

# Dummy Stamps

Issue 4

"An Infrequent Look at the World of British Dummy Stamp Material"

Spring 2007

## De La Rue Phosphor Trials

*New discovery found in deceased estate*

An unrecorded De La Rue sample label with two phosphor bands has recently come on to the philatelic market following the death of Aubrey Walker, of whom more later. The labels were first retailed at Spring Stampex 2007 by Mike Holt.

A retired DLR employee was contacted and asked if he knew anything about the labels or the reasons behind the trial and the following notes have been compiled from his detailed response.



**Magenta solid colour and half-tone  
(man facing to the right)**

**The Trials** These phosphor trials were done in one of the DLR factories, possibly St Albans, and they would have generated their own artwork. The phosphor ink was produced from a phosphor powder produced by Harrison's or possibly Dollis Hill, where the Post Office R&D was located at the time of the trials.

The project was taken over by Jozef Beck (not the Polish foreign minister from the 1930s), who was based at DLR Maidenhead R&D.

**Date of Production** 19 December 1968 was the date of the first successful use of these dummies.

**Subject of Label** I have yet to ascertain who the portrait sitter is on the labels, but will pursue with the National Portrait Gallery when I next visit.

He has been referred to as 'an 18<sup>th</sup> century gentleman' and it seems likely that the sculpted head could have been chosen because the Machin head of Her Majesty that had recently been introduced on British definitive stamps used that type of portrait rendition.

Apart from the fact that DLR was trying to prove that it could tackle all types of stamp production, there would not have been any other reason for simulating a Machin design. Certainly, these labels were nothing to do with the introduction of the Machin design the previous year, as DLR was not involved in that project.



**Orange solid colour and half-tone  
(man facing to the left)**

This is the scarcest colour – only 24 examples recorded

**Colours Known** Four colours are known, namely orange, magenta, turquoise and black. Each exists in a solid or a half-tone version, i.e. eight labels in total, with head facing either left or right

Single colour trials are cheaper, which probably explains why multi-colour was not used.

**Stamp Contract** DLR had ambitions of obtaining a significant proportion of the Post Office contract at that time (as Harrison's had of printing banknotes!). This included an attempt at acquiring some of the definitive range, not just special stamps, which they achieved in 1969 with the PO Technology stamps.

**Printing Process** The proposed process was Delacryl (which was a 300 lines/inch lithographic

*Continued on page two*

## ... DLR Phosphor Trials *continued*

process) and which used trimetal plates.

As these sample labels were litho printed, and are the first successful printing by DLR of phosphor stamps, they predate the Waddington lithographic phosphor definitive stamps by over a decade.



**Turquoise solid colour and half-tone  
(man facing to the right)**

**Phosphor Type** The phosphor used was TPA (Teraphthalic Acid) activated urea-formaldehyde resin applied by letterpress from a rubber stereo. This phosphor was made to glow blue by short wave 235 nm UV radiation.

The phosphor was extremely temperamental and the reaction between urea and formaldehyde is very violent once initiated by heat; only a very small amount of the TPA activator is required in the mix.

However, it had to be heated after the reaction had finished. This was to give the powder resistance to moisture (atmospheric and licking).

The problem was that if the heating went on too long you obtained a powder that could not be ground into small enough particles to make satisfactory printing ink. So some moisture susceptibility had to be tolerated in order to produce a powder soft enough to be ground into printing ink. Hence the impossibility of using wet litho to print the phosphor bars.

**Aubrey Walker** The Post Office, in the shape of Aubrey, provided DLR with its phosphor testing equipment for Quality Control purposes. He was based at Studd Street in Islington and ran the QC Materials laboratory there in the days when telephones were also a part of the Post Office.

Aubrey was a very thorough technologist who was difficult to satisfy. He was involved in the DLR projects as well as keeping control of Harrison's many stamp production activities.

It is from Aubrey Walker's deceased estate that these sets of labels originate from and stamp collectors can be therefore be grateful that he chose to hang on to them so that this story can at last be told. 📄



**Black solid colour and half-tone  
(man facing to the left)**

## Unrecorded Royal Mail Trial

*An update on the feature in issue DS2*

In DS2, I recorded for the first time the Harrison trial for the proposed phosphor barcode stamps.

I mentioned that crimson and emerald green colours exist and can now mention two further colours, although neither is recorded as being in collectors' hands at this time. I can also update their creation date.

My archive of printing articles included the start by me of a manuscript on Harrison trial material and I was surprised to see that I had compiled the following brief note:

**1990** Harrison head design printed either in emerald green, maroon (crimson), **stone** or **mauve**.

These dummies were used at the Post Office Research Laboratories (PORC) for testing the idea of phosphor bar codes on stamps. Not pursued.

For information purposes only, as none of these items have, or ever will, reach the philatelic market.

It now seems apparent that the above note, the information for which had been supplied to me by PORC on one of my visits, refers to the items illustrated in DS2.

Has anyone seen the stone or mauve colours? 📄

## Smilers® Dummy Sheet

*An unusual photostamp trial of unknown purpose*

For those unfamiliar with the term *Smilers*®, they comprise stamps with an adjoining label depicting an image. Often they are of people posing – invariably with a smile and hence the name.

A couple of entire sheets, plus blocks, pairs and singles have been available on the collector market for some time, but the precise use for them has not been ascertained. Some call them proofs, testing sheets for the personalisation process or printing press set-up sheets. Does anyone reading this newsletter know what their true purpose was?

They were printed gravure by The House of Questa and are produced in the same format as the first Smilers® 2001 19p Christmas sheets.

Prices vary wildly, but singles were sold by Gibbons at around £250 each a couple of years ago. 📧

## Smilers® Coil Mock-up

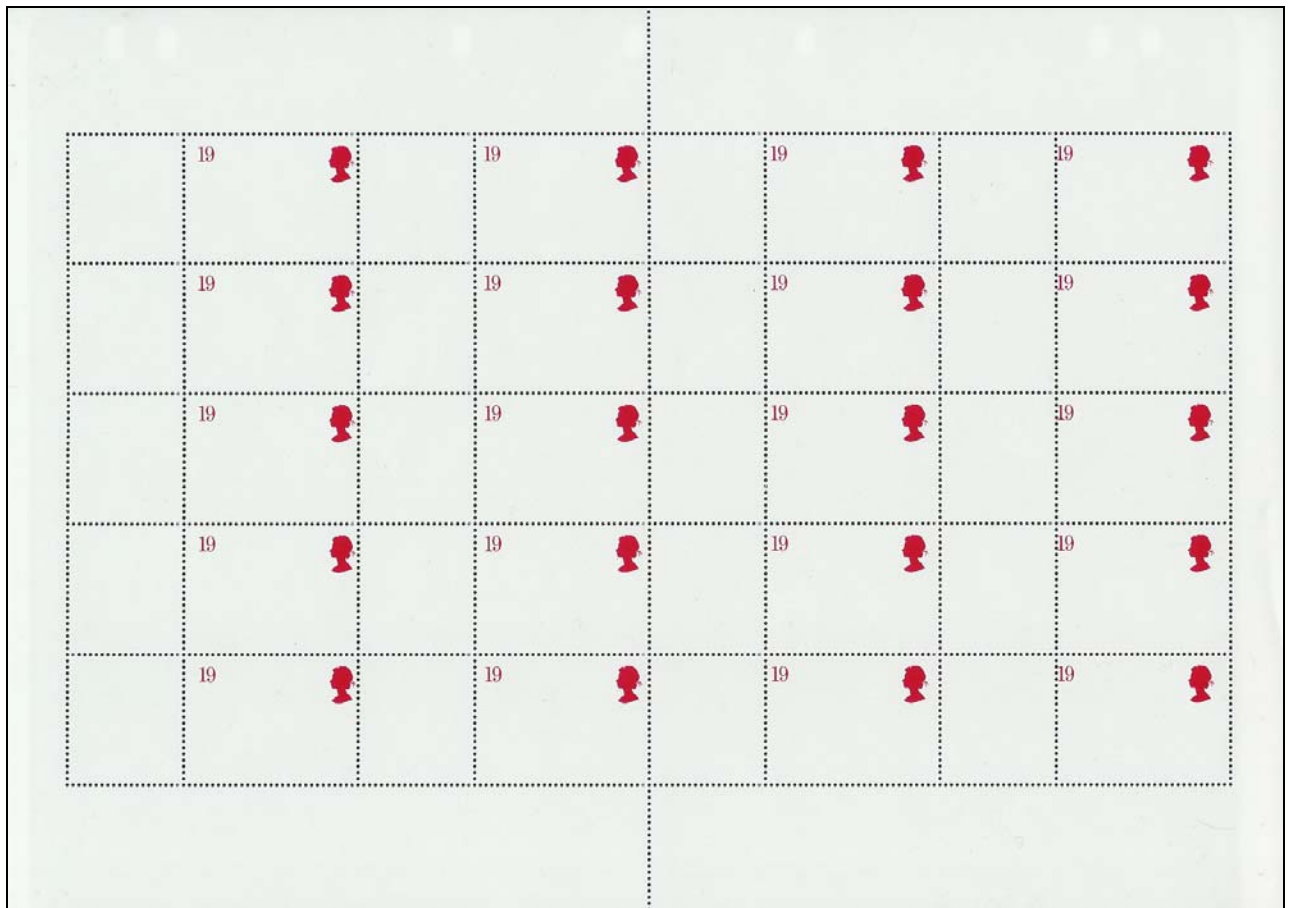
*Do not go mad searching for this item!*

Another Smilers® item, but this time in a coil, was shown on Royal Mail's website in 2007, although it only exists as a mock-up and not as an actual item. This new service is aimed at Direct Mail users enabling them to personalise mail to customers with an appropriately designed label. 📧



*(left)* Smilers® Customised Stamp Roll mock-up. Potential users should visit [www.royalmail.com](http://www.royalmail.com) and search for the term "Rolls".

*(below)* A complete sheet of 20 dummy Christmas 2001 Smilers® stamps and blank labels with red instead of silver head and face value.



# Cartor Sample Labels

*A printer of British stamps based in France*

Originally a French company formed in 1974 and based initially at L'Aigle and since 1999 at La Loupe, it has specialised in the printing of high-quality stamps since its inception.

In 1995, Cartor was taken over by Gilles le Baud who provided the structure for future growth and in 2004 it became a key constituent of the newly-formed ISP Group, having been bought outright by Walsall Security Printers.

Its reputation has been based around the continual development and investment in new printing processes and endeavors to react rapidly to the needs and wishes of postal administrations, now also including Royal Mail following its first print job for them in 2005.

It is especially known for the additional features applied to its stamps, such as foils and the use of thermography and aromatic inks. Further techniques are currently being developed.

This page features a selection of the publicity labels that the company has produced down the years. 📄



(WA)



(SA)

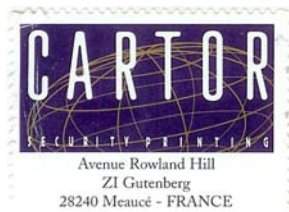


(SA)

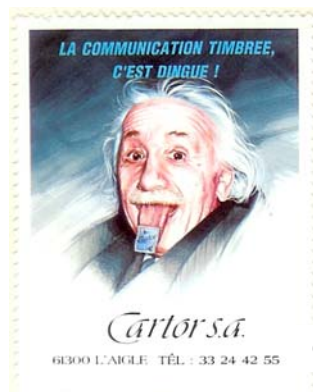


(WA) Water activated  
(SA) Self-adhesive  
(MS) Ungummed

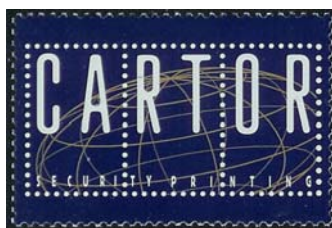
< (MS)



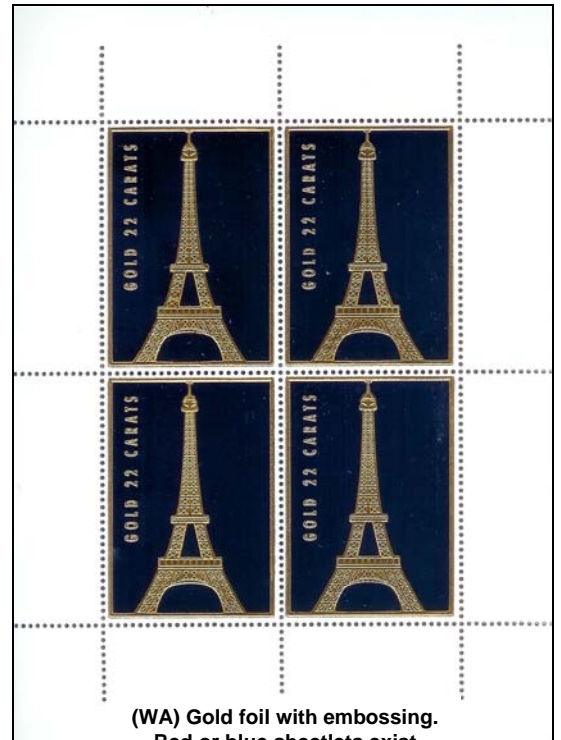
(SA)



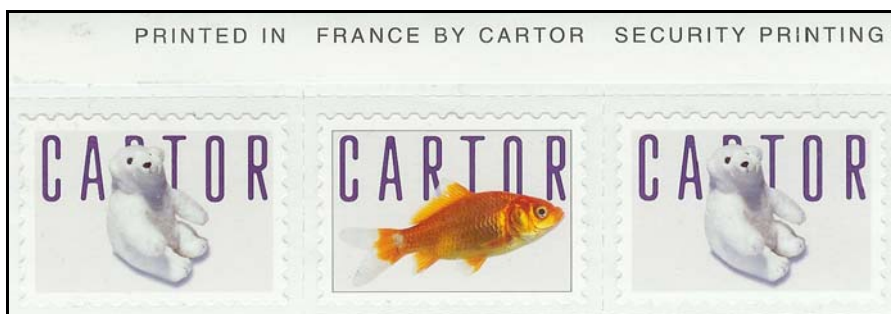
(WA)



(WA)



(WA) Gold foil with embossing.  
Red or blue sheetlets exist



(SA)



(WA)

## Printers' Waste Stamps

*A cautionary tale about buying stolen items*

Ever wondered what happens to the waste paper left over at stamp printers after the issue has been printed? Well, sometimes it gets into the hands of stamp collectors due to a breakdown in the security control procedures at the factory or with the company disposing of the waste.

In the early 1960s, Harrison's suffered in this way and certain defaced stamps entered the philatelic market. Waddington's also had similar problems in the 1970s with an Isle of Man issue.

Interesting items to see, but they are not allowed to be possessed due to their stolen status. Incidentally, I do not own these items in case Post Office Investigators are reading this feature! 📄

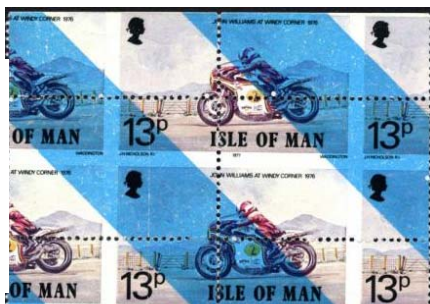


**Harrison's waste**  
(left)  
**1961 CEPT**  
(Below 1&2)  
**1962 NPY**

**Other material is also known to exist from this period in time.**



**Waddington's waste from Isle of Man TT issue**  
(right)



## Harrison's Ink Colour Key

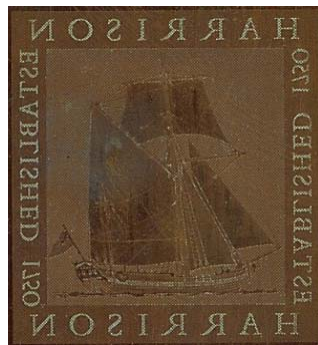
*Pick a colour – any colour!*

OK, so perhaps not any colour, but Harrison's did produce a colour key of the 20 most popular one-colour photogravure printing inks.

These keys were probably produced early in the current reign as they mention BY APPOINTMENT PRINTERS TO THE LATE KING GEORGE VI.



The ship design of dummy stamp also exists in sheetlets of six labels and I have recently seen the copper printing plate used to produce these labels. I will illustrate it next time, but show a small part below, plus the printed sheetlet. 📄



## Encapsulated Stamp Sets

*A novel way to prevent pre-use of new issues*

Ever since the Penny Black was first issued there has been a dilemma within the Post Office as to how it should best publicise its new issues in the media in advance without running the risk of the stamps being misused by the recipient. This problem was largely overcome early-on by overprinting stamps SPECIMEN or CANCELLED, followed in more recent years by the provision of B&W or, later, colour photographic images. Today, high-resolution digital scans are provided to Editors instead of the photos.

Starting in the late 1960s when it became a Corporation, the Post Office altered its policy by allowing unissued stamps to be provided pre-release to news Editors in mint condition at the press conferences held for each new issue. However, there was no risk of the stamps being postally used, as they were mounted on a grey or black descriptive backing board that had been encapsulated in plastic on both sides (except the first card, where the stamps were either placed with a small descriptive sheet at foot, or with a white backing board behind.). The initial two 1969 cards both state 'Stamps issued [date]', but from 1970 all cards read 'Stamps to be issued [date]', reflecting more accurately the pre-release status of each dummy item.

It is not clear how many issues were treated in this fashion, but two dozen card versions have so far been recorded. Readers will note that there appear to be gaps in the listing of sets, but until copies are seen it must be assumed that not every commemorative stamp issue within the seven year period of use was produced in an encapsulated edition. This theory appears to be accurate, as an Editor friend with a long-term career in philatelic publishing cannot recall them appearing each time.

Encapsulated stamp cards are difficult to obtain because few are believed to have been produced, they were intended to be ephemeral and were only handed out selectively.

It is understood that by the end of 1973 regulations were relaxing still further and unmounted mint stamps were handed-out to favoured Editors pre-release and so the need for the cards had diminished. One theory is that they were possibly only given-out to overseas newspaper Editors at the end, but this still remains a matter of conjecture.

The cards cost around £35 each, with the 'To Pay', Royalty, Churchill and 1973 Christmas being the most expensive at £75 each card. The 24 cards cost around £900.

Readers may be aware that Royal Mail is once again producing encapsulated cards but for a different purpose, invariably held on a chain at the till and known as 'scanning tags'. These items contain colour reproductions of stamp book covers together with a barcode, which is swiped by retailers at the point of sale. They are an anti-theft item introduced initially at Woolworth's request due to the number of stamp books that were being stolen by shoppers when books were on open shelves. (Thanks to Dr Jean Alexander for advising me of two types of the first card.)



### ENCAPSULATED CARD CATALOGUE LISTING

1969	PO Technology ( <i>small sheet or backing board behind stamps</i> ) Christmas
1970	Literary Anniversaries Decimal Currency 'To Pay' Labels 10p-£1 IX <sup>th</sup> British Commonwealth Games Philympia International Philatelic Exhibition Christmas
1971	Literary Anniversaries General Anniversaries Modern University Buildings Christmas
1972	Old Village Churches BBC and Broadcasting History Christmas Royal Silver Wedding
1973	European Economic Community British Trees – The Oak British Explorers County Cricket Centenary British Painters Royal Wedding Christmas
1974	Churchill Centenary
1975	62 <sup>nd</sup> Inter-Parliamentary Conference

### ...and finally

I always welcome details of any new dummy finds from printers of British stamps, past and present, and so cordially invite you to drop me a line at [aouh40@hotmail.com](mailto:aouh40@hotmail.com)

Unfortunately, business, family and other commitments to the hobby mean that I cannot guarantee that I can rigidly stick to a publishing programme and therefore suggest that you go to [www.stampprinters.info/dummystamps.htm](http://www.stampprinters.info/dummystamps.htm) every so often where PDF files of this and all future and previous issues of *Dummy Stamps* will be available to download and print-off. Thank you.

Glenn H Morgan FRPSL