

Philatelic Bulletin



Volume 4: Number 3 November 1966

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Introduction

In this issue we are able to give the first news of next year's stamp programme which will include the long awaited new definitive series. We continue the very interesting article on old Post Offices and our feature on the Air-graph system will bring back memories to many of our ex-service readers.

There are several items of Bureau news this month amongst which is information about an additional first day cover service for the Christmas stamps with a Bethlehem postmark. Many messages of thanks have been received at the London Bureau following the transfer of the work to Edinburgh. The staff concerned are grateful to those customers who have shown their appreciation in this way.

The Oldest Post Office in the Country

In the last month's Bulletin we traced the advent of Post Offices and described Sanquhar, Dumfries, which is the oldest we have been able to trace. We promised to give details of other very old offices and print a further selection including particulars of King's Worthy, which is the oldest Post Office in England.

King's Worthy Sub-Office, Winchester 1845

Post Office records show that a Receiving House was opened in King's Worthy in March 1845, with a salary of £3 a year to the Receiver of Letters, Noah Vincent, the first husband of the present Sub-Postmaster's grandmother.

The *Hampshire Directory* of 1855 records that one John Holdaway, ancestor of the present Sub-Postmaster, Mr J. R. Holdaway, then held the office.

Mr Holdaway says that the Post Office has been in the same building since his ancestor's time, and a family photograph of the Office

King's Worthy Post Office, about 1850



obviously taken in the middle of the 19th century is reproduced.

Shipton-under-Wychwood Sub-Office, Oxford, circa 1845

The earliest reference to this Office in Post Office records is the issue of a hand date-stamp for 'Shipton-under-Wychwood' in July 1847.

The present Sub-Postmistress, Mrs K. H. Wiggins, has a letter addressed to her great-grandfather 'Richard Cross, Post Office, Shipton-under-Wychwood' dated 1845. This is evidence that the family's home was recognised as the village's Post Office at least two years before the issue of an official date stamp. The 1841 census return shows that Richard Cross was a weaver, and, at that time, he may also have been the village's unofficial Postmaster-cum-letter carrier. In his day Shipton-under-Wychwood's letters would have been sent through Chipping Norton, the nearest Post Town, which was served by a Mail Coach service from Oxford.

Mrs Wiggins says that the Post Office has been in the same building ever since her great-grandfather's time.

Wormshill Sub-Office, Sittingbourne, 1847

Our records show that a Receiving House was opened in Wormshill in May 1847, with a salary of £3 a year to the Receiver of Letters. In 1950 the present Sub-Postmistress, Mrs Irene Bugden, bought the premises which house the Post Office today and removed her Office from the nearby cottage which had been the village's Post Office since 1923.

Mrs Bugden remembers the Office being in its present building when she was a child, and whilst examining the roof timbers soon after she bought the property she found a pile of ancient Post Office notices and instructions dating from 1849. Her exciting discovery is evidence that Wormshill's Post Office is now back in the very building that it occupied over a hundred years ago, and there can be little doubt that the building (which is about 500 years old) is also the very one in which the village's first Post Office was established in 1847.

Dennington Sub-Office, Woodbridge, circa 1847

An official Post from Framlingham was established to the village of Dennington in May 1845. Although we are unable to discover the date on which the village's first Receiving House was opened, records do suggest that it was about 1847. Dennington is included in the list of Post Offices in the first-ever *Postal Official Guide*, 1856.

When the present Sub-Postmaster, Mr B. R. Missen, took over the Office in 1955 his predecessor, now dead, told him that the Post Office had been in his family, and the same building, for 125 years, that is since 1830. So it is quite possible that before the Post Office granted an official postal service to the village in 1845 the building had been the unofficial postal centre, with the occupier

undertaking to carry the villagers' letters to and from the nearest Post Town.

Banbury Head Post Office 1849

Banbury's Post Office was moved from Parsons Street (where it had been since about 1836) to its present building in the High Street in 1849, by William Braine, Postmaster and Carrier.

The premises were bought by the Post Office in 1877, and they have since been modernised and enlarged many times. Much alteration took place in 1936 but the shell of the original building remains.

The office is only a few steps from the White Lion Inn where, in coaching days, Banbury's mail was off-loaded from the London-Birmingham Mail Coach and transferred to the official Receiving House opposite. The mail was then carried to the Post Office in Parsons Street by the town's Watchman-cum-Letter Carrier.

In 1846, just three years before the Office moved to its present building, Banbury's only Letter Carrier earned ten shillings a week, this amount being thought 'quite sufficient as he is occupied for only 6 hours a day'.

Guyhirn Sub-Office, Wisbech 1854, unofficial postal centre circa 1796

The earliest reference to Guyhirn in our records is dated 1851, when an official Messenger was appointed to serve Guyhirn and the surrounding hamlets 4 days a week. Three years later, in 1854, a Sub-Post Office was opened in the village.

The present Sub-Postmaster, Mr W. S. Cousins, says that the Post Office has always been in his family and the same building. He also says that his family's connection with the building dates from 1796 and that their shop, a grocery and drapery, has been the postal centre of the village ever since that time. This is quite possible because, in the absence of an official postal service in the village until 1851, the Cousins family may well have regularly undertaken to carry the villagers' letters to and from the nearest Post Town.

'The Airgraph System'

'A Novel and Speedy Letter Service from the Middle East Forces'. This, according to the first Press Notice issued on the subject, was the 'Airgraph' Service. The idea of transporting filmed documents instead of the actual letters was developed several years before the outbreak of the last World War by the Kodak organization, with a view to improving the existing transatlantic mail service. In 1940 however, the system was recognized by the GPO as an ideal method of dealing with the rapidly increasing volume of overseas mail.

The principle of the Airgraph system was to reduce, by photographic processing, the size of the original documents. By transporting films of letters, rather than the letters themselves, the maximum use of space on available aircraft was made. To facilitate the filming process special airgraph forms were issued. Using these it was possible for 1,700 letters to be filmed on to 100 ft. of 16 mm. film, which meant that one plane would transport 90 times the volume of correspondence than if the original documents were to be delivered. At the end of the journey the film was developed, and the prints enlarged for delivery to the addressee.

The first airgraph letters to come into this country were from troops in the Middle East. By April 1941, a photographic station had been installed at Cairo, and reproducing apparatus at the London Airgraph Headquarters. The service was highly successful, and by August of the same year it was possible for civilians in this country to send their friends and relations, stationed in the Middle East, news by this system. The staff at the London sorting office were soon dealing with up to 250,000 airgraphs a day, for the new

service was the cheapest of mail services, and by far the most efficient. On arrival at the despatching centre the airgraphs were sorted into batches, at the London office, dependent on which of the Forces the addressee was serving in, and each airgraph given an identification number. This meant that if any films were lost, or damaged en route, the airgraphs would be photographed again, and re-forwarded with the minimum delay. Six weeks after being filmed and despatched, the original airgraph forms, treated as confidential documents, were destroyed.

The service was eventually extended for civilian use, and included such countries as Australia, Canada, Cyprus, India, Nigeria Nyasaland, Rhodesia and Zanzibar. In 1943 however, the public began to use more of the lightweight air letters, and it was decided to discontinue the airgraph system, without which it would have been impossible for the Post Office to have maintained an efficient overseas postal service throughout the War

Special Issues available from Philatelic Bureau

Pictorial Landscape	4d, 6d, 1s 3d, 1s 6d
World Cup	4d, 6d, 1s 3d
Pictorial Birds	4d, (blocks of 4)
Pictorial Technology	4d, 6d, 1s 3d, 1s 6d
Battle of Hastings	4d, (blocks of 6)
	6d, 1s 3d

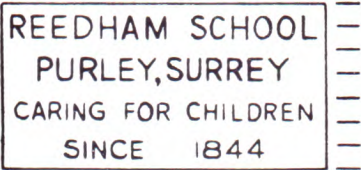
These stamps are available with or without phosphor lines.

Postmark Slogans

The postmark slogan 'Remember To Use The Postal Code' is to be employed in the transposed position at Croydon (two dies), Caterham, Coulsdon and Mitcham from 26th October until further notice. This will be used instead of the slogan 'Remember to Use Your Postal Code' announced in Bulletin No. 2 Volume 4. Covers for reposting to the Head Postmaster, Croydon.

Specimen not available

'Reedham School Purley Surrey, Caring for Children Since 1844' will be used on 20 dies in the standard and transposed positions during the period 7th November to 4th December 1966. The Offices include Guildford (transposed), Epsom (transposed), Motherwell (transposed) and London Mount Pleasant (standard). Covers for reposting to the Head Postmaster concerned.



'Britain Leads World In Helping Spastics' will be used on 69 dies in the standard and transposed positions during the period 14th November to 11th December 1966. Offices using the slogan include Leicester (standard), Bolton (transposed), Bristol (standard) and Colchester (transposed). Covers for reposting to the Head Postmasters concerned.

Specimen not available

'Brighton Festival 14-30 April 1967' will be in use in the transposed position at Brighton during the period 16th November 1966 to 30th April 1967. Covers for reposting to the Head Postmaster, Brighton.

Specimen not available

'Invest In Success – Come to Jarrow' will be in use for a further year at Jarrow from 26th November 1966 to 25th November 1967. Covers for reposting to the Head Postmaster, Jarrow.



'Are You On The New Voters Lists? – Check Now' will be used on 150 dies in the standard position during the period 28th November to 11th December 1966. The offices featuring the slogan include Aberdeen, Ballymena, Stoke Newington, Aldershot, Peterborough, Doncaster, Stockport, Exeter and Bridgend. Covers for reposting to the Head Postmasters of the offices concerned.

Specimen not available

'The Bright Choice For Family Holidays Ramsgate' will be in use in the transposed position at Ramsgate during the period 1st December 1966 to 30th November 1967. Covers for reposting to the Head Postmaster, Ramsgate.



'See Harlow's Christmas Lights' will be in use in the transposed position at Harlow during the period 1st to 31st December 1966. Covers for reposting to the Head Postmaster, Harlow.

Specimen not available

'Industry Welcomed Here Brecon Apply Town Clerk Brecon' will be in use in the transposed position at Brecon during the period 1st January 1967 to 31st December 1967. Covers for reposting to the Head Postmaster, Brecon.



Special Handstamp

A special handstamp engraved '1000 Years Of Poland's Christianity' will be in use on 11th December at Manchester. Covers for reposting to the Head Postmaster, Manchester.

Persian Gulf

Postage stamps issued by the Persian Gulf States of Bahrain and Muscat-Oman are no longer available from the Philatelic Bureau. Customers should obtain their requirements from their local dealer or from the Postal Administration concerned.

Philatelic Bureau

Our readers are reminded that the Bureau is now fully operational in Edinburgh for all services; orders, remittances, correspondence and enquiries must be directed to the following address:

The Manager,
GPO Philatelic Bureau,
2-4 Waterloo Place,
EDINBURGH 1.

Enquiries about the *content* of the Bulletin should continue to be addressed to The Editor, Philatelic Bulletin, PSD/OMB, GPO Headquarters, St Martins le Grand, London EC1.

Philatelic Counter in London

Now that the London Bureau has closed, all stamps formerly on sale at the public counter and all future special issues, will be available at the special Philatelic Sales counter, which has been opened at the London Chief Office in King Edward Street, EC1 (opposite to Post Office Headquarters).

The National Postal Museum

London Chief Office,
King Edward Building,
King Edward Street,
London EC1.

The National Postal Museum aims to stimulate an interest in British postage stamps and in particular to provide philatelists with information about the earliest adhesive postage stamps in the world. As is generally known Uniform Penny Postage and the invention of postage stamps was a unique 19th century British achievement which was later to be adopted universally to the benefit of world commerce and learning. It is therefore fitting that this event and what followed from it should be commemorated in the city which saw the birth of the modern postal system.

The establishment of the Museum resulted from a proposal made by Reginald M. Phillips of Brighton who, in 1965, with singular generosity gave to the Postmaster General, in trust for the nation, his unique and extremely valuable collection of 19th century British postage stamps together with a capital sum for its maintenance so that those who share his interests may enjoy them in perpetuity. The Phillips Collection is of so splendid a quality that a selected exhibit from it was awarded the Grand Prix of the London International Stamp Exhibition held at the Royal Festival Hall in July 1960.

Additional to the Phillips Collection the British Post Office has in its possession a great deal of other material of interest to philatelists and postal historians including the registration sheets for almost every postage label issued since the commencement of penny postage in 1840. These officially approved specimens are of course unique. Initially the Museum is being built round these two collections. Later the Post Office collection of stamps issued by member countries in the Universal Postal Union will be added to the Museum. This 'Berne collection' is an almost complete record of every stamp issued by every postal administration in the world since 1874.

It is not possible to display so huge a range of material at one time: moreover for reasons of conservation, as philatelists will appreciate, it is undesirable to subject stamps to light for prolonged periods. The displays will therefore be changed at intervals so that each exhibition will be meaningful in its own right. By this means it is hoped to sustain and nourish a lively interest in the Museum and to encourage those interested in philately and the development of the posts to use the resources of the Museum for further study.

The reference room of the Museum is being stocked with periodicals, books and other information to which specialised readers will have access for particular purposes. Pamphlets and postcards of more general interest together with lecture notes and illustrative material will also be available. So far as is practicable the Museum staff will assist enquirers but they can neither accept liability for opinions expressed nor give valuations. Approved readers will be given facility to examine items not currently on display.

Special arrangements will be made for philatelic societies to visit the Museum and from time to time there will be lectures on the collections.

It is the intention of the Post Office to create in this Museum an environment which gives personal pleasure to those who visit it, to provide information to those who seek it and to stimulate a taste for research.

With the establishment of this National Postal Museum around the nucleus of the well-documented Phillips Collection, an erudite account of which has been written by Mr Robson Lowe (to be published as soon as is possible), yet another milestone has been

passed in the philatelic history of Great Britain.

A short account of the Reginald M. Phillips Collection is available from the Museum, price 5s.



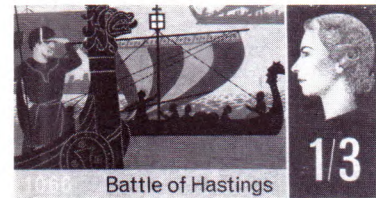
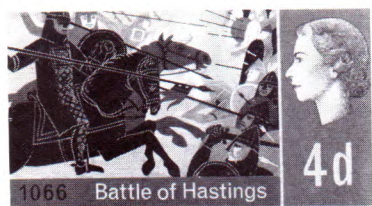
The symbol of the National Postal Museum, (*the Maltese Cross design for the first cancellation mark 1840*).

Times of opening and how to get there

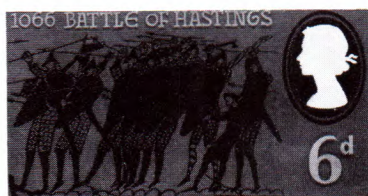
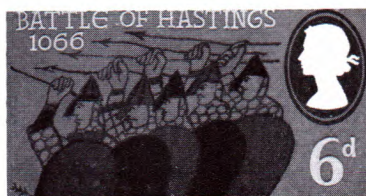
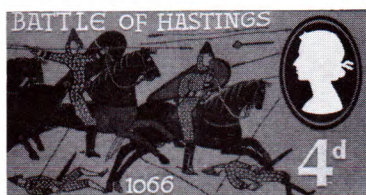
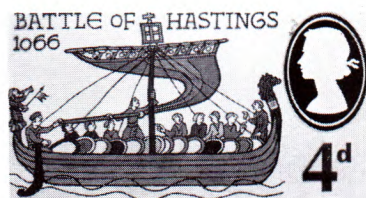
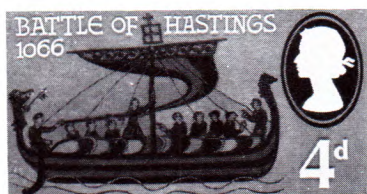
Normally open Monday to Friday, 10.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m.

King Edward Street is a turning off Newgate Street almost opposite St Paul's Underground Station. Buses 7, 8, 22, 25.

Unaccepted Stamp Designs
Battle of Hastings Issue



Gordon Huntley





Margaret Calvert



Cecil Keeling

Christmas Stamps First Day Cover Service From Bethlehem

An additional first day cover service to that provided by the Bureau will be available bearing a Bethlehem, Llandeilo, Carms. postmark.

The Head Postmaster at Llanelly will provide a full service on the official first day envelopes at an inclusive charge of 4s 9d (75 cents), and addressed envelopes sent to him for postmarking and posting on the day of issue will be accepted at a charge of 2s 9d (45 cents). These envelopes should measure not less than $3\frac{1}{2}$ in $\times$ $5\frac{1}{2}$ in. and allow an adequate space at the top of the envelope for stamps and, where applicable, for an airmail label to be affixed.

All applications should be sent to the Head Postmaster, LLANELLY, Carms. as soon as possible and in any case not later than November 24th 1966.

We are sorry that we were not able to give earlier notice of this additional facility, but the decision to provide the service was made as soon as it became obvious that the service would be generally welcomed.

Our deposit account customers who have standing orders will receive their covers bearing an Edinburgh date stamp. Should any of these customers require covers with a Bethlehem postmark, will they please address their order, accompanied by the appropriate remittance, to the Head Postmaster, Llanelly, as it is impracticable for a transfer of credit to be made on this occasion.

We would like to stress that no orders for mint stamps should be sent to Llanelly or Bethlehem. All such orders must be despatched to the Philatelic Bureau, Edinburgh.

Special Stamps in 1967

The first news of next year's stamp programme was given recently by the Postmaster General. He announced that a special issue will be made to mark the achievement of free trade within the European Free Trade Association and that more pictorial stamps will be issued. These will show British flora, British paintings and British discovery.

The theme of the issue on British discovery would be scientific and medical, while the stamps of British paintings would show famous pictures, possibly including one by a contemporary artist.

Mr Short said that he intended to seek the advice of an acknowledged authority on wild flowers – the Rev. Keeble Martin – in connection with the planned special issue on British flora.

The Christmas stamps for 1967, will be on traditional Christmas themes and will not be the result of a children's competition.

The new definitive stamps will probably start to be issued in the spring or early summer of 1967. They will bear a new picture of the Queen and with a simplicity of design will be among the most beautiful ever issued in Britain.

We will announce dates of issue and denominations as soon as they have been decided upon.

Conditions

The Philatelic Bureau will be pleased to supply any number of stamps shown on its current stock list, subject to stocks being available, in mint condition only. For stamps not shown on the list, enquiries should be made of a stamp dealer.

We do not guarantee to supply stamps from particular cylinders or plates, position or cylinder blocks, particular editions of books or books with selected watermark.

Stamps are NOT supplied cancelled to order. Remittances, which *must* be sent with orders should be made payable to 'GPO Philatelic Bureau' and should include a handling charge of 6d for orders under 10s, and 3s 9d for orders of 10s and over (9d and 4/- respectively for orders to Overseas Countries, other than the Commonwealth). For orders to be sent by Air Mail the cost of the airmail postage should be added. Stamps are not accepted as payment for orders.

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