

Harrison & Sons Ltd

A Timeline from King George II to King George VI

This document serves as a record of Harrison and Sons Ltd. and its stamp production through to the end of the reign of King George VI. It first appeared in draft form in Dummy Stamps issue 11 and is updated here. Further input is welcomed, as the story will never fully be told.

1727 HM King George II Becomes Monarch.

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1750 The House of Harrison established in Warwick Lane, London EC.

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1756 Printers of “*The London Gazette*”.

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1760 HM King George III Becomes Monarch.

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1820 HM King George IV Becomes Monarch.

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1825 Private Press Established at the Foreign Office.

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1830 HM King William IV Becomes Monarch.

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1837 HM Queen Victoria Becomes Monarch.

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1856 Private Press Established at the War Office.

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1867 Appointed “Printers in Ordinary to HM Queen Victoria”.

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1870 Press Established at Scotland Yard Police Headquarters.

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1881

Great Britain: Telegraph Forms Postal Stationery Contract Won.

A. Prefix **Code** **POST OFFICE TELEGRAPHS** (Island Telegrams) **No. of Messages** **Office Stamp**
 Office of Origin and Service Instructions **Words** **Sent** **For Postage Stamp**
 Charge **At** **To** **By** **Address**
FROM **TO** **Address**
 1- 2- 3- 4- 5- 6- 7- 8- 9- 10- 11- 12- 13- 14- 15- 16- 17- 18- 19- 20- 21- 22- 23- 24- 25- 26- 27- 28- 29- 30- 31- 32- 33- 34- 35- 36- 37- 38- 39- 40- 41- 42- 43- 44- 45- 46- 47- 48- 49- 50- 51- 52- 53- 54- 55- 56- 57- 58- 59- 60- 61- 62- 63- 64- 65- 66- 67- 68- 69- 70- 71- 72- 73- 74- 75- 76- 77- 78- 79- 80- 81- 82- 83- 84- 85- 86- 87- 88- 89- 90- 91- 92- 93- 94- 95- 96- 97- 98- 99- 100- 101- 102- 103- 104- 105- 106- 107- 108- 109- 110- 111- 112- 113- 114- 115- 116- 117- 118- 119- 120- 121- 122- 123- 124- 125- 126- 127- 128- 129- 130- 131- 132- 133- 134- 135- 136- 137- 138- 139- 140- 141- 142- 143- 144- 145- 146- 147- 148- 149- 150- 151- 152- 153- 154- 155- 156- 157- 158- 159- 160- 161- 162- 163- 164- 165- 166- 167- 168- 169- 170- 171- 172- 173- 174- 175- 176- 177- 178- 179- 180- 181- 182- 183- 184- 185- 186- 187- 188- 189- 190- 191- 192- 193- 194- 195- 196- 197- 198- 199- 200- 201- 202- 203- 204- 205- 206- 207- 208- 209- 210- 211- 212- 213- 214- 215- 216- 217- 218- 219- 220- 221- 222- 223- 224- 225- 226- 227- 228- 229- 230- 231- 232- 233- 234- 235- 236- 237- 238- 239- 240- 241- 242- 243- 244- 245- 246- 247- 248- 249- 250- 251- 252- 253- 254- 255- 256- 257- 258- 259- 260- 261- 262- 263- 264- 265- 266- 267- 268- 269- 270- 271- 272- 273- 274- 275- 276- 277- 278- 279- 280- 281- 282- 283- 284- 285- 286- 287- 288- 289- 290- 291- 292- 293- 294- 295- 296- 297- 298- 299- 300- 301- 302- 303- 304- 305- 306- 307- 308- 309- 310- 311- 312- 313- 314- 315- 316- 317- 318- 319- 320- 321- 322- 323- 324- 325- 326- 327- 328- 329- 330- 331- 332- 333- 334- 335- 336- 337- 338- 339- 340- 341- 342- 343- 344- 345- 346- 347- 348- 349- 350- 351- 352- 353- 354- 355- 356- 357- 358- 359- 360- 361- 362- 363- 364- 365- 366- 367- 368- 369- 370- 371- 372- 373- 374- 375- 376- 377- 378- 379- 380- 381- 382- 383- 384- 385- 386- 387- 388- 389- 390- 391- 392- 393- 394- 395- 396- 397- 398- 399- 400- 401- 402- 403- 404- 405- 406- 407- 408- 409- 410- 411- 412- 413- 414- 415- 416- 417- 418- 419- 420- 421- 422- 423- 424- 425- 426- 427- 428- 429- 430- 431- 432- 433- 434- 435- 436- 437- 438- 439- 440- 441- 442- 443- 444- 445- 446- 447- 448- 449- 450- 451- 452- 453- 454- 455- 456- 457- 458- 459- 460- 461- 462- 463- 464- 465- 466- 467- 468- 469- 470- 471- 472- 473- 474- 475- 476- 477- 478- 479- 480- 481- 482- 483- 484- 485- 486- 487- 488- 489- 490- 491- 492- 493- 494- 495- 496- 497- 498- 499- 500- 501- 502- 503- 504- 505- 506- 507- 508- 509- 510- 511- 512- 513- 514- 515- 516- 517- 518- 519- 520- 521- 522- 523- 524- 525- 526- 527- 528- 529- 530- 531- 532- 533- 534- 535- 536- 537- 538- 539- 540- 541- 542- 543- 544- 545- 546- 547- 548- 549- 550- 551- 552- 553- 554- 555- 556- 557- 558- 559- 560- 561- 562- 563- 564- 565- 566- 567- 568- 569- 570- 571- 572- 573- 574- 575- 576- 577- 578- 579- 580- 581- 582- 583- 584- 585- 586- 587- 588- 589- 590- 591- 592- 593- 594- 595- 596- 597- 598- 599- 600- 601- 602- 603- 604- 605- 606- 607- 608- 609- 610- 611- 612- 613- 614- 615- 616- 617- 618- 619- 620- 621- 622- 623- 624- 625- 626- 627- 628- 629- 630- 631- 632- 633- 634- 635- 636- 637- 638- 639- 640- 641- 642- 643- 644- 645- 646- 647- 648- 649- 650- 651- 652- 653- 654- 655- 656- 657- 658- 659- 660- 661- 662- 663- 664- 665- 666- 667- 668- 669- 670- 671- 672- 673- 674- 675- 676- 677- 678- 679- 680- 681- 682- 683- 684- 685- 686- 687- 688- 689- 690- 691- 692- 693- 694- 695- 696- 697- 698- 699- 700- 701- 702- 703- 704- 705- 706- 707- 708- 709- 710- 711- 712- 713- 714- 715- 716- 717- 718- 719- 720- 721- 722- 723- 724- 725- 726- 727- 728- 729- 730- 731- 732- 733- 734- 735- 736- 737- 738- 739- 740- 741- 742- 743- 744- 745- 746- 747- 748- 749- 750- 751- 752- 753- 754- 755- 756- 757- 758- 759- 760- 761- 762- 763- 764- 765- 766- 767- 768- 769- 770- 771- 772- 773- 774- 775- 776- 777- 778- 779- 780- 781- 782- 783- 784- 785- 786- 787- 788- 789- 790- 791- 792- 793- 794- 795- 796- 797- 798- 799- 800- 801- 802- 803- 804- 805- 806- 807- 808- 809- 810- 811- 812- 813- 814- 815- 816- 817- 818- 819- 820- 821- 822- 823- 824- 825- 826- 827- 828- 829- 830- 831- 832- 833- 834- 835- 836- 837- 838- 839- 840- 841- 842- 843- 844- 845- 846- 847- 848- 849- 850- 851- 852- 853- 854- 855- 856- 857- 858- 859- 860- 861- 862- 863- 864- 865- 866- 867- 868- 869- 870- 871- 872- 873- 874- 875- 876- 877- 878- 879- 880- 881- 882- 883- 884- 885- 886- 887- 888- 889- 890- 891- 892- 893- 894- 895- 896- 897- 898- 899- 900- 901- 902- 903- 904- 905- 906- 907- 908- 909- 910- 911- 912- 913- 914- 915- 916- 917- 918- 919- 920- 921- 922- 923- 924- 925- 926- 927- 928- 929- 930- 931- 932- 933- 934- 935- 936- 937- 938- 939- 940- 941- 942- 943- 944- 945- 946- 947- 948- 949- 950- 951- 952- 953- 954- 955- 956- 957- 958- 959- 960- 961- 962- 963- 964- 965- 966- 967- 968- 969- 970- 971- 972- 973- 974- 975- 976- 977- 978- 979- 980- 981- 982- 983- 984- 985- 986- 987- 988- 989- 990- 991- 992- 993- 994- 995- 996- 997- 998- 999- 1000- 1001- 1002- 1003- 1004- 1005- 1006- 1007- 1008- 1009- 1010- 1011- 1012- 1013- 1014- 1015- 1016- 1017- 1018- 1019- 1020- 1021- 1022- 1023- 1024- 1025- 1026- 1027- 1028- 1029- 1030- 1031- 1032- 1033- 1034- 1035- 1036- 1037- 1038- 1039- 1040- 1041- 1042- 1043- 1044- 1045- 1046- 1047- 1048- 1049- 1050- 1051- 1052- 1053- 1054- 1055- 1056- 1057- 1058- 1059- 1060- 1061- 1062- 1063- 1064- 1065- 1066- 1067- 1068- 1069- 1070- 1071- 1072- 1073- 1074- 1075- 1076- 1077- 1078- 1079- 1080- 1081- 1082- 1083- 1084- 1085- 1086- 1087- 1088- 1089- 1090- 1091- 1092- 1093- 1094- 1095- 1096- 1097- 1098- 1099- 1100- 1101- 1102- 1103- 1104- 1105- 1106- 1107- 1108- 1109- 1110- 1111- 1112- 1113- 1114- 1115- 1116- 1117- 1118- 1119- 1120- 1121- 1122- 1123- 1124- 1125- 1126- 1127- 1128- 1129- 1130- 1131- 1132- 1133- 1134- 1135- 1136- 1137- 1138- 1139- 1140- 1141- 1142- 1143- 1144- 1145- 1146- 1147- 1148- 1149- 1150- 1151- 1152- 1153- 1154- 1155- 1156- 1157- 1158- 1159- 1160- 1161- 1162- 1163- 1164- 1165- 1166- 1167- 1168- 1169- 1170- 1171- 1172- 1173- 1174- 1175- 1176- 1177- 1178- 1179- 1180- 1181- 1182- 1183- 1184- 1185- 1186- 1187- 1188- 1189- 1190- 1191- 1192- 1193- 1194- 1195- 1196- 1197- 1198- 1199- 1200- 1201- 1202- 1203- 1204- 1205- 1206- 1207- 1208- 1209- 1210- 1211- 1212- 1213- 1214- 1215- 1216- 1217- 1218- 1219- 1220- 1221- 1222- 1223- 1224- 1225- 1226- 1227- 1228- 1229- 1230- 1231- 1232- 1233- 1234- 1235- 1236- 1237- 1238- 1239- 1240- 1241- 1242- 1243- 1244- 1245- 1246- 1247- 1248- 1249- 1250- 1251- 1252- 1253- 1254- 1255- 1256- 1257- 1258- 1259- 1260- 1261- 1262- 1263- 1264- 1265- 1266- 1267- 1268- 1269- 1270- 1271- 1272- 1273- 1274- 1275- 1276- 1277- 1278- 1279- 1280- 1281- 1282- 1283- 1284- 1285- 1286- 1287- 1288- 1289- 1290- 1291- 1292- 1293- 1294- 1295- 1296- 1297- 1298- 1299- 1300- 1301- 1302- 1303- 1304- 1305- 1306- 1307- 1308- 1309- 1310- 1311- 1312- 1313- 1314- 1315- 1316- 1317- 1318- 1319- 1320- 1321- 1322- 1323- 1324- 1325- 1326- 1327- 1328- 1329- 1330- 1331- 1332- 1333- 1334- 1335- 1336- 1337- 1338- 1339- 1340- 1341- 1342- 1343- 1344- 1345- 1346- 1347- 1348- 1349- 1350- 1351- 1352- 1353- 1354- 1355- 1356- 1357- 1358- 1359- 1360- 1361- 1362- 1363- 1364- 1365- 1366- 1367- 1368- 1369- 1370- 1371- 1372- 1373- 1374- 1375- 1376- 1377- 1378- 1379- 1380- 1381- 1382- 1383- 1384- 1385- 1386- 1387- 1388- 1389- 1390- 1391- 1392- 1393- 1394- 1395- 1396- 1397- 1398- 1399- 1400- 1401- 1402- 1403- 1404- 1405- 1406- 1407- 1408- 1409- 1410- 1411- 1412- 1413- 1414- 1415- 1416- 1417- 1418- 1419- 1420- 1421- 1422- 1423- 1424- 1425- 1426- 1427- 1428- 1429- 1430- 1431- 1432- 1433- 1434- 1435- 1436- 1437- 1438- 1439- 1440- 1441- 1442- 1443- 1444- 1445- 1446- 1447- 1448- 1449- 1450- 1451- 1452- 1453- 1454- 1455- 1456- 1457- 1458- 1459- 1460- 1461- 1462- 1463- 1464- 1465- 1466- 1467- 1468- 1469- 1470- 1471- 1472- 1473- 1474- 1475- 1476- 1477- 1478- 1479- 1480- 1481- 1482- 1483- 1484- 1485- 1486- 1487- 1488- 1489- 1490- 1491- 1492- 1493- 1494- 1495- 1496- 1497- 1498- 1499- 1500- 1501- 1502- 1503- 1504- 1505- 1506- 1507- 1508- 1509- 1510- 1511- 1512- 1513- 1514- 1515- 1516- 1517- 1518- 1519- 1520- 1521- 1522- 1523- 1524- 1525- 1526- 1527- 1528- 1529- 1530- 1531- 1532- 1533- 1534- 1535- 1536- 1537- 1538- 1539- 1540- 1541- 1542- 1543- 1544- 1545- 1546- 1547- 1548- 1549- 1550- 1551- 1552- 1553- 1554- 1555- 1556- 1557- 1558- 1559- 1560- 1561- 1562- 1563- 1564- 1565- 1566- 1567- 1568- 1569- 1570- 1571- 1572- 1573- 1574- 1575- 1576- 1577- 1578- 1579- 1580- 1581- 1582- 1583- 1584- 1585- 1586- 1587- 1588- 1589- 1590- 1591- 1592- 1593- 1594- 1595- 1596- 1597- 1598- 1599- 1600- 1601- 1602- 1603- 1604- 1605- 1606- 1607- 1608- 1609- 1610- 1611- 1612- 1613- 1614- 1615- 1616- 1617- 1618- 1619- 1620- 1621- 1622- 1623- 1624- 1625- 1626- 1627- 1628- 1629- 1630- 1631- 1632- 1633- 1634- 1635- 1636- 1637- 1638-

1901 **HM King Edward VII Becomes Monarch.**

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1901 **Appointed “Printers in Ordinary to HM King Edward VII”.**

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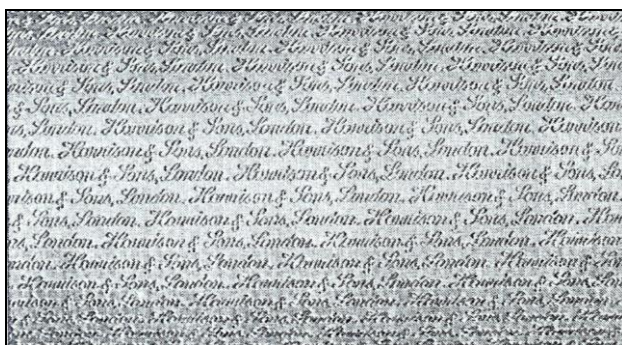
1907 **Temporary Press Established at Windsor Castle on the Occasion of the Visit of European Monarchs.**

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1910 **HM King George V Becomes Monarch.**

The reign of George V was a key period for testing and development, after which business settled down with Harrison largely using the photogravure production process* right through to their demise in 1997. Stamps are depicted at a standard % width per image, with only one value from each issue being shown.

** As would be expected, Harrison retained intaglio, letterpress, screen and lithographic printing capabilities, but these were used relatively infrequently for stamp production in the post-1934 period, with notable exceptions.*



(left) The Harrison & Sons, London script watermark.
(right) Part of the dandy roll used to produce the above watermark

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1910 **Appointed “Printers and Booksellers to HM King George V”.**

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1910 **Great Britain: Definitive Stamps Contract Won to Print by Letterpress.**



Harrison was invited to tender for the new contract by the GPO, presumably as they were a major British government print supplier that had been printing early stamp booklet covers and

telegram forms. Either way, they took the business from DLR, who had held it for sixty years, so this was a leap of faith, but saved the GPO £45,000 each year on its printing bill.

Sir Thomas De La Rue died several months after allocation of the contract to Harrison directly as a result of losing the contract, a loss that he had never got over believing that DLR had a “God given right” to the contract never even considering that another printer might be capable of producing the stamps!

Occasional Notes.

THE NEW POSTAGE STAMPS.

WE were informed some weeks since, on very excellent authority, that there were probably important changes pending in the future with regard to the production of the stamps of this country and its Crown Colonies.

The announcement in the public press of July 20 that the contract for the supply of postage stamps for the United Kingdom has been entrusted to Messrs. Harrison and Sons, of St. Martin's Lane, Printers in Ordinary to His Majesty, occasions us no surprise. The event is, however, one of far-reaching importance to Philately, and presages a vast number of new issues, probably absolutely dissimilar from their predecessors in every detail of design and production.

For thirty years past the postage stamps have been printed by Messrs. T. De La Rue and Co., of Bunhill Row, whose contract will expire at the end of this year. It appears that a number of firms were recently invited to tender for a new contract, with the result that this old-established firm has lost the work—which is one of immense proportions, and gives employment to several hundred workpeople.

1910 report from the *London Philatelist* regarding Harrison winning the stamp contract.

On 18 October 1910, the *Daily Telegraph* newspaper quoted the following:

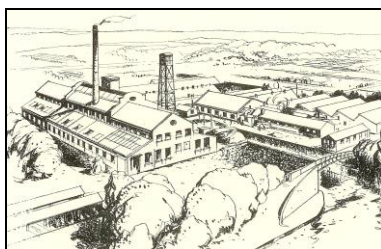
“Mr. Cecil Harrison of the firm Harrison and Sons, Government printers, who recently secured the contract for printing of the stamps for His Majesty's Government, has stated that he expected that they would be ready for publication in May next. The new stamps would be practically the same colour as those of King Edward, but of a somewhat different design. The Mint authorities had the matter in hand, but the actual design had not yet been decided upon. When finished it would be submitted to His Majesty for approval, and then, in the New Year, plates would be engraved and a number of series printed off and circulated privately.”

“The question of the design of the stamps will be given the most careful consideration by King George, who takes a great personal interest in the matter, and who, as it is well known, is a great authority on Philately.”

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1910

Hayes Factory Opened.



Harrison needed more space, so purchased a site at Hayes in Middlesex to concentrate on the newly acquired major contract to print low value definitives for Great Britain by letterpress.

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1911

A Question in The House.

A question had been asked in the House of Commons in March 1911 about who the new supplier of postage and fiscal stamps was. URL <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1911/mar/13/postage-and-fiscal-stamps-new-contractors> appears to contain the first mention of stamps having been created by Harrison *before* the British issue of 1911, which were always assumed to be the first postage stamps produced by this company. It reads:

Postage and Fiscal Stamps (New Contractors)

*HC Deb**, 13 March 1911, Volume 22 cc1872-3

(* meaning = "House of Commons Debate")

Mr. TOUCHE asked the Secretary to the Treasury if he will state who are the new contractors for the supply of adhesive postage and fiscal stamps; what trade or business has heretofore been carried on by them; whether they have had any experience in the manufacture of stamps, and, if so, in what direction; and whether the Postmaster-General is satisfied that the wants of the public will be duly met in the course of the current year under the new contract, and what safeguards have been taken to insure continuous and adequate supplies to that end?

Mr. ILLINGWORTH Messrs. Harrison and Sons are the new contractors for the supply of adhesive postage stamps. The fiscal stamps and certain denominations of the postage will be manufactured at Somerset House. The firm in question are the well-known Government printers, and they have previously manufactured stamps for one of the small Colonies*.

** As no records of the stamps allegedly "manufactured for one of the small colonies" have been found when looking through the major stamp catalogues and contemporary philatelic magazines, readers are invited to confirm either way if they can. Maybe Mr. Illingworth decided not to admit to the House that Harrison was new to stamp printing for fear of difficult MP questioning.*

The Postmaster General, Herbert Samuel, later states in *HC Deb 28 June 1911 Vol. 27 cc420-1* "I agree that there is room for improvement in printing the penny stamp - an improvement which I hope will be secured with more experience on the part of the contractors ***who have undertaken this work for the first time*****, and who have been working under great pressure." So, it is reasonable to assume that the PMG knew the true situation, i.e. that Harrison and Sons had not previously printed postage stamps. (** your compiler's emboldened italics.)

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1911

Great Britain: Definitive Stamps by Letterpress.

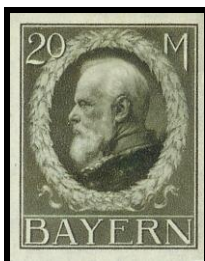


Harrison first produced stamps with the late King Edward VII's effigy, rather than that of King George V, for a full two and a half years due to delays in agreeing new designs and other reasons such as running out of the watermarked paper, neither of which was the fault of Harrison.

These stamps were produced at the Hayes printing works.

1914

Bavaria:



The first photogravure stamp was issued by Bavaria. Harrison had NO involvement as they were printed by Bruckmann of Munich. However, this was an important development in stamp production that would later be influential in the success and dominance by Harrison. Bruckmann utilised a screened photogravure cell structure for the Bavarian stamps, while the 1923 Harrison stamps for Egypt utilised a grained cell structure comprising a random array of cells.

1914-1918

Confidential Printers to the Admiralty, War Office and Foreign Office.

1914

Great Britain: Postage Due Labels by Letterpress.



After trials with Somerset House printings, four initial values were later produced by Harrison for the newly introduced scheme of using labels to indicate that postage due had been paid to the GPO. The scheme started on Monday 20 April 1914.

1920

Egypt: Definitive Stamps by Letterpress.



Harrison won the contract from DLR to print postage, service and postage due stamps for Egypt, following a competitive tender process. DLR was ordered by the Egyptian authorities to hand over the master dies to Harrison to enable them to make new plates and thus enable further stocks of the existing designs to be made. These stamps were printed at the Hayes factory on a newly commissioned watermarked paper comprising a triple crescent and star, uniquely for use by Egypt and helping to identify Harrison printings.

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1921-22 Egypt: Postage Due Labels by Letterpress.



A series of six postage due labels was issued – the first since the previous century.

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1921

Great Britain: National Savings Stamp by Photogravure.



The 6d National Savings stamp contract was won from Waterlow following a success tender process. These were the first GB ‘stamps’ by the photogravure process by Harrison and were printed at the Hayes factory. It is suspected that they were printed on the press recorded below for Egypt.

Waterlow had beaten Harrison in the use of photogravure by producing by this method War Savings stamps in July 1918. It is also understood that they had produced clandestine forgeries of the Bavarian 1914 photogravure stamps during the Great War for the British government.

After this war, all British security printers possessed photogravure printing capabilities, but many were slow to use it for stamp production purposes.

1922

Ireland Provisional Government: Definitive Overprints by Letterpress.



Coil stamp for use in Ireland
as overprinted by Harrison

Various values of British stamps were overprinted 'Rialtas Sealadac na hÉireann 1922' (Provisional Government of Ireland 1922), in five lines of text.

These were made-up into coils (rolls) by Harrison for use in stamp vending and affixing machines, as the local printers used for the sheet-printed stamps could not undertake the overprinting.

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1922

Egypt: Additional Definitive Stamp Value by Letterpress.



New postal rates necessitated a 15m value, so a statue of Ramases II design was produced by Harrison, which unfortunately bore an incorrect Arabic inscription. A corrected printing was produced and the incorrect stamp stock was later overprinted locally with a crown and Arabic text and put in general circulation. Some stock was also overprinted locally 'OHEMS' for use as Official stamps.

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1923

Egypt: Definitive Stamps by Photogravure.



A tender saw several British printers quote and supply proofs in a variety of printing processes for designs depicting the King of Egypt, Fuad I. The new stamps were to have been printed by intaglio initially, but Egypt later favoured the photogravure proofs that had been submitted by Harrison for design approval purposes only. The rest is history!

They were printed at the Hayes factory using a ‘Johannisberg BT.1’ German-made press. The ‘BT’ stands for ‘Bogentiefdruck’ and denotes flatbed feed of cut sheets. However..... Harrison sub-contracted some of the work to a company in the Netherlands known as NRM (see Netherlands entry, below). This was, to quote Kehr in his work *20th Century Stamps of Egypt* (1942, Kalamazoo USA), because “Harrison was not equipped to produce roto-engraved (i.e. photogravure) stamps in such a quantity as was needed and ordered by Egypt. It required nearly eighteen months of experimentation to overcome the technical difficulties before satisfactory results were achieved”. It would appear that it was the 5m, the 20m to 200m and the £E1 values that were the Dutch printings.

The plates were produced by uniformly dusting the plate with a fine bitumen or resin powder. This resists the etch when the plate is etched after transferring the image to it, so producing an irregular cell structure.

Photogravure stamp booklets were also produced as a part of this contract, which probably makes these the first British-printed photogravure stamp booklets. (Egypt was an early adopter of stamps in booklets.)

From 1925, Egypt printed its stamps locally in Cairo at The Survey Department of Egypt, so Harrison was destined to have no further involvement in the production of stamps for this country, except in 1926 when they won the contract to print one last issue (see below).

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1923 Great Britain: Definitive Stamps Contract Lost to Waterlow.



A Harrison printed stamp overprinted “RECEIVED WITH / THANKS.” and “FOR / WATERLOW & SONS” and used on a receipt.

The contract for British low value definitives was lost to Waterlow for a decade solely, it would appear, on price rather than quality.

During this era, Harrison focused on developing its photogravure techniques and capabilities, having set-up a subsidiary company, Collogravure Ltd, to maximize the potential of this “new” process.

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1923

The Netherlands: NRMs Involvement in Harrison Photogravure Stamp Production.



Collogravure Ltd worked in close co-operation with the Dutch firm of Nederlandse Rotogravure Maatschappij (NRM*) of Leiden, drawing “on the finest continental experience of the time”.

This saw Harrison staff being trained by NRM staff in the skills required to print postage stamps by photogravure and also how to make the all-important printing cylinders.

** NRM had been formed in 1913 as publishers and printers. Their first magazine contract, Panorama, was printed on a German photogravure press and they soon developed the skills needed to utilise photogravure. They were a pioneer in the field of several chromotype techniques and developed over the years twenty printing machines.*

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1924 Peru: Battle of Ayacucho Centenary Commemorative Stamp by Photogravure.



The 4c and 5c values of this set were produced by Harrison, while the rest were printed at Waterlow and De La Rue.

Three printers being used for one commemorative stamp issue is quite unusual (but certainly not unique and a Papua New Guinea issue springs to mind).

1926 Egypt: King's Birthday Commemorative Stamp by Photogravure.



The King of Egypt's Birthday single stamp issue was, perhaps surprisingly, given to Harrison to print. Maybe The Survey Department of Egypt did not have the capacity at that time to produce this commemorative issue.

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1927 Palestine British Mandate: Definitive Stamps by Letterpress.



Printed at the Hayes factory, these 14 letterpress designs featured typical views and buildings of the Mandate. Around 400 copies exist with SPECIMEN as either overprints or perfins, plus some further supplies were overprinted for sample use by Harrison (c.\$500 each). Caveat: forgeries exist of the Harrison sample overprint.

An experimental printing of the 7m value exists with a '**HARRISON & SONS LTD., Stamp Printers, LONDON**' imprint in bottom margin. Only one strip is known, plus a pair with part imprint.

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1928

Gold Coast: Definitive Stamps by Photogravure.



The second issue to be printed by Harrison using photogravure was for the Gold Coast (now Ghana).

A set of 10 definitives was issued depicting Christiansborg Castle, with the four higher values being bi-coloured. This was something that Britain never utilised until around three decades later. This delay was probably due to the vast volume of stamps needed in the UK.

(Some values of?) the Gold Coast stamps exist with Harrison sample overprints. Printed at Hayes factory using a “Johannisberg BT.9” German-made press. This was the first issue printed by Harrison as part of a Crown Agents contract – the start of a long association.

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1930

Peru: Definitive Stamp Overprints by Photogravure.



The 1924-1929 Fall of Leguia Government 10 cent value was overprinted 2c or 4c in 1930 by photogravure with a crest design by Harrison.

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1930/1

Peru: Definitive Stamps by Photogravure.



Six of the values from the 1924-1929 pictorial “Portraits and Monuments” issue that had originally been printed intaglio, were printed by Harrison using the same designs but by photogravure. The background was redrawn and now appeared plain instead of a lined.

(The illustration is not of the Harrison printing, which your compiler has yet to track down.)

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1932 Peru: Postage Due Labels by Photogravure.



A pair of postage due labels was printed by Harrison using their now customary 15x14 perforation. The 2c and 10c values reproduced an earlier production by another printer, but redrawn with a plain instead of lined background to them.

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1932 Columbia: Natural Resources Commemorative Stamps Mystery.



This is NOT a Harrison stamp printing!!

It is recorded in a contemporary philatelic magazine article about Harrison that they printed stamps for Columbia by photogravure during 1932.

However, the only issue in this era by this printing process depicts cattle, petroleum, bananas, emeralds (see image alongside), gold or coffee and all are bi-coloured stamps. The Stanley Gibbons stamp catalogue for 1937 states that they were printed by the Government Printing Works in Germany, so any Harrison involvement with Columbia remains a mystery. Can anyone help?

Possibly Harrison sub-contracted the work, but it seems highly improbable that they would have chosen a German printing company, especially when they had an earlier association with the Dutch photogravure printing firm of NRM.

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1933 Quotation about the Photogravure Printing Process.



In August 1933, Mr. B. Guy Harrison stated in an article that appeared in *Stamp Collecting Weekly* [GB]: “*The photogravure process may ultimately become fairly general*”. Little did he know at the time...

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1933 Maldive Islands: Definitive Stamps by Photogravure.



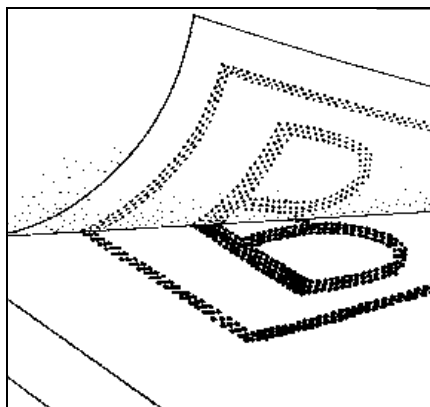
The third issue to be printed by Harrison using photogravure was for the Maldive Islands. A set of nine definitives was issued, utilising the 1909 design previously printed by DLR in intaglio. Yet another contract to have been taken away from DLR by Harrison.

Depicts a ‘Minaret of Juma Mosque, near Male’ design. Not ideally suited to photogravure as it failed to benefit from the tonal range possible.

This set was the first postage stamp issue anywhere to be printed on *Harrison & Sons, London* script watermarked paper.

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1933 Great Britain: Definitive Stamps Contract Taken from Waterlow and a Change of Process to Photogravure from Letterpress.

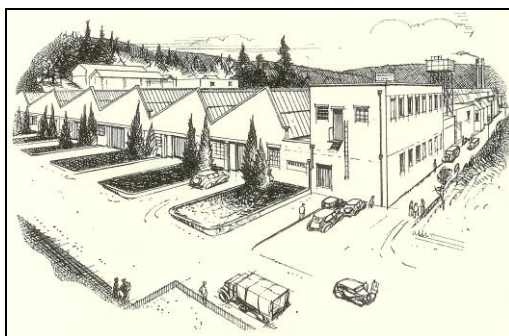


By 1933, a decision by the GPO to move to photogravure printing had been agreed at postal headquarters.

The contract for the British low value definitives was won back from Waterlow and Sons by Harrison following a competitive tender that was to be effective from the 1st January 1934.

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1933 High Wycombe Factory Opened.



Harrison needed more space, so purchased the High Wycombe site to concentrate on their newly re-acquired major contract to print low value definitives for Britain by the photogravure process. This plant became known locally as “The Stamp Factory” and remained in use until their demise.

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1934 Ecuador: Compulsory Tax Stamps by Photogravure.



A pair of “Compulsory Tax” stamps in aid of the rebuilding fund for the GPO Guayaquil Post Office was printed on the *Harrison & Sons, London* script watermarked paper, perforated 15x14.

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1934 Great Britain: First British Definitive Stamps by Photogravure.



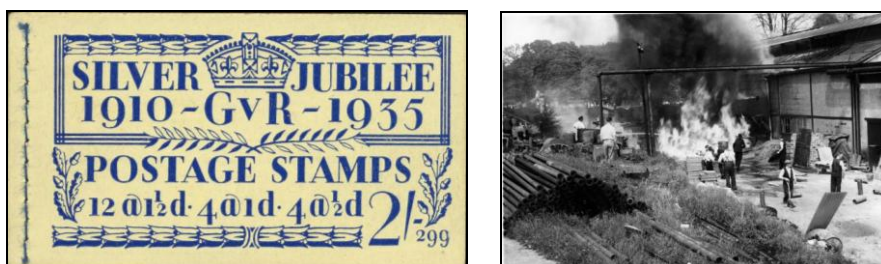
A Wedgwood dish was commissioned by Harrison to commemorate 50 years of [photogravure] stamp printing in 1984.

The first British photogravure postage stamp was the brown penny-ha’penny value that was issued on 20 August 1934. The remainder of the set followed over a period, including the halfpenny illustrated above. The stamps were described at the time as being “enchantingly beautiful” in a British philatelic magazine.

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1935

Great Britain: Silver Jubilee Commemorative Stamps by Photogravure.



The Silver Jubilee of His Majesty King George V saw Harrison print their first commemorative set of stamps for Great Britain in Post Office counter sheets and in stamp booklets.

These stamps may never have seen the light of day if a fire at the premises had really taken hold.

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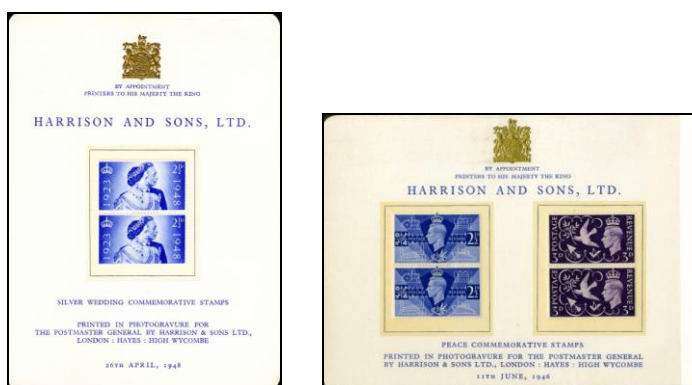
1936

HM King Edward VIII Becomes Monarch.

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1936

HM King George VI Becomes Monarch.



Two sample cards promoting their printing abilities.

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1936-1997

Harrison: Supremacy in Photogravure Production.



A lead seal used on consignments of stamps delivered to Harrison customers around the world.

Harrison maintained its supremacy in photogravure stamp production for dozens of countries around the world for around six more decades but this ceased when De La Rue took them over and eliminated the brand forever shortly afterwards.

It is generally accepted that Harrison had become a thorn in DLR's side because they had managed to take from them around five percent of the world's banknote production in quite a short space of time. "Don't get mad, get even" seems to have been the policy of DLR and, while your compiler accepts that there can be no sentiment in business, it saddens many collectors that the name of Harrison and Sons no longer graces the new stamp issue listing pages of magazines.

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and finally...

In 1914 *The House of Harrison* was published by the company. Within its pages was much information about the company from its early beginnings through to the date of publication. The section on postage stamps is reproduced below, being out of copyright. It provides a fascinating insight into the true background to the early stamps.

POSTAGE STAMPS

On the accession of King George V. the Post Office and Inland Revenue decided on a new departure in the method of supplying stamps for the Post Office and invited a selected number of firms of printers to tender, and the offer of Harrison and Sons was accepted.

Previous to this, for some thirty years the supply of stamps had been in the hands of one firm, and it was recognized that there were so many technical specialities in the production that it would be unlikely any other contractor could be found competent to undertake it.

The consumption of postage stamps in this country is more than a million for every hour of daylight throughout the year. When in addition to the technical difficulties alluded to above the large plant required for this enormous output was considered and also the short time available for preparations, the task to be faced by a new contractor appeared well-nigh appalling. A suitable site had to be found, a large factory built or adapted and equipped with machinery the best and most powerful of its class, all of which had to be specially made, and some of which had to be designed, experimented upon, and perfected. A staff of some hundreds of workpeople had to be organized and trained to their duties, and the whole effectively dovetailed together as a going concern within a period of six months.

The opinion was freely expressed in the trade that it was impossible for any printer without special experience and plant constructed for stamp printing to undertake the work, and the Department are said to have wavered for a moment before accepting the tender of a firm new to this particular line of business and to have sought the opinion of the Government official most competent to advise on such matters. We are told that the expert's advice was given in the following somewhat terse and epigrammatic form —

"If Harrisons say they can do it, they can do it, and they will do it."

It hardly becomes us to say much about such a statement, but it seems to bear out the principle poetically expressed in the following lines:

*"Little or great is man,
Great if he will, or if he will A pigmy still;
For what he will, he can."*

And so the contract was completed and the Firm entered upon the most arduous undertaking which it has been our province to record in these pages.

A disused factory was acquired at Hayes and adapted for the purpose in view. The adaptation, as it turned out, involved little less than rebuilding. A rapid tour was made through several of the European Capitals for the purpose of seeing the best methods of stamp manufacture in use abroad. Machinery was purchased in England where practicable, but, alas, in some cases it was found impossible to obtain within the requisite time suitable machinery in this country and the assistance of foreign engineers had to be obtained. The factory was equipped ready to start work within the first few weeks of 1911, at which time the designs for the new issue of King George stamps and the requisite printing plates were not yet issued from His Majesty's Mint, so that the new factory commenced with a reprint of the familiar issues of King Edward and some hundred millions of these stamps were passed into circulation before the public noticed any change.

When at length the Georgian issues appeared they were subjected to very severe and varied criticism, not only in regard to the portrait of the King and other points in the artist's design, but also in respect of the execution by the printers; a number of faults were found, some of which may have rested upon a solid basis of fact, but others were evolved purely out of the imagination of the critics. The Government were also subjected for some time to a desultory fire of criticism from the back benches in the House of Commons, where a rumour had got abroad that the change of contractors had been effected by the Liberal Government for political motives. This attack died down when the fact came to light that the contract had been placed by the permanent officials of the Government on sound economical grounds and entirely irrespective of Party considerations; but there emerged from the general volume of criticism a consensus of opinion that the portrait of His Majesty was an uncomplimentary and inartistic one and that the technique of the engraving was such that it did not lend itself for reproduction by the processes used for the English stamps.

The Royal Mint accordingly started on the preparation of a new series of stamps in which the portraits, as well as the borders, were designed by Mr. Bertram Mackennal, and the first of these issues appeared in the autumn of 1912. About this time a body of philatelists, from whom some of the loudest criticism had arisen, were holding a Congress and Exhibition in London and as a side show proposed to produce at the Exhibition a stamp "ideal in design and workmanship." A very large number of designs were obtained in competition from all parts of the Kingdom and submitted to the choice of a committee of experts. When the selected design appeared it was found to consist of a representation of His Majesty's head almost identical with the design of Mr. Mackennal on the official stamps just issued, being, in point of fact, a printed reproduction of the same artist's work as used in the coinage.

The new issues, which have now passed into general circulation, have been much admired and are considered by competent judges to be equal to any stamps the country has had since it became necessary to abandon the old methods of obtaining impressions from an engraved plate in favour of the more wholesale process of surface printing.

Altogether the bold venture of the Inland Revenue may be pronounced a decided success and another instance may be added to the record of cases in which the firm of Harrison and Sons has worked successfully in co-operation with a Public Department of the Government.