

HM The Queen 80th Birthday Smilers Sheet



In 2006, a cover was advertised in the philatelic press by The Westminster Collection featuring a £5 commemorative coin and a special 80th Birthday insignia label adjoined by a 1st class Union Flag stamp. The special label design was by herald artist Timothy Noad and the cover was issued to commemorate their 80th Birthday of HM The Queen on 21st April 2006.

The 80th Birthday insignia label and Union Flag 1st Class stamp were from a special Royal Mail commissioned "Smilers" sheet thought to have been produced by The Westminster Collection Ltd. although given the striking similarities to that produced by the Benham Group, there is a suggestion that the sheet may have been produced by "others".

Danuta Solowiej's beautiful design for the new British £5 Birthday Coin, struck by the Royal Mint, celebrates the Queen's milestone birthday with a fanfare of trumpets. Exclusively, the two issues have been brought together in The Queen's 80th Birthday Limited Edition Coin Cover. Postmarked Buckingham Palace and individually numbered within a limited edition of 40,000 covers.



With 20 stamps per sheet it is estimated that something like 2,000 sheets of the special Smilers stamps and labels were produced, the majority of which would have been intended for use in the special covers.



Depending upon sales, some whole sheets may have survived. At least 35,000 covers appear to have been produced as the cover in my collection is numbered 35,266 leaving something like 200 sheets potentially available as whole sheets. The actual number may be considerably less than this as The Westminster Collection were "out of stock" of this special sheet by mid May 2006.