

LES ILES NORMANDES

JETHOU'S 1963 EUROPA ISSUE

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When Captain Cliff decided to issue a set of stamps for Jethou to commemorate Europa 1963 he chose to have the stamps printed by Thomas De La Rue & Co. Ltd. rather than by Guernsey Lithoprint Ltd. It could be that he wanted a better quality of printing but the real reason for the change could well be that Guernsey Lithoprint Ltd. did not want to repeat their disastrous experience at perforating a large quantity of stamp sheets. After all, Cliff intended to issue 50,000 sets of the Europa 1963 stamps. Again, the designer was Charles Coker, who submitted the first proposal to Captain Cliff (*Figure. 1*) and Cliff settled for a two-values set, 3d and 1/9.

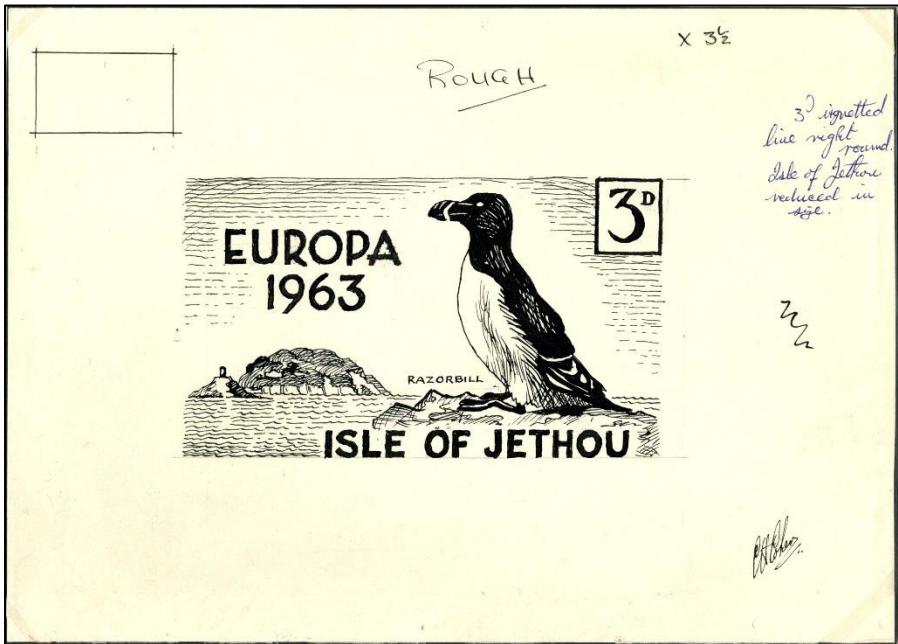


Figure 1

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Coker's first draft for a 3d stamp differs in many details from the final issue: most notably the value is within a square whereas in the issued stamp it is within a circle; there is a line around the whole design in the final version but no such line in this rough draft; the sky and the sea have less lines in the final design and the bird, a razorbill, is much more detailed in the issued version. Additionally, there is no designer's name at the bottom left of the design in this first draft. As Coker wrote in the upper margin, it was only a rough draft. He drew a 38 mm x 22 mm rectangle at the upper left to show what the final size of the stamp should be, and he wrote "x 3½" at top right to indicate that this drawing was three and a half times the size of the final stamp. The overall size of the paper is 248 mm x 176 mm whereas the drawing itself measures 133 mm x 77 mm.

Captain Cliff wrote his comments in the right-hand margin: "*3d vignetted, line right round, Isle of Jethou reduced in size*". Charles Coker corrected his design accordingly and he submitted a second draft (*Figure 2*), which unfortunately was drawn on porous paper. The paper size is 245 mm x 184 mm while the design measures 133 mm x 78 mm. Coker made the corrections requested by Captain Cliff and he added his name below the design at bottom left. But because the paper was porous the ink bled and Coker wrote "*Ink has spread on this Surface, unsuitable for reproduction.*" We must conclude that he redid his design once again, but I have no clue as to the whereabouts of this final, printer-ready design.

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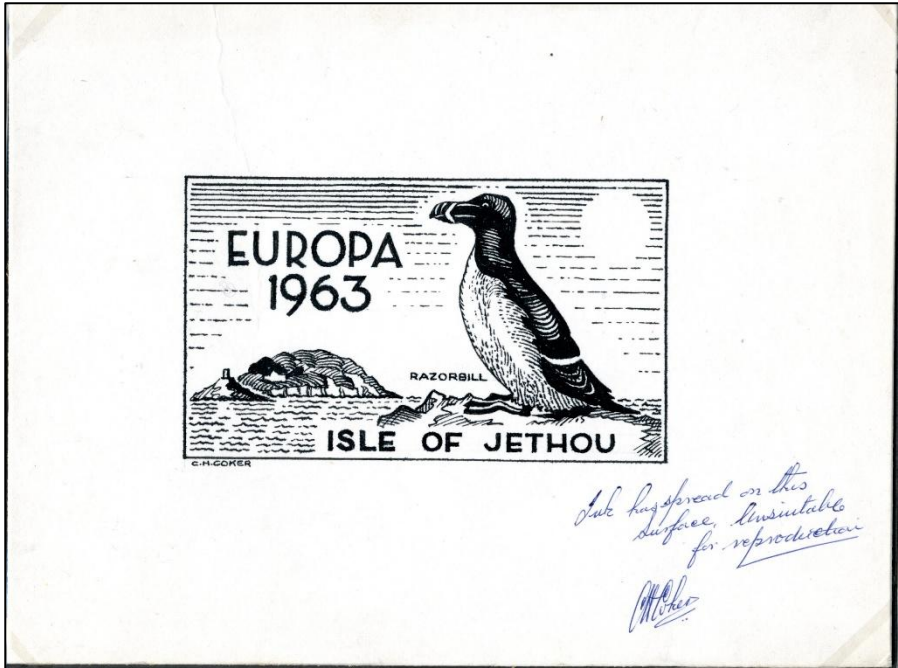


Figure 2

Normally Bradbury Wilkinson would submit colour essays on cards and they did so for the Europa 1964 issue. I have never seen such De La Rue colour proofs on cards of the Europa 1963 issue and they are not mentioned in Backman's catalogues, which does not mean that they do not exist of course. Imperforate proofs in the issued colours are not rare (Figure 3).

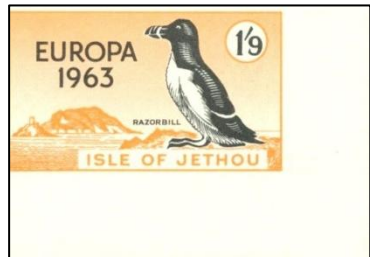


Figure 3

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According to Backman and Forrester, the same plate was used for printing the colour background of both values, but different plates were used for the black part.

This issue was printed by De la Rue in small sheetlets of 12 stamps (4 across and 3 down), set up in larger printer's sheets of 4 sheetlets arranged 2 across and 2 down (see *Figure 4* below for a reconstruction of a printer's master sheet), as shown in Backman's "*Jethou of the Channel Islands Specialized Catalogue*" published in 1976 and in Backman & Forrester's "*The Channel Island of Jethou, Its stamps and postal history*" of 1978. The printer's imprint appears once at the center of the bottom margin of each sheetlet of twelve. The four sheetlets can be identified as follows: the perforation guide in the shape of a cross in the left or right margin identifies a left or right pane, and the bottom margin of the bottom panes is imperforate, but it is perforated in the upper panes.



Figure 7

In the next instalment covering the Europa 1964 issue we will see some very interesting De La Rue proof cards.