

German Occupation of the British Channel Islands

Part 2 - Jersey by Robert Fisher

Jersey is the largest and most populated island of the Channel Isles. German forces began their occupation of Jersey on July 1, 1940. As in Guernsey, the German authorities permitted the continued use of British postage for local island mail and did so throughout the occupation period. However, the local German authorities overprinted a few sets of George VI stamps with a swastika on a trial basis (figure 1). The Bailiff of Jersey protested against the defacing of the King's head, and the matter was referred to Berlin. Berlin rejected the stamps and ordered all copies destroyed, however a few sets found their way to a German stamp auction in 1941.



Figure 1



Figure 2

The Germans then commissioned a Jersey firm to produce an essay for a 1d postage stamp (figure 2). These were generally imperforate and some were overprinted with swastikas. These were also rejected and never placed in use.

As supplies of British stamps dwindled, the Bailiff asked Major Rybot, a local artist, to create a design for a 1d postage stamp. He selected a design similar to that of Guernsey (figure 3), modified the three leopards on the shield to resemble a more correct mediaeval appearance and made a few other minor changes (figure 4). The Germans, as well as many islanders, believed that the leopards were the Arms of the Bailiwicks. However, they had been the part of the Arms of England for centuries. They were printed locally by the Jersey Evening Post. As with Guernsey, there were several printings resulting in color variations.



Figure 3



Figure 4
(Scott Nos N1 and N2)

In 1943, the German Field Commandant, Colonel Knackfuss, suggested a set of six stamps depicting local scenes. The new stamps, designed by local artist Edmund Blampied, was approved by the Bailiff and the German Field Commandant. Due to the shortage of materials, the designs were sent to Paris for printing and were prepared for printing by Henri Cortot in Paris. The original proofs were made the same size as the current French definitives, but were deemed too small for the level of detail on the stamps. The names of Blampied and Cortot were inserted into the designs of all six stamps.

The new stamps were indeed quite colorful and attractively done as shown below with their Scott catalog numbers.



N3



N4



N5



N6



N7



N8

The Jersey Occupation stamps were released for issue on the following dates:

N1: 29 January 1942

N2: 1 April 1941

N3: 1 June 1943

N4: 1 June 1943 Reprinted on newsprint 28 February 1944

N5: 8 June 1943

N6: 8 June 1943

N7: 29 June 1943 Reprinted on newsprint 25 February 1944

N8: 29 June 1943

As in Guernsey, all of these stamps were postally valid until 13 April 1946.

In Part 3 - Odds and Ends, I will reveal how the artists of the Guernsey and Jersey stamps flaunted the German authorities and played dangerous games with the stamp designs.

[Editor's Note: The first part of this three part series appeared in the February CFSC Newsletter which is available on-line at www.CentralFloridaStampClub.org. The third and final installment will be printed in the April CFSC Newsletter.]