

Philatelic Bulletin

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Editorial

We reach a famous milestone this month for James Watson's series on British Special stamps has reached the point where the very first Philatelic Bulletin started describing our new issues. The Bulletin now contains in its many volumes details of every commemorative stamp issued by the Post Office since 1924. Our thanks are due to Mr Watson for his contribution to this record.

Our major feature will please those seeking background information on the Independence of America—the more so as Benjamin Franklin who appears on the stamp was closely involved in the postal services of his times.

Coming Events

Festival of Stamps

This year's Festival will be held at a different venue—the Central Hall, Westminster, London SW1 (almost opposite Westminster Abbey) between 4 and 8 May.

On show will be dazzling displays of stamps and other exhibits among which it is hoped to feature the Centenary of the Royal National Rose Society, the Diamond Jubilee of Cub Scouts, 100 years of the Telephone, 500 years of printing in England together with various Forces stands.

Souvenirs will be available to visitors and mail posted at the Festival will be cancelled with a special postmark. The Festival will be open from 2–8 pm on 4th and 10 am–8 pm on other days.

Visitors will enjoy this unique event which is not a stamp exhibition in the accepted sense but which aims instead to demonstrate how stamp collecting links with many other hobbies and pastimes.

A major part of the 'Printing' section will be devoted to a presentation of colour proof sheets of the Philatelic Bulletin on show in London for the first time.

Clyde 76

12–26 May 1976

Radio Clyde, the local radio station for Glasgow and the West of Scotland, is planning and co-ordinating a festival to be called 'CLYDE 76' from 12–26 May 1976. The Festival is designed to stimulate awareness of the many cultural and physical assets available in the West of Scotland.

As part of the Festival, the Glasgow Philatelic Society will be sponsoring an exhibition in the Museum of Transport, Glasgow. The theme of the GPS display will be linked to the American Bi-Centennial and will include many examples of transatlantic mails and postal markings. Mr Robson Lowe will be exhibiting part of his fine US collection also.

Gems from the RM Phillips Collection

XXXV Colour Trials from the NSW Diadem Plate

This month's gem is one of a very rare set of 12 miniature sheets in the Reginald M Phillips's Collection—there is a rather similar but smaller set in the Royal Philatelic Collection.



Messrs Perkins Bacon, who were rather proud of the recess-printed 'Diadem' issue which they had produced in 1854-56 for the Colony of New South Wales, had laid down a miniature plate of six impressions of the 1d-3d design, which could be used for various trials. The value and the word 'POSTAGE' were erased on the transfer roller before laying down.

Impressions from this plate appear to have been taken for two purposes. The most significant, from the Great Britain point of view, was the production of colour trials in May 1870 for the new Halfpenny value. Other colour proofs from the NSW plate were used to make charts for Colonial Governments to show the range of colours available in the recess stamps printed by Perkins Bacon & Co.

The twelve sheets in the R M Phillips Collection seem to come from more than one series of trials. Three, in shades of olive to orange-yellow on white wove paper, are marked O, M and N in manuscript. Then there are four sheets, numbered 1 to 4, all in various shades of rose to carmine-lake, on ungummed blued paper. Two sheets, in carmine vermilion (illustrated) and lemon-yellow, are on wove paper and finally there are three sheets on different type papers; in black on horizontal laid, green on vertical laid and yellow on white wove paper.

The Queen's head on the NSW 'Diadem' die is of particular interest as it was engraved by Frederick Heath, who collaborated with his father, Charles in engraving the head used on the Penny Black and its successors.

A G RIGO DE RIGHI

Gloucester Philatelic Society

The Gloucestershire Philatelic Society will be staging the Three Counties Federation Day on Saturday 8 May 1976 at the Leisure Centre, Gloucester.

The doors will open at 10.30 am until 5.30 pm and the programme of events will include the annual Federation competition, when 60 frames of competitors material will be on display.

A Stamp Fair, in which twenty dealers will be involved, is another of the special events scheduled to take place.

There will be ample car parking and refreshment facilities in the Leisure Centre. Price of admission: Adults 20p, Children 10p.

21. National Productivity Year 1962

In the light of present-day industrial and inflationary crises and problems, the launching of 'National Productivity Year' by the Duke of Edinburgh in November 1962 can be seen in retrospect as a determined attempt to lift the nation out of its economic rut, and as a spur to greater productivity.



The special stamps issued for this occasion, on the 14th of November, were virtually Britain's first 'campaign' stamps; they were also David Gentleman's first accepted stamp designs and they were the first commemorative series to appear with phosphor bands for electronic sorting, as well as on the normal (plain) paper.

For his designs, David Gentleman extracted the arrow from the 'NPY' emblem and applied it to three different motifs—'units of productivity' on the 2½d green and red, represented as children's toy blocks, each adorned

with upward-thrusting arrows; 'nation-wide productivity' on the 3d blue and violet, with two overlapping arrows superimposed upon a map of the United Kingdom; and, on the 1s 3d red, blue and green, soaring arrows depicted in close formation, evidently inspired by the Farnborough Air Show and representing 'unified productivity'.

The stamps were photogravure-printed as usual by Harrison and Sons—well, perhaps not quite 'as usual'. There were numerous mishaps in paper and printing which provided a host of flaws and varieties for the collector (and for hawk-eyed catalogue editors!), while there were several printings of the low values, characterised by their distinct shades. The basic designs, comprising the Queen's portrait with an oval medallion, the 'NPY' emblem, separate motifs, figures of value and commemorative inscription, were straightforward enough. But during the first printing of the 2½d, for example, both green cylinders were seriously damaged, hence the numerous repairs and retouches in later printings. Some of the 3d printings were defective and had to be replaced, and the discovery of some of the 3d and 1s 3d stamps with the Queen's head (light blue colour) omitted caused great excitement.

The 'multiple crowns' watermark was inverted on the 2½d and 3d denominations, and for an interesting reason. Edge cracks were discovered in the paper after coating, and it was feared that the brittle paper would disintegrate during the gumming process. To obviate this, the edges were trimmed prior to gumming and subsequently fractured and trimmed to size in the usual way, but the extra trimming process resulted in the finished reels of paper being wound in a reverse direction to normal, and printing from these reels resulted in the inverted watermarks. The 1s 3d stamps were reeled and printed in the normal way and have upright watermarks.

Quantities sold (phosphor in brackets) were: 2½d 99,240,000 (7,320,090); 3d 182,580,000 (13,320,000); and 1s 3d 8,832,000 (1,132,000).

JAMES WATSON

Stamp Collecting for the Beginner

Part 2 Starting a Collection

How does one start a collection?
What does one need to start with?

It is advisable to start with a general collection. By 'general' one means a collection of stamps of all countries, or of a group of countries such as the Commonwealth. It is by handling as many stamps of as many countries as possible that one gets the 'feel' of the hobby. The budding collector will be able to study the different places, issues, political changes, or change of name etc. Modern stamps which illustrate a country's culture, its places of interest and historic buildings, its wild life and so on are fascinating, attractive and an endless source of information. By learning about them one will absorb a great deal of general knowledge. It is after handling so many different stamps of many countries that the new collector is more likely to be able to select and decide on the limit of his particular field of interest whether it be an issue, a country or a subject.

One should save all that comes ones way, stamps, envelopes, postal stationery, newspaper wrappers, anything in fact which has a postal use and which is therefore relevant to the hobby. Items should be classified for example, by country or subject matter, thus enabling swift and easy access to a specific item. In time acquisitions will find their rightful place within a general collection.

What happens next? How does one store these things? There are stock books, shoe boxes, albums, transparent envelopes; each has its use. Envelopes, or covers as they are called in the hobby, are easy to keep in boxes where they are less likely to become creased or damaged; they should never be folded in storage. Cover albums are very good, but they need frequent rearrangement when new acquisitions are added to the collection. Stamps are best kept in stock books to start with, but the time will come when there are enough to consider mounting them on album sheets. The choice of album is very much a personal one. By using a stock book, the stamps can be moved and rearranged, and spaces left vacant to await the arrival of the elusive items. But the

rightful place for a stamp collection is mounted in the stamp album.

We now have some of the basic requirements to start collecting; some accumulated material, boxes, stock book and album, and of course the most important tool of the hobby, a pair of tweezers. Collectors should familiarise themselves with tweezers as soon as collecting starts, because they are the means of preventing damage to otherwise delicate stamps. The tweezers should be of the special type with flat ends, obtainable from stamp dealers, not the sharp variety. Using them prevents the grease from ones fingers inadvertently marking the stamp, or from spoiling the gum. Good peelable hinges and transparent photo-corner mounts (for use with covers or large items) are recommended, and in due course a magnifying lens and perforation gauge. None of these need to be very expensive, and with them in your possession the hunt for the stamps is on. The hobby can develop at your own speed, receiving regular or only occasional attention, but obviously the more time which can be devoted to it, the greater the interest and satisfaction.

How does one obtain stamps? By asking all friends and relations to pass on what they receive on letters, is one way. The waste paper basket in the office which can also yield some surprising material is another, but the number of stamps accumulated in this way is seldom enough to complete the sets of any issue (there are nearly always a great number of duplicates of the common values and none of the less common!) With the use of a catalogue one should then make a list of 'wants', and armed with this list, go to a local stamp centre, exhibition or dealer, and look for the missing items of the sets, and if possible, buy them. It is often when looking for these items that one sees other interesting things which one then gets as additions to the collection. This is alright when only one or two stamps are wanted to complete a set, otherwise it can be an expensive way to buy single items. Another way of getting a basic collection on which one can

work is to see what is being offered at auction sales, or to look through dealers sales of collections, for dealers often buy a lot of material in order to get a few special items. This is quite a good way of getting a quantity of basic material which can then be sorted out and mounted according to ones own taste and selection. What about correspondence with friends or relatives in other countries? If ones correspondent is also a collector then one can always offer the stamps of Great Britain on an exchange basis.

Joining a local stamp club will be a great help. Not only do the majority of clubs offer talks and displays from which one can learn more about the hobby, but a great number of them have a 'stamp packet' circuit for their members. Stamp packets are formed within the clubs by the packet secretary handling the booklets of material which have been prepared by members, from their own duplicates; priced (by the owner) usually well below catalogue prices, and then circulated. The member, when he receives his packet, can then, within the comfort of his own home, go through the booklets, take out and sign for any of the stamps which he wants, enter details of the purchase on a special sheet and pay the packet secretary for stamps taken from the booklets. The club usually takes a small percentage of the sale which goes to the club funds.

Local stamp clubs or societies also have occasional auctions, their frequency varies according to the society. Such auctions are usually well supplied with material suitable for most collectors. Clubs are also places where collectors can discuss stamps and obtain information, and above all, where new friendships can be formed.

By following any of these suggestions, the new stamp collector should be able to accumulate a good basic quantity of stamps from which he can derive hours of enjoyment. The time will soon come when he has enough material available for mounting in an album. In my next article I shall discuss how to mount a collection.

ALMA GRUNBERG

Bicentennial of American Independence Picture Postcard

A new picture postcard illustrating an enlarged version of the 11p Bicentennial of American Independence Stamp, will be available for sale during the latter part of May from the Philatelic Bureau, and at all philatelic counters, price 7p.

Royal Air Force Covers

The third cover in the new Royal Air Force series commemorating famous aviation personalities will feature Marshal of the Royal Air Force Sir Arthur Harris the wartime leader of Bomber Command. The cover will depict the Lancasters of No 50 Squadron leaving on a raid in 1943 and will be cancelled with a commemorative handstamp (BFPS 1531) for the Diamond Jubilee of No 50 Squadron to be used on 15 May 1976. The cover will be flown by that squadron and should be available on or about 25 June from Flt Lt R Head, No 50 Squadron, RAF Waddington, Lincoln at 35p plus 6½p postage.

The first and second covers in this Series commemorating R J Mitchell (HA1) and Captain A Ball VC DSO MC (HA2) respectively can be obtained from the Royal Air Force Museum (PRO), Aerodrome Road, Hendon, London NW9 5LL at 35p each plus postage 6½p. The proceeds are devoted to the Royal Air Force Museum Appeal Fund.

On 15 May the first cover in the 1976 programme of the RAF Air Display Series will be issued at Biggin Hill. It will depict the Silver Star free fall parachute team, be cancelled by the special Biggin Hill Air Fair handstamp (BFPS 1530) and then carried by the team in a free fall flight. The cover will be available on 15 May at Biggin Hill or from Major D Swanson, Home PCCD RE, Inglis Barracks, Mill Hill, London NW7 at 35p plus 6½p postage. All proceeds will go to the Army Benevolent Fund.

Visit of the American Ambassador

In one of her first official engagements, the new US Ambassador to Britain, Mrs Anne Armstrong, visited Postal Headquarters to see the 11p postage stamp issued to mark the occasion of the 200th Anniversary of American

Independence. Our photograph shows Sir William Rylands, (left) Chairman of the Post Office, and Mr Alex Currall, Managing Director of Post, discussing the new stamp with Mrs Armstrong.



British Forces Postal Service Cover

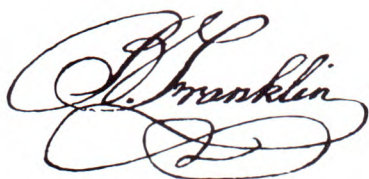
To mark the occasion of the 25th Anniversary of the establishment of SHAPE, the British Forces Postal Service issued a commemorative postal cover and a special 'one day' date stamp BFPS 1951 on 2 April 1976.

The envelope is printed in colour with the SHAPE shield and National Flags of the fifteen contributing nations. The special date stamp comprises the SHAPE badge and motto, the date and inscription '25th Anniversary SHAPE'. An insert giving a brief outline of SHAPE history since inception and a list of Supreme Commanders is contained in the

envelope. Commemorative envelopes stamped with a 10p stamp are available at a cost of 45p from Philatelic Officer, 115 PCCU UNIT RE BFPO 26.

Residential Philatelic Course

A residential week-end philatelic course has been arranged at Beamish Hall, Stanley, Co Durham from 14-16 May 1976. The syllabus and application forms are available from Dorothy M Martin, 46 Briardene Crescent, Kenton Park, Newcastle-upon-Tyne NE3 4RY. A stamped addressed envelope 6" x 9" should be enclosed.



and the American Independence

'The Americans', according to *1066 and All That*, 'started by pouring the tea into Boston Harbour and went on pouring things into Boston Harbour until they were quite Independent, thus causing the United States.' Sellers and Yeatman's assessment of the American Revolution might puzzle the historian, but as far as most of us British are concerned, that's about the size of it.

Since the British after 200 years are surprisingly insensitive about this break in Anglo-American history—even going to the lengths of issuing a stamp to commemorate it—it may be a good time to look a little more closely at events around 1776 and the people whose influence shaped the new nation.

Wars tend to be sandwiched between vigorous bouts of diplomacy, and the American War of Independence is no exception. The fierce engagements between colonists and redcoats—breathing the powerful names of Lexington, Concord, Bunker Hill and later Saratoga and Valley Forge—both followed, and were the prelude to long and anxious negotiations.

The Americans of 1776 had problems. Since the earliest colonies were set up in ancient times, they were milked for profit by the colonising powers. The European colonies in North and South America were no exception. It is only in the last century or so that the need to strike a balance between plunder and responsibility has been grudgingly recognised. In the 18th century warnings to the British that they were in danger of killing the goose that laid the golden eggs went unheard.

British jurisdiction over the American colonies had long been easy-going, if capricious, but eventually, finding itself possessed of thirteen colonies, including the former French territories, the British government adopted a more serious approach. The colonies were certainly well enough established to be worth the milking—and the Americans were not slow to resent the feeling of being squeezed dry by swingeing duties and taxes imposed by a distant power which could not be said to have



Reproduced by courtesy of Radio Times Hulton Picture Library.

their interests at heart. The argument pivoted on the principle 'No taxation without representation,' a reasonable enough one in modern terms but one that, if accepted, would have dealt a death blow to many European economies in the 18th century. At a time when growing industrial towns like Sheffield and Birmingham were still unrepresented in Parliament, many of the British regarded this claim as downright eccentric.

The Stamp Act of 1765 was only the start of the new toughness, but an unfortunate one for the British. By taxing newspapers, advertisements, legal documents and a variety of printed matter, it hit the professional and commercial middle classes. Natural moderation gave way to strong feelings, and the Americans reacted by virtually suspending trade with Britain, while some otherwise sober citizens banded together as 'Sons of Liberty' who over a number of years committed all kinds of revolutionary act—it was a group of Sons of Liberty who in 1773 turfed that offending and heavily-taxed tea into the waters of Boston Harbour.

The British, undeterred by colonial out-

rage, continued with a range of taxes, heavy customs duties and restrictions; and the Americans continued to react against what some, though not all of them, already saw as a gross infringement of their rights. The Americans took drastic steps against the British measures, and the British imposed stringent legislation, the 'Co-ercion Acts', to keep the colonies in their place. In this way a chain of provocation and retaliation was set up and attitudes on both sides hardened accordingly.

Several times over a number of years agitation flared and then died down again. The Boston Massacre in March, 1770, was triggered by a snowball attack on some red-coats. On the very same day a whole sheaf of taxes were repealed, but the tea tax remained, to become the focus of American grievances.

These resentments were formally expressed in the Declaration of Rights and Grievances passed by the First Continental Congress which met in radical mood in Philadelphia in 1774. It was addressed to both the people of Britain and the people of the colonies, and the Congress passed, along with this, a softer-toned petition to King George III. The thought of war was in everyone's minds, but most of the delegates saw it as a last resort.

The Americans could not be accused of mindless fanaticism. They had their extremists, like Samuel Adams, the 'Machiavel of Chaos', and Patrick Henry, but thoughtful men like Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin were probably more characteristic.

In 1765 the moderate and urbane Benjamin Franklin had believed in the 'firm Loyalty to the Crown and faithful Adherence to the Government, which is the Safety as well as the Honour of the Colonies,' but the Second Continental Congress in Philadelphia in May 1775 found him, newly returned from England, without any serious hope of conciliation. While men like Samuel Adams were determined on revolution at any price, the colonials had moderates like Franklin to thank for leaving no stone unturned in the search for a settlement which would satisfy both sides.



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The old State House in Philadelphia, now known as Independence Hall, where Franklin and his fellow Congressmen signed the Declaration of Independence on 4th July, 1776.

With the admirable Jefferson, Franklin was one of the men who drafted the crucial Declaration of Independence (it was said by some that he wasn't given the main task of drafting the document because he couldn't be trusted not to hide a joke somewhere among its earnest lines). It was Franklin who talked peace to the English General Howe, while thinking through defence plans with Washington, in case the worst should happen. And Franklin was one of the commission of three who went to France and negotiated a commercial and defensive treaty with the French when things looked black with the British. Hero of the European Enlightenment, a man such as Franklin had more personal sway than the most powerful ambassador. And after the inevitable and painful war had run its course, and Cornwallis had been defeated at Yorktown, the 75-year-old Franklin was to be found in Paris negotiating the peace, alternately taking an active part in talks with the British commissioners and soothing the French foreign minister's suspicions that he had been left out in the cold.



The American commissioners who signed the peace treaty with Britain in 1783. From left to right they are John Jay, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Henry Laurens, David Hartley. The English commissioners could not be persuaded to pose, and the artist, Benjamin West, left the portrait unfinished.

Photograph reproduced by courtesy of The Henry Francis Du Pont Winterthur Museum

When an infant nation bursts from its shell it is judged, not on any past showing, but on future promise. And how better to assess this than by watching the leaders whose influence has formed and moulded the embryo?

A man like Franklin would be an asset to any emergent state. But who was this man who was at home in three countries, so much so that he felt himself under suspicion 'in England, of being too much of an American and in America, of being too much of an Englishman?' The son of a Northamptonshire man, a tallow-chandler and soap-maker, Benjamin Franklin had the American's ability to get on with all kinds and classes of people. The French welcomed him, a true figure of the Enlightenment,

as a man after their own hearts in philosophy, cultivation and urbanity. The English respected and admired him as a man of ideas, whose scrupulous investigations and lucid expositions ranked him with the leading scientists of his time.

Born and raised in Boston, Franklin was largely self-educated. He early on became a successful printer, and made his base in Philadelphia. He read widely, bought a newspaper which under his control acquired the largest circulation in America, wrote essays, and compiled a runaway best-seller called *Poor Richard's Almanack*, a collection of familiar sayings and proverbs adapted for poor and simple people.

Franklin was a great improver and a great investigator. He was constantly involved in public life and loved to sponsor innovations. His Philadelphia projects included the city police, paving, lighting, a circulating library, hospital and fire service, and he was the founding father of a number of academies and institutions.

As a postmaster of note, Franklin makes a fitting subject for a postage stamp. And as a postmaster he was unquestionably a success. His first taste of the work was as Philadelphia's postmaster for sixteen years. At his own request (unusual for Franklin) he was made Joint Deputy Postmaster-General for the Colonies in 1753. He took his responsibilities very seriously, going on inspection tours of the colonies to see how things really worked, and made himself the envy of generations of future postmasters-general in many countries by not only making the postal service more efficient, but by making it pay as well.

Following a political upheaval and intrigue, he was dismissed by the British from his post in 1774. However, he was made a member of Congress and elected by the Americans to the position of Postmaster General on 26 July 1775. During his time in this office, he made the carrying of newspapers a source of profit, instituted a local penny post such as then existed in London and generally speeded the transit of mail. After playing his part in the drafting of the Declaration of Independence, he was appointed Minister to France in 1776.

But the love of his life was science. He was fascinated by the puzzles posed by nature, and when he gave up business in his early 40s it was to give himself to science full-time. He was a tireless experimenter and corresponded with the foremost scientists of the time. Best-known for his extensive work in the field of electricity, he had a down-to-earth approach to whatever he tackled—even in flying a kite to establish the connection between lightning and electricity.

But Franklin was too valuable to be allowed to bury himself in science. Only six years after

retiring he was embarked on a career of politics and diplomacy which lasted the rest of his life. Based in London for 16 years he represented in all five colonies, including his own Pennsylvania, as colonial agent. He was tempted to settle in London, but his sense of duty was too strong.

Over the years he was involved in a number of scandals, but weathered them all to become President of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania towards the end of his life. Dying of a painful illness at the age of 84 Franklin was given an impressive funeral by the city of Philadelphia while the French mourned his death in public and in private. Franklin died, respected by all the world, and a profound asset to the new nation over whose birth he had watched so protectively and whose budding interests he had so energetically fostered.

LUCY RAYBOULD

Concorde Souvenir Cover

Concorde makes its first scheduled transatlantic flight to Washington on 24 May 1976. Although no mail will be carried we are offering a souvenir cover on that day.

The cover for the occasion has been specially designed by Philip Sharland and shows a Concorde in flight. It will carry the large 20p definitive stamp and be cancelled with an official pictorial handstamp. Serviced covers will be posted at and be given a unique cachet, 'Posted at the Concorde Departure Terminal'. Posting boxes will be available in the Terminal.

Customers who are able to visit the Head Post Office Hounslow or the post offices or special sales counter at London Airport on 24 May will be able to buy a serviced cover addressed to the Head Postmaster Hounslow for 45p. Those wishing to apply by post should direct their orders to the Philatelic Bureau Edinburgh. Their covers will be addressed as requested and passed to London Airport for posting and cancelling with the handstamp and cachet. The price is 45p each. Reposting facilities will be available at the airport.

The History of the Aerogramme and the Start of Commercial Air Mail — Part Three

World War II

By the outbreak of the Second World War on September 3 1939 aviation in both its civil and military applications, had been highly developed. As was the case in the First World War, this was a period that witnessed tremendous progress in aeronautics. Aeroplanes developed in size, range and speed beyond anything dreamed of in pre-war years. The jet age dawned with the development, in Britain and Germany, of jet-propelled aircraft in 1941 and practical application to fighter planes came before the war in Europe had ended.

Airborne troops in the Low Countries in 1940, in Crete in 1941 and in Normandy in 1944, changed the course of whole campaigns. The great naval battles of the Pacific theatre of operations were largely fought by carrier-based aircraft. The Battle of Britain was an aerial one and it was by means of ever larger and more sophisticated bombers that total war came to have such grim meaning for the civilian populations of countries far removed from the front line.

Before the war the carriage of letters by aircraft was still regarded as something of a luxury; however, the war played an enormous part in the development of air mail. The carriage of mail for military personnel increased tremendously and the British postal authorities and military forces of the British Commonwealth throughout the world quickly adopted the Air Letter form as the most feasible method to provide troops with a fast medium of communication which was light enough to be carried by the already overtaxed capacity of military aeroplanes.

Numerous different types of form exist, some printed officially and some privately. These lightweight folding sheets which all stem from an Englishman's initiative and ingenuity, enabled our forces overseas to write to their families and friends at home, thus keeping moral high.

Special Christmas greetings forms were issued from Christmas 1942. 'So far and yet so near in our hearts as we wish you a Merry Christmas', were the words printed inside a

Middle East Command, Air Mail Letter Card of 1942. The enemy had no such links between soldier and civilian.

During the early part of the War, the Australian Government asked Mr Gumbley if he could provide a cheap and rapid means of communication between troops and their families as an aid to maintaining morale. He suggested the adaptation and use of his Iraq Air Mail Letter Card and this was readily taken up by the Australian command and they issued one form to each man every week.

The first forces Air Mail Letter Cards were introduced on April 3 1941 for the Armed Forces in the battle areas of the Middle East and Central Mediterranean. It was exclusively an Army Form bearing the imprint 'A.F.W. 3077' or 'Army Form W 3077'.

The paper was of very poor quality, in grey, stone, or buff of various different shades. The front and back panels of the forms were overlaid with a close printing of minute dots to give privacy to the correspondence on the interior of the folded sheet had no imprinted stamps and examples bear adhesive stamps of many Commonwealth countries.

It is worth noting that not one of these special sheets was printed in Great Britain to take civilian greetings out to the brave men and women in the combat zones until December 7 1942, when Air Letter forms with the 'Army Form' designation omitted and a 6d adhesive stamp affixed were put on sale for corresponding with members of the Forces serving in East Africa. The service was extended to South Africa on April 9 1943.

It was not until June 18 1943, that Air Letters with an imprinted 6d stamp were made available at all British Post Offices.

On July 21 1941, Great Britain had become the first country in Europe to issue an imprinted-stamped Air Letter form. Specifically for the use of prisoners of war in Germany and Italy, the forms were printed by McCorquodale & Co Limited in their works at Wolverton.

The early forms were printed 12 to a sheet on flatbed letterpress Wharfedale machines.

The ruled lines were a separate operation, but later printings done on a reel-fed Timsons Rotary Press machine had the lines printed at the same time as the form and 2½d impressed stamp, which was on a separate cylinder.

At the end of the Second World War British air routes were reorganised. British European Airways (BEA) was established on August 1 1946 to handle domestic and European flights from British Overseas Airways Corporation (BOAC).

Imperial Airways and its principal rival, British Airways had amalgamated in November 1939 to form British Overseas Airways Corporation, which officially took over all British external air services on April 1 1940.

Next time, Post-War Air Letters of Great Britain up to 1966. PETER JENNINGS

Inland Greetings Telegrams '21 Today' First Day of Issue

A new 21st birthday greetings telegram form and envelope, designed by Ken Thomas, will be introduced on 17 May to replace the existing design which has been in use since 1967 and has now become outdated. The decorative card and matching envelope will be available as a 'First Day Telegram' on this date, and customers may place orders from 10 May up to close of normal working hours on 17 May. Orders may be placed either by telephone as for a normal telegram (phonogram) or by completing an inland telegram application form at any Head Post Office.

The envelope will bear the name and address as requested by the customer, and the card will carry a first day of issue impression on the inside cover. No message will be allowed with this service. Delivery will be made by post and the charge for the facility will be £1.08 (including VAT). Overseas customers may order the item from the Philatelic Bureau, Lothian House, 124 Lothian Road, Edinburgh EH3 9BB; the charge will be



£1.25 which includes air-mail postage to the country of destination, and this must be enclosed with the order.

Book Reviews

**Stanley Gibbons Great Britain
Specialised Stamps Catalogue Vol 3
The Queen Elizabeth II Pre-Decimal
Issues 3rd Edition**

The new edition of the QE 'specialised' is the first since 1971 and is restricted for the first time to the pre-decimal issues. In making this change, the publishers have recognised the philatelic watershed created by decimalisation and the difficulty of combining in one volume the extensive pre-decimal material and the already considerable decimal issues. Indeed they can already warrant a fourth 'decimal' volume which is in preparation.

The general organisation follows the previous editions, but there has been extensive revision of the detail particularly of the sections devoted to the Wilding and Machin definitives. New discoveries have been added to the

varieties listed throughout. Particular attention has been given to booklets, with separate identification of the perforation types for the first time. Here too there has been a change in pricing policy with the yardstick now being average rather than complete perforations.

After 4½ years it is to be expected that substantial price changes are virtually the rule. A random examination suggests that the new prices match those of the current 'Elizabethian' where comparison is possible. However the question must arise how long it will be before the publishers follow the practice in other philatelic handbooks and replace ephemeral prices with general indications of relative scarcity.

The Stanley Gibbons Great Britain Specialised Stamp Catalogue Volume 3 (3rd Edition) is published by Stanley Gibbons Publications Ltd, 391 Strand London WC2R OLX. Price £5.00.

The Kings Stamps

The special exhibition entitled 'The Kings Stamps 1910-36' referred to in the February Bulletin is now on display at the National Postal Museum.

Special Handstamps

Unless otherwise stated, items for reposting should bear ½p in excess to the normal postage, and should be sent to the Head Postmaster of the town where the special posting box is located or the relevant district Postmaster in London, marking the outer cover 'Special Handstamp'.

8 April-7 June 1976 (P/R)

'World of Islam Festival London SW7'. Special posting box at the Science Museum Exhibition Road, London SW7 2PD.

14 April-2 October 1976 (P/R)

'The 1776 Exhibition the National Maritime Museum Greenwich SE10'. Special posting box at the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London SE10 9NF.

Postmark Slogans

Unless otherwise stated, items for reposting bearing the appropriate postage rate should be forwarded to the Head Postmaster of the town where the slogan is to be used, marking the outer cover 'Postmark Slogan'.

15 March-30 May 1976 (P)

'Tameside Theatre now open'. To be used at Ashton Under Lyne. First and Second Class.

15 April-20 May 1976

'Devon County Show Exeter 20-21-22 May'. To be used at Barnstaple, Exeter, Torquay. Second Class.

22 April-19 May 1976 (P)

'Leicester Right at the Centre'. To be used at Leicester. First and Second Class.

26 April-12 June 1976

'SNO Proms Sheer Enjoyment! Usher Hall Edinburgh 7-12 June 1976'. To be used at Edinburgh. First and Second Class.

26 April-3 July 1976

'SNO Proms Sheer Enjoyment! Kelvin Hall Glasgow 18 June-3 July'. To be used at Glasgow. First and Second Class.

26 April-10 May 1976

'Piccadilly Medal Golf Finham Park 12-15 May'. To be used at Coventry. First Class.

1-15 May 1976

'Dunhill Weymouth Olympic Week 15-22 May'. To be used at Weymouth. First Class.

9 May-5 June 1976 (P)

'York Festival & Mystery Plays 11 June-4 July'. To be used at York. Second Class.

9 May-12 June 1976 (P)

'Bible Exhibition Lower Guildhall Plymouth 7-12 June'. To be used at Plymouth. Second Class.

'International Air Tattoo July 31-August 1 RAF Greenham Common Newbury Berkshire'. To be used at the following offices:

12-26 May 1976

- Aldershot, Brighton, Birmingham, Bournemouth, Salisbury, Swindon, Basingstoke, London SEDO NDO, Bromley.
- 2-16 June 1976
Camberley, Coventry, Reading, Newbury, Reigate and Redhill, London, Paddington, Croydon, Enfield, Harrow, Twickenham.
- 23 June-8 July 1976
Medway, Guildford, Southampton, Crawley, Leicester, London WDO, WCDO, Hounslow, Southall, Sutton.
- 15-29 July 1976
Slough, Bristol, Gloucester, Cardiff, Newport, London ECDO, SWDO, NWDO, Uxbridge, Kingston.
All First Class.
- 19 July-2 August 1976
'Dunhill Supports Cowes Week July 31 to August 7'. To be used at Southampton. First Class.
- 6-20 August 1976
'Rothmans Cricket Aylesbury v Surrey Sunday August 22'. To be used at Aylesbury. First Class.
- 20 September-4 October 1976
'Piccadilly World Match Play Golf Championship Wentworth October 7-9'. To be used at Hounslow. Second Class.
- 29 November-19 December 1976 (P)
'The RAF Benevolent Fund repays the debt we owe 67 Portland Place London W1'. To be used at the following offices:
London—ECDO, WCDO, WDO, Paddington DO, SWDO, Battersea DO, SEDO, E17, NDO, NWDO, Barnet, Bromley, Croydon, Enfield, Epsom, Harrow, Hounslow, Kingston, Romford, Sutton. All First Class.
- Repeat Campaigns**
- 15 March 1976-14 March 1977 (P)
'Elizabethan Banquets every Tuesday Friday and Saturday in the Old Palace Hatfield Park Bookings Hatfield 62055'.
To be reused at Welwyn Garden City.
- 19 March 1976-18 March 1977
'Catch the Sun in Thanet at Broadstairs Margate Ramsgate'. To be reused at Margate, Ramsgate.
- 29 March-26 September 1976
'Oldham the Great British Town for Industrial Growth Shaw 44411'. To be reused at Oldham First and Second Class.
- 29 March-26 June 1976 (P)
'Choose Sunny Arun'. To be reused at Bedford and Biggleswade.
- 5 April-2 May 1976
17 May-13 June 1976
5 July-12 Sept 1976
6 December-20 December 1976 (P)
(Kingston only).
- 'Chessington Zoo—Surrey open every day of the year'**. To be reused at the following offices:
WCDO, WDO, SWDO, SEDO, Kingston.
- 6 April-23 August 1976 (P)
'Visit Tatton Park Knutsford Cheshire's Stately Home'. To be reused at Altrincham. Second Class.
- 19 April-4 September 1976 (P)
'Chichester Festival Theatre 1976 Season 18 May-25 September'. To be reused at Chichester. First and Second Class.
- 3 May-28 May 1976 (P)
'Spring Bank Holiday Gala RAF Henlow'. To be reused at Bedford, Luton and Stevenage.
- PLEASE NOTE**
That the Postmark Slogan **'University of Essex for Conferences'** will now run as follows:
First Class Machine from 3 May-27 June 1976.
Second Class Machine from 27 November-24 December 1976.
That the Postmark Slogan **'Scone Palace'** should read **'Visit Scone Palace Perthshire'**. It will be reused at Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee and Aberdeen as follows:
14 June-26 June 1976.
P denotes Pictorial
R „ Rectangular

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