

The Wilding definitives collection II, 1953-59

Second in



Illustrations are at proof stage – some of the values will be changed.

Technical details

Printer De La Rue

Process Gravure

Stamp size 20 × 24mm

Sheet size 123 × 70mm

Perforation 15 × 14, with ellipses on vertical sides

Phosphor One band 20p class, two bands others

Gum PVA

Watermark '50' (Golden Jubilee)

Paper Uncoated, cream tint to stamp borders

THE FIRST MINIATURE SHEET this year goes on sale at main Post Office branches, Tallents House and Post Office philatelic outlets on 20 May. It contains nine definitives in Wilding designs, a companion sheet to that issued last December on the 50th anniversary of the first Elizabeth II stamps. The sheet, price £2.52, contains nine stamps and a label reproducing the UK national floral emblems as shown in the bottom left hand corner on the original 2½d, 3d, 4d and 4½d stamps.

The stamps in the sheet are of the following values (in the design and colours of the original value, shown in parentheses): 8p (4d), 68p (1s6d), 4p (3d), 10p (6d), 20p (7d), 28p (9d), 42p (10d), 34p (11d) and E (4½d). The sheet, which measures 123 × 70mm, was designed by Rose Design, with type by Mike Pratley. The original stamp designs are by: M C Farrar Bell 3d, 4d, and 4½d (4p, 8p, and 20p), George Knipe 6d and 7d (10p and 19p), Mary Adshhead 9d, 10d and 11d (27p, 42p and 41p), and Edmund Dulac 1s6d (68p).

To match the originals as closely as possible, the miniature sheet is printed on watermarked, uncoated paper with a tint around the stamps giving the effect of a creamy paper as used for the Wilding stamps until 1962.

FIRST DAY FACILITIES Unstamped Royal Mail FDC envelopes will be available from main Post Office branches and philatelic outlets about a week before 20 May, price 25p. The design reproduces the national floral emblems as shown on four values in the Wilding series. Orders for FDCs with the miniature sheet cancelled by a pictorial first day postmark of Tallents House Edinburgh or Windsor must reach Tallents House by the date of issue. Price £3.38 UK or £2.88 overseas.

a series marking the 50th anniversary of the Wilding stamps

Collectors may send stamped covers on the day of issue to: Royal Mail Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB, or Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, Wexham Road, Slough SL1 1AA (Windsor postmark), marking the outer envelope 'FD03 11' or 'FD03 12'. Covers can be posted or handed in at main Post Office branches for the Windsor postmark. Details of sponsored handstamps will be announced in the *British Postmark Bulletin* – available on subscription from Tallents House. For a sample copy write to: The Editor, British Postmark Bulletin, Royal Mail, 148 Old Street, London EC1V 9HQ.

Covers for first day and sponsored postmarks can bear the complete sheet or any stamps from it subject to a minimum 20p postage.

PHILATELIC PRODUCTS A well-illustrated pack containing the miniature sheet will be available from main Post Office branches and philatelic outlets, price £2.90. The pack includes illustrations of the work of Enid Marx, Mary Adshead, and Michael Farrar Bell, together with an unused stamp design by George Knipe and a photograph of Edmund Dulac at work. There will be no stamp cards for this issue.





THE WILDING DEFINITIVES COLLECTION II 1953-1959

work 'postage' and revenue.

A deadline of 30 June was set and during July the panel considered a total of 75 designs. This was reduced first to 19 and then to a shortlist of nine and presented to Her Majesty. With minor modifications a final five designs were approved. The Postmaster General suggested that the first five values be in each of the chosen designs, and repeated in rows or threes throughout the range. An alternative was 1/2d-2d, 2 1/2d-4d, 5d-8d and 9d-1s. In October, higher values (1 1/2d and 1 1/2d) were agreed to cover increased overseas postal rates.

The first two values were issued on 5 December 1952, covering basic postal rates with further values issued throughout 1953. Achieving satisfactory colours sometimes proved difficult such as for the 4d, 1/2d and 1 1/2d, issued on 2 November. The latter stamp was issued in shades including Winstone bottle Vert, Nickel, Blue, Jade and Spectrum green before a simple green was selected. The 1/2d was printed in

The Wilding definitives were first issued in sheets of six and were cancelled prior to being 'Tucker' covers design. This was cancelled in 1953 in the 18 Edward VII Crown and 18d (1953-54) (for the Wilding designs) (London).

Enid Marx (1907-95) was educated at Rodden, the Central School of Arts and Crafts and the Royal College of Art. She worked mainly in textile design and printing and book illustration. She designed posters for London Transport and during the War served as textiles expert to the Board of Trade. She designed the 1976 Christmas stamps.

MARY ADSHEAD (1904-90) was trained at the Slade School of Fine Art, and from the 1920s much of her work was devoted to creating murals, her last major work in this area completed in 1982. She also designed the 2 1/2d stamp in the 1949 UPU series and the 1937 Scout Jubilee 2 1/2d.

MICHAEL FARRAR BELL (1914-91) was known as a painter of pub signs until the 1930s, thereafter best known as a designer of stained glass and for restoring the Great West Window in Bath Abbey. His Coronation and definitive stamps were followed by the 1d stamp in the Salvation Army issue of 1965.

EDMUND DULAC (1882-1951) was born in France, worked in Britain from 1907 and was naturalised in 1912. He was best known as an illustrator but was involved in many other areas of design, including stamps. He created the 1937 Coronation stamp and his 193d design for the Queen's Coronation met with great approval, although he died on 25 May. Enid Marx eulogised "Edmund Dulac's lovely design seems more than ever to have caught the poignant fairy-tale quality in a very moving way... How sad that Dulac should have died before his stamp was issued."



The Wilding definitives collection II • 1953 - 1959

Darren O'Higgins of De La Rue supplies this information about the printing techniques used for the recent Wilding miniature sheets, comparing them to those available to his predecessors at Harrisons in the 1950s.

Printing 50 years ago and now In 1952 the inks used were solvent based (Toluene); now the inks are spirit based. (Toluene is now banned for health reasons.) Solvent based inks are of stronger density than spirit based and thus on some colours require less ink to achieve the depth of colour. The inks in 1952 would have been specially formulated for uncoated paper whereas in 2002 coated paper is the norm. In 1952 the cylinders were chemically etched; now they are mechanically etched on a Klisch diamond etching machine. Chemically etched cylinders followed by the manual engraving of individual cells produces a different cell profile to that produced by a Klisch machine. In 1952 the impression cylinder applied heavy mechanical pressure only; now electrostatic assist rollers draw the ink from the cylinders. The impression cylinder in 1952 applied tons of mechanical pressure to the paper during the printing process to draw the ink out of the cells. Air pressure and electrostatic assist now perform that function. Thus the single colour Wildings combined some fine detail with strong background or solid colours.

Due to a combination of the three reasons above, particularly ink and cylinders, it proved difficult on some values to achieve the right colour strength whilst maintaining detail. The more ink we applied to get the depth of colour, the more detail started to be lost. If we concentrated on the detail then the background or solid areas of colour appeared weaker.

The paper used for the Wildings was uncoated and this was replicated for the current versions. It was interesting to note that when the essaying was in progress we tried the essays on coated paper as a comparison and found that a closer match could be achieved in terms of colour and detail although the coated paper made the overall appearance different.

For further information about the design and printing of the original Wilding stamps, see Bulletin Publication No 9 *The Wildings: The First Elizabeth II Definitives*, included free with the April 2002 *Bulletin*. Copies of the publication are still available from Royal Mail Tallents House, at £2.95 (order code PB362). A photograph of the diadem worn by The Queen on the stamps was shown in the July *Bulletin* (page 331).

The Wildings Planning of the first definitive issue of The Queen's reign began shortly after her accession on 6 February 1952. Later that month The Queen was photographed at the studios of Dorothy Wilding, a leading London society photographer. On this occasion The Queen wore a tiara. The images were not considered entirely suitable and a further session was held in April when The Queen wore the famous diadem made for King George IV. An image from this second session was approved for use on the stamps. Designs using the approved head were submitted by leading artists and designers and a Committee set up to select the best. The first values – 1½d and 2½d covering basic UK postal rates – went on sale on 5 December in time for Christmas postings. Further values followed in batches on 6 July, 31 August and 2 November 1953, 18 January 1954, with the series being completed on 8 February 1954 – two years and two days after The Queen's accession.

Decimal versions of the Wildings started with the 20p, 26p and 37p stamps in *The Definitive Portrait* prestige book of 1998, and the 1½d and 2½d reissued as 1st and 2nd class stamps in the *A Gracious Accession* book in February 2002. These two NV1 stamps plus 1p, 2p, 5p, 33p, 37p, 47p and 50p values were included in the first miniature sheet issued last December and still available from Tallents House and Post Office philatelic outlets ●