

Philatelic Bulletin

Volume 12 Number 7 March 1975



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Introduction

The January Bulletin showed a famous clock taken from *RMS Columba*, a Clyde steamer which had aboard a posting box. By coincidence this month's National Postal Museum notes tell the story of the boxes which operated on Cross-Channel Steamers.

We are finding it a little hard to produce something new in the way of congratulations to Dr A S Law who has won the Post Office Stampex Trophy for the third consecutive year. We offer him our best wishes on his outstanding achievement which is described at further length elsewhere in this issue.

RAF Covers

A flown souvenir cover associated with the Royal Air Force Museum series will be issued to commemorate the work done by the Royal Aircraft Establishment and in particular in the

pilotless aircraft field. It will show the unmanned Firefly 8 and Jindivik and be flown in a Firefly 5 after cancellation by a commemorative handstamp (BFPS 1490) on 3 February 1975. It will be available on or about 25 February 1975 from the Project Officer Mr A Percy, Royal Aircraft Establishment, Llanbedr, Merioneth at 30p plus postage. All proceeds from the sale of this cover will be donated to the Royal Air Force Museum Appeal Fund.

First Day Cover Services European Architectural Heritage Year

The Council of Europe has designated 1975 as European Architectural Heritage Year, the purpose of which is to awaken the interest of the European peoples in their common architectural heritage. To commemorate this event in Great Britain, 5 special postage stamps are to be issued on 23 April.

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 as requested, and bearing the full set of stamps. The cover will be cancelled 'Philatelic Bureau Edinburgh' and despatched.

Service B

Customers own pre-addressed covers will be given the full set of stamps, cancelled and despatched.

Service C

Bulk orders of 50 or more covers all to the same address, under the conditions of Service A.

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

Details of prices are given on the application form enclosed.

Gems from the RM Phillips' Collection

XXI The Cross-Channel Mobile Boxes

Very few of the many thousands of travellers who every year before 1939 posted their letters and cards in the special boxes carried on board the Cross-Channel steamers could have been aware of the interesting story which lay behind this service.

The introduction of the mobile posting boxes was in accordance with provisions of the Anglo-French Postal Convention of 1 June 1843 which were continued in the revised convention signed in 1856. The Conventions provided for the bulk of the mail between the two countries to be carried by subsidised Packet services but 'In order to afford the inhabitants of the parts of the two countries every facility for the despatch of letters by merchant vessels plying between France and Great Britain a Moveable Letter Box, pro-

vided with a lock, may with the previous consent of the two offices, be placed in each of these vessels to receive such letters as the public may wish to deposit in it. On arrival of the vessel the moveable box shall be carried to the postmaster, who shall open it and take out the letters and then return the box to the agent who brought it'. (Articles 12 and 13, Convention of 1856.) Article 31 provided that "Letters found in moveable boxes . . . shall be marked on the side of the address by the postmaster at the port of disembarkation with an octagonal date stamp in red ink independently of the name of that office". Letters originating in ships coming from France were to receive an 'MB' (Mobile Box) date marking; those from ships going to France were struck with a handstamp with the



letters 'BM' (Boite Mobile).

The very fine cover from the R M Phillips collection illustrated above shows the first type of boxed 'MB' struck on arrival in London in 1844, the first year of use. This type is also known used at Southampton, Dover and Brighton. It is believed to have been applied mostly to mail posted in the mobile boxes carried on steamships linking Le Havre with the above-named English ports.

Two features of particular interest in this cover are the cancellation of the 1d adhesive stamp by a SHIP LETTER/LONDON date-stamp and the fact that the cover is stamped at all. Most of the known covers are stampless but a very few covers are known for the period 1844-56 which were put into a moveable box on a ship between the Channel Islands and England, and franked with a 1d stamp. But this does not fit this cover because a charge of 6d (in ms.) has been raised to be paid by the addressee. This was the correct rate per $\frac{1}{2}$ oz for letters to (and from) France so no allowance has been made for the 1d adhesive. It is possible that the combination of these markings and an adhesive on this cover makes it unique.

The use of 'MB' (and the French equivalent 'ANG BM') markings continued until 1939. These marks were usually used to cancel the adhesives after the 1870's as of course the use of adhesives on letters to France became compulsory in 1855. Before 1870 stamps on incoming letters were usually cancelled with the 'killer' of the port concerned, the octagonal 'MB' handstamp being struck alongside.

A G RIGO DE RIGHI

Machin Definitive Stamps Again Win the Post Office Trophy at Stampex

For the third consecutive year we have to congratulate Dr A S Law of Stoke-on-Trent for winning the Post Office Trophy at STAMPDEX, this time with a study of the

Machin portrait multipositives of the low-value definitive issues 1970-74.

In the research for his exhibit Dr Law found that the traditional use of multipositive plate flaws left some cylinders unplated and knowing that such flaws can be touched out and new ones appear, he resorted to the alignment of stamp images produced by the step and repeat camera process.

When a multipositive plate is made for photogravure printing with the step and repeat camera, certain tolerances are normal and allowed for. When subsequent blocks of multipositives are made, they can never be exactly identical with one another and the slight differences in the alignment and the minute flaws of each block would be the property of each particular plate. These proved to be variable as between different plates, but constant for all cylinders of a given known plate. The use of these 'finger-prints' brought positive identification to a field where the more familiar 'scars' had enabled only strong supposition.

Only persistence in this type of study would ensure a complete picture is obtained because of the very short life of some of the printings of the various denominations of stamps and it is no use waiting for someone to produce a catalogue before collecting and studying current material, which by then may have disappeared.

Similar information on earlier photogravure stamps may well have been lost for ever because the importance of studying current material was not appreciated. As in previous years Dr Law has demonstrated that it is possible to find a theme for original research sufficient to satisfy the judges from modern stamps freely available at no great cost. We hope that his example will encourage others to submit entries of modern British stamps in future years.

New Philatelic Posting Box

A special Philatelic posting box will be brought into use at Wrexham, Clywd from 23 April 1975.

7. Royal Silver Wedding, 1948

In a previous article in the series 'British High Value Stamps of the 20th Century' (*Philatelic Bulletin*, Vol. 11, No. 5, January 1974) I commented on the importance attached by the British Post Office to the occasion of the Silver Wedding of the late King George VI and his Consort, Queen Elizabeth, on 26 April 1948. This was made evident by the decision to issue a £1 stamp which proved to be a controversial 'double-edged sword'—it was a handsome, prestigious design worthy of the event, yet (and the Post Office made no secret of this) it was intended mainly for collectors at home and abroad, primarily as a means of obtaining much-desired revenue.



The £1 stamp, designed by Joan Hassall (who survived four unaccepted essays, a rejected bromide and three competitors), was fully documented in my previous article: now it is the turn of the equally attractive 2½d stamp, intended for 'the man in the street' to use on his letters and thus share in the nationwide celebrations.

A late decision—November 1947—to issue the stamps left the Post Office with rather less than five months to commission and select suitable designs, have the stamps printed by the willing but hard-pressed printers—Harrison & Sons Ltd of High Wycombe—and then have them distributed and placed on sale throughout the United Kingdom. It was a time for cool heads, fingers dutifully crossed, and speedy consultation with the selected artists.

These, for the proposed 2½d design, were Joan Hassall, J Stobie, H L Palmer (who had designed the previous Stamp Centenary and 2½d Victory issues), L Thornton and G T Knipe. Here I must express due acknowledgement and thanks to A G Rigo de Righi, Curator of the National Postal Museum, and author of the very fine Museum publication, *The Stamp of Royalty*, 'British Commemorative Issues for Royal Occasions, 1935-1972', for much of the information given here. It reproduces, in colour and black and white, more than 20 trial designs for the Royal Silver Wedding issues.

From the beginning the 2½d stamp was intended to be in horizontal format, and the method of printing of both 2½d and £1 stamps—photogravure—was very quickly settled. No doubt recess-printing was considered for the high value, but time did not permit the laborious engraving of plates while the extra cost, too, would have been prohibitive. Attractive, contemporary portraits of the King and Queen, based on photographs by Dorothy Wilding, were selected for both designs and, in the event, the now familiar 'twinning' profile portraits were employed on both stamps.

Joan Hassall and the four Harrisons' staff artists named above immediately started work on a Post Office idea for the 2½d design—the incorporation of 'stock' landscapes of Tower Bridge and Windsor Castle, also, later, Buckingham Palace. All these early efforts were, after due consideration, discarded, and by the end of January 1948 no official decision

had been taken on suitable designs for the 2½d or the £1 denominations.

During early February eight new designs for the 2½d were submitted by the Harrisons' team (as well as five essays for the £1 stamp), and all but one artist, G T Knipe, persisted in using the background 'landscapes' theme which had been rejected previously. George T Knipe, who may have had in mind the simplicity and success of the earlier Edward VIII photogravure printed issues, broke away from his design colleagues and depicted the Royal profiles in isolated splendour, flanked, in his first attempts, with the 'Tudor' crown and the figures of value, and the years '1923-1948' at the foot; alternatively, the Royal Cipher replacing the crown with the years running vertically at the sides.

The accepted design was a composite—or a compromise—of Mr Knipe's two essayed bromides: the crown and the '2½d' were retained in the upper left and right corners, and the years '1923-1948' kept in their flanking positions. There had not been time for essays in the selected colour—ultramarine—recommended by the Royal Fine Arts Commission, and the designs of both 2½d and £1 values were put in hand, posthaste, on the strength of stamp-size photographs! That was just two months before the stamps were required to be on sale—26 April 1948, the anniversary day.

While the £1 stamp was available in London and certain head post offices elsewhere, the ubiquitous 2½d value was sold throughout the country to the tune of 147,500,000 stamps. As with the £1, the 2½d stamps were overprinted for use in the British Post Offices abroad.

JAMES WATSON

British Empire Exhibition, Wembley 1924-1925

Mr James Watson's article on the British Empire Exhibition postage stamps, which appeared in the August 1974 edition of the Bulletin, created a lot of interest, and inspired many readers to write to the Editor. Mr Watson made the point that the special commemorative postage stamps, the first commemoratives to be printed for Great Britain, were sold only at the post offices in the exhibition grounds. It is this statement which readers believed to be inaccurate.

Mr Watson was invited to reply in the December bulletin, in which he made it clear that his source of information was from a series of articles written by W G Stitt-Dibden who had made a special study of the 'Wembley' issues. This therefore prompted us to make a search of the official files on the BEE, and the following information came to light.

The Post Office and the Exhibition Authorities agreed that the postage stamps should be sold only at the exhibition grounds, but to satisfy the needs of some philatelic dealers and those members of the public who were unable to travel to Wembley, a service was introduced at the exhibition ground and also at the London Chief Office, whereby the stamps could be obtained through the post.

It is conceivable therefore that some sub-postmasters, in an effort to maintain the goodwill of their customers, may have acquired stocks of the stamps by this method. It must be stressed, however, that such practice would have been quite unofficial. Also, visitors to Wembley were able to buy unlimited quantities of the stamps, take them away from the exhibition and postally use them anywhere in the United Kingdom. This was permissible and would explain the use of postmarks other than the Exhibition postmark.

We are in agreement with Mr Watson that the scarcity of the 1925 issue is due to the poor sales because BEE was not so popular as it had been in 1924.

CORRECTION

In Mr James Watson's article about the 'Centenary of the First Adhesive Postage Stamps, 1940', published in the January issue of the Bulletin, the reference made to the size of the stamp should have read, 'a horizontal design half as wide again as a normal definitive'.

We apologize to Mr Watson.

Embarking Upon Postal History

by PETER COLLINS

Most readers of this article collect stamps. The majority have progressed at least to the stage of studying a catalogue and learning something of the colourful pieces of printed paper which first attracted them to seek some satisfaction of the squirrel instinct which motivates men to collect from the earliest days of their mental development as schoolboys to maturity, seniority and old age.

Many collectors, seeking a mental relaxation beyond the visual appeal of the stamps, have progressed to philately, the study of the stamps, the methods and the period of printing, the significance of shades, the reason for the printing flaws and varieties. By a studious consideration of the technicalities of production and seeking the reason why constant marks occur, the collector relaxes his mind by absorption in his stamps.

It may be that some philatelists have not yet discovered the delights of delving into the history uncovered by an examination and understanding of postal documents, old letters, covers, handstamps and cancellations. Postal History reveals the social and economic history and the background to an area or events.

To be a part of the stream of history creates a sense of stability in a changing and impermanent world. Ancient religions revered ancestors to create the illusion of a permanence in the scheme of eternity. The world's most recent civilisations trace family trees for the same reason.

Pieces of Postal History—entires and covers—clothe the skeletons of stamps with the flesh and blood of life. With their handstamps, cancellations and transit datestamps they tell the story of postal routes and postal rates. The student knows that mail to or from the country he collects cost so much and travelled by a certain route. He knows that certain post offices were open only between certain dates, that some cancellations are seldom seen, that certain datestamps were used only on outward, and some only on inward mail.

The postal history collection becomes more

than mere collecting; it develops to detective work; can a cover at this date from this office at this rate be genuine? Has a new discovery been made? It becomes also a treasure hunt. The student of a country, county, state, province or town recognises a cancellation or a certain type of cancellation as being unknown to him, and possibly it is the earliest or the latest known date of use.

Knowledge and recognition are the keys to getting bargains or hitting the jackpot. What is the appeal of postal history? Like everything connected with every branch of the hobby, visual appearance is of prime importance. A clean, colourful, attractive item at once catches the eye and the spectacular piece attracts a price to match. The cover or entire is worth more than a cancellation on piece. Interesting contents of a letter enhance its value.

The cancellation not formerly known or used at a date earlier than previously recorded in published studies is a winner; the registered envelope with scales set out for registration charges may be worth ten times more than the type in which this formula is not included. Since knowledge is power one hopes every day to add some new information to one's knowledge and this continual quest for knowledge is both satisfying and satisfactory.

The most exciting and satisfactory way of embarking upon a study is by acquiring a bundle of covers relating to the area or subject that interests you. This is still possible as an old family correspondence or that of an old-established firm or solicitor will come on the market from time to time through an auctioneer or dealer. Although such an accumulation will cost far more than it did a few years ago, it will undoubtedly be worth very much more by the time you have sorted, classified and studied it.

The principal lines to follow in studies of postal history are:

1. The study of an area (town or county) showing the dates of opening and closing of various offices with examples of the cancellations in use. Sometimes the parcel and registra-

tion handstamps are very elusive and T.P.O.'s passing through your chosen district should not be overlooked.

2. The study of mail to and from a country (or places within a country) showing the postal rates, routes followed and time taken by the mail, perhaps including—or exclusively—airmail.

3. A historic period, showing the development of postal services and routes.

4. A historic event—on a large scale—wars and military campaigns are an example; as microcosms the Wembley Exhibitions and the 1911 London-Windsor flights fall in this category.

5. A combination of any or all of the above categories.

A satisfactory system for arranging a collection is under headings—Geographical, Alphabetical, Chronological and Numerical and the method is equally applicable to any type of collection.

Geographical arrangement is a convenient division into north, south, east and west, or into counties, states or provinces. **Alphabetical order** within this division is most straightforward for easy reference. **Chronological arrangement** permits a ready reference to the earliest dates you have of different types of datestamps or new post offices, and numerical progression gives coverage for the many postal administrations that have used a code of numbers to indicate different offices.

Finally it may seem most satisfactory to group together all covers showing the same postal rate.

Works of reference are essential. An atlas and good gazetteer keep facts which seem familiar fresh in one's memory, a set of encyclopaedias and a dictionary of national biography are almost essential pre-requisites and when the mind and imagination have been stimulated, access to a reference library is helpful.

Postal guides for the areas and periods covered are desirable and reference to any philatelic works on your subject is obvious.

There is no point in spending time on ground that has already been covered. If you are unable to find any published work, join the appropriate specialist society. Do not, however, accept unquestionably all work which has been published. Your research could well prove wrong some long-accepted statement.

Having obtained your works of reference, you may start to arrange your collection.

As an introduction, maps and a history of your subject, perhaps supported by newspaper cuttings (eg. shipping notices in regard to maritime collections, war reports for military studies) and extracts from postal or post office guides will interest friends looking at the collection and clarify for you the objects of your study, possibly also providing a lead to new lines to follow.

Recording essential facts from the covers also provides subject matter for writing-up. To pursue uniformity with every page of writing-up within the collection produces a standard pattern which is pleasanter for the eye and easier for the mind to follow.

Points to record are the place and date of posting; place and date of receipt; places and dates of handstamps applied in transit, time taken in transit and finally the postal rate, indicating how this is made up, i.e. double rate, change of route, registration, etc. Changes in time of transit and in rate of postage are important as they may indicate a change of route or method of transit.

Some students use a card index system, marking the covers lightly in pencil with a number corresponding to the file card. This enables covers to be mounted for display while the cards are free to be shuffled about and re-arranged to different systems. Whilst normally they would probably be maintained in date order it might prove of interest to file together all items bearing the same postal rate, all of which have travelled by the same route, all of which took the same time in transit. An intelligent appraisal and comparison of the likenesses and differences between seemingly similar covers that come together through

Parcel Post Motor Coach

*Royal Mail Parcel Post Motor Coach, London to Brighton, at Friars Oak.
The first Journey, June 2nd 1905.*



We are indebted to Mr Anderson of Ashted, Surrey, who sent this postcard of the first journey of a parcel post motor coach.

these different ways of filing should lead one to confirm or shatter some postal historian's theory, or establish some new ones.

All this may seem a lot of work to go to simply to further one's hobby but in this branch above all others in the pursuit of stamp collecting, the more you know about your subject the more pleasure it will give you.

A proper pursuit of postal history will provide an all-absorbing occupation that will take you further and deeper from the real world with its present worries and cares and wrap you in the romance of the Afghan War, the posts of the west where Wells Fargo received payment for stamps in silver dollars cut in four to make "a quarter" or eight to make "a bit". As Antarctic mail takes you South with the historic expeditions and China mail shows the encroachment of Europeans to the East culminating in the Boxer Rebellion, the mind of any intelligent collector will be broadened and inevitably he will seek to learn more about his subject, extend his horizon and discover more of the world.

A few years ago, covers from most periods

of history, with or without adhesives, could be bought for a few shillings. Now the situation is vastly different. Postal history has come into vogue and since its systemised study can hold the key to such vast treasures, it is assuredly here to stay.

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Postal Addresses in Scotland

Following the creation of new local government Regions under the Local Government (Scotland) Act, 1973, Post Office customers in Scotland are being consulted about the use of new Scottish Regional names as part of their postal addresses.

To gauge opinion about including in postal addresses the names of the nine new Regional administrations formed under the Act, the Post Office is consulting the Post Office Users' National Council and the CBI. The Scottish Postal Board is consulting the Post Office Users' Council for Scotland and other bodies in

Scotland either directly or through Head Postmasters.

New county names in England and Wales, created in 1974 by the Local Government Act 1972, were made part of postal addresses after the Post Office consulted customers, including the Post Office Users' National Council and the Confederation of British Industry—both of whom were in favour of the changes.

In Scotland, the Post Office uses the present county structure as a basis for dealing with mail. Changes caused by the Act could affect 1,200,000 of Scotland's 2m addresses.

'After the Act comes into force, the new names will tend to displace the old ones in general usage,' said Mr Alex Currall, Managing Director of Posts. 'That would point towards our accepting the new names or variants of them for postal addressing. We could do this without damage to the quality of the service we give, but we shall wish to hear our customers' views before decisions are made.'

In explaining his reference to 'variants' Mr Alex Currall instanced Strathclyde, which, because of its size and population, would have to be sub-divided for postal purposes into North, Mid, West and South Strathclyde. Similarly, the new Highland Region would have to be sub-divided into West Highland and Highland.

'Decisions will not be made until consultations have finished,' said Mr Currall. 'And until announcements are made nationally and locally, customers should continue to use present postal addresses throughout Scotland.' He emphasised that postcodes will not be affected by any changes.

British Stamp Designers

By some strange oversight the list printed in the February Bulletin did not include the following details. Our apologies are tendered for the confusion.

1965 Salvation Army *G Trenaman 1s 6d*

1965 Lister *P Gauld 4d, F Ariss 1/-*

1965 Commonwealth Arts Festival

D Gentleman and R Dease

1965 Battle of Britain *D Gentleman and*

R Dease 6 × 4d and 1s 3d, A Restall 9d

1965 Post Office Tower *C Abbott*

1965 United Nations *J Matthews*

1965 ITU Centenary *A Restall*

1966 Robert Burns *F G Huntly*

1966 Westminster Abbey *S Robinson 3d,*

Bradbury Wilkinson 2s 6d

1966 Landscapes *L Rosoman*

1966 World Cup *D Gentleman 4d,*

W Kempster 6d, D Caplan, 1s 3d

1966 Birds *J Norris Wood*

1966 World Cup 'Winners' *D Gentleman*

Book Reviews

The All-Colour Book of Stamps by Kenneth Chapman and Barbara Baker

This new general work is a one volume of a series dealing with subjects as disparate as oriental carpets, Egyptian mythology and wine. What they have in common is that they set out to be a general survey of the subject and to take advantage of extensive colour illustrations to present it.

On both counts this volume is a success. Within its 72 pages the authors have compressed a wealth of information about stamps and postal history which give it relevance even for a fairly advanced collector. The illustrations and helpful captions are numerous, and those depicting postal history items reveal to the layman (and let it be whispered) to some stamp collectors, beauty of which they may be unaware.

The All Colour Book of Stamps is published by Octopus Books Limited, 59 Grosvenor Street LONDON W1X 9DA, price £1.50.

A Postal History of Darlington by James Courtney

In order to compile a postal history of a particular locality, be it hamlet, town or city, the subject demands that the author should spend hours, days and sometimes months in painstaking research, sifting archival material

and scanning documents which may have lain dormant for generations.

James Courtney's 'A POSTAL HISTORY OF DARLINGTON' bears the hallmark of one dedicated to his subject. The book is informative, interesting and very readable, and students of postal history should be well pleased with this work, and doubtless will want to include it on their book shelves, while the reader with only a passing interest in the subject may well be encouraged to pursue it further.

Mr Courtney has made full use of all the material made available to him, and pieced together a colourful picture of the important part played by Darlington in the postal reform of Great Britain. His book is full of detail, references and information, not appreciated and generally made known until his research appeared in book form.

The Philatelic Bulletin would like to offer its congratulations to him, and also to the Darlington Corporation who is responsible for the publication, which is obtainable from Dressers (Stationers) Ltd, 26 High Row, Darlington; price 50p.

"Music on Stamps" by Sylvester Peat

Sylvester Peat is the founder and President of the Philatelic Music Circle, as well as a noted musician, conductor and church organist. The first four volumes of a projected six-volume work on Music on Stamps are now available. These cover, alphabetically, A-R, or musically and philatelically, Hermann ABENDROTH (conductor of the Berlin State Opera, early 20th century; East Germany 1957 SG E346) to RUDAGI (9th century blind poet and musician; Persia 1958 SG 2274: Russia 1958 SG 1222-24 (3v)).

Included are the names, dates, brief biographical and philatelic details of those composers and musicians depicted on stamps. The text is illustrated with black-and-white reproductions of many of the stamps listed. But it goes much further than this, as can best

be illustrated by examples. For Chopin, we are given 7 lines of biography, a list of 21 stamps and 1 miniature sheet, with SG nos, and also, black and white illustrations of most of the stamps listed, together with first day covers, special Polish Air Mail covers, Postal Stationery and Postmarks featuring the composer. Picture Postcard reproductions show a portrait of the composer, his tomb, the room in Majorca in which he spent a winter with Georges Sand, a monument at his birthplace, and a painting of the composer playing for Prince Radziwill at a typical salon recital of the time.

The famous rub shoulders with the not-so-famous. One of the shortest entries concerns one "BULNES M—a Chilean politician who founded a Conservatory of music". We are assured that "Chile 1911 SG142" was issued to commemorate him, but in this case there is no pictorial evidence to prove it. For Puccini we have only the single "Italy 1958 SG C490" showing that best known of all artist's garrets—Rudolfo's in La Boheme. But we do get a portrait of the composer, an autographed picture postcard of an early production of Tosca which has to be seen to be believed, and some fascinating vignettes—imitation postage stamps used to publicise the premiers of Tosca and La Boheme. The author is not without his controversial touches. In a brief note on Maurice Ravel he writes "Ravel is imaginative sometimes almost to the point of ugliness". But where? Even Gaspard de la Nuit, for all its fierceness, is never ugly.

Great Britain is poorly served; presumably Vaughan Williams (1972 SG883) will appear in volume 5, but such other British "Musicals" as the Salvation Army bandmen (1965 SG 665) and Good King Wenceslas (1973 SG 923-8) are excluded as not depicting composers, conductors or musical monarchs, although Wenceslas might just get in under the latter category. Sylvester Peat apologizes in Volume 2 for "the absence of stamps in respect of those great British composers, Delius and Elgar, which is due to the insensitivity of the

British Post Office to the claims of music. We must therefore make do with postmarks in these cases." To make up for the omission we are given some delightful Elgarian postcards from the early years of the century. One can only support Sylvester Peat's view and trust that by 1984 somebody up there will have had a change of heart. (1984 marks the 150th anniversary of the deaths of Elgar, Delius and Holst).

To sum-up, this is an excellent, well-produced series. The lack of colour merely urges the collector to seek the originals. The inclusion of material that strays beyond the confines of the purely philatelic adds enormously to the interest of the books, but more important suggests, particularly to novices in the thematic field, how a thematic collection on ANY theme can be opened out to enhance the value and the pleasure such a collection can give, both to the collector and those to whom he displays it. Strongly recommended.

Music on Stamps is published by Picton Press, Chippenham, Wilts, price 60p per volume.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Sir,

NO POWER FOR THE BOSSES

Mr Gerald Davies' letter (January 1975) covers much of the ground the designers and I travelled during the development of the designs for these stamps.

1 We looked at drawn reproductions of the bosses and decided that they lacked the authenticity of the photographs with which they were compared.

2 We looked at the bosses removed from their vaulting and they appeared to us as seals (a questionable attribute that Mr Davies favours) and not as part of an architectural structure.

3 We considered, very seriously as always, the need to identify the values without question and we rejected the plain coloured background as it competed in an artificial way, with the detail of the boss.

4 On the fourteen issues for the last two years there have been only nine examples of captions and denominations set in a sans-serif face.

5 For the RSA student Bursaries competition in 1972 the Post Office provided the schools with pre-printed film of the caption and denomination, with the intention of solving for the student, as far as this test was concerned, the least important part of the overall problem. And we gave them a sans-serif setting.

6 There is only one issue in a year, that of Christmas, which if printed in a vertical format, could impose unduly on the address area of the envelope. Since the Post Office handles more small envelopes at Christmas than at any other time, we prefer to make our Christmas stamps horizontal in format.

I hope Mr Davies will accept that, all in all, we do try to do our professional design homework before we issue stamps.

Yours faithfully,

STUART ROSE, FSIA

*Design Adviser Postal Headquarters
London EC1*

Dear Sir,

Your welcome article entitled *Bus Ex* in the October *Philatelic Bulletin* not only deals interestingly with the unusual bus/mail service which existed in the Farnham and Haslemere areas up to 1939, but also acts as a penetratingly valuable public perspective over general methods of postal and transport operation which were often discontinued at that time and never resumed.

I have, indeed, often felt that both in 1914 and in 1939 the public services must have encountered a distressing and traumatic 'generation gap' which we are still gallantly attempting to remedy. In all transport and postal matters it goes without saying that it is the daily currency and continuity of the communications—whether local or national—that builds up their strength and popular usage. Any world war—and this century has already brought us two such wars—is particularly

destructive of communications. War histories generally tell us of how the public services were placed upon a wartime basis or how property and life were destroyed, but they tend to omit a true valuation of the number of lives and the amount of expert local knowledge within the postal and transport services removed so tragically from us during wartime periods—this not only by wartime death in military action or during civilian public service duties, but also due to the fact that the two wartime periods must obviously have bridged the time up to retirement age for many postal people; so that they were no longer available to resume the specialised services in which they had become expert in prewar days.

Although your article states the fact that the Farnham *Bus Ex* service was not widely used, many philatelists as well as business users might well feel that, under modern conditions, such special services on specific 'buses or trains are likely to be very much prized by the public. The accuracy and individuality of a postmark may be regarded truly as an inestimable part not only of the security of Her Majesty's Posts under today's special conditions, but also of that indispensable 'final flourish and fanfare' which only the Post Office can provide upon the envelopes of any postal user. I am thus always happy to support, both in word and in practice, all such local individualities of service, postmark and tablet procedure—the widening philatelic interest in such elements seeming to me to betoken a new era of respect and self-respect within the posts and the public usage of them.

Whilst resident in Norway some years ago now, I was fascinated not only by the large numbers of *Ex Bus* services and postal buses used by the Norwegians, but also by the coming-together of ferry boats and/or rowing boats for the transfer of posts and parcels in the middle of Sognefjord. I became a frequent patroniser of the post boxes found on the sides of every train and on suburban trams in Oslo and other cities.

Some of these neglected or abandoned ser-

vices had an almost artistic simplicity of operation illustrating human communications at their finest. Some business men, for example, may remember the through Pullman trains that travelled the Underground between Aldgate and Harrow before 1939. A notable pre-1939 feature of London was the Saturday night postal delivery. For example, wedding anniversary cards posted during Saturday night shopping for Monday delivery had arrived on the domestic doormat by the same evening, delivered—two days early!—while the family were still out during the late shopping period.

I believe that your periodical is an excellent focus for wide good cheer and confidence as to the future of local public communications for I am sure that the qualities of ingenuity and constancy illustrated in such postal operations as the *Bus Ex* service are self-resurrecting in ways of such colour and vivacity as are always more than enough not only to dissolve all adverse circumstances but to use adversity as a stepping-stone in the creative process.

Yours very faithfully,

EDDIE TURNBULL

GOSFORTH

Northumberland

Special Handstamps

Unless otherwise stated, items for reposting bearing at least 4p in postage, 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'.

19 March 1975 (P/R)

1875-1975 Centenary 19 March 1975 St Joseph's College Dumfries. Special posting box at St Joseph's College, Craigs Road, Dumfries DG1 4UU.

24 March 1975 (P/C)

30th Anniversary Operation Varsity 24 Mar 75 British Forces 1941 Postal Service. Special posting box/items for reposting as for Handstamp of 3 Feb 1975.

19 April 1975

Scottish Philatelic Congress Stirling 19 April 1975. Special posting box at Pathfoot Building, University of Stirling, Stirling FK9 4LA.

23 April 1975 (P/O)

500 years St George's Chapel 23 Apr 1975 Windsor, Berks. Special posting boxes at (1) Entrance to St George's Chapel, Special Bookstall, Windsor Castle, Windsor, Berks SL4 1NJ. (2) Guildhall Information Kiosk, The Guildhall, Windsor, Berks SL4 1LR.

NB Collectors who require the Special Pictorial Handstamp *must* indicate that this is required due to the fact that a normal FDC cancellation will be in use on that day.

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'.

1 February–31 March 1975

Operation Gatepost. Help Emergency and Public Services—Put a number on your gate. To be used at High Wycombe on 2nd Class Machine.

8 February–31 March 1975 (P)

Visit the Bible Exhibition April 7th–12th Victoria Hall Dunns Lane Mumbles Swansea. To be used at Swansea HO First Class.

9 February–30 April 1975

29 September 1975–30 April 1976

Fly from Luton Airport. To be used at Luton First and Second Class.

17 February–22 March 1975 (P)

Cardiff Festival of 20th Century Music 8–22 March 1975. To be used at Cardiff First Class.

1 March–30 June 1975

194 Radio Forth your Local Radio. To be used at Edinburgh First Class.

(P)

The RAF Benevolent Fund repays the

debt we owe 67 Portland Place London W1. To be used as follows:

7–20 April 1975

Aldershot	Basingstoke
Camberley	Maidstone
Ashford	Medway
Brighton	Fareham
Lewes	Reading
Canterbury	Newbury
Chichester	Reigate and Redhill
Crawley	Slough
Eastbourne	Windsor
Guildford	Tunbridge Wells

2–15 June 1975

Bournemouth (2)	Plymouth (2)
Bristol	Salisbury
Weston-Super-Mare	Southampton (2)
Dorchester	Swindon (2)
Exeter (2)	Bridgwater
Gloucester (2)	Torquay (2)
	Newquay

4–17 August 1975

Altrincham	Chorley
Northwich	Stockport
Blackburn	Buxton
Bolton	Macclesfield
Burnley	Warrington
Barrow in Furness	St Helens
Ambleside	Manchester NDO
Hyde	Manchester SWDO
Rochdale	Middleton
Preston	Salford

29 September–12 October 1975

Birmingham (2)	Nottingham (2)
Coventry	Peterborough
Crewe	Rugby
Derby	Stafford
Grantham	Stoke-on-Trent
Kettering	Walsall
Kidderminster	Warwick and Leamington
Leicester	Wolverhampton
Northampton	Worcester

17 November–7 December 1975

List of Offices to follow.

3 March 1975–2 March 1976 (P)

North Tyneside for Business & Pleasure. To be used at: North Shields,

Wallsend, Whitley Bay. First and Second Class Machines.

Repeat Campaigns

Until 18 May 1975

23 June-24 August 1975

29 September-16 November 1975

22 November-28 December 1975

The British Deaf Association cares about Lifelong Deafness. To be reused at Carlisle. First Class Machine.

Until 27 April 1975

29 September-28 December 1975

To be reused as above in Second Class Machine.

18 January 1975-17 January 1976

Leeds says, be wise, Look before Crossing. To be reused at Leeds. Second Class Machine.

18 January 1975-17 January 1976

Leeds Motorway City of the Seventies. To be reused at Leeds. First Class Machine.

18 January 1975-17 January 1976

Leeds a Capital City for Work and Play. To be reused at Leeds. First Class Machine.

3 March-28 September 1975 (P)

Lowther Wildlife Country Park April-October. To be reused at Penrith.

20 April-10 May 1975 (P)

York Races 13-14-15 May.

26 June-9 July 1975 (P)

York Races 11-12 July.

28 July-17 August 1975 (P)

York Races 19-20-21 August.

18 August-31 August 1975 (P)

York Races 3-4 September.

23 September-6 October 1975 (P)

York Races 8-9-11 October.

All to be reused at York.

NB These dies are in use (1st Class) in an Alf Machine only, therefore no guarantee can be given of standard of cancellations.

5-25 May 1975

Make Friends with a Deaf Child. To be reused at Newcastle-Upon-Tyne. First and Second Class Machines.

19 May-22 June 1975 (P)

Visit Holm Cultram Abbey Festival June. Information phone or write Abbey Town 654. To be reused at Carlisle.

25 August-28 September 1975 (P)

Visit Holm Cultram Abbey. Abbey Town Cumberland 12th Century Abbey and Arts Centre. To be reused at Carlisle.

17 November-21 December 1975 (P)

Holm Cultram Abbey Arts Centre Abbey Town 654 Carlisle for your Leisure Time. To be reused at Carlisle.

13 February-12 April 1975 (P)

Ascot Races April 10-12. To be reused at Ascot First Class.

13 April-20 June 1975 (P)

Royal Ascot Races June 17 to June 20 1975. To be reused at Ascot First Class.

21 June-26 July 1975 (P)

Diamond Day Ascot Races July 26. To be reused at Ascot First Class.

27 July-27 September 1975 (P)

Ascot Races September 25-27. To be reused at Ascot First Class.

28 September-11 October 1975 (P)

Bovis Day Ascot Races October 11. To be reused at Ascot First Class.

PLEASE NOTE: Due to technical difficulties the following slogans were *not* used on the dates advised.

13 January-26 January 1975

Ancient Order of Foresters, The Friendly Society for 125 years Brighton District. At Brighton.

The second period 30 June-31 August 1975 still applies as previously announced.

11 January 1975

Blue Circle Cement Day January 11 Ascot Races. At Ascot.

5-18 January 1975

Enjoy a visit to Dorking Swimming Centre Mole Valley District Council. At Reigate and Redhill.

'P' denotes Pictorial

'R' denotes Rectangular

'C' denotes Circular

'O' denotes Oval

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.

The annual subscription to the Philatelic Bulletin for 12 issues a year is 75p including postage by surface mail to anywhere in the world, or air mail to anywhere in Europe. For airmail to countries outside Europe the subscription is £1.65.

Subscriptions should be sent to the British Post Office Philatelic Bureau, Lothian House, Lothian Road, EDINBURGH EH3 9BB.