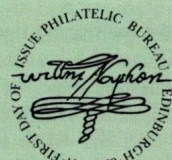


# The Welsh Bible—1588—1988



1 March 1988

Four stamps will be issued on 1 March, St David's Day, to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the publication of Bishop William Morgan's translation of the Bible into Welsh. The stamps were designed by Keith Bowen and feature portraits of four of the main figures involved in translations of the Bible.



The Renaissance, beginning in Italy, gradually spread throughout northern Europe. It revolutionised art and music but above all it changed men's ideas. The rediscovery of classical texts in their original languages, Latin, Greek and even Hebrew, lead to an upsurge in interest in the philosophical ideas of the great men of the past. In particular, this was reflected in ideas on religion. There was considerable revulsion against the corruption of ecclesiastical practices and language among many of the great thinkers such as Erasmus whose ideas came to be described as humanism. One of their aims was to reconcile the many great religions of the world, another was to return to the sources of their information to eliminate wrong interpretations, and a third was to make their thoughts available both to each other and to the general public. This was greatly helped by the spread of printing from moveable type.

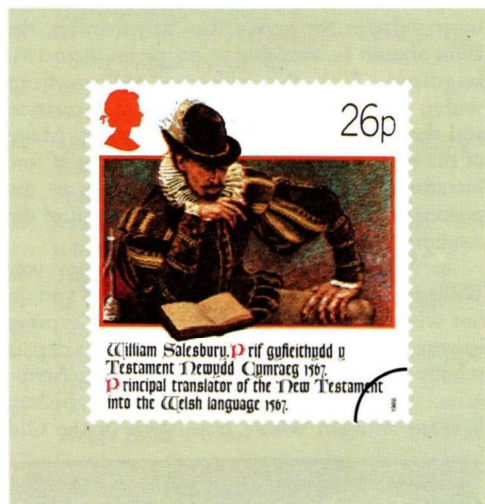
They wrote in Latin, and Latin was the language of the Church but they recognised that to appeal to a greater audience meant that they must write in the vernacular. In particular, the Bible should be available to people in their own languages. With the failure of reform from within came the cataclysm of the Reformation and the great work of translation began. Many of the translators were to produce works of fine literature, standardising their languages in the process. Luther's German and the English of the Authorised Version are two examples.

In Wales the first of the translators was William Salesbury who wrote in 1547 "If you do not wish to be lower than beasts, seek learning in your tongue ... If you do not wish to depart wholly from Christ's faith, seek the Holy Scriptures in your tongue." Later came Bishop William Morgan whose translation of the Old





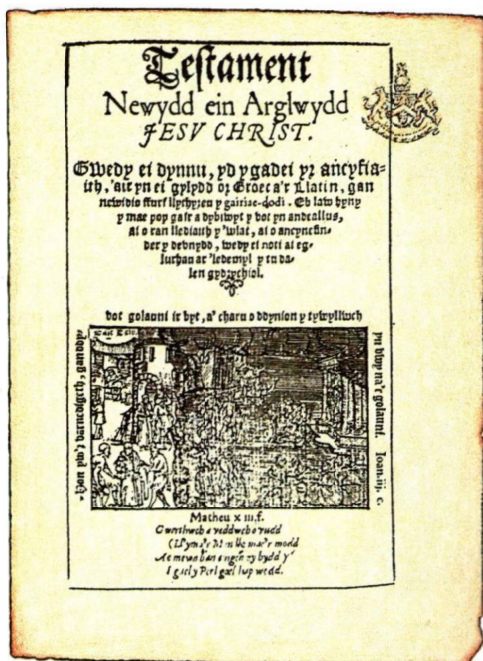
Testament and thorough revision of the New was published in 1588. This had a similar cultural impact on the people and language of Wales as that of some of other countries' translators which is the reason for the celebration of the 400th anniversary of its publication. Morgan, who is shown on the **18p** stamp was rector of Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant. His was the first complete translation and is noted for its warm, dignified style.



Morgan built on the work of others. William Salesbury, who is depicted on the **26p** stamp, came from Llansannan, Clwyd. A layman, he had translated the Gospels and Epistles of the English Prayer Book into Welsh in 1551. His was the inspiration for the Act of Parliament, passed in March 1566, for the translating of the Bible and Divine Service into the Welsh tongue. Salesbury's New Testament appeared in 1567, though it contained a large number of variant readings and archaisms.

On the **31p** stamp is shown Richard Davies. He translated five of the New Testament books in a less pedantic fashion than Salesbury with Thomas Huet, Precentor of St David's, translating the Book of Revelation. Davies invited Salesbury to join him and continue work on the Old Testament but disagreement caused a rift. Morgan took up the work where they left off.

On the final stamp, the **34p**, is Richard Parry of St Asaph's. Together with John Davies, rector of Mallwyd, he carried out a revision of Morgan's work in 1620. He standardised the language still further and a popular version appeared in 1630 termed the "Little Bible". This

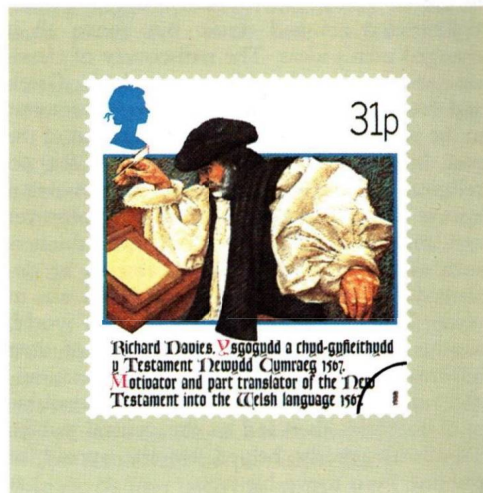


allowed some of the reformers' goals to be achieved.

The stamps bear Keith Bowen's depictions of the translators based upon several sources. The inscriptions are in the style of the period and in both English and Welsh, making this the eighth special stamp issue to appear with Welsh inscriptions.

### Technical Details

Designed by Keith Bowen, the stamps have





been printed in photogravure by Harrison and Sons Limited. In format they are vertical, 35mm x 37mm, perf. 14 x 14½, printed on unwatermarked, phosphor-coated paper. Printing is in sheets of 100 on PVA Dextrin gum.

### PHQ Cards

PHQ cards (Nos 108 A-D) featuring each of the four stamps will be available from 15 February, price 15p each.

### Presentation Pack

The presentation pack will cost £1.31 and was designed by Newell and Sorrell, with text by Dr Brynley F Roberts. The text appears in both English and Welsh. It was printed by Clement & Foster Limited.

### First Day Cover

The first day cover design is similar to the flap of the presentation pack. It costs 16p. Two pictorial postmarks will be used for the first day of cover service, one from the British Philatelic Bureau featuring William Morgan's signature, and the other from Tŷ Mawr, Wybrnant,

Gwynedd shows Morgan's birthplace.

A first day cover service will be provided by the Bureau with the official Royal Mail cover addressed to the destination required with the four stamps cancelled with either postmark. The charges will be £1.56 (inland) and £1.36 (overseas). Application forms, available from the Bureau and at Head Post Offices, should be returned not later than 1 March.



Customers requiring only the special pictorial postmarks may obtain them under the reposting facility by sending on the first day of issue a stamped addressed envelope under an outer cover endorsed 'Special First Day of Issue Handstamp' to:

'British Philatelic Bureau' 20 Brandon Street,  
EDINBURGH EH3 5TT

'Tŷ Mawr' Special Postmark Duty  
Caernarfon Sorting Office  
Cibyn Industrial Estate  
CAERNARFON  
Gwynedd LL55 2ND

