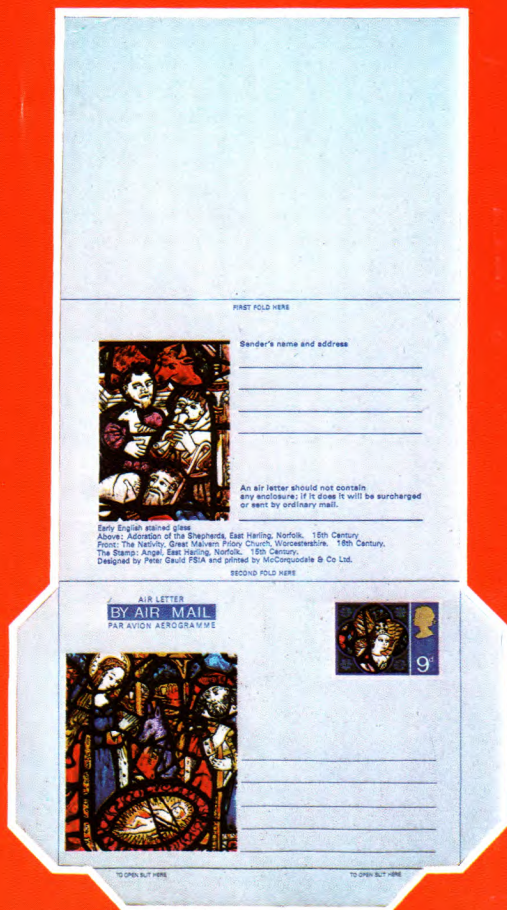


Philatelic Bulletin

Volume 8 Number 2 October 1970



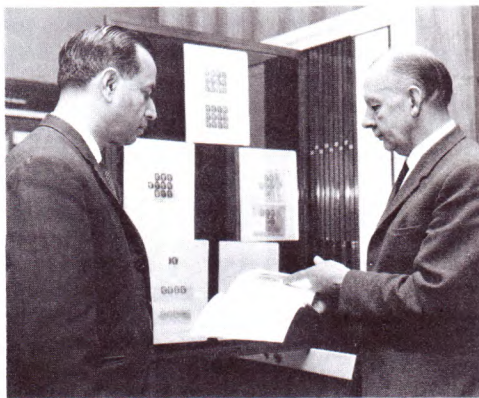
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Pressure on space in the last two *Bulletins* has prevented any 'Letters to the Editor', but this month we are able to resume this most popular forum of your views.

Many of you were good enough to say how much you enjoyed our special *Philympia Bulletin*. We cannot promise to maintain that size or standard every month but we will make every effort to produce something of equal quality for the next International Philatelic Exhibition to be held in Great Britain!

National Postal Museum's 100,000th Visitor



*Mr Soowamber (left) with the Curator,
Mr A. C. Rigo de Righi.*

Introduction

For the first time for as long as we can remember there are no National Postal Museum notes this month. The Curator and his staff are, at the time of writing, so pre-occupied with *Philympia* and the new exhibition at the Museum that the preparation of the article has had to take second place. We have not forgotten those whose interest lies in the nineteenth century, however, and hope that they will enjoy the articles on the first postage stamp books and the early University 'locals'.

When Mr Laichand Soowamber, the Assistant Postmaster-General of Mauritius, left his country for a three-month tour of Great Britain to study our postal services, he little expected that he would be the 100,000th visitor to the National Postal Museum.

The staff of the Museum were expecting to reach that number and on 28 August 1970 they were ready and welcomed Mr Soowamber as he entered. The Curator, Tony de Righi, presented Mr Soowamber with some of the Museum's publications and invited him to sign a special page of the Visitors Book.

British 'Locals' of the Nineteenth Century

It was in 1680 that the first private post was established to fill a gap in the national – and Crown-controlled – post of the time. This was William Dockwra's Penny Post which undertook to deliver letters, and packets up to 16 ounces in weight, to any address within the cities of London and Westminster for a charge of 1d – and that even included insurance cover up to £10. Within two years, the General Letter Office stepped in and invoked its monopoly. The courts ruled in favour of the Crown which took over Dockwra's post.

Dockwra issued no adhesive stamps. Letters which passed through his post are recognized by the triangular handstamps. In similar form, this postal marking continued in use for over a hundred years following the take-over by the Crown but letters bearing the original Dockwra mark used in 1680 and 1681 are very rare. A good Dockwra strike readily sells nowadays for £1,000.

Over two hundred years later, a number of the colleges of Oxford and Cambridge each established a letter-carrying service between the colleges of their respective university and to local addresses within each city and issued stamps for the prepayment of the 'postage'. Each service ran for 15 years before the General Post Office once again took action for infringement of its monopoly and the college posts were closed down.

Keble College, Oxford, founded in 1870, originated the college stamps in 1871, and to publicize a drive to raise £1m for endowments and new building in its centenary year has once again issued stamps in 1970. Until the actual centenary in June 1970, the 'stamps' were used as stickers which supporters were encouraged to use on the back of their general correspondence. Designed by Mrs Philippa Davidge, the wife of a former Keble bursar, the 1970 stamps have also been approved by the Post Office for use by a purely internal messenger service of the college.

What riled the Post Office in the 1870's was the use of the college stamps on letters carried between colleges and, therefore, in the 'terri-

tory' serviced by the Post Office in the normal way. If inter-college mail had been carried free (even if stamps of no franking value were required by the college authorities to control the use of the service within its jurisdiction) there could have been no legal objection. In practice, although most of the stamps had no value denomination printed on them (there were some inscribed 'ONE PENNY' issued by Lincoln College, Oxford), a charge was made for them. These college posts of the 1870's followed closely the pattern of long-standing inter-college messenger services to which no exception was taken officially because the charges for carrying letters were added to the senders' terminal accounts and no stamps were involved. It was when Keble sought to reduce clerical expenses by issuing stamps (printed by Spiers and Sons of Oxford) and requiring prepayment that the services operated outside the law in view of the semi-public nature of the service.

Before the enforced closure, the idea spread and Merton College followed Keble's example in 1875 when Emberlin and Son of Oxford produced embossed stamps featuring the Merton College Arms, just as Keble's arms had been used on their stamps. By 1882 Lincoln, Hertford and Exeter colleges had their own stamps and two years later All Souls and St John's followed suit. Balliol left it until 1885, prepared its own stamps but never used them.

Only three Cambridge colleges took up the idea. Selwyn came first when W. P. Spalding produced some lithographed stamps for the college in 1882. The same printers produced stamps for Queen's College in 1883 and St John's in 1884.

A private service of a much more public character began a few years before the college stamps were first issued. The promoter was Robert Brydone, a Scottish businessman, who established in Edinburgh and Leith a service for the delivery of printed matter by a 'circular delivery' company. At that time, the minimum official postage rate was 1d for a letter weighing

up to $\frac{1}{2}$ oz making the distribution of printed advertising matter, invoices and receipts an expensive business for commercial concerns. Brydone cut the rate to $\frac{1}{4}d$, issued stamps accordingly, and quickly drew business away from the Post Office. The successful service was extended to Aberdeen, Dundee, Glasgow, Liverpool and London. The circular delivery companies began operating in 1865 and closed down in 1868 following legal action by the Post Office.

The stamps of the various circular delivery companies controlled by Brydone are still met with and can be purchased, unused, from about 10s to £10 each depending on the company concerned and such philatelic varieties as perforation differences. On the original circulars, the stamps are very much rarer and, naturally, very much dearer.

Similarly, the college stamps can be found unused at within much the same range of prices. Covers with the stamps are quite a different proposition. The services were not so extensive as the $\frac{1}{4}d$ circular posts and very few envelopes have survived franked with college stamps.

The standard priced catalogue of these issues is the 'Robson Lowe Encyclopaedia of British Empire Postage Stamps - Vol I', and it is significant that even this catalogue quotes prices for unused only, both with regard to the circular delivery issues and those of the colleges.

Occasionally a small stock of both these issues comes to light in unused condition and it has been possible to undertake plating studies of some of them. Exceptions are the stamps of Selwyn, Cambridge, which were issued imperforate and cut up into singles before use. This means there are no blocks of the stamps available to students to permit a study of the positional varieties on which plating studies depend.

Keble College defied the ban. According to Robson Lowe, the college continued to use an envelope and a postcard in 1886 and subsequently produced an envelope (with the college arms embossed on the flap) which was sold at

8d per dozen for the carriage of letters by college messengers to any part of Oxford.

All this brings us back to the Keble College 'stamps' of 1970. Since their issue free of charge in May 1969 they have been used on the correspondence of sympathizers, supplemented of course, by the normal postage stamps. Their use will be stepped up in this centenary year but there is no suggestion that they represent any postal charge. They have to be placed on the envelope away from the postage stamp. If, through being misplaced, they are occasionally cancelled by the normal post office postmark, this will in no way give them a status greater than they deserve - that of an interesting souvenir recalling the days when the colleges *did* issue their own postage stamps.

Christmas Stamps - First-Day Cover Services

The Christmas stamps this year are to be issued on 25 November and will consist of three denominations 4d, 5d and 1s 6d.

In addition to the normal services from the Bureau we are again offering a 'Bethlehem Llandeilo Carms' cancellation. Application forms for both postmarks are enclosed.

The charges are:

Service A

Deposit Account customers	3s 11d
Non-Deposit Account customers	4s 5d

Service B

3s 3d

Service C

3s 11d

Application forms for the Bethlehem cancellation must be sent to the Head Postmaster (Philatelic Section) Llanelli, Carms, and requests for the Bureau postmark only and combined applications for covers with the Bethlehem postmark and covers with the Bureau postmark MUST be sent to the Philatelic Bureau, Edinburgh.

For the benefit of those who like to prepare and post their own covers the special posting boxes will be available at over 160 offices throughout the country.

'Mayflower' and Dickens Philatelic Wall Charts



The anniversaries of the sailing of the *Mayflower* and the death of Charles Dickens and the stamps issued to commemorate the occasions have aroused a fresh wave of interest and enthusiasm in them.

For those who wish to have a collector's item we have produced a limited number of pictorial charts measuring 15 in. $\times$ 12 in. which depict the subjects and on which are mounted the Dickens and 'Mayflower' stamps respectively.

The *Mayflower* picture which was designed by Battersby shows, in full colour, a reproduction of a sailing ship of the period cut away to reveal the interior layout, the Pilgrims in their picturesque clothes and a portion of an old map of Massachusetts. The 1s 6d *Mayflower* stamp is mounted in one corner of the picture by an acetate strip.

Fritz Wegner, well known as the designer of

the 1969 Christmas stamps, has once again showed his ability by designing the Dickens chart.

He has drawn a series of famous Dickens characters and a composite London scene as it may have appeared in Dickens' own time. Dickens himself is portrayed and a brief précis of his life is given. As on the *Mayflower* chart, the stamps are attractively mounted to complement the drawings.

These charming pictures will be eagerly sought after by both philatelists and others seeking an unusual souvenir or gift. They are available from the Bureau price 7s 6d (plus 6d postage and packing for up to 5 – more than 5 post free) or from the philatelic sales counters price 7s 6d.

Trade enquiries to The Manager, British Post Office Philatelic Bureau, 2-4 Waterloo Place, Edinburgh EH1 1AB.

Origins of the Letter Box

Such is the magnitude of the debt modern civilization owes to Florence in such a multiplicity of fields that it is hardly surprising that few people are aware that it is also to the city on the Arno that we probably owe the letter box as we know it today. Yet it is a fact that Florence's 'tamburi' (closed wooden boxes with a slit) which date from the early sixteenth century may well have been the prototype of the modern letter box. Though the original purpose of tamburi, which were located in churches, was to provide a receptacle for letters from people wishing anonymously to denounce persons believed to have broken the law or to be enemies of the state, the boxes were probably later used by post-boys to deposit ordinary letters to the clergy.

A somewhat more primitive form of letter box was in use a century later on the island of St Helena and the Cape of Good Hope. This consisted merely of a stone slab, under which captains of eastbound ships would deposit letters, in the hope that they would be collected by homeward-bound ships and taken to their destinations. One of the oldest of the Cape stones, dated 1607 and bearing inscriptions in English, Dutch, Danish and French, can be seen at the South African Museum in Cape Town.

A similar arrangement operated on Ascension Island, though here the practice was to put one's letter in a bottle. It is not clear when the bottle-post began but it is believed to have remained in use until 1815 and in contrast to the domestic correspondence exchanged by way of the stones of St Helena and the Cape of Good Hope, the correspondence which passed through bottles was almost always concerned with maritime affairs.

Perhaps the most ingenious method of delivering mail was that which originated in St Kilda, a remote island off the north-west coast of Scotland. It was to this island that Lady Grange had been banished by her husband in 1734, lest she expose his Jacobite activities. Whereas her attempts to utilize the current, which sweeps eastward past the

island, to carry to the mainland letters bound around pieces of cork, met with no recorded success, those of John Sands, marooned there over a century later, were successful, principally because he correctly divined that the North Atlantic Drift, a branch of the Gulf Stream, passed eastward from St Kilda. He launched a series of miniature wooden mail-boats with letters in bottles and these eventually reached the mainland. Mail can still be sent from St Kilda in this way, though on a more commercialized basis.

This 'tin can mail' is also a feature of Nina Fooou, one of the Tongan islands. Here conditions were such that the only way the inhabitants could get their mail to and from the island was by swimming through shark-infested waters to passing ships of the Union Steamship Company. The swimmers often carried in the mail with which they returned a number of letters from tourists on the ship who wanted the quaint, rather verbose special handstamp of the island, which to this day is known all over the world as Tin Can Island.

Recent unorthodox methods of posting letters include one whereby the inhabitants of Easter Island sent air-mail letters by balloons which were later pulled in by US transport planes. Another involves a cask chained to a rock in the Straits of Magellan, a floating post office into which ships can put in or take out their letters.

Letter boxes have been a feature of post offices for many centuries, but it is believed that it was not until some were erected in the main thoroughfares of Paris in 1653 that posting boxes were sited away from post offices as the orthodox system of a country. Where France led, others followed, and the course towards the highly organized systems of today had been set.

This article is based on information taken from Jean Young Farrugia's *The Letter Box*.



Thanks to the generosity of a reader we can reproduce a cover sent from Ladysmith during the famous siege in 1900. The cover was sent by Captain F. M. Crichton Maitland, Gordon Highlanders, who, in the absence of stamps,

endorsed it 'On active service. Stamps not available'. Captain Crichton Maitland was severely wounded soon after writing but recovered and fought with distinction in the 1914-18 war.

New-Style Stamp for 5d Envelopes

The design of the embossed stamp on the 5d 'B' envelope was changed on 21 September to bring it into line with the 4d and 5d 'A' envelopes. The sixteen-year-old rose-shaped design incorporating the Cecil Thomas bas-relief portrait of the Queen, has been replaced

by a Stewart blue eight-sided design with a profile of the Queen based on the bas-relief by Arnold Machin.

The envelopes are on sale from the Philatelic Bureau in Edinburgh and may be purchased from philatelic counters throughout the country. As stocks are used up other Post Offices will start selling the new envelopes. There was no special first day of issue service.

The First GB Postage Stamp Books



Recent research into Post Office Records has established that the first GB Postage Stamp Books were on sale to the public in May 1891.

As these were obtainable through an automatic vending machine it can be claimed that these were also the first stamp machines as it was 'an offence to purchase postage stamps from any other source, other than from Post Offices', which were open from 8 am till 8 pm.

Mr W. Maysmor Williams wrote to the Postmaster-General, The Rt Hon. H. C. Raikes, MP, requesting an interview to discuss the project, early in August 1889. As a result, the PMG granted permission to affix six Collins Automatic Stamp Deliverer Machines, experimentally, in London. The machines were to be placed *Within Six Months* or the permission would lapse.

The patentee (Collins) made application for the registration of a trade-mark with the slogan FROM PILLAR TO POST. The PMG raised an objection on the grounds that the slogan '... had been in common use since the earliest

days of racing, and therefore might be misconstrued by the general public'. The objection was upheld and in consequence of these protracted deliberations the machines were not affixed within the time limit imposed and the concession to Messrs Collins lapsed.

However, on 3 November 1890, permission was revived in favour of Mr Maysmor Williams, who exercised his concession through a company formed on 12 February 1891 with a nominal capital of £20,000 with the '... object of issuing stamp booklets through vending machines'. The company was registered under the title of The Stamp Distribution Syndicate Ltd with offices at 11 Queen Victoria Street, London EC. The locations for the machines was increased from *six* to *ten*.

These machines were fixed to posting boxes and were loaded with a memorandum stamp book which was approximately $3\frac{1}{2}$ in. $\times$ $2\frac{1}{4}$ in. with a red linen cover. The back cover had an oblique slit into which was inserted a single 1d lilac Queen Victoria stamp which was 'security



endorsed' with the initials S.D.S. through the face of the stamp. Inside the covers were 64 pages, some of which bore full-page advertisements. Other pages were dated memoranda, for notes, or for use as writing paper for a letter. There were several pages devoted to general information including postage rates, and calendar for 1891.

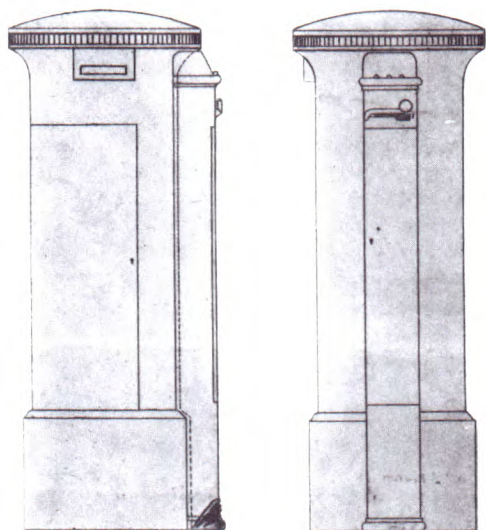
The memoranda book and stamp was enclosed in an envelope, gummed, ready for addressing and posting. The fact that all this was obtainable by putting one penny in the machine brought the following comment from the *Leeds Daily News* of 4 May 1891: '... the fact is that he who puts a penny in the slot will get a better bargain than he who pays for it over the counter!'

Post Office records holds a detailed document showing that some 161,492 books were sold between 2 May and 6 August 1891 – an average of 3,103 books each day.

Unfortunately, it appears that later the machines began to give trouble and numerous

complaints from the public to the PMG gave rise to an enquiry which confirmed the facts – which in turn 'brought discredit on the GPO ...' with the result that on 27 May 1892 the PMG wrote to the Chairman, terminating the concession. The S.D.S. went into voluntary liquidation.

However, the stamp book operation continued until 1895, for PO Records reveal that on 26 May 1892, just one day before the PMG terminated the concession to the Stamp Distribution Syndicate, another company was formed under the chairmanship of the renowned postal reformer, John Henniker Heaton, MP, to '... acquire the whole of the rights and interests of the Stamp Distribution Syndicate (Ltd), the vendors, in certain patents and licences granted for the manufacture and sole use of machines constructed for the automatic delivery of postage stamps.' According to the prospectus the great advantage to the public was that for the sum of one penny a memorandum book and envelope and a penny



stamp were to be obtainable at all hours of the day and night, and it was by reason of the revenue to be derived from the advertisements which were to appear in the memorandum books that the company was to be enabled to supply the three articles for one penny, and realize a considerable profit. The principal object of formation, however, was the sale of licences to subsidiary companies for the use of the company's patents in different parts of the country.

This company was registered under the title of The Stamp Distribution (Parent) Company Ltd.

When the operations commenced in 1892, a new type of vending machine was used. This was illustrated in a promotion booklet distributed to prospective advertisers which listed some 138 machines 'fixed and in full working order' covering the London area, Ipswich, Margate and Ramsgate. Subsidiary companies were formed to operate in the north of England and elsewhere.

A similar format to that of the original S.D.S. book was employed except that the covers were red cardboard. The top panel of

the front cover was headed MEMO. BOOK with a CROWN under which appeared 'By Royal Letters Patent'. The rest contained an advertisement. The outside back cover had an oblique slit which contained a penny lilac Queen Victoria stamp 'security endorsed' S.D.C. These books bore the printers imprint Harrison & Sons, Printers, St. Martin's Lane, under a full-page advertisement.

The envelope had been re-designed and patented. The normal gummed flap having a small, perforated flap, also gummed, to securely hold the stamp book. The extension flap was torn off, leaving the envelope ready for normal use.

The advertisements are of exceptional interest. The lay-out and content emphasize the enormous advance in this field. There is also a great deal of postal history contained in the 'information' pages that appear. The calendar for the S.D.(P.)C. book illustrated is for 1893.

The company continued to operate until 1895, when a petition for winding up was made on 13 March of that year. The proceedings were reported in *The Times* of 11 May 1895.

It was an enterprise that appeared to have great prospects for success.

The foregoing does however establish beyond any shadow of doubt that Great Britain was the first country to pioneer postage stamp books through the concession granted to the Stamp Distribution Syndicate in 1891. The American books containing 2-cent stamps did not appear until 1892, the same year as the Cape of Good Hope books containing 1d stamps.

Furthermore, a minute in PO Records (No. 1705) refers to correspondence between the Postmaster-General (Lord John Manners) dated 1877 and a Mr Unet Coates who suggested that '... if stamps were issued in booklet form, they would meet with a favourable reception from the public ...' It was further suggested that postage stamps should be issued in books, somewhat like cheque books – the format adopted in 1969 for the £1 Cook book.

STAN L. HILLS

Christmas Air Letter

Christmas Air Letter First-Day Cover Services

The Christmas Air Letter will be issued on 28 October 1970 and for those who wish to obtain a 'First Day of Issue' handstamp the usual philatelic posting boxes will be opened at over 160 offices throughout the country.

In addition a 'Bethlehem Llandeilo Carms' cancellation will be available and a posting box opened at Bethlehem. Collectors unable to visit Bethlehem may obtain covers with a typed address and a Bethlehem handstamp by writing to the Head Postmaster (Philatelic Section) Llanelli, Carms, stating their requirements and enclosing the appropriate remittance. The inclusive charge for this service is 2s per cover.

The latest date for applications is 21 October 1970.

Pictorial Stamp Books

Forthcoming editions of pictorial stamp books include:

British Ships — 4s 6d

Sovereign of the Seas October 1970

Swallow December 1970

British Homes — 5s

Mereworth Castle October 1970

British Birds — 6s

Golden Eagle October 1970

British Explorers — 10s

Captain Cook November 1970

Cambridge Philatelic Society Golden Jubilee

Cambridge Philatelic Society commemorates its 50th Anniversary with a 4-day exhibition at the Guildhall, Cambridge, from Tuesday to Saturday, 20–24 October. The exhibition will be opened by the Mayor of Cambridge at 2.30 pm on the first day.

In addition to exhibits mounted by Cambridge Philatelic Society members, there will also be a display by the Crown Agents.

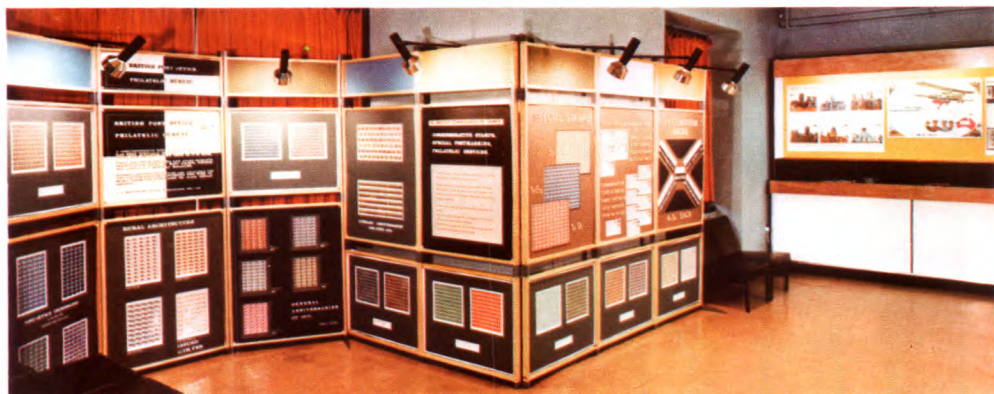
A Golden Jubilee Dinner will be held on Saturday, 24 October, at the University Arms Hotel, Cambridge.



Our Christmas Air Letter this year is printed by McCorquodale & Co. from a design by Peter Gauld. Both the pictorial element of the form and the stamp depict early English stained glass in rich colours of purple, blue and gold.

The Air Letter will be available price 10d each from 28 October until 24 December 1970.

Commonwealth Games Display



The presence of nearly fifteen hundred athletes from all parts of the world at the 9th British Commonwealth Games gave the Bureau an opportunity to display its wares to an international audience.

In addition to large static displays at each of

the major sports venues a smaller exhibition was mounted in the Athletes Village where a special Post Office was sited.

This is part of the small portable display unit which featured items which could be purchased from the counter.

New Display at National Postal Museum Anglo-American Postal Links since 1620

All philatelists, be they new to stamp collecting or experienced students of stamps, should find much to interest them in the new display at the National Postal Museum, opened by the United States Ambassador, Mr Walter Annenberg, on 7 September. This traces the development of mail services between Britain and America during the 350 years since the Pilgrim Fathers sailed from Plymouth in 1620.

The display, which includes material loaned by a number of well-known collectors, begins with a 1620 letter from Bermuda to England and numerous other transatlantic letters of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Other items from the period 1750-1840 illustrate the Falmouth-New York Packet services, the American War of Independence and the War of 1812-14.

The display goes on to show a fine array of stamped covers, both US and British, of the 'classic' period with many mixed frankings of

considerable eye-appeal.

For collectors of twentieth-century material, there is a section of pioneer transatlantic air mail covers, ranging from the Alcock and Brown first airmail of June 1919 to the New York-London air race of 1969. There are also artists' drawings, essays and progressive colour proofs (of the issued designs) of a number of recent British stamps commemorating aspects of the transatlantic mail story. Most of this modern material has never previously been seen by the public.

The display will remain open until early in 1971. An illustrated booklet *350 years of Anglo-American Postal Links* by the Museum's Curator, A. C. Rigo de Righi, which gives the background to the development and improvement of postal services between Britain and America, can be obtained from the Philatelic Bureau, 2-4 Waterloo Place, Edinburgh EH1 1AB, price 3s post-free.

Computers to Train Postcode Operators

Postmen who operate postcode desk keyboards may in future be taught almost entirely by computer. In pioneering this type of training the Post Office is soon to take delivery of a computer which will individually control up to 20 trainees, allowing each to develop his or her skill at the most suitable pace.

Until now the Post Office has employed traditional typing training methods, using modified portable typewriters. Disadvantages of this method include the fact that in a class of eight – the most suitable number for any one instructor – the pace of training is geared to at least the average, if not the slowest, class member. In addition the feel of the coding keyboard is different and it is difficult to simulate problems presented by real mail.

Now, with a specially programmed computer and a keyboard which is an exact replica of the one he will eventually use, each postman will receive highly individual tuition.

A keyboard simulation is flashed on the television-type screen before him; over this is a superimposed diagram showing how his fingers should be positioned. The letter to be typed will flash on the screen – the position of the flashing letter on the keyboard simulation corresponding with the position of the key which should be pressed. The trainee will attempt to key the character when he receives a command signal from a headset which he will be wearing.

His reaction is monitored by the computer and according to his agility and skill the computer instructions will pass from single letters to groups of letters, then letter and number combinations which the trainee will key without the aid of the keyboard display.

Errors made by the trainee will be recorded automatically and brought to his attention on the screen. The supervisor is alerted if anyone makes an excessive number of mistakes.

Finally the coding desk is fully simulated by displaying addresses on the screen for the operator to encode at his own speed. At this stage errors will not be displayed until the particular trial is completed and the overall

performance calculated.

The aim is to produce operators capable of a speed of 250 characters per minute with an error rate of only one in 2,000 characters. The computer will be programmed to examine the pupil at every stage of training and give revision exercises or prolonged practice sessions on any weak point he may display. Much more concentrated attention will be given to individual trainees than is possible by conventional methods.

The computer may also be used in later stages to provide existing operators with refresher courses or extra speed training.

The first computer trainer will be installed at Croydon and the first full class of trainees should be under instruction by the end of this year.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Sir,

As a recent subscriber to the *Philatelic Bulletin* I'd like to take this opportunity to express to you my enthusiasm and appreciation for its high degree of excellence. I only wish the USA postal system would develop something similar.

I would also like to comment on an item in the Nov. 1969 (Vol. 7, No. 3) *Bulletin*, p. 3, column 2, concerning PO First Day Covers. It appears you had received some criticism on their design; that some persons had evidently found them to be too conservative in design. Let me say that this is exactly what I like most about them. The designs are always in such excellent taste and reserved design to complement the design of the accompanying stamps. Being a subscriber to one of the numerous, rather hideous, private FDC services here in the US it is with great satisfaction I look forward to enjoying the beauty of each new GPO cover from England.

Please continue with your present design policy.

Sincerely,

DONN. C. KEESLER

Seattle, USA

Dear Sir,

I have been an avid reader of the *Bulletin* since the very first (duplicated) issues, and one of my favourite sections is that of readers' letters. A recent appeal for help by Mr Robert Law naturally caught my eye. The problem is to dry stamps without them either curling up or adhering to any material used for pressing them. The following method is 100 per cent successful.

Take a sheet (of any convenient size) of one of the self-adhesive plastic laminates now on the market. . . . Peel off the protective layer . . . this is coated with a non-stick (silicon-based?) compound on the side which was against the adhesive of the plastic.

Simply lay the wet stamp on this surface, sticky side against the plain side of the backing sheet. Lay a piece of dry blotting-paper on top, and any light pressing weight to prevent curling. When dry, the stamp simply comes away from the backing sheet . . . any doubt as to this may be easily assuaged by a simple test using a mint stamp . . . even the full adhesive cannot hold the stamp to the backing sheet once it has dried out.

I trust this method will prove invaluable to the other collectors who have been faced with this particular problem.

Sincerely,

B. J. REEVES

Sheffield

Dear Sir,

The problems of 'Robert M. Law', as stated in Vol. 7, No. 11, July 1970, can all be solved by the use of filter-paper instead of blotting-paper to lay damp stamps on.

A continuous 'sandwich' of alternate layers of filter paper and stamps can be made, possibly with a weight on top.

Drying is slower, but filter-paper is less fluffy than blotting and no adhesion occurs.

Yours sincerely,

JOHN ATKINS

Hockley, Essex

Dear Sir,

I was interested in Mr Joel S. Kahn's letter in July issue, re: international stamps.

Gradually life tends towards internationalism. Musical notation is already in international use. People are travelling now more than ever before. As to language, there are even now some millions of educated people who are working in the interests of Esperanto, the international language invented by Dr L. L. Zamenhof 83 years ago, references to which have already appeared on the stamps of numerous countries. Among the Esperantists there is also an international currency, used at universal congresses and in tourism.

Unfortunately, nationalistic prejudices among politicians are holding back a quicker progress in the spread of Esperanto, but it seems to me its adoption would be ideal for the purpose under correspondence. It is easy to learn as there are no exceptions or irregularities, and is in extensive use throughout the world for correspondence (among philatelists, and others), for tourism and business.

Its adoption will eventually be a great help towards world unity and peace.

Yours faithfully,

NORMAN BOOTH

Bridlington, Yorkshire

Dear Sir,

I was extremely interested to read Mr A. Stanley Barnes letter in the July *Bulletin* with reference to Mr Samuel Graveson winning the Herts Philatelic Postal History Competition with his entry 'The Post into Kent and Foreign Parts'.

Readers of your *Bulletin* will, I think, be interested to know that Mr Graveson retired to Wye near Ashford, Kent, and his collection of Kent Postal History was presented by him to the Ashford (Kent) Philatelic Society when I was its secretary.

It was Mr Graveson's hope that this collection, together with his written paper on Kent Postal History, should be preserved and kept in such a way that it could from time to time be

displayed to societies. To this end the whole collection, with Mr Graveson's approval was completely re-written and arranged in such a way that its presentation can be easily understood by postal historians and philatelists alike.

This unique collection has been enlarged over the years and has been displayed, in accordance with Mr Graveson's wishes, to most of the philatelic societies in Kent.

Yours sincerely,

R. M. BROWNE

Sittingbourne

Postmark Slogans

Tewkesbury Festival '71 Music, Drama, Art, Sport Son et Lumiere will be used transposed at Gloucester until 11 October 1970.

Hinckley Multiple Sclerosis Day 17 October 1970 will be used at Hinckley from 11-17 October 1970.

Hinckley "Mentally Handicapped" Fair 10 October 1970 will be used at Hinckley from 3-17 October 1970. This is a change of dates from the original publication.

Boys Brigade Week 22-29 Nov 1970 will be used at Hinckley from 8-29 November 1970.

Roker & Seaburn Sunderlands Twin Resorts will be re-used at Sunderland from 1 April-31 July 1971.

New Industry thrives in Sunderland is being re-used at Sunderland until 31 March 1971 and from 1-31 August 1971.

See Sussex from Sunny Worthing on the Warm South Coast will be used at Worthing. Dates of use not yet finalized.

Basildon Faces the Future is continuing in use at Basildon until further notice.

Muscular Dystrophy Week Oct 17-24 (pictorial slogan) is in use transposed at 23 offices including 2 London District Offices - South Eastern District Office and Eastern Central District Office, Bolton, Leeds, Luton, Caerphilly, Birmingham and Glasgow until 25 October 1970.

Herring this slogan will continue in use at Birmingham until 31 December 1971.

BBC Radio Oxford VHF 95 29 October 1970 will be used transposed at Oxford from 12 October to 30 November 1970.

Hartlepool for Power and Progress will continue in use at Hartlepool for a further 12 months.

United Nations Day Oct 24 will be used transposed at Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, Edinburgh, Glasgow Southern District Office, and Belfast from 18-25 October 1970.

National Army Museum Series - Military Covers

A further two covers in this series will be issued on 25 October 1970.

Group 4 No. 6 Campaigns and Battles

This cover, commemorating the Battle of Balaclava, will feature a full-colour reproduction of the well-known painting by R. Caton Woodville, 'The Relief of the Light Brigade'. The cover will be stamped with the 9d Florence Nightingale stamp and cancelled with a pictorial British Forces Postal Service handstamp depicting a map of the Crimean Peninsula.

Group 3 No. 3 Famous Generals

This cover illustrates a portrait of Lord Cardigan, the illustrious but much criticized officer who commanded the Light Brigade at the Battle of Balaclava. A pictorial British Forces Postal Service handstamp, featuring the crest of the Earl of Cardigan, will cancel the 9d Florence Nightingale stamp on the cover.

These covers will make a total of 16 issued so far in the series. Copies of all issues are available at 5s each from:

The Philatelic Officer
The National Army Museum
Building Appeal
HM Tower of London
London EC3

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