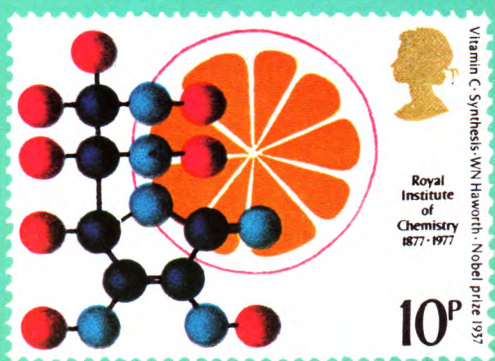


Philatelic Bulletin

Volume 14 Number 6 February 1977



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Editorial

Stampex with its attendant excitements is almost with us again. The Exhibition will be held at the Royal Horticultural Society Hall, Greycoat Street, London SW1 between 1 and 5 March. The hours of opening have been changed slightly—the Exhibition opens at 11 am on 1 March. The Post Office will be there in force with a large display and sales counter, and readers are reminded that the 'Chemistry' stamps to be issued on 2 March will be available at the Exhibition. First day covers may be posted in the Hall to get the London SW cancellation.

The Chemistry stamps are featured prominently in this Bulletin and we are grateful to Dr Ian McKinley of the Royal Institute of Chemistry for his invaluable help throughout.

Special Covers

To coincide with the Queen's Silver Jubilee Tour of the UK the Post Office will issue special souvenir covers. Differing designs in stamped foil will be issued for the four

countries and the covers which will bear the full set of Silver Jubilee stamps will be cancelled with a special handstamp at the main places visited by the Queen.

Details of the tour are not yet known but it is expected that the covers will be cancelled at about 15 places in England, 4 in Scotland, 3 in Wales and 2 in N Ireland. To enable collectors who wish to have either the various country sets or a complete range of all the covers specially designed packages containing the covers will be available from the Philatelic Bureau. For those who wish to have a memento of individual visits of the tour, covers will be available at the main offices of the places to be visited.

Readers will also be interested to know that in addition to the usual Presentation Pack a 16 page souvenir booklet will be issued. A set of the Jubilee stamps will be included in the book which will contain 8 pages in colour depicting notable events in the Queen's reign. The book will cost £1.10.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Sir

I have been impressed lately by the high standard of design in most recent British commemorative issues, but what does not appeal to me so strongly is their shape and quantity. How much more exciting are my album pages of the issues of the sixties than their rather monotonous modern equivalents! So many issues in the last three years or so have contained four stamps, each of exactly the same shape. Although format alternates, why not have the occasional long stamps, as in the Ships issue (1969), or Simon de Montfort's Parliament issue (1965)? And what happened to the three-stamp issues of 1971-2?

I think many readers will see my line of argument; it would be interesting to read some of their views on the Post Office's apparent lack of originality.

Yours faithfully,

Kirdford
W Sussex

JEREMY MICKLEM

Gems from the RM Phillips Collection

XLIV The Twopenny 'Jubilee' Essays

On 30 May 1885 the Commissioners of the Board of Inland Revenue issued a warrant to Warren De La Rue (as 'Engraver to the Board') to prepare dies and plates for a new series of stamps from $\frac{1}{2}$ d to 1/- in value. These were the stamps put on sale on 1 January 1887; the so-called 'Jubilee' issue.

It is unlikely that all the designs had been finalised by May 1885; certainly the design for the Twopenny value being worked on by Messrs De La Rue at the very beginning of 1886 was different in many respects from the issued stamp.

This month's 'gem' consists of two essays for the Twopence value based on this design which can be dated about 30 January 1886. One is a proof in black of the frame die. The other is a bi-colour (carmine and sage-green)



composite proof of the die of the same frame design (but with the leaf sprays erased) and an otherwise unknown value die which also included the missing leaf sprays. This composite design was wholly rejected in favour of the issued design in which only the (smaller) value tablet is printed in the second colour.

A G RIGO DE RIGHI

British Achievement in Chemistry Centenary of the Royal Institute of Chemistry

Chemists and chemistry have made vital and widespread contributions to the welfare of mankind and will do so increasingly in the future as resources become scarcer. The impact of the practice of chemistry is not widely appreciated even though the United Kingdom chemical industry is one of the largest and most vigorous in the world and, during recent times, its products have reshaped our lifestyle to an astonishing extent. Victorian life of 1877 was hard and dreary for all but the comparatively well off. Such changes and rapid growth of the science of chemistry were foreseen by a group of men led by Edward Frankland who founded, one hundred years ago, the professional and qualifying body now known as the Royal Institute of Chemistry. The Institute from the start set its own examinations and is the only body in the United Kingdom able to certify the competency in chemistry of its 27000 members.

Although many chemicals have very beneficial properties, especially when used in the proper ways, many can be harmful. It is a

tribute to the knowledge and training of chemists that, in spite of the fact that many of the 10,000 or so which are in commercial production are hazardous, their use is rarely accompanied by mishaps. Of course there are many relatively innocuous ones and some of these, familiar in the home, are featured on the stamps—steroids, vitamin C, starch and salt.

Chemical products account for a considerable portion of the United Kingdom trade surplus attributable to manufactured goods; this favourable position has been gained by developing novel products using expertise in research techniques. A basic understanding of chemistry—an appreciation of how and why chemical substances interact—has been developed in Britain over many years by research workers in industry, in the universities, and in Government laboratories. They have done well. Twenty British chemists, several of whom are or were Fellows of the Royal Institute of Chemistry, have received Nobel Prizes for their researches, a number

exceeded only by the Germans with twenty-three and the Americans with twenty-one. The Nobel Prizes were instituted in 1901, endowed from the fortunes made manufacturing explosives in Britain by the Swedish chemist Alfred Bernhard Nobel. They are the highest recognition which a scientist can receive from his fellow scientists and every autumn the news from Stockholm, where the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences administers the awards, is eagerly awaited.

The understanding of how and why chemicals interact has been accumulated using sophisticated research techniques and four of those developed by British Nobel Laureates appear on the stamps. Conformational analysis is a technique developed by Professor Sir Derek Barton which won for him the 1969 Nobel Prize. Chemists think in terms of molecules, which are the basic building blocks of all substances, composed of atoms assembled in defined shapes and arrangements to a blueprint called the chemical formula or structure. Often referred to merely as 'structure', it is the atomic architecture which is adopted by the chemical and must be known at least in part before the substance can be manufactured or modified. Each chemical substance, of which there are more than $3\frac{1}{2}$ million, has its own unique chemical structure, which may be represented either by ball and stick models or simply by line drawings, both types are shown on the stamps.

The $8\frac{1}{2}p$ design based on conformational analysis depicts part of the chemical structure of a steroid, now the basis of many compounds used in medicine, on a background of products from the pharmaceutical industry. Conformational analysis explains in terms of chemical forces between constituent atoms why molecules adopt preferred shapes (conformations). Barton used steroids to pioneer his theories which have simplified considerably the intricate synthesis of complicated biological substances.

Synthesis is the name given to the deliberate stepwise construction of a newly discovered



Dr Alfred Nobel

Photograph reproduced by kind permission of the Royal Swedish Embassy.

chemical, often used to prove its unique structure. Professor Sir Norman Haworth and his group of research workers spent several years deducing the structure of Vitamin C, shown on the 10p stamp, and produced the first synthetic vitamin long known to be plentiful in citrus fruits and to prevent scurvy, the disease which so plagued seafarers. Haworth and Paul Karrer of Switzerland shared the 1937 Nobel Prize for independent work in the vitamin field. All foods consist of naturally produced chemicals and many also contain synthetic preservatives, flavours and colours. Control of food quality and additives is monitored by Public Analysts all of whom are required to have Institute qualifications.

In 1952 Profs A J P Martin and R L M Synge received their recognition for the discovery and development of partition chromatography. This technique separates the components from a mixture of chemicals which are carried along over a stationary phase on an absorbent surface at different speeds by a stream of gas or liquid. Paper may be used to effect the separation, so that when sprayed with a dye, the chemicals are revealed as coloured zones as shown on the 11p stamp. Alternatively if a column of material (for example starch) is used substances pass through it at different speeds so that the components of a mixture emerge as separated pure chemi-

cal. Detection as they leave the column gives a trace similar to that also depicted on the 11p stamp. Chromatography is widely used in industry to ensure that a chemical product is pure; pharmaceuticals for example are checked in this way at the Government Laboratory.

The structure of a chemical compound can be assigned absolutely by X-ray crystallography, a technique in which a beam of X-rays is directed through a crystal of the substance and the way in which the rays have been scattered is recorded photographically. Complicated analysis, now inconceivable without computer aid, reveals the regular arrangement of the atoms. This technique was laboriously

pioneered long before the days of computers, by W H and W L Bragg using sodium chloride (salt) crystals; their model which won for them the 1915 Nobel Prize in Physics, is shown on the 13p stamp. Professor Sir Lawrence Bragg, the youngest man ever to become a Nobel Laureate, has also been distinguished by being elected an Honorary Fellow of the Institute. Salt deposits occurring naturally in the United Kingdom have long formed the basis of our large inorganic chemicals industry producing such household goods as soda, bleach and soap, taken for granted as part of 'Chemistry in our Lives'—the theme of the Institute's Centenary.

DR IAN MCKINLEY

Stamps for Pleasure 2. Paper and Watermarks

Paper is one of the essential commodities or materials of everyday life which most of us tend to take for granted. Without it there would be no books, no magazines or newspapers, no letters or stamps to post them (and no bills to pay!). The manufacture of paper is a highly skilled operation, and paper for postage stamps requires special attention—it has to be reasonably tough, it must be flexible enough to withstand the pressures of printing 'on the web' (in reels like cloth on the loom), and it must have a calendered surface suitable for printing by the appropriate process.

Compare the paper used for our low-value Machin definitives with that for the line-engraved high-value stamps—alas, now also being photogravure-printed—and you will realise that the different printing processes require different textures of paper. The low values are comparatively soft and smooth and, since about 1960, 'chalk-surfaced' (i.e. coated), while the engraved stamps have noticeably thin, tough paper, and tend to tear unevenly (with undesirable short and long perforation 'teeth') if one is not extremely careful. Many a post office clerk has unwittingly ripped off the perforations of a high-value stamp in removing it from the sheet!

Modern technology and the sophisticated methods of printing stamps have largely obviated the many problems that existed when paper, damped for the actual printing by lithography or line-engraved plates, expanded and then shrank in the drying process. The sheets of stamps often dried so unevenly (because paper expands more in one direction than the other, depending on the 'lay' of the fibres) that perforation was thrown out of its correct alignment, and spoilage was commonplace.

The first GB postage stamps of 1840—Penny Black and Twopence Blue—were printed on handmade, deckle-edged paper manufactured by Stacey Wise of Rush Mills, Hardingstone, Northants, and varied considerably in thickness. The sheet was large enough to provide the equivalent of three sheets of 240 stamps, each having the requisite number of 'small crowns'—one to a stamp—comprising the watermark, arranged in 20 horizontal rows of 12 units to correspond with the printed stamps. Handmade paper continued in use, also for the Colonies who required individual watermark emblems, until about 1863.

From December 1864, all the paper for the

De La Rue GB surface-printed issues was machine-made by Turner & Co., Chafford Mills, Fordcombe, Kent, and coated or chalk-surfaced paper came into use with the British and Colonial issues of Edward VII—not only did it forestall attempts to clean off cancellations, when the design rubbed off as well, but it also improved the print quality.

Modern stamp paper is usually an evenly-grained wove, but even today there are many exceptions and differences in the paper which stem from the original method of manufacture, further complicated by the way the paper is presented to 'reel-fed' or 'sheet-fed' presses prior to printing. Some low-value Machin stamps show the marks of the parallel wires of 'laid' paper.

Among the many types of paper used in the production of stamps and postal stationery, one of the most distinctive was John Dickinson's silk thread paper. It is of especial interest because Dickinson also invented the machine, patented in 1809, on which the paper was made, strands of blue silk threads being embedded in the pulp during manufacture. This paper, intended as an alternative security measure where watermarks were impractical, was used for the famous Mulready envelopes, early stationery and the embossed 1s of 1847 and 10d of 1848.

As mentioned in the first article in this series, Rowland Hill took elaborate precautions against forgery of his 'Blacks' and 'Blues', and the principal of these was the introduction of the watermark, 'a device or pattern formed within the paper by the dandy roller in the wet pulp stage of manufacture'. From that time there have been numerous types of watermark devices used in the production of British stamps, a practice which ceased in 1967.

The Small Crown of the first issues in 1840 was followed by the Large Crown, then came the Garters (in three sizes), the Emblems, Spray of Rose, Maltese Cross, Anchor and Orb, and lastly, in Queen Victoria's reign, the Imperial Crown. A novelty in 1870 was the

script 'half penny' (extending over three stamps) as the watermark for Britain's first—and diminutive— $\frac{1}{2}d$ stamp.

The issues for Edward VII employed three watermarks—Imperial Crown, Anchor and Three Crowns in ascending order of value to the £1, while George V had his own Royal Cypher in single and multiple forms, establishing a standard pattern which continued through the reigns of Edward VIII and George VI to the Elizabethan issues. Multiple watermark emblems relieved the printers of precise registration and the ultimate was reached with the introduction, in 1958, of the Multiple Crowns watermark for definitives and special stamps.

A watermark is defined as an 'impression' in the paper, but philatelists know that on some stamps the watermark may be difficult or impossible to distinguish for a variety of reasons—an intense concentration of cellulose in the paper, the paper being too wet when impressed by the dandy-roller or faulty adjustment of the roller itself. The correct identification of watermarks is important when it involves the relative values of the stamps. For example, the first Wilding definitives of 1952-54 with the Tudor Crown watermark and the second issue of 1955-58 bearing the St Edward's Crown watermark are worth considerably more than the Multiple Crowns' stamps of 1958-65.

There are mechanical aids to watermark detection, but the time-honoured method is the use of so-called 'benzene'—actually petroleum ether—with a dropper and tray. The stamp is laid face down on the tray and enough drops allowed to fall on the stamp to render it momentarily transparent before the fluid evaporates. Fortunately, most British stamps have easily visible watermarks if placed on a black background or held up to the light, so that it shines through.

In my next article in this series I will be talking about inks, gum and phosphor applications.

JAMES WATSON

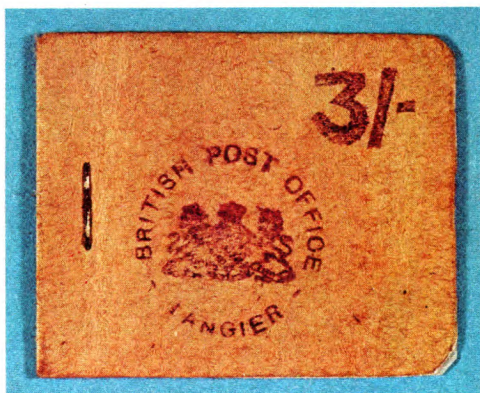
Philatelic Poser of the Month

A short time ago we received in our postbag a most interesting philatelic item which has baffled us. Mr T E Jones of Accrington, a Bulletin reader, has sent us an unusual 'stamp book' which appears to have been made in Tangier.

Our illustrations show the book opened and closed and on the front cover can be seen an impression of a British Post Office, Tangier handstamp together with a '3/-' impression. Inside can also be seen what remains of the stamps, 3 King George VI $\frac{1}{2}d$ overprinted 'Tangier'; there are also a few air-mail labels which make up the first page.

We have carried out some research in the hope of trying to establish whether it is an essay, or if in fact, a quantity was produced locally, but regrettably we have not been able to find anything positive about this 'stamp book'.

Another question we asked ourselves was, what were the denominations of the other stamps if the book was valued at three shillings? Our guess is, that it was made up of four $\frac{1}{2}d$: four $2\frac{1}{2}d$: and four $6d$ stamps,



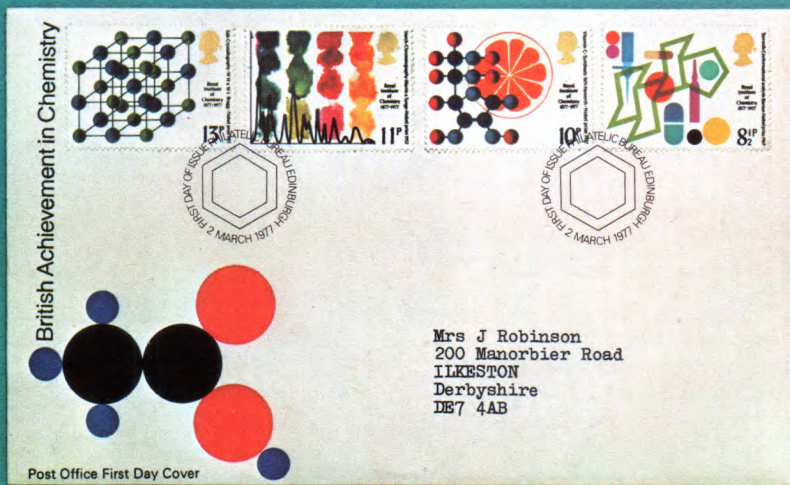
bearing in mind that the postal rates from Tangier to UK was $6d$ by air mail, for the first half ounce; and $2\frac{1}{2}d$ by surface mail, for the first half ounce, between 1945 and 1955 (the period during which the book could have been made).

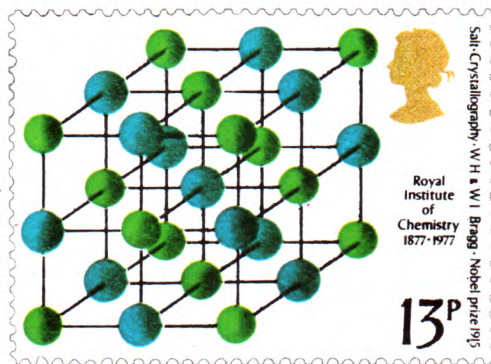
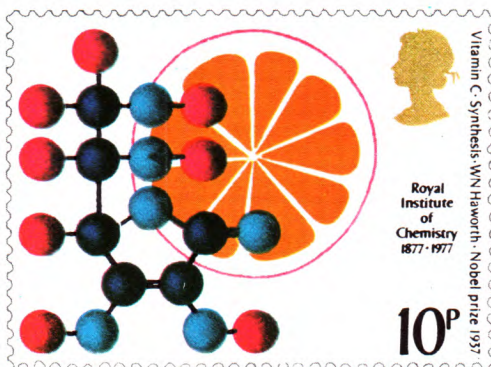
We publish this item in the hope that at least one of our many readers will have seen something similar before. Please let us know if you have.



British Achievement in Chemistry

2 March 1977





To mark the centenary of the Royal Institute of Chemistry a set of four stamps will be issued on 2 March 1977. The designs chosen feature the works of British Nobel prizewinners. The 8½p, based on conformational analysis, depicts the chemical structure of a steroid which won the 1969 Nobel Prize for Professor Sir Derek Barton. The 10p stamp shows the synthesis of Vitamin C for which Professor Sir Norman Haworth shared the 1937 prize. In 1952 Drs A J P Martin and R H M Synge received their Nobel Prize for the discovery and development of chromatography featured on the 11p stamp. The 13p shows something of the work on crystallography which won for W H and W L Bragg the 1915 award.

Printing Details

Designer : Jerzy Karo FSIA

Printer : Harrison & Sons Ltd

Process : Photogravure

Format : Horizontal

Size : 41 mm × 30 mm

Perforation : 15 mm × 14 mm

Paper : Coated Unwatermarked

Phosphor : All-over. *No to Sheet* : 100

Colours : 8½p Light brown, bistre yellow, light vermillion, new blue, deep magenta, black, gold. 10p Bright orange (marked yellow), bright rose red, new blue, ultra marine, black, gold. 11p Greenish yellow, rose carmine, new blue, blackish lilac, black, gold. 13p Gold, yellowish green, new blue, black.

First Day Cover Services

The following first day cover services will be offered by the Philatelic Bureau, Edinburgh.

Service A

This consists of the official Post Office cover, addressed to the correct postal address of the destination required, and bearing all four stamps. The cover will be cancelled, 'Philatelic Bureau, Edinburgh' and despatched for a charge of 60½p. For deposit account customers the charge will be 56p.

Service B

Customers own pre-addressed covers, bearing the correct postal address, will be given the full set of stamps, cancelled and despatched for a charge of 50½p.

Service C

For bulk orders of 50 or more covers all to the same address, under the conditions of Service A, the charge is 58p per item.

A special pictorial handstamp will be applied.

The usual first day of issue facilities will be available at offices with philatelic posting boxes.

Application forms, available from the Philatelic Bureau, Edinburgh and at all Head Post Offices should be returned not later than 21 February 1977.

Postcards

A postcard reproduction of each of the four Chemistry stamps will be available from the British Post Office Philatelic Bureau and most main Post Offices, price 7p.

National Postal Museum New Special Exhibition

The National Postal Museum's latest special exhibition, 'A Penny Well Bestowed . . .', was opened in the Museum on 15 December 1976. The opening ceremony was performed, most fittingly, by Dr I D Hill of London, a great-great-nephew of Sir Rowland Hill, the creator of the Uniform Penny Post in 1840.

The exhibition features the famous 'Penny Posts', local collection and delivery services which began in London in 1680 and spread throughout the country from the 1790s; and the vigorous campaign of the 1830s leading up to the adoption of Uniform Penny Postage and the introduction of the adhesive postage stamp in 1840. Also featured in the exhibition is the 1d concessionary rate from 1795 for soldiers' and sailors' letters, items related to the American and Australian local Penny Posts, the campaigns for Ocean and Imperial Penny Postage led by Elihu Burritt and J Henniker Heaton MP in the 1840s and the 1880s, and the Penny Postage Jubilee celebrations of 1890 and the centenary of Penny Postage in 1940.

The display is based on the famous collec-



Mr Alex Currall, the Managing Director of Posts, presenting to Dr Hill at the opening ceremony of the new exhibition, a facsimile of a watercolour landscape, painted by Sir Rowland Hill when a boy.

tion of Mr Frank Staff, author of the standard work on the subject, *The Penny Post 1680-1918* (Lutterworth Press, 1964); but also included are unique items from the Museum's own collections and material held in Post Office archives. Notable amongst the latter is one of the set of Rowland Hill's *Post Office Journals* generously presented to the Post

Office some years ago by Mr Robson Lowe—opened at Hill's entries for the week in May 1840 when the world's first-ever postage

stamps were issued to the public.

The exhibition will remain on view for about three months. JEAN FARRUGIA

Some Aspects of the Machin Decimal High Values

Part 2

After manufacture the plates are immediately numbered and stored until required. They are used two at a time on opposite sides of the printing cylinder so that one revolution produces two sheets of stamps each bearing different plate numbers.

An examination of a series of sheets immediately after printing from single pane plates would show them numbered alternatively 4; 5; 4; 5; 4; 5.

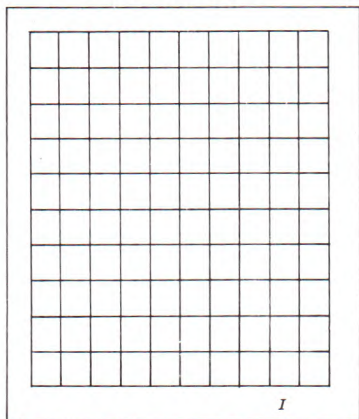
An examination of a series of sheets immediately after printing from double pane plates would show them numbered alternatively 12/12A; 13/13A; 12/12A; 13/13A. As plates are frequently re-chromed, there being no order in which they are re-used it is quite possible to find 'lifts' of sheets alternatively but not successively numbered ex 18/20; 18/20; 18/20. The presses are designed so that they cannot be run with only one plate.

It is quite probable that when the first double pane sheets (20p) were produced it was preferable to divide them into two panes and perforate as single width sheets rather than as one double pane. In this case the divided sheets overall were narrower than the normal single pane printings and the existing perforating machines had to be adapted to accommodate them. Sheets treated in this way show perforation guide holes opposite row 6, one to each vertical margin. Thereafter sheets from the same double pane plate can be found perforated in either manner (a single or double width comb).

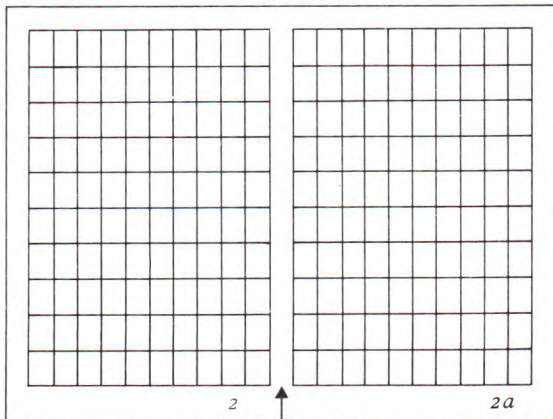
Papers fall into one of two categories, those supplied by the Post Office or those obtained by the printers themselves. The Post Office papers consist of those with a phosphorised coating and creamy papers with a fine surface sheen. The printer's paper is whiter than the

One printed sheet of stamps, untrimmed, unperforated from

(a) 100 unit plate.



(b) 2 × 100 unit plate.



1 stamp width.

P.O. cream. Apart from the special circumstances surrounding the use of the phosphorised paper, the paper used must be one suitable for recess printing which is commercially available. The latter implies that because of the high rate at which paper is produced there must be a certain degree of tolerance pertinent to coatings, base paper and manufacturing conditions. These, in themselves, can produce visual variations in colour whilst the enormous pressures between the printing rollers can cause similar effects. To a large extent the whiteness of the paper depends upon the degree of optical white added during papermaking. One should be on guard not to read too much into paper variations.

The 10p cerise was printed upon a phosphorised paper to enable the Post Office to determine the effect of adverse weather conditions upon the type of phosphor (T.P.A.(S)) chosen. This continued the experiments started previously with the 1/6d 'all over phosphor'. When the experiment was discontinued there was no further need for that type of paper and to prevent wastage the bulk was used with some plates of the 50p value. The issue of these was announced but not the printing made with the 20p plates. Apparently a printing was made and subsequently released for sale 'over the counter'.

The Post Office normal creamy paper with a high surface sheen needs no special mention, the coating having a moderate reaction to ultra-violet light but mention must be made of a group of 20p plates nos. 13-16 a part printing of which was made upon a paper having a very dull (negative) reaction to U.V.

light and reminiscent of the initial printings of the 2/6d and 10s Machin sterling. It would seem that in these instances a different coating had been used. The paper supplied by the printers is easily recognisable as it is whiter than formerly used (but far less shiny). This is a useful identifying feature for during the changeover period from one paper to the other some plates were used with both types. (Applicable to the 50p and £1 but not the 20p.)

The design of the stamp is not an ideal subject for recess printing and Messrs. Bradbury Wilkinson & Co. Ltd. are to be congratulated for the excellence of the production. Security control is good and considering the quantities printed the number and types of errors are extremely small. Those associated with the actual paper include non coated, 20p and 50p—of the former from Plate 5 probably only four exist and for the latter—Plates 8 and 9—approximately a thousand in total. Creased paper varieties have been seen for all values except the 10p and in small numbers offsets for the 50p and £1. The £1 has been reliably reported as having at least one side imperforate but unfortunately the writer has not had the opportunity to view it.

'At first listed in the Gibbons GB Specialised catalogue Part 4 it has now been excluded from their more recently published Elizabethan. Apparently after the copy for the former had been prepared and passed to the printer and from a re-examination of the status of the £1 imperforate—at the time a last minute addition—its subsequent inclusion could not be justified'.
(*To be continued*)

British Special Stamps

28. The Shakespeare Festival, 1964

William Shakespeare's 400th birth anniversary was 'the event of the year' and one which could hardly be ignored by the Post Office. Yet at first they were in a quandary because the existing stamp-issuing policy excluded the

commemoration of 'people and events from past history'. As Mr Ray Mawby, APMG, pointed out at Question Time in the Commons on 26 February 1964—in response to a question about a stamp for Robert Burns—



'British history has so many distinguished figures in literature, science and the arts that . . . we would have the invidious task of choosing among them'.

However, by that time the Post Office had skated nimbly around their dilemma and the five stamps, tactfully inscribed 'Shakespeare Festival', had been designed and printed, and were ready for distribution before the date of issue, 23 April (traditionally accepted as Shakespeare's birthday—St George's Day). The designers were David Gentleman, who had made such an impact with his earlier designs for National Productivity Year (1962) and the Lifeboat Conference (1963), and, for the 2s 6d engraved stamp, the brothers Christopher and Robin Ironside.

For his four stamps David selected some of Shakespeare's plays as livelier, more interesting subjects than the hackneyed, picture-postcard Ann Hathaway's Cottage, Shakespeare's house and the Memorial Theatre at Stratford-on-Avon. Scenes from the plays were flanked by portraits of the Queen and of the Bard himself.

The characters were reproduced from woodcuts—a technique he employed successfully for the 'Lifeboat' stamps—while the simple sets, uniformly styled, were based on the Elizabethan stage. The 3d stamp showed Puck and Bottom from *A Midsummer Night's*



Dream. The cavorting Puck was inspired by a carved capital at Southwell Minster where he is known as 'Robin Goodfellow' or 'Jack-in-the-Green'; costume details for Bottom, heavily disguised in an ass's head, came from Millia Davenport's *The Book of Costume* and an old manuscript.

Feste, *Twelfth Night* (6d), was a composite clown from a number of sources, including a watercolour by Rosalind Dease, and Allardyce Nicoll's *The History of Harlequin*. Romeo and Juliet are depicted in a version of the well-known balcony scene, wearing Renaissance-Italian costumes, from *Romeo and Juliet* (1s 3d), while the kneeling figure of Henry V in his tent on the eve of Agincourt (*Henry V*, 1s 6d) was based on a rubbing from an ancient brass.

Shakespeare's likeness on the stamps—the familiar 'First Folio' portrait—came from an engraving by Martin Droeshout on the title-page of the first collected edition (or 'folio') of 36 plays published after Shakespeare's

death (1616) in 1623. However, the portrait is reversed (as in a mirror) to show his head turning in to the design, towards the familiar Wilding portrait of the Queen who was, at that time and until 1967, always depicted on the right of the stamp, 'looking in'.

For the 2s 6d design, the brothers Ironside presented us with a period piece of the 1940s (compare with the George VI high values of 1939-48)—scrolled vignettes of unequal dimensions containing, in one, 'Hamlet contemplating Yorick's skull' in the graveyard, in the other, the (engraved) Wilding portrait of the Queen. The hapless Yorick was jester to the King of Denmark (Hamlet's father)—'a fellow of infinite jest and most excellent fancy'. The Ironsides' fancy extended to the inclusion of decorative 'pylons' flanking the vignettes, but at least 'Hamlet' was named as the relevant play.

The four Gentleman(ly) stamps were multi-colour/photogravure-printed in sheets of 120 (6×20) on ordinary and phosphor-banded paper, watermark 'multiple crowns', by Harrison and Sons. Shades, resulting from different printings, are recorded for all four denominations, but there are surprisingly few listed varieties—a line of dots across Puck's head (3d); a broken 'H' in 'SHAKESPEARE', and missing floorboards at right of stage (6d); and a 'large pearl' flaw on the Queen's necklace (1s 3d).

The 'Hamlet' stamp was engraved and recess-printed by Bradbury Wilkinson in sheets of 40 (4×10) on ordinary 'multiple crowns' watermarked paper. Its deep slate-purple colour became blackish brown in a subsequent printing, and other variations are known, including an unconfirmed jet-black shade. There were three separate printings of this stamp and, like the 1s 3d and 1s 6d stamps, it exists with watermark inverted.

Quantities sold (phosphor in brackets) were: 3d 133,670,000 (10,427,880); 6d 19,238,200 (1,318,560); 1s 3d 7,067,200 (727,800); 1s 6d 6,910,120 (657,120); 2s 6d 3,664,920.

The Post Office supported the Shakespeare

stamps with a record number of innovations in postal stationery – an official first day cover, designed by David Gentleman and featuring Bottom and Feste; a new-style first-day hand-stamp; air-letter sheets; and the first presentation packs which included one set of the stamps and full details of the issue. Pack sales amounted to more than 93,000.

JAMES WATSON

Book Reviews

The Stanley Gibbons 'Elizabethan' Catalogue of Modern British Commonwealth Stamps 1977 Edition

The 1977 'Elizabethan' retains the colourful cover and general format of the last few years, and the publishers have continued to accommodate the 12-month mass of new material for a modest 25p increase in price.

The Great Britain listing includes a number of new varieties extending even to the new 20p definitive (SG 873). However, given the unchanged prices for most Elizabethan issues in the 1977 'Part 1', it is the matter of price changes which is the most significant feature of the new publication.

The early special issues show no alterations until the 1965 Commonwealth Arts Festival (SG 670m rises to £1.50 plain and £4.00 phosphor). Thereafter the increases are very selective, even the 'good' phosphor issues remaining unchanged. Many are unaltered from 1976 'Elizabethan' price levels, this implies a real decline if the depreciation of sterling is taken into account.

The definitives fare slightly better and some of the better 'Wildings' show notable increases (e.g. SG 526/7 and 556). There are however no changes in the Castle HV's or the graphite and phosphor-graphite issues. The 1969 Machin HV's fell back in the 1977 'Part 1' and it is now matched by a reduction in the presentation pack from £40 to £30.

The Stanley Gibbons 'Elizabethan' Catalogue is published by Stanley Gibbons Publications Ltd, 391 Strand, London WC2R 0LX—Price £6.75.

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'.

20 December 1976 UFN

Stoke On Trent is a Mechanised Letter Office Please Use Postcodes. To be used at Stoke On Trent. First and Second Class.

2 January-1 April 1977 (P)

South Woodham Ferrers the Place for your New Home. To be used at Chelmsford. First and Second Class.

17 January-3 April 1977 (P)

A Phone Saves Time and Money. To be used at the following offices:

Kilmarnock 17-23 January 1977

Falkirk 24-30 January 1977

Glasgow (Blantyre) 31 January-6 February 1977

Motherwell (Hamilton) 7-13 February 1977

Kilmarnock (Irvine) 14-20 February 1977

Stirling 21-27 February 1977

Dumfries 28 February-6 March 1977

Dumbarton 7-13 March 1977

Motherwell 14-27 March 1977

Kilmarnock (Saltcoats) 28 March-3 April 1977.

1 April-30 June 1977 (P)

Expanding Hastings has Room for You. To be used at Hastings. First and Second Class.

Repeat Campaigns

13 December 1976-26 February 1977

In Distress or Despair - The Samaritans - Phone Amersham 5000 Day or Night. To be reused at Aylesbury. Second Class.

20 December 1976-19 May 1977 (P)

Holiday Guide 20p from Room 7 Guildhall Tenby Tenby and South Pembrokeshire. To be reused at Tenby and Pembroke Dock. First and Second Class.

24 December 1976 UFN

Holiday at Bridlington Free Colour Guide from Dept 100 Information

Centre. To be reused at Bridlington. First and Second Class.

29 December 1976-28 June 1977 (P)

Come to Sunny Weymouth and Portland. To be reused at Weymouth. Second Class.

P Denotes Pictorial.

Slogan Cancellations

Several readers have written to ask why we have changed the position of slogans on the envelopes so that they now obliterate the stamps. Perhaps a word or so of explanation will not be amiss.

All forms of postmarks are intended to cancel the stamps in order that they cannot be reused and to show the office and date of posting. To ensure that all the stamps are cancelled when more than one is used the cancellation takes the forms of wavy lines or a postmark slogan.

The datestamp details are impressed for essential Post Office monitoring and control and it is necessary for the information to be read clearly and easily. Whenever possible, therefore it is desirable that the town, date and time of posting are shown on the cover rather than on the stamp/s and this consideration will become even more important should we ultimately resort to microfilming in our quality of service examinations of mail. It is for these reasons that we now impress the slogan to the right of the town die.

We gave careful consideration to the requirements of collectors but bearing in mind the special facilities offered on first days of issue and the special arrangements offered at various offices throughout the country we decided that operational considerations should take precedence on ordinary mail and that in order more easily to read the dies, the slogans will be used to cancel the stamp/s.

Silver Jubilee Stamps

The stamp designs to mark the Jubilee will be based on a portrait of the Queen framed by two decorated initials 'ER'. Further details will be published later.

Requests to reproduce articles and illustrations appearing in the *Bulletin* should be addressed to the Editor, Philatelic Bulletin, PMK 3, Postal Headquarters, St Martin's-le-Grand, LONDON EC1A 1HQ.

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