

## **Great Britain:**

### **Elizabeth II Pre-Decimal Civilian Letter Post Rates**

**1952 May 01 to 1971 February 14**

The period between 1952 May 01 to 1971 February 14 can be defined as that of Elizabeth II pre-decimal postal rates. Queen Elizabeth II ascended to the throne on 1952 February 06. The first postal rate change of her reign took place on 1952 May 01. Since the first postage stamps for the new queen were not issued until 1952 December 05, the early period of the Elizabeth II rates were often paid with George VI (or earlier) stamps or stationery. The latter included a posthumous George VI registered envelope rated at 8½d to pay the registration rate of 6d adopted on 1952 May 01, together with the first step inland letter rate (or Commonwealth surface rate) of 2½d. The period ends on 1971 February 14, the day before Britain adopted decimal currency.

The exhibit opens with examples used during the legacy rate period between the Queen's ascension and the 1952 May 01 postage rate increase. In the body, the main rates are shown in the order: inland rates, British Commonwealth surface letter rates, foreign surface letter rates, world-wide surface post cards and surface printed-paper rates, and air mail rates. An example of air mail newspapers to Europe is given at the end of Section 6.5, air mail printed paper. Examples of Registered, Express or Inland Recorded are presented after basic letter rates. Covers with both Registered and Express are grouped with Express items. Less common services such as Advice of Delivery, Certificate of Posting, Insured or Postage Due are presented within the main sequences. A detailed plan is provided on page 2. Rates for parcel post, Forces mail, railway service, airline service and aerogrammes are not within the scope of the exhibit. The conclusion to the exhibit is a brief section giving three examples of decimalization of postal stamps or postal rates. Three large format (and for the time, high-value) decimal definitives (10p, 20p and 50p) were issued on 1970 June 17 (after the introduction of 10p and 50p coins) to help accustom the public with the new currency. Pre-decimal stamps remained valid for postage until 1972 February 29. Thus, both decimal and pre-decimal stamps were valid together for more than 20 months partially in the pre-decimal period and partially in the post-decimal rate period.

Within the time frame of the exhibit, the basis for postage due markings and charges on overseas mail changed. While those markings and charges are (each) a suitable subject for an entire exhibit, some understanding is helpful to interpret correct rates from postage due markings. Until 1966/10/02 markings were the total postal due at the appropriate multiple of the deficiency (usually double) in gold centimes. From 1966/10/03 until 1975/12/31, fractions were used. The numerator was appropriate multiple of the deficiency and the denominator was the minimum surface rate for foreign (not Commonwealth) surface mail letter. This fraction was to be multiplied by the minimum surface letter rate of the receiving country to find the postage due in their own currency.

In the exhibit, descriptions of unusual rates or destinations are highlighted by **bold and underlined** words in captions. *Information about postal rates and regulations, or historical information, is printed in italic font.*

Date formats in the exhibit correspond to ISO 8601:2000 practice, YYYY/MM/DD.