

The Machin Corner Part Four

Regional Machins

Along with regular machins the Post Office also issued other Machins for use in specific countries that make up the United Kingdom. These special stamps had a bust image reduced to accommodate an heraldic emblem. These are:

Isle of Man (Only four values issued total)

Northern Ireland

Scotland

Wales.

With the exception of the Isle of Man, the remaining three countries had a redesign of the heraldic symbol so that in some cases there are two distinct versions to collect. Sorting these stamps generally needs to follow a methodology, which will make life easier. Here is my sorting criteria:

Face Value - What is the denomination on the stamp

Colour – What colour is the stamp?

Printing Method – Is it photogravure or lithograph?

Perforation – is it 15x14 or something else?

Phosphor – Does it have two bands, a centre band or a LH/RH band?

By far the largest number of regional varieties were printed for Wales with Scotland being a close second. All regional decimal Machins were produced from 1971 and ended in 2000 with a special booklet only issue (Flame coloured 1st value).

Because the populations are smaller in these countries, the demand was a lot less so they tended to be issued in bursts normally driven by national P.O. rate changes. Postally used covers can easily be found bearing the older issues with a makeup rate stamp also applied. As with the regular Machin stamps, the printers also changed with the award of new contracts and it is these changes that create most of the variations within the issues. Below is the key sorting identifiers needed to separate type one from type two engravings. Where stamps have been issued in both types, *these are always lithographed editions*. In total there are six values that exist in both formats. In the table below we can see the scope of this identification:

Denomination	NI	SCOT	WALES
13p Chestnut	X	X	X
17p Grey Blue	X	X	X
22p Yellow Green		X	
26p Red	X		X
28p Blue	X		X
31p Purple	X	X	

Northern Ireland.

1st three dots are joined indicates a type 1 printing



1st three dots are separated indicates a type 2 printing



The difference is quite small and requires magnification sometimes. There is no mistaking which printing it is once you know what to look for.

Scotland



Dot in the
closed eye
is a Type 1
printing



NO Dot in the
open eye is a
Type 2
Re-engraved
printing

The Scottish 31p Purple Type 2 (Not shown) is one of the most expensive Machin regional stamps to obtain. Current SG values (2026) are £150 either used or mint (\$202 USD).

Wales



Dot in the closed eye is a Type 1 printing



NO Dot in the open eye is a Type 2 Re-engraved printing

The 17p Grey Blue Type 2 is another expensive Machin regional. SG prices this one at £40 either mint or used (\$54)

Machin “nuts” (Specialists) also check for missing and misplaced phosphor bands, the location of the heraldic symbol (Denotes the machine on which they were produced) and lastly the perforation. There were three firms involved in printing these stamps with the lithographed Scottish dual issues being printed by Waddingtons whereas De La Rue supplied the remaining stamps for Northern Ireland and Wales, Harrisons always issued the photogravure issues.

For the most part the stamps were printed on white Phosphorised paper so detecting the phosphor bands demands careful attention to detail on used examples. Booklet panes were also issued and these command low values overall. These booklets could be dispensed from vending machines and regular/sub post offices and proved to be popular.

Happy hunting.

Mark Cooper.