

Country Stamps

4 December 1990

New 17p, 22p, 26p and 37p Country stamps for Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales will be issued on 4 December. They will be on sale at post offices in the respective countries and at the British Philatelic Bureau, "Collections" centres and philatelic counters. The designs will be the same as previous issues, the colours of the new stamps being the same as the national definitives: 17p dark blue, 19p flame, 26p stone and 37p red. These values cover the basic second class inland rate; the basic inland first class and EEC countries rate; the non-EEC European rate and the new combined rate for basic weight airmail letters.

Country stamps, then referred to as "Regional Issues" made their debut in 1958 with 3d stamps for Guernsey, Jersey and the Isle of Man and 3d, 6d and 1s3d stamps for Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Various additions to the range of values followed — 2½d stamps (postcard rate) for the three islands in 1964, 4d and 5d stamps for each region in 1966 and 1968 respectively and 9d and 1s6d stamps for the three main regions in 1967. The stamps for Guernsey and Jersey were taken off sale when the islands became "postally independent" in 1969. New decimal stamps for the remaining four regions were issued in July 1971. The Isle of Man also became postally independent in 1973 since when the stamps for Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales have been referred to as "Country" issues. Numerous new values have resulted from postal rates increases and the stamps enjoy popularity with many collectors who have built up specialised collections.

The background story to the introduction of the "Regionals" was given by Jean Farrugia in a series of articles in the *Bulletin*: August 1978 (Scotland), September 1978 (Wales), October 1978 (N Ireland), November 1978 (Isle of Man), January 1979 (Jersey) and February 1979 (Guernsey).

Technical Details

The 12 stamps have been printed in offset-lithography by The House of Questa Ltd in sheets of 200. The 17p stamp is printed on



fluorescent paper with a single phosphor band; the other values are on Phosphor Coated Paper. Perforation is 15 x 14 and the gum PVA Dextrin.

First Day Facilities

First day cover envelopes, price 19p each, will be available from the Bureau, "Collections" centres, philatelic counters and main post offices in the respective countries. Pictorial "First Day of Issue" postmarks will be available at the Bureau and for the three Country capitals: Belfast, Edinburgh and Cardiff. First day covers will be provided in sets of three — one set with the Bureau postmark, the other with the postmarks for the three capitals. Application forms, available from the Bureau, "Collections" and philatelic counters, should be returned by 4 December.

Collectors preparing their own covers may send them for the pictorial postmarks to: British

Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, EDINBURGH EH3 5TT (Bureau postmark); Scotland & N Ireland Special Handstamp Centre, Glasgow LDO, George Square, GLASGOW G2 1AA (Edinburgh and Belfast postmarks — state clearly which is required) or Wales & The West Special Handstamp Centre, Cardiff LDO, Penarth Road, CARDIFF CF1 1AA (Cardiff postmark).

First day posting boxes will be available at all offices which normally provide them in each of the three countries and at all "Collections" and philatelic counter offices in England. Covers posted in these boxes will receive the standard, non-pictorial "First Day of Issue" handstamps.

Presentation Pack

A "New Issue" Pack containing all 12 stamps will be available from the Bureau, "Collections", philatelic counters and main post offices in the respective countries from 4 December, price £3.35.

