

The Queen on GB Stamps



A familiar image in the early part of Queen Elizabeth II's reign. The Queen is pictured in a $\frac{3}{4}$ pose wearing the State Diadem, made for George IV in the 1820s. In use until 1967 this image was used on what is known as the Wilding series.

The portrait was taken by Dorothy Wilding, a professional photographer who started photographing the Royal Family in 1927. Wilding was the first woman to be appointed as the Official Royal Photographer for the 1937 Coronation and received a Royal warrant in 1943.



THE design of coins is determined by a tradition going back at least to the time of Charles II that the direction in which the head faces should alternate between the coinage of successive monarchs. This is not the case for stamps. Ever since the first prepaid adhesive stamps were issued in 1840, all standard issues have shown the head of the reigning monarch in profile and facing left, up until the Wilding series.



In 1966, new commemorative stamps issued used a new design based on a bust designed by Mary Gillick for the pre-decimal coinage. Gillick's design was notable for portraying the Queen uncrowned, and was the last to be used on the pre-decimal coinage. This image is still used on commemorative stamps.



The Machin series has been used since 5 June 1967, replacing the Wilding series. Designed by Arnold Machin, they consist simply of the sculpted profile of the Queen and a denomination, and are almost always in a single colour.

Arnold Machin was born in Stoke-on-Trent in 1911. In 1964 Machin was chosen to design a new effigy of the Queen for the decimal coinage, which was to be introduced from 1968. This was used for all British coins until 1984. In 1966 the Queen approved Machin's similar design for an effigy of her to be used on definitive postage stamps. The design was first used on the 4d stamp which was issued in June 1967, and has been used on all British definitive stamps (except more recent regional issues) since. Unlike coinage the effigy has never been updated.



After five decades of service, the Machin series has encompassed almost all changes and innovations in British stamp printing. It is thought that this design is one of the most reproduced works of art in history with more than 320 billion copies produced.