



NABA 2000 Embroidery Stamp – Trials

by Helmut Büchel, *SwissPhila*

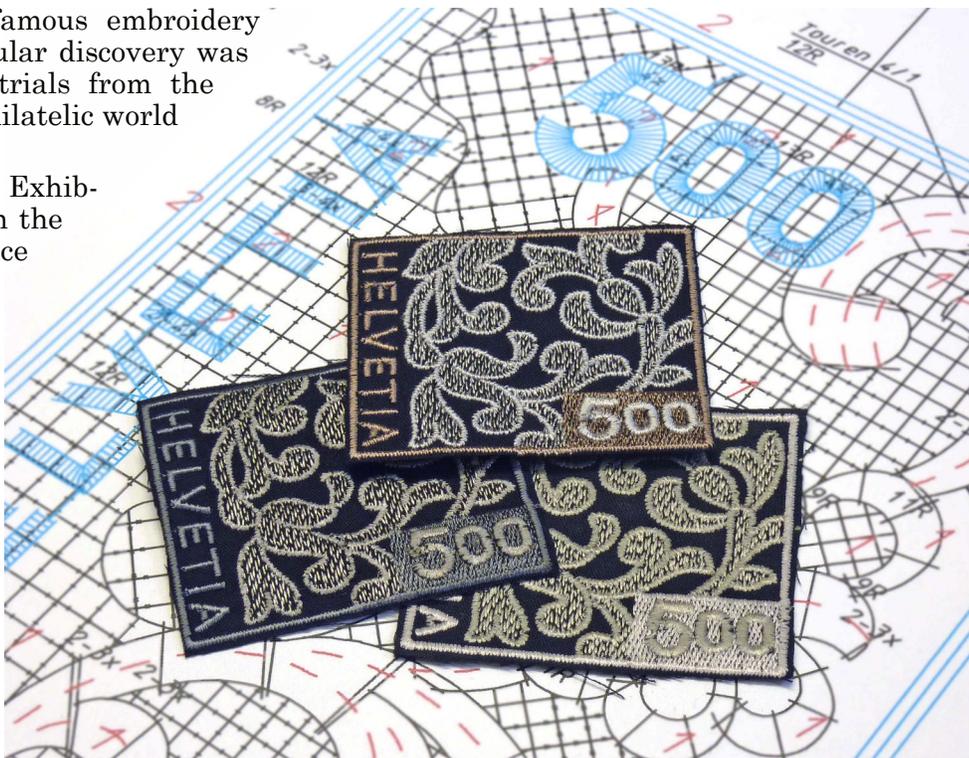
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Twenty years after the famous embroidery stamp was created, a spectacular discovery was made by chance: there are trials from the development process of this philatelic world novelty of that time.

For the National Stamp Exhibition NABA 2000 in St. Gallen the idea was developed to produce the world's first embroidered stamp. In *Lupe* No. 3 of May 2000, the public was informed for the first time about the issue of an embroidered stamp on the occasion of the opening of NABA St. Gallen without, revealing the design.

In close cooperation between Swiss Post and the traditional company Bischoff-Textil AG, based in St. Gallen, a small team of selected employees began working on the development of this world first in 1999 on their initiative and in great secrecy. As can be read in *Lupe* No. 3/2000, the textile designer Peter Hostettler, who works at Bischoff-Textil, was inspired by centuries old embroidery patterns which are stored in the Bischoff-Textil archive. (Fig. 1 next page)

The *Lupe* further describes that after many sketches and drafts, hand samples were also produced for submission to the post office. Subsequently, patterns were produced on small embroidery machines (so-called machine patterns). Such patterns (trials) have now been discovered in the estate of a former employee of Bischoff- Textil.



There are trials in three different colors (Above): brown-white, blue-white, and white-green. All of them were embroidered on black fabric and are almost the same size as the final stamp. The trials are the same height as the later produced stamp, but 5 mm narrower.

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Fig. 1. Example of historic embroidery, ca 1760.

After further development of the design and selection of the final version, it was then prepared for industrial production (Fig. 4,5) and finally manufactured in various processes in Diepoldsau in the St. Gallen Rhein Valley.

The fact that the embroidery stamp was produced in the St. Gallen Rhein Valley has to do with the long tradition of embroidery craftsmanship in this region. Markus Hungerbühler (Fig. 2), the then director of the Bischoff-Textil production plant in Diepoldsau, still remembers the production of the embroidery stamp today, as the high quality requirements of the Swiss Post Office combined with the quantities to be produced presented a great challenge.

Several months passed until the entire quantity was produced. Despite machine production there was still a lot of manual work to be done. Thanks to good teamwork – combined with the existing expertise – the world's first embroidery stamp was delivered on time and in the required quality and was presented to the exhibition visitors as a surprise at the opening of NABA 2000 in the Olma-Hall in St. Gallen. Details about the production of the embroidery stamp were then published by the Swiss Post in Lupe No. 4/2000.

Unfortunately, this stamp has been somewhat forgotten, but with the sensational discovery of these trials, it is likely to become a focus of attention for philatelists again.

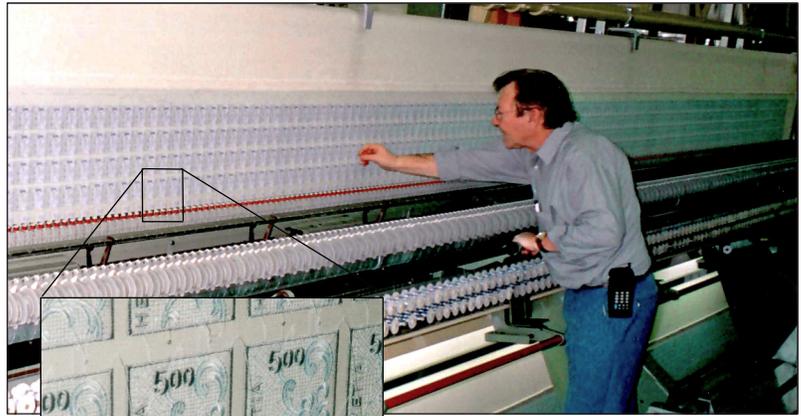


Fig. 2. Quality control of the embroidery stamp on a 10 meter wide SAURER machine at Bischoff-Textil AG in Diepoldsau (SG).



Fig. 3. Detail of machine during production of issued embroidered stamp.

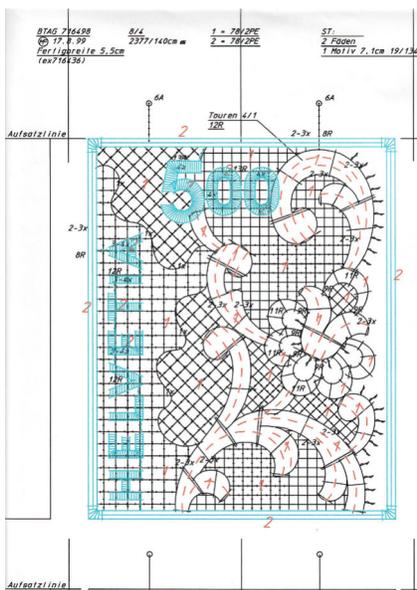


Fig. 4. From the designer's sketch, the embroidery draftsman creates a CAD drawing.

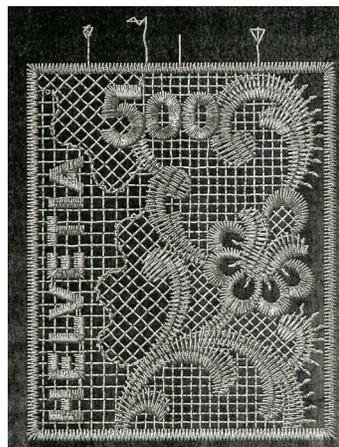


Fig. 5. Computer simulation of the embroidery process programmed on the embroidery machine (so-called "punching").



Fig. 6. The finished embroidery stamp as it was presented at NABA in St. Gallen, 21 June 2000.