

UNPOPULAR ISSUES

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King George V came to the throne in May 1910, but it was not until June 1911 when stamps for his reign were issued, showing a three-quarter head, known as the Downey design. They were strongly criticised by the public and printers mainly on artistic grounds, and a second major die was utilised from January 1912. But the two face values, of issue 'H', were available for only about 18 months. Fortunately, for perfin collectors, this was still a very prolific period of perfin usage; and from the detailed catalogues, they can be found on a little over 15% of all dies, being reported on ½d/1d in a ratio of 44/56. Many dies are seen to have a 'date of use' range spanning these years but without reports of the Downey head usage, it is expected that more will eventually 'appear'. Indeed, some dies such as E2305.01 and E4660.02, are so far known only on issue 'H', with Sidney Allchin and Sloper's having perfined it. For the DDF collector, issue 'H' probably exhibits more varieties per stamp than any other GB definitive run, considering it's short life – three watermarks, two main dies, two sub-dies, multi-shades, etc – and any collection is well worth checking for differences. There are plenty out there! From August 1912, issue 'H' was gradually replaced by issue 'I', showing "a more pleasing profile head".

Moving on by nearly a century – Royal Mail has done it again! Withdrawn production of a seemingly unpopular issue after about 18 months. This time it is the PiP (Priced in Proportion) issue, which appeared in 2006, although the principal of PiP is probably here to stay (see 2007 Christmas issue). There were 2 speeds (2nd and 1st class), 2 sizes (small and large) and each with two types ('lick & stick' and self adhesive). As basic stamps – there are many more 2nd/1st, small size, self-adhesives than their 'lick & stick' counterparts; the reverse is true of the large size. But when it comes to finding these perfined, most values are going to be (ex-sheet) 'lick & stick', examples of which were shown at the AGM; and far scarcer will be (perfined from a single headed die(?)) the self adhesive varieties. This 'W ellip' issue, whilst similarly suffering a short life, is going to be much more difficult to find than those of the 'H' issues due to the dwindling number of current perfin users. Keep you eyes open! Who ever said that 'moderns' were common, or boring?