

Dummy Stamps

Issue 17 "A look at British Dummy Stamp Material, with an Occasional Excursion Abroad" Quarter 2, 2010

Chichester Printing by Questa

Yes, you did read correctly - Questa

Cast your mind back to 1967 when Sir Francis Chichester was commemorated on a GPO stamp. Now look at the image below and identify what is different to the one that you probably own.



If you cannot readily find a difference, it is that the imprint in the bottom margin is missing, albeit created by me using a software package. Why?

A little known fact is that the House of Questa also printed this stamp to show-off the quality of its stamp printing capabilities to the then GPO.

Questa Director, Wally Rodgers, recorded a series of three oral history tapes for the BPMA in 2001. (Repository GB 1971 British Library, The National Sound Archive. Finding No F9723-F9725)

On tape three, side A in an interview summary, Wally states:

"Broke into P.O. work by persuading them that they (Questa) could do the work. P.O. gave them a piece of Chichester artwork, told HoQ to go away and do some proofs from it. Went back three or four weeks later, P.O. thought they were excellent."

I have never heard of these stamps entering the philatelic market, indeed even the BPMA online catalogue does not record that copies are held, so it will probably remain a gap in our stamp collections.

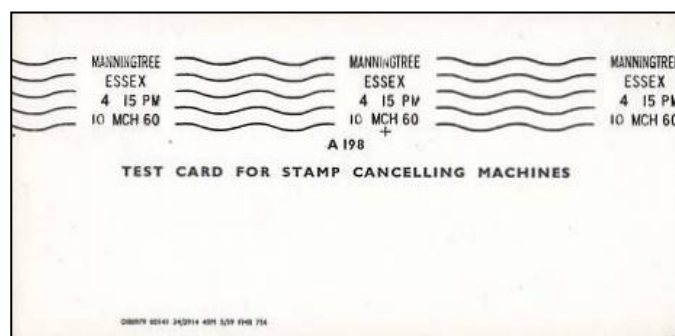
If ever found, House of Questa copies should be obvious, as they bound not to have a Harrison imprint, obviously, hence my manipulation of the issued stamp image alongside.

This is an interesting story and one that was repeated in the early 1990s when Questa printed the 24p value from the Harrison Christmas issue of 1991 (see *DS3*).

We all know that Questa did end-up on the list of preferred print suppliers to Royal Mail, who continued to use them until they were sadly swallowed-up into De La Rue. ☒

Not just stamps...

Stamp Cancelling Machines also produce testing items



The illustration above is of a stamp cancelling machine test card relating to Manningtree Post Office, dated 10 March 1960. It is from the model type that is illustrated alongside.

I took this photograph recently at the Museum Store of the British Postal Museum & Archive Store, Debden.



Christmas Labels Identified

The designs were printed by Harrison... but why!

In *DS15* I posed a question from a reader regarding a mystery religious-themed pair of stamps with the Queen's head and 1st class indicia.

I can now reveal what appears to be at least a partial answer to the query. I was wrong in thinking that it might be a Questa production, but it is British. Harrison can take credit for printing the labels and I can thank another *DS* reader for identifying that the designs are from a 1976 Swedish stamp issue.

In the mid-1970s, Harrison Launched for Royal Mail the first so-called Swedish folded stamp booklets. The experimental stage was done in conjunction with the Swedish stamp printing works at Kista.

It is presumably due to this collaboration that the Swedish Post Office commissioned Harrison to print some stamp postage stamp issues for them.

One such issue was the Christmas 1976 set in both coil and booklet formats. At the foot of two of the se-tenant designs was a panel with the country name and face value on it. For some unknown reason, Harrison guillotined off the panel and added the head and 1st class indicia.

This was done to the booklet stamp format and not to the coils. This is proven by the fact that the coil stamps had imperforate side edges and perforated top and bottom edges, i.e. they were in vertical delivery format.

As a reminder, I illustrate below the strip of three labels that formed the basis of the original query and you will see how easy it was for Harrison to create the dummies, but the question remains: *why* did they produce them?



The Stanley Gibbons catalogue confirms that the Swedish stamp issue was printed in photogravure by Harrison and also records the design information. The pictorial stamp depicts the Virgin Mary visiting St Elizabeth, while the text design is taken from a late 15th century Austrian prayer book.

One final thought - GB did not premiere 1st and 2nd class indicia stamps until 1989!! ✉

Harrison version (right) alongside the Swedish booklet pair (far right) to show how the dummy would have been created by cutting-off the base area.



Low-res images of used booklet stamp pair (left) and booklet pane of ten (below).



London 2010 International Stamp Exhibition



8th – 15th May 2010
Business Design Centre
 52 Upper Street
 Islington
 London
 N1

The 8-day London 2010 International Stamp Exhibition will feature the finest competitive exhibits from collectors around the world, plus stamp dealers, auctioneers and postal administrations, including a major presence from Royal Mail. This show takes place in London just once every ten years and is not to be missed by enthusiasts!

The Business Design Centre is located at the junction of Upper Street and Berners Road; the nearest Underground station is Angel (Northern Line).

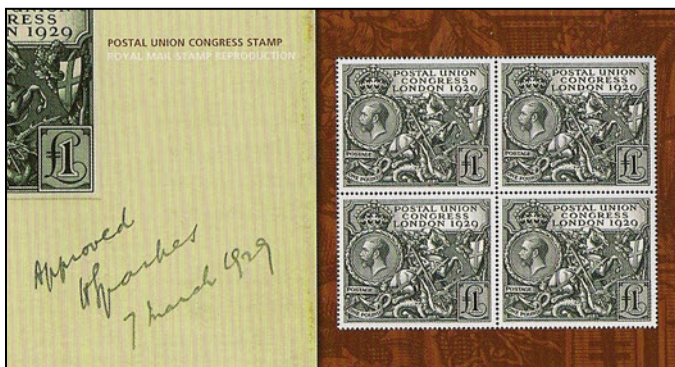
Hours of opening
 8 – 14 May 10:00am to 6:00pm
 15 May 10:00am to 5:00pm

Enschedé PUC £1 Pres Pack

Don't forget the Guildhall Art Gallery demonstrations

From 8-15 May, Enschedé will demonstrate intaglio printing at the Guildhall Art Gallery.

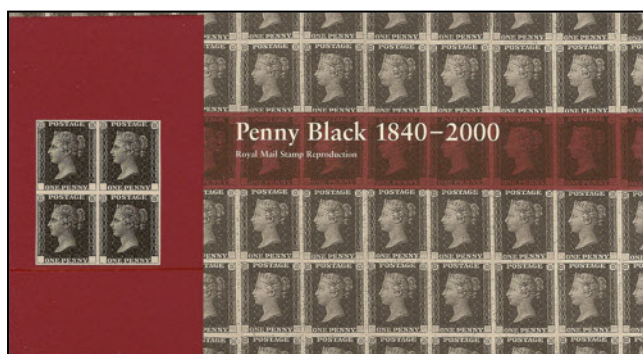
I am told that there will be up to four sessions each day and that times will be shown at the BDC exhibition and at www.london2010.org.uk in due course. There are no known sales restrictions on the 2010 PUC £1 packs, indeed Rushstamps are already selling packs on eBay at around double cost - £9.95.



I illustrate above a mock-up of the intended pack design. The final product may possibly differ slightly and, if this is the case, I will illustrate the revised pack in the next issue of *DS*. They will be on sale at the BDC and by mail order from Royal Mail, Tallents House, Edinburgh in the normal way.

TSS2000 "Penny Black" Pack

The first "Royal Mail Stamp Reproduction" was in 2000



For anyone who is unfamiliar with the first pack produced in 2000, the face and reverse are depicted at the foot of the previous column.

The TSS2000 stamps sold in the packs came from a different printing to those printed at the exhibition, none of which are understood to be in collectors' hands but were destroyed after the show.



Printer Mark Balakjian*, plus Knud Mohr of the FIP and John Roberts of Royal Mail posing at the printing demonstration

The *Independent* newspaper stated at the time:

"The world's first postage stamp is to be recreated using the original printing press to coincide with a major international exhibition.

The Royal Mail will print reproduction Penny Blacks 160 years after the stamp was first issued on 6 May 1840. The printing will take place during The Stamp Show 2000 in London next month and will make use of the Perkins-Bacon printing press loaned by the British Library philatelic collections.

The Royal Mail said the printing process would use the original Victorian printing method and would be "extremely slow", with only 10 sheets printed a day - and a maximum of 70 sheets produced during the show.

David Beech, curator and head of the British Library philatelic collections, said the historic press was given to the library in 1963. It has been lent to exhibitions before, but has not been used."

The forthcoming third edition of *British Stamp Exhibitions 2010*, as co-compiled by Graham M Wilson and myself, notes: "Sales were limited to one pack per purchaser, although this restriction could be circumvented by queuing again! A limited edition of 12,000 copies, prices quickly rose to £25 per pack. Sold for £5, but is currently £32.50." ☒

*Mark Balakjian grew up in Lebanon before arriving in London in 1966. He studied painting at Hammersmith School of Art and did a Postgraduate in printmaking at the Slade School of Fine Art. Mark has had numerous group and solo exhibitions including many International Print and Drawing Biennales in Europe, Japan and the USA where he has received many awards. He will be aged 70 this year.

De La Rue Phosphor Trials

Image of man on labels has now been identified

In *DS4*, I illustrated phosphor trials by De La Rue. The person depicted on the labels had been a mystery, but thanks to a customer of stamp dealer Mike Holt, his name can now be revealed.

I had always thought that I recognised the person, but could not come-up with a name. It transpires that it was no less a personage than Captain James Cook, of explorer fame.



Wedgwood had created a medallion of Cook and it appears that it was this image that had been used by De La Rue as the basis for the phosphor trial designs, according to the Cook expert. ✉

Bradbury, Wilkinson sample folders

How styles have changed

I have recently come across a couple of sample presentation folders produced by Bradbury, Wilkinson for distribution to their potential and existing clients.



Mid-1950s sample folder.

The one above is of a high quality with several sample stamps from different countries attached in a leather or mock-leather hardbound presentation format that dates from around about the mid-1950s.

The stamps are pin-perforated SPECIMEN or have a similar printed overprint.



1969 High Values Machin Folder

By the late 1960s, the folder style had become multi-coloured glossy card and, while still attractive in its way, it lacks the quality of its earlier counterpart - but that's a purely personal opinion. ✉

Questa Dummy Sheet Errors

Even these humble items do not escape mistakes

Perforation shifts are not an uncommon mistake to make when producing a stamp issue. It is all the more galling for a security printer, though, when the error happens on a sheet designed to show-off their printing expertise!

Such an error happened to Questa when they produced a trial sheet for their new gravure printing press in June 1998 (*alongside*). A similar shift of perforation happened three years earlier with their souvenir sheet printing for the Design a Stamp competition held during Stamp 95 (*below*). ☒



Gummed perforated sheet depicting the four winning designs in the 1995 Design a Stamp Competition on the theme of "Wildlife".

The sheet was printed at the House of Questa on 20 June 1995.

The four designers were Zoe Arbuckle (Young Telegraph winner), Nikesh Patel (5-9 years winner), George Castaldini (10-13 years winner) and Anh Nguyen (14-16 years winner). The sheet was given away in the August 1995 *Philatelic Bulletin* and free copies could also be obtained by sending a stamped addressed envelope to the exhibition organisers.

The print run was 70,000 copies.

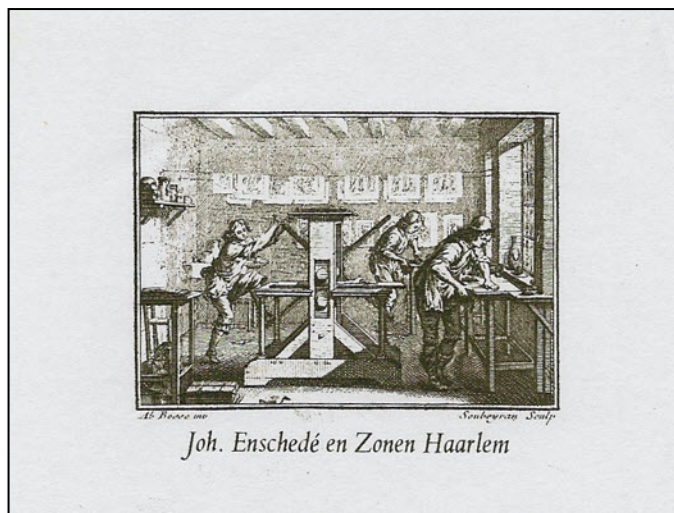
Enschedé in London

Dutch printer travels to London 2010... and Stamp 97

As I type these words it is under a week before the Guildhall Art Gallery exhibition opens. I have been given an invitation to the pre-launch event to be held on 6 May and plan to take some photographs of the intaglio printing press that Enschedé has brought over from Haarlem, if in-situ by then.

Those photographs (and others related to printing, philately and London 2010) will be able to be viewed on my [Flickr](https://www.flickr.com/photos/48015769@N00/) photo website by entering the URL www.flickr.com/photos/48015769@N00/

I illustrate here some pictures of the same press in its more usual home in Haarlem, together with an engraved sheet of a similar looking press that had been in operation a very long while ago.



Engraved sample print of a very similar looking press in use. It appears that this earlier version may be of wooden construction.



Inking the plate.



Enschede sample from Filacept.



Applying pressure to plate.



Slowly and carefully removing the printed sheet from the plate.

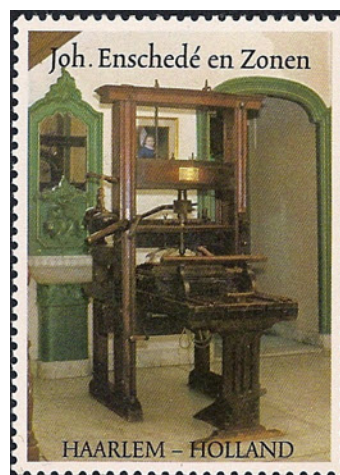
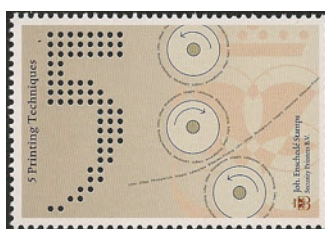


Enschede's in-house engraver, Mrs Inge Madlé.

A supporter of philately, Enschedé also attended Stamp 97 and gave stand visitors a card depicting Mrs Inge Madlé together with the Castles high value definitives that she had engraved for Royal Mail.

Inge was on hand to illustrate the technique of engraving and to answer questions at set times during the show and she signed relatively few cards.

Joh. Enschedé has also depicted other printing presses and allied aspects on its publicity labels, as shown in the examples depicted here. ☒



Cartorelief

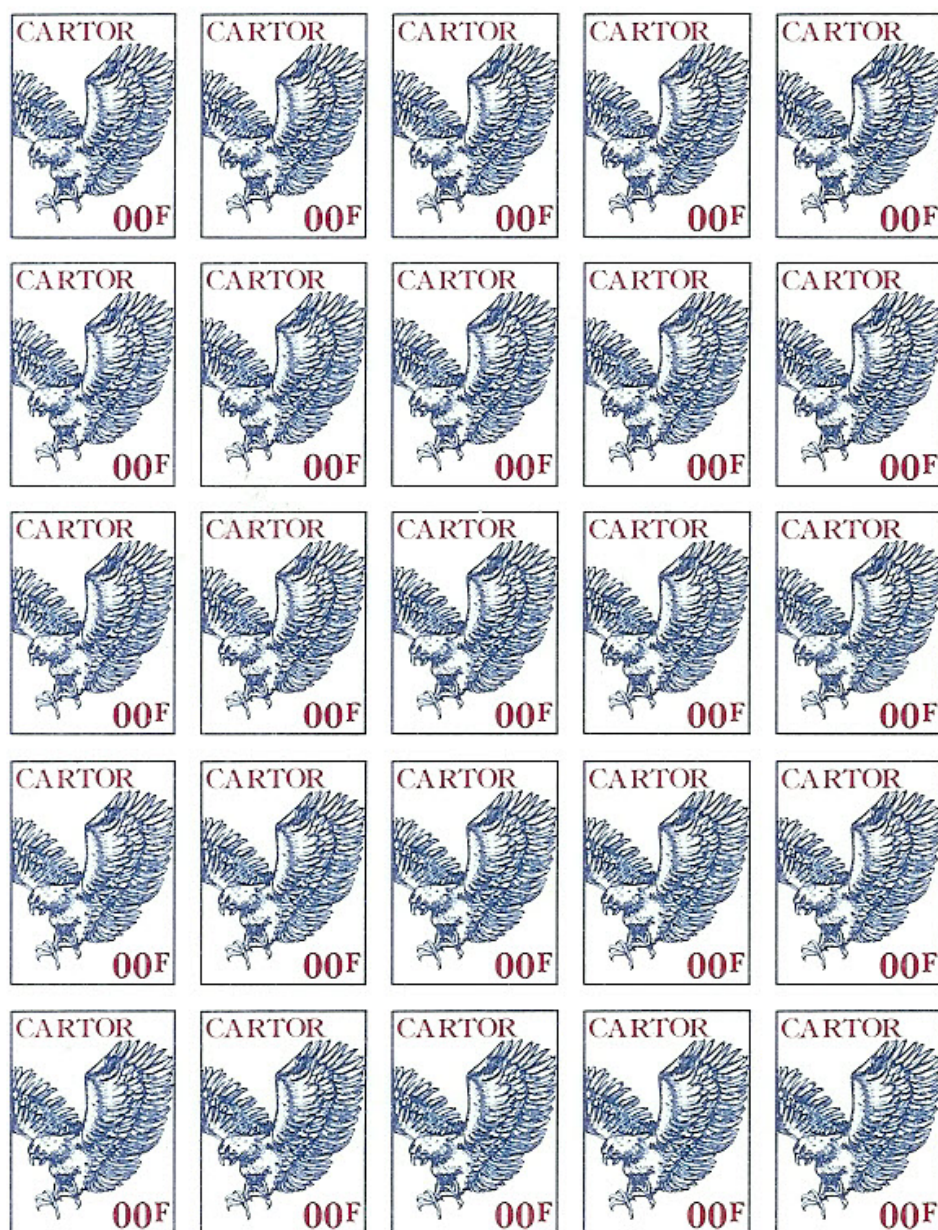
Thermographic printing process developed for stamps

Some time before being taken-over by Walsall, Cartor was perfecting a printing process that it described as being new. The sample sheet illustrated

below was produced to promote what has every appearance of being thermography. They went on to use this process on a few stamp issues and it is still one of the printing options, but the name Cartorelief appears to have fallen into disuse, possibly because the name is used elsewhere by a company involved in mapping, or CARTO[graphic] RELIEF. ☒

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Intaglio versus Photogravure

Harrison compared two of its printing processes

Face and reverse of a sample card produced to demonstrate the comparisons to be made between intaglio and photogravure printing. ☒



The striking features of photogravure printed stamps are the strength of colour and the greater delicacy of portraits obtained by the photographic nature of the process.

But photogravure printing for security work has other advantages, three of which are important. The preparation of the printing cylinders is quick, which together with the high speed of the printing machines allows for rapid deliveries of large quantities. The speed of production results in low costs. The amount and complexity of the precision equipment act as effective barriers to forgery.

Harrisons now print over twenty-eight million stamps a day for the postal authorities of many nations, and has grown into what is probably the largest security works printing by this process in the world.

The accompanying examples are intended to show the deep range of tone provided by the process when using only one colour. Attention is also invited to the examples of two-colour and full-colour stamps, the production of which this Company has special facilities.

Vanished Coaching Inns of London

Off-topic, but of possible interest to those visiting GAG

Before railways, coaching inns were the hub of long distance transport services and a focal point in every town. In their heyday, they were a popular subject for artists. At the time of their decline, in the latter half of the nineteenth century, they also became a subject for photographers wishing to make a documentary record of this characteristic but passing feature of urban life.

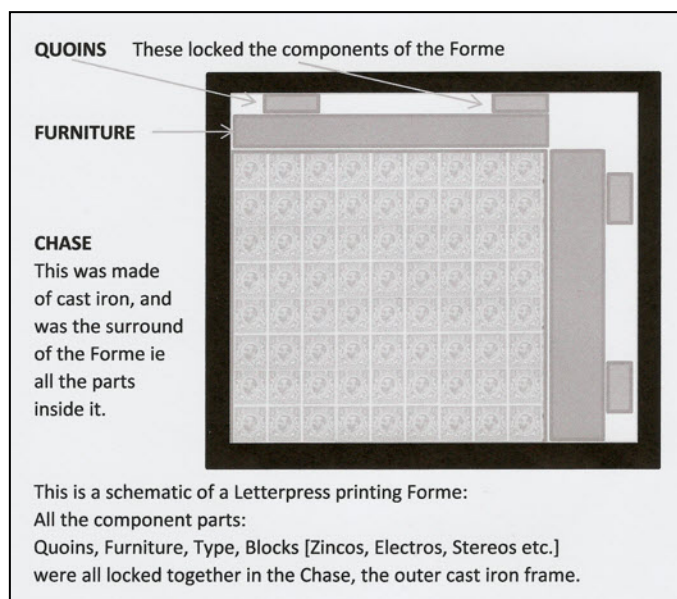
An exhibition includes examples of these engaging images alongside maps and some related ephemera and is being held at the Guildhall Art Gallery from 22 April to 12 May and is free when purchasing an admission ticket to the Gallery. So, if visiting *GPO and Empire*, why not view this extra display. Note that the closing date is three days before the end of London 2010. ☒

Correction

Forme and Chase mix-up

When recently describing letterpress printing elsewhere, I erroneously stated that the Forme is what the blocks etc. were locked into, but that is the Chase, the whole thing then becoming the Forme.

A reader has kindly corrected me and I am happy to set the record straight here and to display his picture that explains all. ☒



...and finally

I always welcome details of any new dummy finds from printers of British stamps, past and present, and so cordially invite you to drop me a line via the Guest Book facility provided at:

www.stampprinters.info/guestbook.htm

Unfortunately, business, family and other commitments to the hobby mean that I cannot guarantee that I can rigidly stick to a publishing programme and therefore suggest that you go to:

www.stampprinters.info/dummystamps.htm every so often where PDF files of this and all future and previous issues of *Dummy Stamps* will be available to download and print-off. Thank you.