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Tim,

#### OBSERVATIONS ON THE NEW £10 DEFINITIVE STAMP

As requested, I detail below my views on the forthcoming £10 stamp. My instant reaction on seeing it was one of great disappointment and a lost opportunity. They appear to have been made almost as printers' samples to show just what can be done with a printing press!

#### FROM A COLLECTORS' VIEWPOINT

- o Some of the pre-release examples seen at the Press display were poorly perforated so that part of the base of the design appears at the top. Whilst they are legally of 'merchantable quality', i.e. fit for the purpose that they were made for, they are not of collector quality. Hopefully this is not a widespread problem.
- o The so-called cylinder numbers are a travesty. There are ten 1A's all printed in violet! If, from a security viewpoint, it was deemed inappropriate to allow people to know the number of colours used, then OK, but to include them for the sole purpose of 'milking' the collector of £40, then I am disappointed and angry.

#### AESTHETICALLY

- o Taste is a very personal matter and I would not wish to establish myself as a style guru. However, I consider the image to be too fussy and cluttered.
- o The numeric '£10' in violet is totally out of keeping with what purports to be a classical design, both in colour and typeface. Why does it not match the Castles typography?

#### SECURITY ASPECTS

- o I reckon that there are the following security features (some obvious, some deduced):
  - eight ink colours
  - U V built-in to one of above colours on the shield area (or it is a separate pass through the press)
  - Braille embossing
  - silver foil blocking
  - elliptical perforations
  - very fine litho screen
  - normal perforations
  - non-OBA paper
  - ESP (extra small print) or microprint. (Clever, I've never believed that a litho screen could be fine enough to reproduce this feature and that only intaglio could do this)
  - the wording 'ten pounds' at the left is an anti-laser copying feature designed to confuse the scanner
  - I would not be surprised if the ESP incorporates an intentional letter transposition, ie spelling mistake!
  - I have not seen the reverse, so cannot comment on the gumming. Maybe an underprint is included?

Having initially condemned the design, I would say that Questa have done an excellent job at creating a secure stamp by the lithographic printing process. It would certainly offer many a 'back street' printer something of a headache to replicate.

I am warming towards it, if only because of the security!