

# The G.B. Sixpenny Definitive Aerogrammes of Queen Elizabeth 1954-1964

By I. H. C. Godfrey

## FOREWORD

**A**N anomalous position occurs in this interesting sideline of philately in that collectors of aerogrammes residing in foreign countries—at the receiving end—have better opportunities of discovering new printings than those who live in the country of their origin. This applies particularly to Great Britain, whence, according to the G.P.O., some 65 million air letters (aerogrammes) are posted annually to all parts of the world. Consequently, persons abroad are able to accumulate and compare batches of sheets, sent in the normal course of correspondence, from many different localities in the United Kingdom, whereas those unfortunate collectors in the home country have the chance only of scrutinising the examples bought at their local post offices. The latter are, however, at an advantage when it comes to spotting “errors”, for very few of those found have been used for postage, naturally.

Over the years it has been noticed that new issues of aerogrammes have occasionally been put on sale in Birmingham, Liverpool, Glasgow, and other large cities, some time before being sold over the counters of post offices in London, and consequently the actual dates of issue of certain items cannot be determined with accuracy. In the check list which follows the first day of issue date is shown only where it has been established.

On June 3rd, 1953, the day after the Coronation of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, a colourful commemorative aerogramme was put on sale to mark the occasion, and for which a special imprinted 6d. stamp was designed, showing the date: 2 June 1953. A large Coronation emblem was incorporated at the bottom left corner of the sheet. Four types of the Coronation aerogramme are known, apart from errors of printing and cutting. As a commemorative issue it lies outside the scope of these notes.

The first definitive Q.E.II aerogramme was issued on January 1st, 1954. The imprinted stamp which was used for the Coronation sheet, with certain modifications, was maintained, and this design was standard on all aerogrammes until the opening of the 46th Parliamentary Conference on September 12th, 1957, for which the second commemorative sheet of

Her Majesty's reign was produced. During the three-and-three-quarter years of its currency the basic sheet, bearing the “modified Coronation stamp”, was reprinted six times, so that seven main types exist.

**The Tablet.** The curved-scroll tablet BY AIR MAIL which was first used on the 1953 Coronation issue has, with minor modifications, been used on all the definitive aerogrammes of Great Britain, and on most Colonial issues, ever since.

**Instructions on Back Panel.** From June 1953 until the beginning of 1955, a two-line text was printed on the back panel, reading:—

IF ANYTHING IS ENCLOSED THIS LETTER  
MAY BE SENT BY ORDINARY MAIL.

A major change was made on January 18th, 1955, when a stronger admonitory text was substituted, reading, in three lines:—

AN AIR LETTER SHOULD NOT CONTAIN ANY  
ENCLOSURE; IF IT DOES IT WILL BE SURCHARGED  
OR SENT BY ORDINARY MAIL.

*The measurements of these inscriptions vary with the different printings.*

**Side Panels.** “First fold here” between two arrows, printed vertically, is all that appears on the “writing panels”. The elevation of this text usually varies in the different printings, which can be recognised by the alignment of the centre folding dots *vis-a-vis* that instruction.

**Gummed Flaps.** The words “To open cut here” (with arrow) on the bottom or top gummed flap appeared on all Q.E.II aerogrammes until late in 1964, when the instruction was altered to read “To open slit along here” (between two arrows) on both of the gummed flaps.

**Format.** Until July 1960 all air letter or aerogramme sheets of Great Britain were cut with the address panel in the top right quarter of the unfolded sheet. One million aerogrammes were printed in 1960 with the format changed, so that the address panel was at bottom right, the first of these being placed on sale on July 13th of that year. They were of an *experimental* nature, so as to assess public opinion as to whether the new arrangement of the panels should be made standard in future printings. It seems that large business concerns approved of the new set-up as being more convenient for usage in typewriters and, consequently, it has been adopted for all subsequent issues, commemorative and non-commemorative.

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The first Q.E.II definitive air letter with the “modified Coronation stamp”.





Fig. 1. Tablet A



Fig. 2. Tablet B

(These illustrations are enlarged.)

G.B. Q.E.II Aerogrammes (continued from page 43)

### Characteristics to look for in identification of various printings

#### ADDRESS PANEL

##### Tablet

- Position of A of AVION in relation to the first E of LETTER.
- Short or long lasts of the letter R in AIR and LETTER.
- Even, or uneven, spacing of the letters in AIR of AIR LETTER.
- Length of the words AIR LETTER.
- Length of the word AEROGRAMME.
- Spacing of dots and length of address lines.

#### Imprinted Stamp

Coarse and fine screen photogravure.  
Coarse, 167 lines to the inch. Fine, 250 lines to the inch.

*Note.*—The colour of the stamp ranges from dull carmine to bright scarlet.

#### BACK PANEL

Measurements of "Sender's Name and Address" lines.  
Measurements of the two- or three-line enclosure warning.

#### SIDE PANELS

Position of horizontal centre folding dots in relation to the words "First fold here".

All definitive issues of this reign have been printed on light blue *unwatermarked* paper by, so far as is known, McCorquodale & Co., of Wolverhampton. Normally, the texture of the paper furnishes 180 sheets to the pound (weight).

#### "MODIFIED CORONATION STAMP" PRINTINGS 1954-1956

##### Type

- E.1 *Tablet.* (a) A of AVION towards *right* of E of LETTER.  
(b) Short last to first R.  
(c) AIR LETTER. Letters evenly spaced.  
(d) AIR LETTER, 23 mm.  
(e) AEROGRAMME, 14 $\frac{3}{4}$  mm.

*Address lines:* 88 $\frac{1}{2}$ , 84 $\frac{1}{2}$ , 80, 76 and 72. Dots spaced 64 to 1 inch.

"Sender's name and address" lines: 92, 82 and 72 mm.  
Two-line enclosure warning: 83 mm.  
Centre folding dots point to "s" of "First fold here".

- E.2 Specifications as Type E.1, but:—

*Address lines:* 87, 82, 78, 74 and 70 mm. Dots spaced 38 to 1 inch.

"Sender's name and address" lines: 90, 80 and 70 mm.  
Two-line enclosure warning: 82 mm.  
Centre folding dots point to "ld" of "First fold here".

- E.3 Specifications as Type E.2, but:—

Three-line enclosure warning: 97 mm.  
Centre folding dots point to "d" of "First fold here".

- E.4 Specifications as Type E.2, but:—

"Sender's name and address" lines: 90, 80 and 68 mm.  
Three-line enclosure warning: 95 mm.  
Centre folding dots point to "ld" of "First fold here".

- E.5 Specifications as Type E.1, but:—

AIR LETTER, 22 mm. AEROGRAMME, 15 mm.  
*Address lines:* 87, 83, 79, 75 and 70 $\frac{1}{2}$  mm. Dots spaced 38 to 1 inch.  
"Sender's name and address" lines: 90, 81 and 70 mm.  
Three-line enclosure warning: 102 mm.  
Centre folding dots point to "i" of "First fold here".

- E.6 Specifications as Type E.5, but:—

AIR LETTER, 23 $\frac{1}{2}$  mm. AEROGRAMME, 15 mm.  
*Address lines:* 87 $\frac{1}{2}$ , 83 $\frac{1}{2}$ , 79, 74 and 70 mm. Dots spaced 38 to 1 inch.  
"Sender's name and address" lines: 90, 81 and 71 mm.  
Three-line enclosure warning: 96 mm.  
Centre folding dots point to "ld" of "First fold here".  
*Note.*—Paler blue printing and all lettering larger than in earlier issues.

(Types E1 to E6 are Tablet A—Fig.1)

- E.7 *Tablet Changed (Tablet B, Fig. 2):—*

- A of AVION towards the *left* of E of LETTER.
- AIR LETTER, 23 $\frac{1}{4}$  mm.
- AEROGRAMME, 14 $\frac{3}{4}$  mm.

*Address lines:* 87, 83, 78, 74 and 70 mm. Dots spaced 38 to 1 inch.

"Sender's name and address" lines: 90, 81 and 68 mm.  
Three-line enclosure warning: 97 mm.  
Centre folding dots point to "d" of "First fold here".

(To be continued)



# The G.B. Sixpenny Definitive Aerogrammes of Queen Elizabeth 1954-1964

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## "HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT" STAMP PRINTINGS 1957-1964

The new definitive aerogramme replacing the "modified Coronation stamp" with the "Houses of Parliament" stamp was issued on October 14th, 1957, superseding the 46th Parliamentary Conference commemorative sheet of September 12th, and identical in every respect except for the deletion of the commemorative blue overprint on the imprinted stamp. All printings exist only with the three-line enclosure warning previously described. The stamp is in coarse screen photogravure.

### First Series:

Format with address panel at *top* right quarter of unfolded sheet.

### Type

#### E.8 Tablet:

- (a) A of AVION towards the *left* of E of LETTER.
- (b) Short last to first R.
- (c) AIR LETTER, gap between A and I.
- (d) AIR LETTER, 23½ mm.
- (e) AEROGRAMME, 14½ mm.

Address lines: 87, 83, 78, 74 and 70 mm. Dots spaced 38 to 1 inch.

"Sender's name and address" lines: 90, 80 and 68 mm.  
Enclosure warning: 96.5 mm.  
Centre folding dots point to "d" of "First fold here".

#### E.9 Identical specifications except that:—

Centre folding dots point to "fo" of "First fold here".

#### E.10 Centre folding dots point to "ol" of "First fold here".

#### E.11 Specifications as Type E.8, but:—

No gap between A and I of AIR LETTER.  
AIR LETTER, 22 mm. AEROGRAMME, 15 mm.  
Centre folding dots point to "ol" of "First fold here".

#### E.11a Same, but:—

"Sender's name and address" line measures 89½ mm. (90 mm.).  
Enclosure warning: 96¼ mm. (96½ mm.).

#### E.12 Similar to Type E.11a, but:—

"Sender's name and address" line measures 88½ mm. (89½ mm.).  
Centre folding dots point to "o" of "First fold here".

#### E.13 Tablet:

- (a) A of AVION immediately *above* E of LETTER.
- (b) Both R's with long lasts.
- (c) AIR LETTER, normal spacing of AIR.
- (d) AIR LETTER, 21½ mm.
- (e) AEROGRAMME, 15 mm.

Address lines: 87, 82½, 78½, 74½ and 70 mm.  
"Sender's name and address" lines: 89, 80½ and 68 mm.  
Enclosure warning: 94½ mm.  
Centre folding dots point to "ol" of "First fold here".

#### E.14 Tablet:

- (a) A of AVION to the *left* of E of LETTER.
- (b) Both R's with long lasts.
- (c) AIR LETTER, normal spacing of AIR.
- (d) AIR LETTER, 21½ mm.
- (e) AEROGRAMME, 15 mm.

Address lines: 86½, 82½, 78½, 74½ and 62 mm.  
"Sender's name and address" lines: 88½, 80 and 74 mm.  
Enclosure warning: 94½ mm.  
Centre folding dots point to "ol" of "First fold here".

### Experimental Issue of 1960—Revised Format

Address panel in bottom right quarter of unfolded sheet.

### Type

#### E.15 Tablet:

- (a) A of AVION directly *over* E of LETTER.
- (b) Both R's with long lasts.
- (c) AIR LETTER, normal spacing of AIR.
- (d) AIR LETTER, 21 mm.
- (e) AEROGRAMME, 15 mm.

Address lines: 86½, 82½, 78½, 74 and 61½ mm.

"Sender's name and address" lines (four): 89, 80½, 74½ and 62 mm.

Enclosure warning: 95 mm. Large full stop.  
Centre folding dots point to "F" of "First fold here".  
Stamp: Coarse screen photogravure (167 lines to 1 in.).

### Second Series

Format with address panel at *bottom* right quarter of unfolded sheet.

#### E.16 Tablet:

- (a) A of AVION inclined towards *left* of E of LETTER.
- (d) AIR LETTER, 21½ mm.
- (e) AEROGRAMME, 15½ mm.

Address lines: 86½, 82, 78, 74 and 61½ mm.

"Sender's name and address" lines (four): 88½, 80½, 74½ and 60 mm.

Enclosure warning: 94½ mm. Normal full stop.  
Centre folding dots point to "d" of "First fold here".  
Stamp: Coarse screen photogravure (167 lines to 1 in.).

#### E.16a Stamp: Fine screen photogravure (250 lines to 1 in.).

#### E.17 Specifications as Type E.16, but:—

AIR LETTER, 22 mm. AEROGRAMME, 15 mm.  
Address lines: 86½, 82½, 77½, 73½ and 61½ mm.  
"Sender's name and address" lines: 88½, 80, 70 and 57½ mm.

Enclosure warning: 95½ mm.  
Centre folding dots point to "ol" of "First fold here".  
Stamp: Coarse screen photogravure.  
(A minor variety exists in which the text reads "First old here".)

#### E.17a Stamp: Fine screen photogravure.

#### E.18 Specifications as Type E.17, but:—

Centre folding dots point to "ld" of "First fold here".  
Stamp: Coarse screen photogravure.

On April 23rd, 1964, two pictorial aerogrammes were put on sale to commemorate the Shakespeare Anniversary Festival, and subsequently towards the end of that year two new types of the "Houses of Parliament" stamp aerogramme were issued, in both of which the words "Sender's name and address" were moved up on the back panel, above four dotted lines of even length.

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## G.B. 6d. Definitive Aerogrammes (continued from page 105)

### Type

- E.19 Most specifications similar to Type E.17, but:—  
 “*Sender's name and address*” placed above, and to the left of, four dotted lines of even length, 86½ mm.  
*Address lines*: 87, 83, 78½, 74½ and 62 mm.  
 Centre folding dots point to “*ld*” of “*First fold here*”.  
*Stamp*: Coarse screen photogravure.
- E.20 Identical to Type E.19, but “*To Open Slit Along Here*” (between two vertical arrows) appears in the centre of *both* gummed flaps.

### Check List with Recorded Varieties

#### Q.E.II Definitive Aerogrammes

(RR) indicates that the item is extremely rare. Auction realisations, for example: Type E.4b, £24; Type E.8a, £42.

(R) indicates that the item is thought to be very scarce in mint condition.

Type	Kessler Cat. No.	Date	MODIFIED CORONATION DESIGN (First colour is that of imprinted stamp)
E.1	13	1954, Jan. 1st.	Deep red, dark blue printing.
E.1a	—	—	Postmarked “ <i>First Day of Issue</i> ”.
E.1b	—	—	Coarse mauve-tinted paper. (R)
E.1c	13a	—	Albino stamp imprint. (RR)
E.1d	13b	—	Cutting of sheet inverted. (RR)
E.2	14	1954, late ..	Deep red, dark blue printing.
E.3	15	1955, Jan. 18th.	Carmine-red, dark blue printing.
E.3a	—	—	Postmarked “ <i>First Day of Issue</i> ”.
E.4	16	1955, June ..	Carmine-red, light blue printing.
E.4a	16a	—	Last “ <i>E</i> ” of “ <i>AEROGRAMME</i> ” as “ <i>B</i> ”.
E.4b	—	—	Weak stamp impression. (RR)
E.5	17	1955, January	Deep red, dark blue printing.
E.6	18	1955, May ..	Carmine-red, pale blue printing. (R)
E.7	19	1956, late ..	Carmine-red, light blue printing. (R)
			PARLIAMENTARY STAMP DESIGN.
E.8	21	1957, Oct. 14th	Mauve-red, blue printing.
E.8a	21c	—	Error: Imprinted stamp only. (RR)
E.9	21a	1958 .. ..	Mauve-red, blue printing.
E.10	21b	1958 .. ..	Mauve-red, blue printing.
E.11	22	1959 .. ..	Mauve-red, blue printing.
E.12	—	1959 .. ..	Mauve-red, blue printing.
E.13	—	1960 .. ..	Mauve-red, blue printing.
E.14	—	1960 .. ..	Mauve-red, blue printing. (R)
			EXPERIMENTAL ISSUE. NEW FORMAT*
E.15	23	1960, July 13th	Mauve-red, blue printing.
E.15a	—	—	Postmarked “ <i>First Day of Issue</i> ”.
			DEFINITIVE ISSUE WITH NEW FORMAT*
E.16	—	1960, September	Mauve-red, light blue printing.
E.16a	—	1962 .. ..	Fine Screen Photogravure.
E.17	—	1962 .. ..	Mauve-red, light blue printing.
E.17a	—	1963 .. ..	Fine Screen Photogravure.
E.17b	—	—	“ <i>First old</i> ” for “ <i>First fold</i> ”. (R)
E.18	—	1964 .. ..	Mauve-red, light blue printing.
E.19	—	1964, late ..	“ <i>Sender's Name and Address</i> ” above four dotted lines. Mauve-red, light blue printing.
E.20	—	1964, late ..	“ <i>To Open Slit Along Here</i> ” on flaps. Mauve-red, light blue printing.