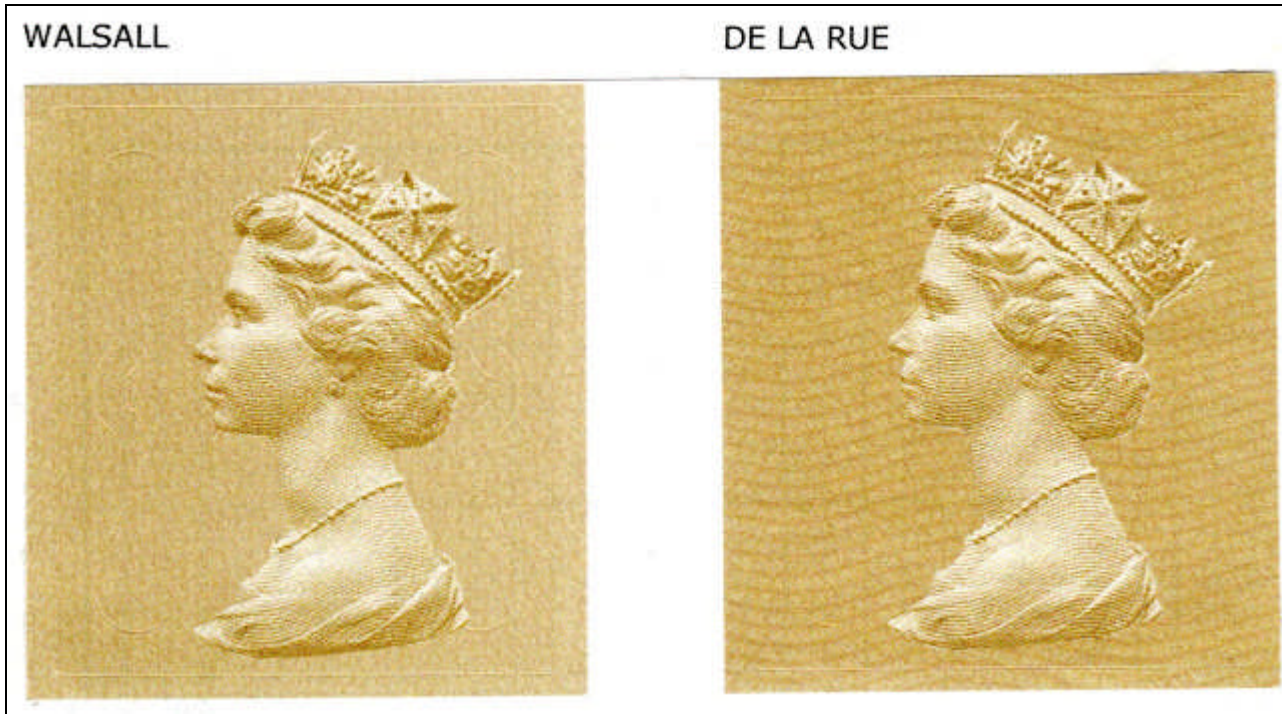


Great Britain Horizon Labels by Dave Parsons

When sorting through the penny box recently, the item to the right was discovered. Was it a stamp or just a label like something from a Pitney Bowes machine?

Upon further research it appears this is a newer GB Horizon Label, first used as a trial in 2009 and then put into service in 2010. They are quite large at 60 x 65mm and either imperforate or die cut perforated (5 X 5) issues and have security feature-slits. The samples shown here have been reduced in size to take up less space. The labels were printed by De La Rue until 2012 when Walsall became the printer.



The images above are of the un-coded labels as delivered to the local post office. Service indicators are overprinted on each label. This block lettering on Horizon mail indicates a large array of possible services available depending on size, special handling and security. Below is a table that shows some of the current and past usages and which might be found on Horizon labels.

<p>1LG - Large Letter Inland Mail 1PK - 1st Class packet Inland Mail 1af -- Articles for the blind (Free) 1st -- No charge certificate of posting request 2L -- 2nd class under 100g (RSF service) 2LG - Large Letter 5mm to 25mm thick (RSFO) 2PK - 2nd class packets A ---- Letters, small packets sent by Airmail AXX - Air-sure Tracking to safe countries</p>	<p>SU -- Surface mail overseas low cost BF -- Parcels to Armed Forces overseas. PE ---Economy parcels to overseas destinations PS -- Standard value parcels to overseas destination SP -- Standard parcels (replaced by PE &PS) RSF - Recorded Signed For mail 1SP - Small Parcel, less than 2kg 1MP - Medium Parcels 2SP - Parcel larger than an "SP" but still less that 2kg</p>
--	---

BL --- Letters to Armed Forces at home or O/S	2MP - Bigger than an "SP up to 20kg
BLG - Large letters to British Armed Forces	BSP - Replaces small "BKP" to British Armed Forces
BPK - Packets to British Armed Forces	BMP - Replaces med. "BKP" to British Armed Forces
BFF - To "BRPO"s from Family and Friends	SD1 - Special Delivery by 1PM
FP - When re-posted after postage corrected	SD9 - Special delivery by 9AM
MOR - Mail Order Return service	IS --- International Service
RPR - Returned commercial Packet service	IT --- International Service, Tracked
SD -- Special Delivery	ITS -- International Service, Tracked Signed

Some of these service indicators were provided to replace all or a segment of a previous service. The dates and usages are listed in the Deegam Complete Machin Handbook. The indicators were printed with different typefaces and two languages, English and Welsh. When sold, each label is overprinted with a service indicator, the amount paid, post office location code, codes allowing the mail to be directed, tracked and the date of use. The label would have been printed for a particular transaction and is the normal form of label as seen by the public. The un-coded examples at the top of this article depict how the labels appear when delivered to the post office. However, the unused labels were not issued or made available to the public.

Collecting the Horizon labels can be interesting. The stamps themselves have different printers, 3 differing styles of security slits, and either perf 5 or imperforate. The overprints have different fonts, many different service indicators, 2 languages, VAT codes. Given the possible combinations of the preceding factors, Deegam has identified 699 unique labels. Another source indicated nearly 1000 different combinations exist.

In late 2015 the Horizon label was changed to the style on the right. The Queen's head is smaller, the background is white, and the wavy text fades away down the page. The date of issue of these new labels was September, 21, 2015.

So the answer to the lead questions is: even though the Horizons have many characteristics of stamps, they are labels. You can not go to a British post office and buy them and you could not even send one to yourself with certain service indicators. But they are attractive and can be collected.

Thanks to Charlie Jensen (FL) for providing some samples of these and for his analysis, Ian Ballock (GB) for the new white issue photo. Information was also gathered from the Deegam Complete Machin Handbook, which is a super comprehensive resource on all things Machin.



*Editor Comment: **Dave Parsons** has been helping Eugene Smoots and Betty Mudge with the Penny Boxes. He has been sorting thousands of stamps and has previously reported some interesting finds. The above story shows just how educational the Penny Box stamps can be. Dave's collecting interests include U.S. used and BOB, Mint U.S. Commemoratives, Canada, Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Switzerland, South Africa and Australia. He can be reached by email at da.parsons@gmail.com.*