

STAMPS OF THE CHANNEL ISLANDS

The Channel Islands are situated at the western end of the English Channel, but much nearer to the coast of France than to that of England in the bay formed by Cherbourg and Ushant. Though under the British Crown, both Guernsey and Jersey are self administered under their respective Bailiffs; the other smaller Islands are attached to Guernsey.

Until recently the Channel Islands have been simple — and cheap — to collect for it was not until World War II that the Channel Islands had any specific issues of their own stamps, apart from those of their Inland Revenue. Up to that time postal services were operated by the British Post Office using stamps of Great Britain.

After a few months of the German occupation of the Channel Islands, during which the K.G. VI stamps of Great Britain continued in use, with no new stock coming into the Islands, 1d stamp became short and, at the suggestion of the German Authorities, 2d stamps of the G.B. Centenary issue were bisected diagonally: these were first used on December 24th 1940. Although not officially authorised, 2d stamps of the K.G.V. 1912-22 issue and the 1934-36 (photogravure) issue were bisected by local philatelists and were used up to Feb. 22nd, 1941.

The then German Commandant had ordered the Postmaster of Jersey to have British stamps overprinted with a swastika plus the words Jersey 1940 — with the swastika so centred that it covered the King's head. This was, in fact, actually done by the local printers, Bigwoods but the Bailiff of Jersey protested so strongly to the Berlin authorities that the latter ordered the stamps to be destroyed; they were never issued and very few of them escaped.

By 1941 it became necessary to print a definitive issue. In Germany $\frac{1}{2}$ d, 1d & $2\frac{1}{2}$ d value were designed by E. W. Vaudin who made the arms of Guernsey his main future; the Germans would not allow any design which even remotely connected with the Royal family but were fooled, not knowing that the Arms of Guernsey were in fact the personal Arms of the Sovereign, dating back the William, Duke of Normandy. These stamps were typo printed by the Guernsey Press. The $2\frac{1}{2}$ d was not issued until 1944.

In Jersey, $2\frac{1}{2}$ d & 1d values were designed by N. V. L. Rybot and were printed by the Jersey Evening Post: the former was issued in April 1941 and the 1d in January of the following year. The Jersey designer

also fooled the Germans for he based his design on that of Guernsey but added 4 minute letters 'A', one in each corner; these stood for 'Ad Avernum Aodlphe Atrox' — 'To hell with you atrocious Adolf': that was on the 1d. On the ½d appeared A, A B, B which stood for 'Atrocious Adolf and Bloody Benito'.

In 1942 Guernsey reprinted the ½d & 1d values on bluish French bank-note paper, whilst Jersey in 1943 produced 6 values to a new design of E. Blampied and typo printed by the Franch Government Works, Paris.

The Islands were liberated on the 10th May, 1945 after which British stamps were again used. In 1948, on the 3rd anniversary of the liberation, a special issue of 2 stamps 1d & 2½d, depicting local scenes, was issued (designed by J.R. Stobie 1d and E. Blampied 2½d); these stamps were used not only in the Channel Islands but also in Great Britain.

Ten years later the British Postal Authorities started their Regional issues and Guernsey as well as Jersey had their own lower value stamps — 2½d, 3d & 4d. Again these stamps could be purchased and used in Great Britain as well as in the Channel Islands.

In 1969, when the British Postal Services ceased to be a Government Department, Guernsey and Jersey each decided to set up their independent Postal Administration. On the 1st Oct. each island issued its own long pictorial definitive set of stamps, followed at once by commemorative sets, postage due sets. Thus the stamp collecting enthusiast was provided with two more stamp issuing countries 'and' two additional drains from his pocket.

It is reasonable to predict that the new issues will attract more and more collectors who will look for occupation stamps and items of postal history; in consequence, prices of those items will undoubtedly increase.

Mention must be made of the "Wildlife" issue of Jersey, a commemorative set of 4 stamps issued on 12th March, 1971. This set is quite the most attractive, both in design and colouring, that I have seen. These stamps refer to the Jersey Wildlife Preservation Trust which was set up some 10 years ago by that well known Wildlife conservationist and author Gerald Durrell who is doing such great work in preserving and breeding from those animals and birds, etc. which are rapidly approaching extinction.

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