

Philatelic Bulletin

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Editorial

Part of the pleasure we get from producing the Bulletin comes from the nice people we meet. Most of them are connected in some way with philately but quite obviously we need to have other contacts if only to prevent us becoming too insular! New stamp issues give us the opportunity of talking to 'outsiders' when we are seeking help or advice. This month we offer our thanks to two such organisations whose willing help we acknowledge — the World Wildlife Fund and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds — each of whom has produced features to complement our British Wildlife stamps.

We spoke recently about the Post Office Stampex Trophy, and, as promised, publish an article on the subject by another good friend, Dr Jean Alexander. There are about 80,000 sub-

scribers to the Bulletin which probably means that something like 100,000 people read it. If only 1% entered a study of modern GB stamps the judges would have 1,000 to consider. Now is the time to prepare *your* submission!

Christmas 1977 Stamps

Six special postage stamps, 5 se-tenant at 7p each and 1 at 9p, together with an appropriate first day cover, are to be issued on 23 November to commemorate Christmas 1977. Two Christmas cancellations will be available. 'Philatelic Bureau, Edinburgh' depicting two pears and 'Bethlehem, Llandeilo, Dyfed', showing a single pear.

The following services for First Day covers will be provided.

Service A

The official Post Office cover will be addressed to the correct postal address of the destination required and given all six stamps. The cover will be cancelled with either postmark. The charge is 62p, or for customers with deposit accounts 57½p.

Service B

Customers own pre-addressed covers, bearing the correct postal address, will be given the full set of stamps, cancelled and despatched for a charge of 52p per cover.

Service C

For bulk orders of 50 or more covers to the same address under the conditions of Service A, the price is 59½p per cover.

Customers who specifically require the Bethlehem postmark, should send their orders to the Head Postmaster (Philatelic Section), Llanelli, Dyfed. All orders for cancellations other than Bethlehem only, should be sent to the Philatelic Bureau, Edinburgh.

First day of issue cancellations will be given to covers bearing the Christmas stamps posted in special philatelic posting boxes in main offices throughout the United Kingdom.

Gems from the R M Phillips Collection

XLX Two Values of the 1887 "Jubilee" Issue

For MS Hackett

4d & 9d



*I am not sure whether the
distances are right in this, but
MS Turner's proof will give
them - I think*



*Approved H.C.R.
June 4 1889*

Unusually, I am showing two gems this month instead of only one. However, both relate to the same 1887 issue and illustrate two different aspects of it.

Most values of the 1887 set were issued in January 1887 without the protective rules round the outside of the plates known to philatelists as 'Jubilee lines'. Illustration No 1 above, dated 4 August 1887, shows a perforated plate proof of the Fourpenny value, with experimental 'Jubilee line' rules. This has been mounted on card which is endorsed in manuscript '4d & 9d' and 'I am not sure whether the distances are right in

this, but Mr Turner's proof will give them'. It is also of interest, most unusually, this proof is perforated 'DLR'.

One of the values added later to the other 1887 stamps, was the Tenpenny issued on 24 February 1890. Illustration No 2 shows the final artist's sketch for this value dated 15 March 1889 and endorsed 'Approved HCR June 4 1889'. It will be noticed, however, that before issue the colours of the Tenpenny were changed to dull purple and carmine instead of blue yellow and mauve.

A G RIGO DE RIGHI

British Special Stamps

35. Lister Centenary – Antiseptic Surgery 1965

Among the celebrated names in British medicine — Fleming and Florey (penicillin), Harvey (circulation of the blood), Jenner (vaccination) and Simpson (anaesthetics) to name but a few — that of Joseph, 1st Baron Lister of Lyme Regis, 1827-1912, ranks high. This was acknowledged by the Post Office when, on 1 September 1965, they issued two stamps marking the centenary of Lister's initial discovery of the techniques of antiseptic surgery.

The two designs, by different artists, made a satisfactory pair, complementing each other in style and presentation. The 4d stamp, designed by Peter Gauld, featured Lister's carbolic spray, basis of his antiseptic technique — the emitted vapour being calculated to dispel germs in the atmosphere of the operating theatre. It was in universal use for many years until replaced by more modern methods of antiseptic surgery.

For the 1s stamp, Frank Ariss, a newcomer to stamp design, depicted a portrait of Lister framed by a hexagon with the letters 'OH', the whole representing the chemical symbol for carbolic acid. The square frame of these pictorial elements represented a piece of lint, and the black border around the square, a sheet of lead or thin block tin. Both stamps featured the Wilding 'three-quarter' portrait of the Queen as on previous occasions, but this time with a noticeable forward tilt compared with the previous

'Salvation Army' issue.

Joseph Lister was the second son of a distinguished father, J J Lister, FRS, the optician who discovered and developed the fundamental principle of the microscope. Born in Upton, Essex, Joseph graduated in medicine at London University in 1852, and became a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons. He was successively house-surgeon to James Syme (whose daughter he married in 1856), and professor of surgery in Edinburgh, Glasgow and King's College Hospital in London, having (in 1865) first used crude carbolic as an antiseptic.

Distressed by the numerous deaths following operations and encouraged by Pasteur's discovery of the action of yeasts in fermentation, Lister concluded that the deterioration of open wounds in surgery was caused by bacteria giving effect to fermentation of the flesh tissues. The application of undiluted carbolic acid formed, with blood, a dense crust over the wound, favourable to healing. Later, gauze impregnated with cyanide of mercury and zinc was used with some success.

Lister helped to found the Jenner Institute of Preventive Medicine, since 1903 called the Lister Institute, and was President of the British Association in 1896. He was made a baronet in 1883 and a baron in 1897, and he received the Order of Merit in 1902.

Though primitive by present-day standards of surgical disinfection and hygiene, Lister's revolutionary techniques saved lives and upheld the high traditions of medicine.

The Lister stamps were photogravure-printed by Harrison and Sons in sheets of 120 (6×20) on ordinary and phosphor-banded paper, watermark 'multiple crowns'. A notable variety occurs on the 4d, both ordinary and phosphor-banded paper — the omission of the brown-red tube which is normally seen coiled to the right of the spray. The 4d (ordinary) stamp is also known with the indigo colour omitted. Numerous minor constant flaws are recorded.

Quantities issued (phosphor in brackets) were: 4d 92,167,440 (10,732,800); 1s 10,732,800 (1,452,360).

JAMES WATSON



The Post Office Stampex Trophy

The Post Office Trophy was first presented at 'Stampex' in 1969 for the 'Best Presentation of the Stamps of Great Britain from 1924' and is now an annual award. The purpose of this article therefore is to encourage both new and established collectors of modern British stamps to take part.

In addition to the trophy, which is held by the winner for one year, there is also a beautiful memento, inlaid with silver and showing an enlarged impression of the £1 Machin stamp. The memento is retained by the winner.

Anyone can enter for this competition provided that the subject matter deals with some aspect of British postage stamps since 1924 to the present time. With the increasing interest in modern Great Britain it could be assumed that Stampex would be inundated with entries for the trophy. In fact in very recent years entries have been disappointingly few and some otherwise excellent submissions have been ruled ineligible as they have contained some pre-1924 stamps. The following paragraphs may help those entering for the first time.

An entry may consist of from 18-36 album sheets but it is always better to enter the maximum number of sheets if possible. It is also important with any competitive entry that the subject is carefully chosen, and that it will fit the requisite number of sheets. Avoid overcrowding yet at the same time do not make them appear empty.

During the years 1924 to 1977, there are many subjects which would fit well into 36 sheets; they can be divided into Commemoratives (special issues) and Definitives. The stamps issued to commemorate the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley in 1924 and re-issued the following year, inscribed 1925, were the first commemoratives of Great Britain, and would be a good subject for an entry. There are many aspects of a Wembley collection apart from a set of 1924 and 1925 stamps. For example: perforation varieties, coils, postmarks, and slogan cancellations advertising the Exhibition. Further ideas can be obtained from the book on the Wembley issues¹.

The next set of commemorative stamps was issued in 1929 to mark the Postal Union Congress. This study won the trophy in 1970 and dealt with the plating and controls of the low values and hence the expensive £1 could be excluded.

Another excellent topic would be the Silver Jubilee. This could be the 1935 Silver Jubilee of King George V or combined with the Queen's recent celebrations.

Any one of the definitive issues of KG VI or all the commemoratives could be considered as possible themes. Could the Coronation issue of 1937 be linked with the Coronation issue of 1953? The Olympic Games issue of 1948 would make a most interesting study, and further information can be found in the book previously mentioned¹.

During the present reign the one hundredth commemorative issue was reached, appropriately with the introduction of the 'Roses' set of stamps, and with the forthcoming 'Wildlife' set the total will be 108. While any one issue could be studied on its own, the scope of the research could be widened by grouping two or more related topics or by studying the various special issues of any one year. Changes in the methods of printing, sheet layout and positioning of cylinder numbers collectively would make an excellent subject.

The first definitive issue which qualifies for entry in the competition is that introduced in 1924, during the reign of KG V, printed on block cypher watermarked paper by Waterlow and Sons Ltd. In earlier competitions the photo-gravure issue of 1934, and later the issues of KEDW VIII have been entered, but without success. However, with the appropriate background material they could be successful I am sure.

The KG VI definitives which have been out of the limelight for years, offer scope for much research, with interesting changes in controls and cylinder numbers together with colour changes.

The QE 'Wilding' definitives and Machin £sd and Decimal issues have already been entered

but as these are the most complex issues since the line-engraved stamps of Perkins Bacon, there is tremendous scope for the development of further entries.

In addition to basic stamps there are a number of other areas from which an entry could be taken. Stamp booklets have won the Trophy on one occasion, and they make a popular and attractive display. Coil stamps are becoming more popular but because of their length can be difficult to display. Postal stationery which was neglected for many years is now popular, and a recent book², unfortunately now out print, is invaluable.

Once you have decided on your topic and have studied entries at local and national exhibitions, it will be time for you to enter for the Post Office Trophy. Read the rules carefully, and remember, you cannot win if you do not enter. I won the Trophy the first time I exhibited at Stampex, so could you. Good luck!

JEAN ALEXANDER

References

- ¹ The Wembley and Olympic Issues; The stamps and associated markings by W G Stitt-Dibden, published by The Great Britain Philatelic Society.
- ² British Postal Stationery by A K Huggins, published by The Great Britain Philatelic Society.

Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds recently reached a milestone in its long and illustrious history when it enrolled its quarter millionth member. There is no denying that the RSPB has burgeoned beyond belief of a handful of faithfuls who, only a few years ago, were its only supporters.

Why this dramatic growth? Perhaps it is because the watchword 'conservation' is echoing in everyone's ears as birdlife is threatened and the beauties of the British countryside are buried for ever under a tide of industrial development.

Mindful of these threats, the Society launched a £1 million appeal in the spring of 1975 to buy more reserves and so safeguard our rich heritage of birdlife and wildlife. Among the notable reserves secured are Minsmere on the Suffolk coast, famous for its graceful avocets — the bird adopted as the distinctive symbol of the Society, and Loch Garten on Speyside, home of the majestic fish-hunting osprey.

The Society itself was founded as the Fur and Feather Group at Disbury in Manchester in 1889 to protest against the trade in birds' feathers for millinery. In 1891 the Group widened its objects and became the Society for the Protection of Birds. It grew rapidly and by 1897 was employing staff in London. By 1904 the increasing public interest in the Society's

work was acknowledged by the granting of a Royal Charter.

The original object of the Society, to curb the importation of bird plumes, was not achieved until 1921 when Parliament passed the Plumage Act. By then, many other threats to bird life had been recognised. The need for reserves, or sanctuaries as they were then called, was realised and the RSPB bought land at Dungeness in Kent. In the 1920s oil pollution became a major problem affecting seabirds, and by 1928 the Society was warning people against the indiscriminate use of toxic chemicals in gardens.

At the start of the Second World War, membership of the Society stood at 4,852. Despite the war, the Society's work continued, although at a reduced rate, and by 1946 membership was 6,000. Soon afterwards the Junior Bird Recorders' Club — now the Young Ornithologists' Club with a membership of 75,000 — was started.

In 1961 the RSPB began investigating the effects of organo-chlorine pesticides and the Society's reports influenced the decisions to impose voluntary bans on some uses of these chemicals. The Society began to expand rapidly after it moved its headquarters from London to Sandy in Bedfordshire in 1961. The acquisition of reserves and the extension of the Society's

educational programmes, development of research, investigations and publications departments all followed soon afterwards.

The RSPB now owns or manages 70 reserves covering more than 60,000 acres of habitats of all types. Most of them are open to the public, although visiting has to be restricted for obvious reasons. Details of visiting times are available from the Society's headquarters. (Please enclose a stamped addressed envelope when writing.)

Annual membership of the Society is £5 and all members receive copies of 'Birds' — a lively, colourful and informative magazine with news and views about birds and conservation — four times a year.

Forces Covers

RAF Cover HA 17 commemorates Air Chief Marshall Sir John Boothman KCB KBE DFC AFC, winner of the Schneider Trophy in 1931 and holder of the World's airspeed record. The covers were flown in a Vulcan Bomber during the Silver Jubilee flypast over London and are issued with a special cancellation for the 60th Anniversary of 44 Squadron (BEPS 1565). They are available from Fl Lt C Cullis, 44 Squadron, RAF Waddington, Lincoln LN5 9NB, at 35p each plus 7p postage.

RAF Cover HA 18 commemorates Air Marshall William Avery Bishop VC CB DSO MC DFC ED, the well known Ace of the first world war. The covers are issued with a special handstamp for the 60th anniversary of 60 Squadron and are available now from Fl Lt D Downey, 60 Squadron RAF Wildenrath BFPO 42, at 35p plus 7p postage.

Overseas customers are reminded that additional postage is required with their orders.

The 180th anniversary of the Battle of Camperdown will be commemorated on 11 October 1977 with the issue of a special pictorial cover illustrating the crest of HMS Venerable, flagship of the fleet engaged in the battle.

The following services are offered by the Royal Naval Philatelic Officer.

The cover, bearing a 10p postage stamp will be cancelled with a pictorial handstamp depicting the crest of the aircraft carrier HMS Triumph. It will be signed by Vice Admiral G M Forbes RN (the last Captain of HMS Triumph) and Rear Admiral Graham RN, Port Admiral, HM Naval Base, Portsmouth, and will cost £1.67.

Alternatively, the cover as above, but with a 9p stamp, and signed by Vice Admiral Forbes only, will cost 87p.

An unsigned cover bearing an 8½p stamp cancelled with the special handstamp will be available at 40p.

Orders addressed to Cmdr P F Cole, DSC RN (retired), Fleet Air Arm Museum, RNAS Yeovilton, Somerset BA22 8HX, must be accompanied by a self addressed envelope measuring 7" x 5" approximately.

RAFLET Stamp Club – First Exhibition

The Raflet Stamp Club is holding its first exhibition in the Dermot Boyle Wing of the Royal Air Force Museum at Hendon, London NW9. The exhibition will consist of some 60 frames of varied philatelic material, much of it of award winning standard which will be on show during the weekend of 29-30 October 1977. The museum opening hours are 10 am to 6 pm on the Saturday, and 2 pm to 6 pm on the Sunday.

It is particularly fitting that this exhibition should be staged in the Dermot Boyle Wing of the RAF Museum, as this extension to the original building was financed from the proceeds of the sale of RAF Museum Philatelic Covers.

Entrance to the exhibition, which is free, is through the main museum aircraft hall, and a catalogue describing the exhibits will be available.

The Raflet Stamp Club was formed in 1958 and now has some 960 members at home and overseas. It provides a full philatelic service for all serving and former members of the Royal Air Force.

The King's Stamps 1910 – 35 Part 7(a) The Choice of Colours II – III



Fig 1

Colour Scheme 'A'

Sir Matthew Nathan, bearing in mind the various operational factors laid down in November 1910, originated the first comprehensive colour scheme for the whole range of values from $\frac{1}{2}d$ to $1/-$. The colours he suggested were those of specific issued Japanese, US and Canadian stamps, and he asked for fresh essays to be printed from Hentschel (zinc) blocks in those colours.

These new essays were provided by Somerset House (Stamping Department of the Inland Revenue) on 2 March 1911. To allow a more realistic appraisal the Hentschel essays were, in many — but not all — cases, printed se-tenant with a die proof, in the same colour, of the equivalent KE7 value. (The $2\frac{1}{2}d$ values are illustrated as fig. 1). In submitting the Hentschel essays, Somerset House pointed out that it was not possible to produce the same rich colour effect from a zinc

block or even a typograph (surface-printing) die as from a stamp printed recess (line-engraved) as were most of the foreign stamps sent for matching. This set of essays, which was designated as Scheme 'A', was shown to the Vice-Controller of the London Postal Service (now the London Postal Region) for his comments. He pointed out the possibility of confusion, under operational conditions and particularly under artificial light, between the greens of the $\frac{1}{2}d$, $4d$ and $8d$ values, the blues used for the $2\frac{1}{2}d$ and $7d$, the yellows and oranges for the $3d$ and $5d$ and the mauve/purple shades of $1\frac{1}{2}d$ and $6d$. (See appended Table 'A' showing the colours used for Schemes A to DD).

Schemes 'B' and 'C'

Bearing in mind the comments made by the London Postal Service, a further set of Hentschel essays, in entirely new colours, were obtained

*Colour Scheme 'D' provisionally approved by
P.M. Lon 1st April 1911.*



Green



Red



Maroon



Brown



Blue



Grey



Orange



Light Blue.



Purple



Dutch Brown



Black

8d.



Verdant Green

9d.



*10d Purple
or
Ros.*

10d.



*1/- Purple
or
Blue.*

1/-

Fig 2

from Somerset House on 4 March and assembled as Colour Scheme B (see Table).

Although the reasons for rejecting Scheme 'B' are not on record, Somerset House was asked on 6 March to provide a new set of Hentschel essays in specified colours together with additional 9d, 10d and 1/- essays on a variety of coloured papers. This presumably, was in the light of an earlier decision by the GPO (on 17 February) that although in principle stamps of all values up to 1/- should be printed in single colours yet 'it might be found necessary after all to adopt bi-coloured stamps for some of the values between 8d and 1/-.'

As will be seen from the appended Table, the single colours specified for Scheme C were taken from those already used in Schemes 'A' and 'B', plus (for the 7d value) the grey of the Edwardian 7d. For the three top values (9d, 10d and 1/-) essays printed in black, coloured papers were used. Thus specified essays (together with a supplementary range of printings on coloured papers) were received by the GPO on 13 and 16 March, but once again the scheme ('C') was turned down.

Schemes 'D' and 'DD'

Renewed discussions at the Post Office produced some new ideas, which were embodied on 16 March in a fourth scheme ('D') with changes in the colours specified for the 1½d, 3d, 4d, 7d and 8d values (see Table). Hentschel essays in the selected colours were ordered and delivered by Somerset House on 25 March, but scheme 'D' seems apparently to have remained entirely theoretical. The reason was, once again, operational objections to several of the proposed colours, such as the use of deeply blued paper for the 10d value which was the quadruple international 2½d letter rate for which a blue stamp was already required by UPU regulations.

In the light of this a modification of scheme D, which is best designated as scheme DD, was (provisionally) approved by the Postmaster General on 3 April 1913. It will be seen from the Table that the only alterations are in the 8d to 1/-

range of values. The Hentschel essays used in making up the Post Office's copy of scheme DD (in the National Postal Museum and illustrated as figure 2) seem to consist of spares from schemes C and D, since it is dated 3 April and a set of essays in the correct colours for each value was only ordered two days later. Somerset House were asked at the same time to supply the Royal Mint with a set of similar colour essays together with a supply of all the inks used to enable the Mint in due course to provide die proofs of each value in its correct selected colour.

Halfpenny to Threepenny Colour Scheme April 1911

By this time it was becoming only too clear that no further useful progress could be made on a comprehensive colour scheme until dies became available for at least each basic design, let alone each separate value. But since only one man, J A C Harrison, could be entrusted with the engraving of the requisite head and frame dies it was unlikely that any dies beyond the Fivepenny value would be ready made before the end of 1911.

In the meantime, there was an absolute commitment to have at least some (low) values on sale by Coronation Day, 22 June 1911. By the beginning of April only two finished dies were ready: for the Halfpenny and the One Penny (Mackennals' 'Dolphin' and 'Lion' designs with the Downey head)*. J A C Harrison had also — on 15 March — finished engraving the master (no value) die of Mackennals' 'wreath' design intended for the Twopence and Threepence values.

Top priority had to be given to the ½d and 1d values, the only ones which could possibly be printed and put on sale by 22 June. Between 1 and 7 April three different sets of proofs were struck from the completed dies of these two values on various proof and (watermarked) stamp papers in green and red shades selected to match as nearly as possible colour scheme DD. Selected examples of these two values were sent to the King and approved by him on 11 April 1911.

TABLE A
ACTUAL AND PROPOSED COLOURS MAY 1910-APRIL 1911

Value	Colours of KE7 Issue	Colour Schemes					Colours Approved by the King
		Scheme 'A' 2.3.1911	Scheme 'B' 4.3.1911	Scheme 'C' 13.3.1911	Scheme 'D' (proposed) 25.3.1911	Scheme 'DD' 1.4.1911	
½d*	Green	Green SD3	Green W22	Green SD3	Green SD3	Green SD3	Green SD3
1d*	Carmine	Red SD2	Red MB101	Red SD2	Red SD2	Red SD2	Red SD2
1½d	Purple & Green	Mauve SD4	Dutch Brown MB91	Magenta MB95	Maroon SD12	Maroon SD12	—
2d	Grey-Green & Red	Brown SD5	Magenta MB95	Brown SD5	Brown SD5	Brown SD5	—
2½d*	Blue	Deep Blue SD6	Blue MB66	Deep Blue SD6	Deep Blue SD6	Deep Blue SD6	—
3d	Purple on Yellow	Yellow SD7	Orange SD16	Orange SD16	Grey SP6	Grey SD18	—
4d (1909)	Orange	Yellow-Green SD8	Bartolozzi Brown MB90	Dutch Brown MB91	Orange SD16	Orange SD16	—
5d	Purple & Blue	Orange SD9	Sage Green SD17	Light Blue SD10	Light Blue SD10	Light Blue SD10	—
6d	Fugitive Purple	Fugitive Purple SD15	Purple MB39	Purple MB13	Purple MB13	Purple MB13	—
7d (1910)	Grey	Light Blue SD10	Paynes Grey MB94	Grey SP6	Dutch Brown MB91	Dutch Brown MB91	—
8d	—	Pale Emerald SD11	Violet MB97	Maroon SD12	Black on Green No 4	Black W98	—
9d	Purple & Blue	Maroon SD12	Maroon SP60	Black on Yellow W98	Black on White W98	Verdant Green SP93	—
10d	Purple & Red	Sepia SD13	Pearl Green MB92	Black on Blue W98	Art Purple on Blue SP95	Purple on Rose SP95	—
1/-	Green & Red	Black SD14	Ruby Black SP92	Black on Rose W98	Art Purple on Rose SP95	Purple on Blue SP95	—

ALL COLOUR ESSAYS USED IN SCHEMES A—DD WERE PRINTED FROM
HENTSCHEL ZINC BLOCKS

*Values which, by UPU regulations, had to be printed in shades of green, red and blue respectively.

Suppliers of Printing Inks:

SD = Stamping Department IR
SP = Slater & Palmer

MB = Mander Brothers
W = Winstone

Stamps for Pleasure 9. The Postmark Collector

The history of the postmark goes back for hundreds of years, long before postage stamps were introduced. Prior to the Restoration letters were inscribed in manuscript with the amount due to be collected on delivery. Then Charles II re-enacted Cromwell's proposals for a revamped Post Office, and it was the new Postmaster-General, one Henry Bishop, who, in 1661, introduced the postmark — 'A stamp . . . that is put upon every letter showing the day of the month that (it) comes to the Office, so that no Letter Carrier may detain a letter . . .'

The small, circular 'Bishop marks' gradually, through many variations, developed over the years to assume the shape and style of the familiar circular datestamp ('c.d.s.'). The variations and exceptions during the 19th century included the so-called Maltese Cross, issued for use with the first postage stamps, the Penny Post 'straight line' cancellations, various types of 'killers' — numerals in barred ovals, also linked with the c.d.s. as a 'duplex' (which, too, had its deviations such as the 'spoon' and the 'shoe'), skeletons, squared circles, scrolls and the mini c.d.s. known especially to collectors of old picture postcards as 'thimbles'.

The postmarks described, and the relevant study of postal rates and routes, are the basis of British postal history, but perhaps I am 'jumping the gun' for the embryo postmark collector.

The newcomer to stamp collecting has the choice of unused stamps — perhaps in conjunction with 'First Day' postmarked covers — or 'fine used' stamps, i.e. stamps which have been postally used, bearing clear, light cancellations, preferably showing part of a circular 'town' postmark. In actual practice, the beginner usually starts with a few mint commemorative sets and is perhaps content to add the new issues as they come along. Some collectors are rather more ambitious and try to acquire the Machin definitive issues in all their different values and permutations of phosphor bands, gum and paper — the constant changes keep the specialists on their toes!

Postmarked stamps, which 'have done their duty in the post', have a special appeal.

Collectors have to seek out nicely postmarked examples, c.d.s. or slogan marks, and, as these are an extension of the straightforward collection of used stamps, they are best collected 'on piece' — usually a rectangle 4×2 in. clipped from an envelope — or on the original letter itself. Older stamps and postmarks may be quite rare on cover, and should be preserved in their original state.

Some enthusiasts collect the postmarks of villages and towns in their own county and such a collection forms an interesting sideline to the normal collection. Others look for army camps, railway cancellations ('travelling post offices') and 'paquebot' (packet-boat) marks applied to letters posted on board ships. Postmarks of the Royal Household, especially of the late Victorian and Edwardian eras, are eagerly sought.

Britain's first ever slogan postmark — BUY NATIONAL WAR BONDS NOW — was launched in London in December 1917, and it is now a collector's item. Subsequently, slogan postmarks were used only for Government-sponsored campaigns and publicity for national and local events until, in 1963, local authorities were permitted to sponsor tourist and prestige postmarks. The first pictorial postmark for tourist publicity — 'Happy Harold, cheerful warrior ready for a holiday invasion' — was introduced at Hastings in April 1963. Slogans have since become a comparatively inexpensive yet valuable means of advertising and publicity, providing unlimited scope for the postmark collector.

Readers of the *Philatelic Bulletin* will be familiar with the services offered by the Post Office for the provision of Special Handstamps and Postmark Slogans, also for special events such as the Queen's Silver Jubilee and the facilities for First Day cancellations. The British Postmark Society, founded in 1958, issues a *Quarterly Bulletin*, and interested readers should write to the Secretary, Mr T. M. Richards, Bay Horse Inn, Tunstall, Richmond, North Yorks. DL10 7QS.

JAMES WATSON

British Wildlife

by David Black, World Wildlife Fund

Britain has been aptly described as an island of a thousand landscapes — for within its relatively small area, one can find a great variety of countryside from the natural relicts of the great Caledonian pine forest in Scotland to the man-made hedgerows, pasture and woodland, so typical of the British scene. But this green and pleasant land is being eaten into by housing, roads and factories at the alarming rate of 80,000 acres a year! Our countryside is disappearing under concrete.

To fight the obvious and less obvious threats and exploitation of our valuable land, conservation organisations have developed to cope with every conceivable intrusion. There are a large number of varied organisations, both voluntary and governmental, to deal with the protection of the countryside and its wildlife. To name but a few — the Nature Conservancy Council which is the government agency dealing with all conservation matters from the effects of an oil spill in the North Sea to the establishment of a national nature reserve. The Society for the Protection of Nature Conservation (SPNC) is a voluntary organisation based in Lincolnshire, which acts as an umbrella organisation for the 40 County Naturalists' Trusts in England, Scotland and Wales. The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), a large organisation based in Bedfordshire, owns and manages nature reserves primarily of ornithological interest. On the broad conservation front there is the Council for Nature which through its regular magazine 'Habitat' and meetings keeps the Natural History Societies and others informed on current conservation frontiers.

The World Wildlife Fund is in a slightly different category — it is an international fund-raising organisation, with the British National Appeal as one of the 26 national appeals throughout the world. Its function is to raise money for the protection of wild plants, wild animals and wild places at home and abroad. Since 1961, WWF has spent £1,000,000 in Britain on a great range of projects. Surveys and protection of vulnerable species has been a feature of WWF work. Some plants in this category include our

rarest orchid, the lady's slipper orchid, the highland plant, the alpine catchfly, and animals like the little tern, merlin and large blue butterfly. Many of these animals and plants are interesting enough in themselves, but also highlight the problem of the loss of our wild places.

For example, take the humble natterjack toad, an attractive little amphibian, once common in Britain on heaths and dune slacks. The natterjack is now extinct from inland sites in Britain, and no more than 20,000 exist in scattered colonies along the coasts of East Anglia and north-west England. The main reason for its decline is human pressure, including intensive tourist development. The World Wildlife Fund has financed a national survey of the natterjack and also supported the excavation of breeding ponds in the Southport dunes in Lancashire. This is one of the natterjack's last strongholds and it is under extremely heavy pressure here, as the Southport beaches are only a few miles from Liverpool. The magnificent dune system (which makes up the Southport Dunes Site of Special Scientific Interest) has already been encroached upon by a private housing estate, a holiday camp and from the unrestricted access to the beach by cars; these factors have all contributed to the degradation of the dunes. Natterjacks favour damp dune slacks where breeding pools have been deepened and excavated with WWF help. Ainsdale Reserve is a national nature reserve within the dune system where natterjacks and the rare sand lizard still survive. One cannot, however, rely completely on this reserve, as it could soon become a mere oasis, isolated and surrounded by all the trappings of holiday development. The natterjack is one small animal that illustrates the loss of the dune habitat. Other species that indicate vulnerable habitats include the little tern and the disturbance of shingle beaches, the smooth snake and the fragmentation of southern heathland and the green-winged orchid, an attractive survivor of old meadowland.

The otter is a special case, a mammal of healthy freshwater streams and rivers, that has recently attracted a great deal of publicity. The Joint Otter Working Group, set up by the Nature

Conservancy Council, has now produced a report on the status of the otter in Britain. 'The otter is now rare or absent in some parts of Britain . . . At the turn of the century it was difficult to name a county where otters did not exist; since then there has been a substantial reduction in numbers and range, with a further decline in the early 1960s.' Otters need quiet, pollution-free water with plenty of natural cover — conditions that are these days difficult to find. While increased disturbance from recreational activities, river pollution and habitat destruction are amongst the most important factors affecting the otter, the report suggest additional causes for its decline. These include the severe winters of the early 1960s, organo-chlorine pesticides affecting the otter's breeding, the killing of otters because of fishing interests, an increasing mink population and the disturbance caused by hunting. Recommendations to protect the otter include legal protection, the establishment of otter havens and a voluntary ban on hunting. WWF, keen to protect the otter, will in future support well-designed schemes for otter havens.

WWF has already supported the purchase of over 100 nature reserves in this country, ranging from the great wetland area of Minsmere on the Suffolk coast to a small local nature reserve like a disused chalk pit in Yorkshire or a field of old pastureland in Worcestershire.

These are just a few examples of the threats to our wildlife. If you are interested in helping the wildlife cause, there are a number of organisations which need your help and through which more detailed information can be obtained.

DAVID BLACK

British Wildlife Stamps – Some Background Notes

The Hedgehog

This interesting insectivore is very widespread and has even found its way into gardens of the inner suburbs of London and other large cities. The hedgehog is a welcome visitor to the garden as it consumes a large number of harmful insects and invertebrate animals like slugs and snails.

The hedgehog is a fearless little mammal, well protected by its spiny coat and it will tackle any prey that it can overcome, including the venomous adder. Apart from badgers and foxes, Man is the hedgehog's worst enemy; thousands of these animals are killed every year on the road. In Sweden, where it is less common, it is protected, and there motorists are well educated to steer clear of hedgehogs on the road.

The Hare

There are two kinds of hare native to Britain; the one illustrated by the Post Office is the brown hare which has a widespread distribution throughout lowland Britain. 'As mad as a March hare' refers to the activities of the males who box, chase and leap about in early spring.

The young hares, called leverets, are born in forms which are no more than shallow depressions or scrapes in a field or rough pasture. The young when born are fully developed with hair and open eyes. When danger threatens, they 'freeze' with their bodies pressed closely to the ground.

The blue or mountain hare is a highland animal, stockier than the brown hare and confined to the uplands of Wales, northern England and Scotland. Like the stoat, the coat colour changes, from grey-brown in summer to white in winter.

The Red Squirrel

The red squirrel is essentially an animal of coniferous forest but it also lives in deciduous woods, especially young beech woods. It is not common in England, and although it became practically extinct by the beginning of the nineteenth century in Scotland, it has since been introduced and is now flourishing there in large coniferous plantations. The red squirrel is more cautious than the grey squirrel and is an expert climber using its large bushy tail for balance. Its food consists of almost everything vegetable, from the buds and bark of trees to seeds, fruit, nuts and fungi.

The Otter

During the last 50 years the otter has declined in numbers from many of its former haunts. The

otter in Britain is now an endangered mammal. The reasons for its decline are complex, but foremost is the disturbance and pollution of our waterways, followed by hunting and competition with another amphibious mammal, the mink. A recent report produced by the Government's conservation agency, the Nature Conservancy Council, gives a number of recommendations for the future protection of the otter; these include legal protection, a voluntary ban on hunting and the establishment of wildlife sanctuaries for otters, called otter havens.

The Badger

One of the most popular of British mammals, the badger is nocturnal and lives in underground sets, generally in woodland where there is an understory of bracken and shrubs. Their underground homes consist of a labyrinth of tunnels and chambers with many entrances. Spoil heaps outside the set contain old bedding of grass, bracken and leaves. The badger will take a great variety of food, from young rabbits to acorns and bulbs, but the most important single item of its diet is earthworms.

The young are born from January to March and the cubs remain underground for about eight weeks. The Badger Act of 1973 has given badgers welcome protection; they can no longer be killed and their coats used for shaving brush bristles. However, in the last few years direct evidence linking badgers with the spread of bovine tuberculosis in cattle has made necessary the eradication of badgers from a few isolated areas in the West Country.

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