

British Philatelic Bulletin

Volume 25

Number 3

November 1987



Contents

- 50 Philatelic Points of View
- 51 Royal Mail Yearbook 1987
Collectors Pack 1987
- 52 Designing the Christmas Stamps
- 53 Stamp Design Competition for School-
children
NPM Programme for 1988
- 54 The Genesis of the Machin Design
- 56 Arnold Machin Visits the Exhibition
- 57 British Special Issues No.141: British
Sporting Centenaries, 1980
NPM Machin Photographs
- 58 Stamp Books and Perforations
- 61 Christmas Covers
Christmas Cylinders
- 62 Royal Engineers
- 66 New Perforator at Questa
New BPF Logo
- 67 Royal Mail Code Show
Commemorative Cover
Studio Pottery Cover
Exhibition Cards
Telecom Christmas Postcard
- 68 Victorian Printing Methods: Part 3
- 70 New Definitive Varieties
November Digest
- 71 Letters to the Editor
- 72 Mount Stewart Stamp Books

Philatelic Points of View

The Stamps and Philately Division of the Royal Mail wants to hear more from philatelists about matters of concern to them. The *British Philatelic Bulletin* is therefore inviting readers to put forward their comments and suggestions on a wide range of philatelic topics over a six month period.

Attention is being focused on one particular subject area each month. The subject for this month (number three in the series) is the Collectors Pack (see page 51).

So, if you would like to express a view or make a suggestion regarding this item, please write to the following address:

Philatelic Points of View
Collectors Pack
Room 328
Royal Mail Stamps and Philately
22/25 Finsbury Square
LONDON
EC2A 1PH

At the end of the six month period of "Points of View", there will be a prize of a special stamps Yearbook to the person who has sent in the most interesting suggestion in the opinion of a Royal Mail panel of judges.



Royal Mail Yearbook 1987

On 17 November, coinciding with the issue of the Christmas stamps, Volume 4 of the Royal Mail Special Stamps Yearbook will be issued. This very interesting and beautifully illustrated book contains background information about the development and production of all the special stamps released in 1987.

The book is hardbound with a matching slip case and includes sets of all of this year's eight special stamp issues. It will be available from all philatelic counters and the British Philatelic Bureau, many main post offices and some sub-offices.

The price of the book is being held for the third year running at £15.95 (the stamps have a face value of £8.61).

Collectors Pack 1987

The 1987 edition of the Collectors Pack will be issued on 17 November, coinciding with the issue of the Christmas stamps, priced at £9.28. It will be available from all philatelic counters and the British Philatelic Bureau, many main post offices and some sub-offices. The pack contains a complete set of all the 1987 special stamp issues worth £8.61 which are mounted on a quality

display board. In addition to the stamps, there is a colourful and informative brochure giving background details about each of the stamp subjects.



Designing the Christmas Stamps

MICHAEL FOREMAN

The invitation to design the Christmas stamps came early in October 1986, just prior to a trip to New York.

During the flight there I made rough sketches of ideas but then became busy with other work and couldn't give much thought to the stamps until the return flight.

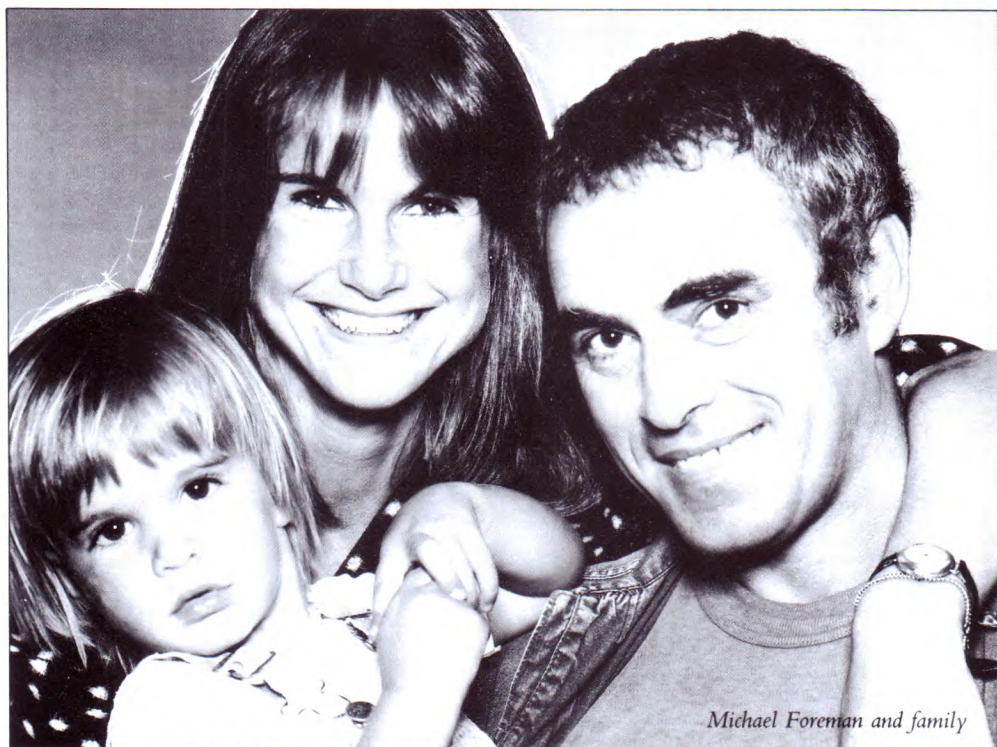
On looking again at the sketches I saw that my ideas were clichés – the too obvious first ideas of someone in the early stages of jet lag. But by now it was deep into November and the family thoughts were turning to the promise of Christmas.

It was a requirement that the stamps appeal to, and reflect, children. We have two small children and I decided the five stamps might have a chronological sequence based on the Foreman family festivities.

The preparation – the opening of the box of tree decorations.

The anticipation – scanning the Christmas Eve sky.

Then the sleep of Christmas dreams, the dawning of the special day, and after all the



Michael Foreman and family



excitement, a quiet moment to remember.

For me, it is a season of memories recalled in the eyes of my children, and always a time to look forward to.

A few years ago, I illustrated Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*. I started work in October and continued through to February and I was full of the Christmas spirit for all that time. With the stamps I could foresee another chance for a long wallow in festive good cheer.

On my first visit to the Post Office Design Department in Finsbury Square, London, autumn leaves were falling on the lunchtime bowls players on the bowling green. On subsequent visits the trees were bare, and later, snow-covered. Then the big freeze of January killed off the palms, and on my last visit the daffodils were looking for the return of the bowls players. Throughout this time, I was painting Christmas. After various false starts and transformations, the final five stamps took shape.

This Christmas I will be painting the hot red landscape of Central Australia, but hopefully even there I will receive a few postage stamp reminders of Christmas past.

Stamp Design Competition for Schoolchildren

Primary schoolchildren throughout the country are being given the chance to design a postage stamp in a competition worth £7,500 in prizes. The Royal Mail is looking for a design for a special stamp to mark 150 years of publicly-funded education in England and Wales, to be issued in 1989. If suitable, the winning painting will appear on the stamp.

Every primary school in the UK will be invited to take part in the competition. Children will be asked to paint or draw a picture connected with school life. The best pictures will be included in a mobile exhibition which will tour the country during 1988.

The overall winner will receive £300 for art equipment for themselves, plus £3,000 for art materials for his or her school. Second prize will be £200 for art equipment and materials, plus £2,000 for the school, and the third prize will be £100 for materials, plus £1,000 for the school. Ten runners-up will receive a £10 gift token, and all 13 winners and runners-up will also win a 1988 Royal Mail Special Stamps Yearbook.

Additional prizes of Berol arts materials will go to the schools of all three winners and 10 runners-up.

The competition is open to all children who reside and attend school in Britain (excluding the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands) and who were aged under 11 years on 31 August, 1987.

Leaflets are being sent direct to primary schools.

NPM Programme for 1988

The exhibition programme at the National Postal Museum has now been determined for 1988. On the ground and mezzanine floors there will be an exhibition entitled "Railways and the Post" to mark the sesquicentenary of the TPO system. This will open on 11 January and last throughout the year till the end of December. To coincide with the opening a set of three cards will be issued on railway themes and there will be a special handstamp for the duration of the exhibition.

In the main gallery the current exhibition – The Genesis of the Machin Design – will continue until 28 March. From 4 to 29 April there will be a display put on by the Cyprus Study Circle. This will be followed from 9 May to 30 September by an exhibition – "How a Stamp is Made" – which will illustrate and explain the various stages of stamp production. From 10 October till 30 December there will be a display of Olympic material, put on in collaboration with the Society of Olympic Collectors and the British Olympic Association. This will mark the anniversaries of the 1908 and 1948 Olympic Games held in London.

Other than the postcards issued in January for the Railways and the Post exhibition there will be three sets released during the year. Each issue will comprise three cards and will include illustrations of stamp boxes and monarchs' heads. They will be issued on 6 May, 8 August and 7 November. More details will be published nearer the time.

The Genesis of the Machin Design

DON STADDON

As the writer of a series of articles on this subject in the *British Philatelic Bulletin* it was very exciting for me to be invited to review the exhibition currently on show in the National Postal Museum.

Here it is possible to see significant items, including actual casts and essays, some of which have not previously been on public display. Not only that, but perhaps more importantly, new light is shed on the subject thanks to a collection of official files which have recently been discovered. Without breaching its confidentiality this material has helped us to piece together, clarify and in some cases correct, misunderstandings and doubts expressed in my articles. Additionally, it has added precision in respect of the dates when essays were supplied to the Post Office, and subsequent actions agreed.

What you will now find is that suggestions of a profile portrait for commemorative stamps were made in April 1961, with a proposal from

Harrisons, the printers, being supported by artists Michael Goaman and Faith Jacques. Designs from both were produced between then and 1962 with The Queen wearing a diadem, as on the Wilding stamps. It is interesting to note that the submissions from Faith Jacques included definitives as well as commemoratives.

No further developments are recorded until 1965 when Anthony Wedgwood Benn was Postmaster General. Early in that year essays were prepared from a Wilding diadem profile portrait, and profile portraits by Anthony Buckley with and without tiara. Those without tiara were used for definitives, and those with tiara for commemoratives. In the April 1986 issue of this magazine the Buckley portraits were incorrectly attributed to Lord Snowdon.

Activity was stepped up later in 1965 with several artists briefed by the Post Office Stamp Advisory Council to produce ideas. Most of their work is on display with one thing in

Overall view of the exhibition





The camera and Machin cast photographed before the exhibition was mounted and before restoration.

common. None used a diadem head. Most depict a tiara head from a Lord Snowdon photograph but there are some designs by Andrew Restall with The Queen's head unadorned. A miniature crown was added to the artwork in several instances but not all.

One of the artists was Arnold Machin, an eminent sculptor who based his initial ideas on designs he had produced for the new British coinage, but with the head facing left instead of right. In the exhibition essays of his work are displayed showing the inclusion of regional symbols, dated April 1966. Further essays of the same designs were made in May 1966 based on an improved photograph by John Vickers of this same cast at the Royal Academy.

There are also two portrait casts and artwork by Stuart Devlin, a cracked plasticine head by Reginald Brill with artwork and bromides based on a Lord Snowdon photographic portrait, and designs by David Gentleman also taken from the same photograph.

David Gentleman was later to produce a drawn profile design with The Queen wearing a diadem instead of a tiara. At the time he was working directly to the Postmaster General and not the Stamp Advisory Council. This work continued in parallel with that of Arnold Machin

until a final choice was made towards the end of 1966.

Half way through 1966 a key decision was made by the Stamp Advisory Council of the Post Office whereby photographer John Hedgecoe was invited to produce new studies of The Queen wearing the same diadem as that on the Wilding definitives. These photographs were taken on 22 June and designs by David Gentleman 1961 designs by Faith Jacques



man incorporating the Hedgecoe portrait were essayed by Harrisons with the inclusion of a 6d value panel in October.

Also in October, essays of the Machin tiara head were produced in a simplified format to exclude the regional symbols mentioned earlier.

Arnold Machin was then asked to work on a diadem head, but what he used as a model is not known. In my article I said it was the Hedgecoe portrait but this is by no means certain.

What is certain, as shown in the exhibition, is that further Hedgecoe essays were prepared by Harrisons with the head on a white background. This was unconnected with Machin's work.

Late in October 1966, essays were produced from photographs of a Machin cast with diadem, with both dark and uniform light backgrounds. These essays have two lines of shading in the hair and a full complement of pearls in the necklace.

A corsage was introduced in November 1966, and various treatments can be seen with enlarged photographs of the diadem cast essays having a corsage added. These were followed by essays in December taken from further modifications to the mould. These have a dark background, two lines of shading in the hair, and probably because of an accident to the cast, a pearl missing from the necklace. This cast had the background blackened with graphite but its whereabouts are at present unknown.

At the same time, so as to meet the need of a light background stamp a photograph from a cast with a light background was chosen. This cast, with one line of shading in the hair and a full complement of pearls is featured in the exhibition along with the original camera used by Harrisons for the photographic work. Some essays of December 1966 depict a gradated light background to the head. Even more essays were produced in January and February 1967, for colour selection purposes, for paper trials, and for presentation to The Queen. Despite the previous choice of the design with corsage and no wording, the essays throughout December, January and February were of various designs, all at the same time.

The 4d value was approved by The Queen in February 1967 and on 3 March further essays were produced in blocks of four - the best ever Machins according to some experts. Final essays were then prepared for the different values from March to June, also in blocks of four. These are identical to the issued stamps apart from the 5d and 1d values which exchanged colours. The 5d

became Stuart Blue and the 1d became gold.

This prolonged and necessarily intensive exercise culminated with the issue of the first three Machin definitives in June 1967.

David Gentleman's work, although not selected for the definitives, resulted in a cameo head for commemorative or special stamps, first used on the 1966 Landscapes set. Later, Arnold Machin sculpted a head for special issues, first used on the 1968 British Bridges set. On this head The Queen is shown wearing a wreath. The final stage of Machin's work is concerned with the high value stamps. As he had previously with Harrisons on the low value definitives, Machin worked very closely with Bradbury Wilkinson on the high value designs. Of these, the £1, recess printed in black, was the nearest he ever got to his idea of stamp perfection, the Queen Victoria Penny Black.



Arnold Machin Visits the Exhibition

On 17 September Arnold Machin visited the National Postal Museum to view "The Genesis of the Machin Design" exhibition in the company of the then Chairman of the Post Office, Sir Ron Dearing. In the photograph Mr Machin is describing to Sir Ron how he went about creating the plaster cast and the difficulties he encountered in photographing it with the camera which is on display in the exhibition.

British Sporting Centenaries, 1980

British Special Issues: No.141

FRANCIS KENNEDY

It was fortunate for the Post Office that there were three varied sporting centenaries in 1980 and one in the 1980/1 rugby season, thus providing the student artist, Robert Goldsmith, with material for four lively sports stamps designs for this issue, one of the few printed by offset lithography by The House of Questa (who have always specialised in lithographic printing).

The 12p stamp, featuring two track athletes, marked the centenary of the Amateur Athletics Association, often referred to as "the three As". The 13½p pictured a Welsh rugby player in national colours outwitting a player in French national colours. The Welsh Rugby Union was founded in Neath, South Wales, at the end of the 1880/1 season, so it was stretching a point to

include this stamp in the series. The Amateur Boxing Association, remembered on the 15p stamp, was founded in February 1880. Finally, England and Australia, two of the world's leading cricket countries, first met at Test Match level, at the Oval, Kennington, London (still a ground of Test Match standard) in September 1880 and so cricket rightly completed the set with the 17½p.

Printing was in sheets of 100 (2 panes, 5 x 10). The panes were separated by a narrow gutter, though normally printing by The House of Questa would have been in unbroken sheets of 100. Another distinctive Questa feature is the perforating which is 14 x 14½; the Harrison printings are normally 15 x 14.

The major listed error occurs on the 15p Boxing stamp, some of which are known imperf. between the last horizontal row of stamps and the bottom sheet margin. The use of lithography resulted in several minor and casual (as distinct from constant) flaws known as litho "rings" caused by specks of dust on the plate surface repelling the ink during printing.

Exceptionally, this issue was released experimentally on a Friday (10 October 1980) instead of a Wednesday as usual. This probably accounts for a cover from Salisbury, Wilts., known to bear the pre-release date of Wednesday, 8 October. The quantities sold before withdrawal from sale on 9 October 1981 were: 12p, 45,787,000; 13½p, 11,008,000; 15p, 10,229,000; 17½p, 9,910,000.



NPM Machin Photographs

The National Postal Museum has put on sale a set of five photographs illustrating the development of the Machin plaster cast. Three of the photographs are already on sale but two more have been added – the Tiara bust and the commemorative Wreath cast. Cost is 60p each photograph (\$2.50 the set) plus an 18p handling charge for orders by post. The address is National Postal Museum, KEB, King Edward St., LONDON EC1A 1LP.

Stamp Books and Perforations

AUBREY WALKER

For some time there have been occasional adverse comments from collectors regarding the quality of perforations and their register with the cut edges of panes in counter and machine-vended stamp books. Although the books are operationally satisfactory, and acceptable to the general public, it has been claimed that the quality varies and is sometimes not equal to the higher standard required by the specialist collector. This is an attempt to explain the present situation and indicate possible improvements in future.

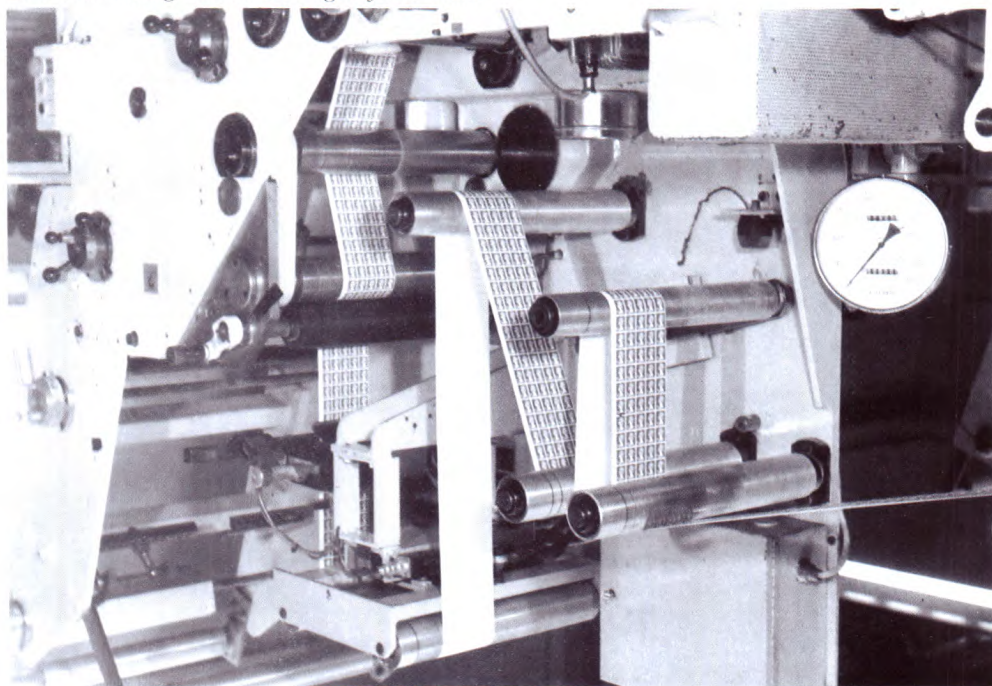
Currently, both counter and machine-vending books are produced by Harrisons at their security printing works at High Wycombe. Although specialists will already be familiar with the processes involved, they are briefly reviewed for completeness.

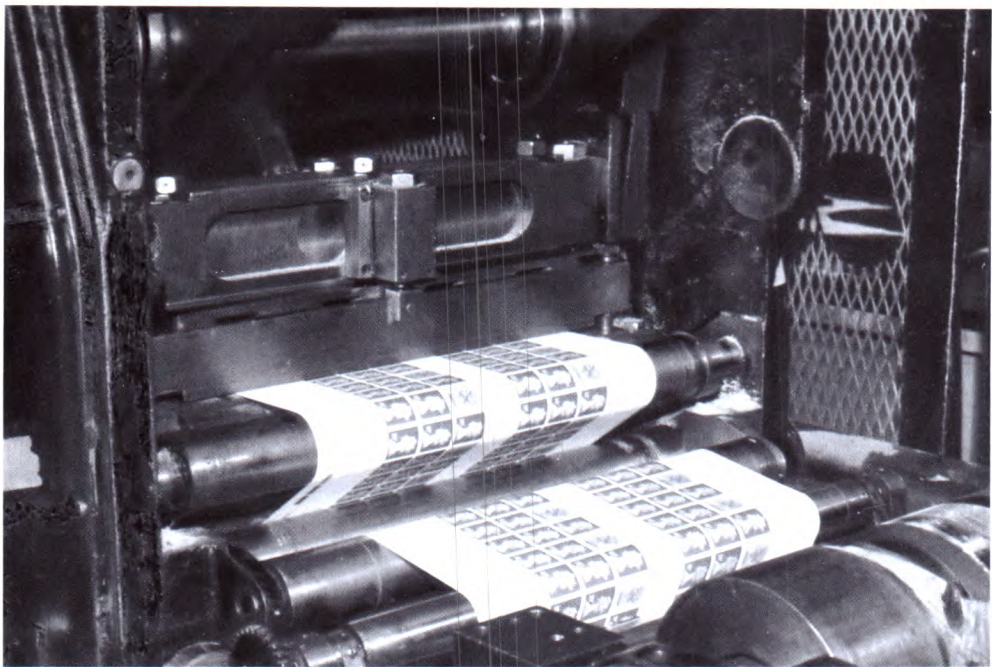
The "Jumbo" reel of base paper from the mill is coated and gummed at High Wycombe before *Libra book making machine showing half-web width*

being calendered and slit into four narrower webs for printing. The stamps are printed by photogravure on reel-to-reel rotary Chambon presses. The printed stamps are then slit into two half-width webs suitable for the Libra-Goebells book machine, and run through the slow-moving Harley-Moate inspection machine for visual assessment by skilled operators. The reels are then put into store for subsequent conversion into books. In this operation the card for the book covers is printed, "married" to the stamps, and cut into individual panes or books.

The Chambon printing machines are equipped with reciprocating perforators which in some respects resemble the Grover sheet perforators, except that they perforate a moving web. This operation is extremely critical and may give rise to some of the comments.

It must be realised that the position of perforation holes relative to the printed stamps is





Book stamps entering the Chambon perforator

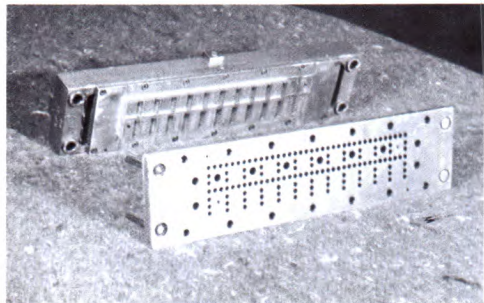
extremely critical, as the slightest displacement or variation will be visually apparent.

Thus, the web must be nearly stopped for perforation every second stamp row with a precision of a fraction of a millisecond to meet the demanding requirements.

Some might say - "that's the engineers' problem, not ours". So it is, and this may clarify what they are doing about it.

Clearly, one cannot perforate a moving web by means of a reciprocating device whereby pins are forced through the paper into the matching holes of a dieplate. Unless, of course, the perforating assembly moves with the web,

Top: pin block with guide plate attached; below: perforator die block showing clearance channels on under side.



which it *can* do but only very slowly. This is accomplished by a rocking motion.

The device consists essentially of an upper block fitted with perforating pins (the pin block) positioned above the web; immediately below this, also above the web, is a perforated steel plate, the guide plate, through which the pins pass; and finally, below the web, a second perforated plate, the die plate, with precision holes exactly matching in position the perforating pins. If the periphery of the holes in the die plate is less than perfect, ragged perforations result. Unfortunately, metal wears so the holes must be dressed - that is, squeezed in and re-ground, at regular intervals.

Were the stamps at rest, as with Grover or Bickel sheet perforating, there would be no problem. But it is not, and to bring it completely to rest, perforate, and accelerate back to machine speed without interrupting the smooth motion required by the printing cylinder would introduce considerable strain and result in numerous paper breaks.

The web can, however, be slowed considerably for its passage through the perforator by an ingenious system of eccentric rollers. These have an axis of rotation which is not central to the roller but displaced, causing the roller to swing from side to side.

A bicycle fitted with wheels like this would cause the rider to rise and fall as if on a horse.



The device is crudely illustrated in figure 1. The degree of offset is exaggerated. It can be seen that as the lower pair of rollers swing from side to side they will slow the web considerably, though not to a standstill, and then accelerate it back to running speed.

Figure 2 shows the path of the web through the perforator after this system has operated. Although the pin block and guide plate descend simultaneously on to the die plate, the pin block has a slightly longer stroke than the guide plate. This clamps the web between the two on the down stroke whilst the pins are forced, via the guide plate, through the paper into the die plate, releasing the paper discs thus removed into specially engineered discharge channels. Great care is taken to prevent blockages at this point, as this would impair perforation quality.

As already pointed out, although the web is slowed considerably, it is still moving during the perforating operation. It is, therefore, necessary to arrange for the entire perforating system to move with it. This is accomplished by means of eccentric (off-centre) cams which cause the assembly to rock from side to side, i.e. in the direction of the moving web and back again after the paper is released.

Again exaggerating the effect, this is sketched in figure 3. The action is: lift, swing "up-stream", descend to perforate, swinging "down-stream" with the paper, lift and then repeat. During this operation the slack of the paper is taken up by the eccentric rollers illustrated in figure 1, maintaining a fairly even tension on the rollers.

The operation is very critical. The pins must penetrate precisely to the correct depth and during the "upstroke" must be lifted into the guide plate until they just clear the paper.

Essential engineering tolerances must permit slight differences in pin length and thickness, also in the precise diameter of the holes. In addition, manufacturing tolerances of the paper, which are unavoidable, may result in slight differences in thickness of paper, coating and gum, all adding to operational problems.

Computer control of the coating machine and computer monitoring of the gummer have

now been installed and will undoubtedly improve standards and reduce variations.

The perforating pins and die plate wear in use and require constant refurbishing. The newly engineered blocks will behave differently from worn ones during the reciprocating motion needing very precise adjustments by the machine operators. What more can be done? Regular maintenance and inspection are already a feature, quality audits and frequent inspection are part of the procedure. In fact, everything humanly possible is already standard procedure, so little improvement can be expected from the existing equipment. So what more can be done? Only one thing – design a different system.

For some time, Harrison's engineers have been working on a rotary perforator similar in principle to those fitted to the Jumelle press used for definitive and special issue stamps. This is a completely new development. A prototype has been built in-house, and practical trials have shown that results are vastly superior to any-

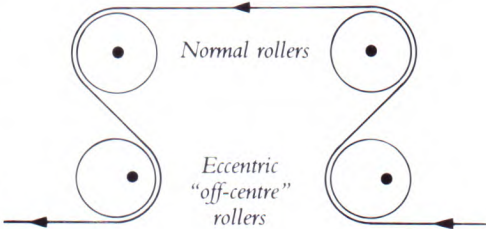


Figure 1

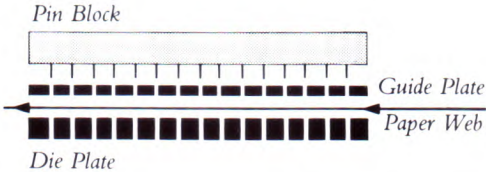


Figure 2

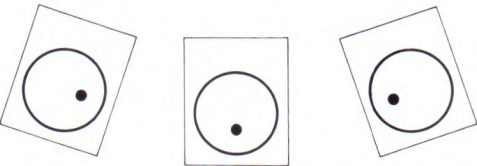


Figure 3

thing obtainable from the existing reciprocating devices. Additionally, a useful bonus is the increased production speeds made possible. It is hoped that eventually all book stamps will be perforated in this manner, obviating most of the problems described, and ensuring consistently better perforating quality.

The Cutting Operation

As mentioned previously, the Chambon presses print a web which is twice the width of that required for the Libra Goebells book machine. The web is therefore slit lengthwise, yielding two webs for subsequent conversion into stamp books.

Because the tension at the edges of a moving web is different from that at the centre, lengthwise slitting results in two webs which have the tension higher at the left of one half-web, and higher at the right of the other.

The cutting device on the book machine consists of a knife descending through the printed stamp sheets plus cover card, against a block, in the manner of a guillotine.

Because of the tension gradient across the web, the stamps (and perforations) may not be precisely at right angles to the sides of the web. If the cutter blade and block are set exactly at right angles to the sides, then cutting errors may creep in. The cutter *can* be rotated slightly to compensate, but would need to be re-adjusted every time a left hand half web were substituted for a right hand one. It is a major engineering task to align precisely the knife with the block resulting in unacceptable machine "down time".

The engineers are therefore studying a re-design whereby the entire cutting assembly is made as an integral unit which, operated by a Vemici-type control, be adjusted by the machine operator without even stopping the machine. This would result in excellent alignment.

Christmas Covers

The following are some of the commercial covers being prepared for the Christmas issue to be released on 17 November.

Benham. Illustrated covers bearing the complete set of stamps are being produced to be cancelled by one of two handstamps, either Bethlehem (Llandeilo) or Christmas Common, Oxford. The latter shows a nativity scene. Price £3.75 each. Also available will be a special card for the Christmas sheetlet of 36 x 13p stamps.

Ordered in advance these cost £7.50. A gutter pair from the same sheetlet will be used to produce a separate cover with a special cancellation at Christleton, costing £3. And five attractive small "silk" covers highlight the magic of Christmas for children. With five different postmarks they cost £7.99. All the above are available from Benham (A Buckingham] Ltd, Westcliff House, Folkestone, Kent CT20 1SZ.

Hamleys. The famous toyshop, Hamleys, is issuing a first day cover of the Christmas stamps. Bearing a full set the covers cost £5 (with single 31p Christmas Morning stamp £2.50). Payments with orders to CoverCraft (Hamleys FDC), PO Box 713, LONDON SE19 2HH. (Europe add 50p, overseas £1 per cover).



Christmas Cylinders

The cylinder numbers and colours printed of the Christmas stamps to be issued on 17 November are as follows:

13p

Gold 1A	Greenish yellow 1B	Rose 1C	Greenish blue 2D	Black 1D
------------	--------------------------	------------	------------------------	-------------

18p

Gold 1A	Greenish yellow 1B	Bright purple 2C	Greenish blue 1D	Bright blue 2E	Black 2F
------------	--------------------------	------------------------	------------------------	----------------------	-------------

26p

Gold 1A	Greenish yellow 1B	Scarlet 1C	Bright magenta 1D	Dull rose 1E	Greenish blue 2F	Black 1G
------------	--------------------------	---------------	-------------------------	--------------------	------------------------	-------------

31p

Gold 1A	Greenish yellow 1B	Scarlet 1C	Bright magenta 1D	Dull rose 1E	Greenish blue 2F	Black 1G
------------	--------------------------	---------------	-------------------------	--------------------	------------------------	-------------

34p

Gold 1A	Greenish yellow 1B	Dull rose 1C	Greenish blue 1D	Bright blue 1E	Black 1F
------------	--------------------------	--------------------	------------------------	----------------------	-------------

Royal Engineers

BARBARA LAST

The Latin *ingeniarius* was originally applied to a man "of genius" skilled in constructing defences for a town, and later extended to one who built works of public utility, the civil engineer. The Normans developed the science of military engineering. The Corps of Royal Engineers, alone of all British regiments, claim an unbroken history of permanent service to the Crown, from the time of the military engineers of the Normans, who were chosen by the King as men professionally expert and held their appointments by royal patent.

William the Conqueror brought his military engineers with him in his invasion fleet in 1066. Humphrey de Tilleul, the Chief Engineer, is shown on the Bayeux Tapestry directing the building of a fort which had been transported in prefabricated parts from Normandy. He erected it on an earth mound surrounded by a circular moat at Hastings to safeguard William's back in case of withdrawal. But de Tilleul heard rumours about his wife's behaviour and hastily left to investigate. He was replaced by Gundulf, a young monk of Bec, who was proficient in the building of abbeys and fortresses which, as centres for civil administration and the military, enforced law and order. Gundulf was expert in siege warfare, the building of war machines to breach enemy defences, or tunnels to delve beneath his walls.

William believed that the effectiveness of an oath of allegiance from his reluctant Saxon subjects was reinforced by an intimidating show

of force. London's temporary wooden fort was replaced by the massive turreted square White Tower or Keep, built by Gundulf of Caen stone, that is the heart of the Tower of London. Built on a low hill it was to protect William's new capital "against the fickleness of the vast and fierce populace."

Gundulf was trusted by the King's two sons, William Rufus and Henry I. He became an eminent Bishop of Rochester, an able administrator, famous for his personal sanctity. He is held to be the founding father of the Royal Engineers.

Edward I employed over 1,000 "fossatores" to build his roads and castles in the Welsh mountains to subdue the people. The engineers built trebuchets, which, by means of a lever arm and counterweight of several tons, catapulted huge stones against the enemy defences. A yoke of 20 to 30 pair of oxen were needed to position these cumbersome war machines, supported by long trains of pack ponies laden with stone cut from nearby quarries. Before 1772, the engineers were members of an officer corps who acted as military consultants to the King. They designed and organised the projects, but the actual work was carried out by civilians, specially recruited and formed into Ordnance Trains.

These men dug saps (trenches) to attack enemy positions, hence the name "sapper". English sappers were first used overseas at the siege of Calais and at Crecy in 1346, when miners were recruited from the Forest of Dean, and smiths and artificers from the City of London. Cannon, static and dangerously capricious weapons to fire, were first used by them in this campaign. The development of the gun superseded the ponderous engines of war, and brought these new weapons under the direction of the Office of Ordnance (later Board of Ordnance) in the White Tower. Nicholas Merbury, Henry V's Chief Engineer at the battle of Agincourt in 1415, became the first Master of Ordnance with a permanent establishment of engineer and gunnery officers, controlling the artillery and arsenals, and in wartime raising Ordnance Trains of gunners and sappers.



CORPS OF ROYAL ENGINEERS

Commemorating Bishop Gundulf
the King's first Engineer
and builder of the Tower of London

17 MAR 73

BRITISH FORCES · 1381 · POSTAL SERVICE

Under the Tudors the seaward defences of the Thames and Channel ports were strengthened against the threat of Spain and France. Elizabeth's Military Engineer, Paul Ivy, is seen with Sir Walter Raleigh (Jersey 1980 SG226/7) when the latter as the new Governor of Jersey was ordered by the Queen to see to the island fortifications. She refused to waste any more money on the obsolete mediaeval Mont Orgueil, and Elizabeth Castle (Jersey 1978 SG189) was built on an islet guarding St Helier, four days free labour being supplied by each household. Little is known of Ivy. He built fortifications at Falmouth, and wrote two technical books. A Train in Cromwell's army included a Chief Engineer and master Gunner, six Assistant Engineers, three Captains, three lieutenants of Pioneers and a Battery Master. After the Restoration, Thomas Phillips, Master Gunner and Chief Engineer, investigated the Jersey fortifications. He drew up three ground plans (Jersey 1980 SG222/5) and executed the delicate fortress paintings (Jersey 1978 SG187/9). When St Malo was bombarded by the English squadron after the battle of La Hogue, Phillips himself placed and fired the bombship which demolished the sea wall.

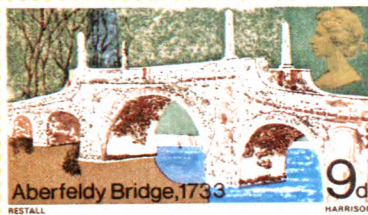
During the campaigns in the Low Countries in the Wars of the Spanish Succession, Marlborough used huge siege trains. These were raised for each major war, but with peace all the trains and most of the army were disbanded,

leaving a small nucleus of permanent gunners and engineers. Consequently, no serviceable cannon could be found to oppose the Jacobite Rising of 1715. The following year, therefore, the Artillery was separated from the Engineers, although in sieges for the next 150 years, the Engineer officers were responsible for siting and constructing batteries from which the Artillery fired the guns. The Rising also resulted in the first military roads being built in the Highlands, and William Adams, under the direction of General Wade, constructed the Aberfeldy bridge over the River Tay in 1733 (GB 1968 SG764). Another type of bridge is Boxer Bridge (Falklands 1987 SG541) built on two ton Larsen piles which were blown about like twigs in mid-winter gales. After the 1745 Jacobite Rebellion and the battle of Culloden, sappers were sent to open up the Highlands by constructing military roads, so that the army could move quickly across the moorlands to quell any future risings.

The Soldier Artificer Company (Gibraltar 1969 SG297) was formed in Gibraltar in 1772 under Lt Col (later Sir William) Green, the first permanent unit of engineer soldiers of the British Army. A second unit was raised in England, the Royal Military Artificers, and they were both involved in the Great Siege of Gibraltar of 1779/83 and the Napoleonic Wars.

As the Corps of Sappers and Miners are descended from the Soldier Artificers, the Royal Engineers claim to have been born on the Rock.

JERSEY





The first necessity was to put the defences in order when the new Governor, Lt-Gen Eliott, an experienced field engineer, arrived. Known as the "old cock of the Rock" the resolute Scot was painted by Turnbull leading his men (Gibraltar 1967 SG222).

The Great Siege was a protracted affair with the defenders suffering great privations. Kings Bastion (Gibraltar 1983 SG499) was built at this time. The Cornishman Sgt Major Ince of the Military Artificers planned and blasted tunnels through the rock to site guns out. The tunnels had to be ventilated by holes in the rock face, and these proved such excellent emplacements from which to pour flanking fire on the enemy that more embrasures were deliberately built. In the north face a gun battery was placed in St George's Hall, the gallery chosen by Gibraltar for Europa 1983's "Works of human genius" (SG491). These tunnels honeycombing the Rock continued to be bored during World War II, and are now used for workshops, a hospital and stores. The 20th century debris has been used to reclaim land and extend the old RAF runways. For their continuous presence and public work like building the Victoria Stadium (1987 18p) the Royal Engineers have been granted the Freedom of Gibraltar (1987 32p).

The importance of the engineers in Wellington's Peninsular wars to enable his troops to "live, move and fight" was marked by a change of title in 1814 to the Royal Sappers & Miners. St Helena 1969 (SG248) illustrates a second Corporal of this regiment in 1832 and their breast-plate as worn after 1823, plus an officer's

hat (SG293). They built the road across the Pyrenees, and after Waterloo it was over their pontoon bridge on the Seine that Wellington rode to his victorious entry into Paris.

Early in 1787 the corps of Engineers was granted the Royal Warrant while under the command of the Duke of Richmond (Guernsey 1987 SG M/S393) as Master General of HM Ordnance at the Tower. It is the 200th anniversary of this event that is celebrated this year. They had many tasks including map making, for in 1791 the Ordnance Survey unit was formed under the Board of Ordnance. When the Board was abolished in 1855, the Ordnance Survey duties were undertaken by the Engineers until 1983. The separate Military Survey service was established in 1856, and every Commonwealth country has been surveyed by the Corps. The Falklands (10p) show 19 Topographic Squadron at work on Sapper Hill in 1986, with the Royal Engineers Memorial cairn in the background. Nowadays, the Military Survey's sophisticated computer technology supplies maps and geographical information to all three services, and provides the moving map displays for RAF Harrier and Tornado aircraft. A special unit also works in the USA fixing and monitoring satellite orbits of the world.

After the Crimean War the officer Corps of Royal Engineers was at last amalgamated into one unit with the soldiers of the Royal Sappers & Miners, responsible not only for the traditional offensive/defensive military works, but also for testing and adapting new inventions and war

practices that first came under the Royal Engineers umbrella. An electric telegraph system was organised at the Crimea by landline to Army HQ, and thence by submarine cable to London. The telegraph was used extensively in the South African campaigns, and the Army Telegraph Service was eventually hived off as the Royal Corps of Signals in 1920.

Aerial reconnaissance and surveys were made from the time of the Boer War from man-carrying balloons, and the Royal Flying Corps (Military Wing) was formed in 1912, leading to the creation of the RAF some six years later.

Tanks, the Brennan torpedo, mines, camouflage, gas warfare, photography, divers, electric-controlled sea-mines, searchlights, railways, bombs and bomb disposal all came under RE direction. In the Falklands in 1982, vast areas of land were highly dangerous as they were strewn with unexploded bombs and mines, many of them difficult to locate as they were cased in plastic. Since November 1985, the Explosive Ordnance Disposal units have used a



remote controlled miniature tracked vehicle (REDFIRE) that can be driven on to a minefield at a safe distance from its operator. Aided by closed circuit TV, an arm or boom, fitted with a propane gas torch, reaches out on to the mine which burns but does not explode (Falklands 1987 24p).

There have been some philatelically famous Royal Engineers and their exploits. A BFPS handstamp in May 1973 commemorated Talbot Edwardes RE who thwarted Col Blood in his attempt 300 years ago to steal the Crown Jewels from the Tower. Sappers have been connected with underwater and submarine diving services ever since the removal of HMS *Royal George* (Turks 1985 SG844) which capsized at Spithead in 1782 with great loss of life.

Lt Richard Moody RE was sent out to examine the Falklands. He arrived in 1842 at



Port Louis in the brig *Hebe* (Falklands 1978 SG345) with 12 Sappers and Miners and their families. Designated Lt-Governor, Moody had orders to build the Falklands capital at Port Stanley.

Alderney shows an RE of 1890 (SGA18) against the Victorian breakwater that was started in 1846. Gordon of Khartoum worked on the island after being commissioned as an engineer in 1853. Thirty-two years later, as Governor-General of the Sudan (Anguilla 1984 SG622), he was besieged and killed at Khartoum, both his birth and death anniversaries being marked by special handstamps. During the Zulu Wars in 1879, Lt Chard won the VC for a heroic defence of the hospital at Rorke's Drift (RSA 1979 SG461).

Since World War II, Royal Engineers have (among many other civilian projects) helped to build the new Halley base in the Antarctic early in 1983 (British Antarctic Territory 1986 SG148); completed a 3,600 feet airfield in the Virgins in 1968, marked by the issue of the RE cap badge (SG231), and helped Pitcairn's harbour development. Operation Pallium, under Capt H Cowan RE 1976/7 (SG190/3) built a jetty and greatly improved the island landing facilities.

It will, therefore, come as no surprise that amongst the rest of their commitments the Engineers are responsible for Forces mail. The Army Postal Corps was authorised by Royal Warrant in 1882. Raised from the Post Office Rifles Volunteers who served in Egypt, after the Boer War it was absorbed in the Royal Engineers in 1908. In co-operation with the RAF, it ran the first regular airmail service in 1919 to the Army on the Rhine, and in 1962 took over HM Ship mail from the London GPO, developing air drop facilities to ships at sea. The RE Postal and Courier Department now run the mail

24.9.87-17.1.88

Royal Mail Code Show
Science Museum
LONDON
SW7 2DD

Royal Mail Code Show

An exhibition publicising the postcode is taking place at the Science Museum, South Kensington, London until 17 January. On show are graphic displays indicating the use of the postcode and there are also two machines for use by visitors. One contains all the postcodes of the United Kingdom and users can check exactly what their own postcode is. The other is a coding desk and visitors can send themselves a special card available free which they can code themselves. The card receives the code in the form of the usual blue phosphor dots but without any coding desk ident. A slogan cancellation publicises the show in various offices including London SW.

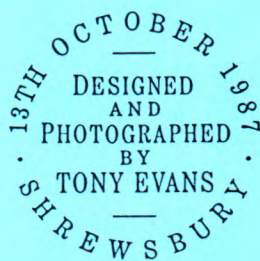


Commemorative Cover

A commemorative cover is being produced for 26 January to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the arrival of the "First Fleeters" in Australia. The cover features a painting of the fleet entering Port Jackson, later renamed Sydney. Cancelled with a special Portsmouth handstamp the covers cost £2.50 each (postage extra: UK 25p, Australia £1, rest of world 50p). Remittances in sterling to A G Bradbury, 2 Fairholme Road, LEICESTER LE2 6GL.

Studio Pottery Cover

A special first day cover has been produced by Tony Evans, the designer of the Studio Pottery stamps, and he has also designed a special handstamp from Shrewsbury. The envelopes are of fine quality paper and each bears the full set of stamps cancelled by the Shrewsbury handstamp and signed by Tony Evans. They are available at £9.95 each (overseas add 55p) from Tony Evans, PO Box 2000, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY1 1AA.



Exhibition Cards

The list of overseas agents selling the BPO exhibition cards as published in the September *Bulletin* should be amended as follows. In the USA, from the Interpost agents, the cost of each card is £1 plus £1.25 postage and packing, a total of £2.25.

For West Germany the agent is:

Jurgen Schneider
Georg Roll Nachfolger
Holbeinstrasse 2
Postfach 1346
D-2880 BRAKE
WEST GERMANY

The cost of each card is £1 plus £1 postage and packing, a total of £2.

Telecom Christmas Postcard

Telecom Technology Showcase is issuing a new postcard on 17 November featuring a Christmas postcard by Elena H Clapsaddle, first produced in America in 1907. The price of the postcard will be £1.20 serviced and 10p mint. Orders, including 40p postage and packing with cheques made payable to British Telecom, should be sent to Telecom Technology Showcase, 135 Queen Victoria Street, LONDON EC4V 4AT.

Victorian Printing Methods

Part 3: Letterpress

L N WILLIAMS

The steps subsequent to engraving, in summary, were as follows.

First, the hardening of the die, that is, heating in a box in contact with carbon, or later by heating in a furnace on a bed of molten sodium cyanide and quenching.

Then the die was surrounded with a wrought iron "collar", which was shrunk to fit closely. The function of the collar was to prevent injury from pieces of flying metal if the die should shatter during the next step in the process.

That next step was to hold the die above a soft steel blank in a press capable of exerting enormous and sudden pressure – pressure in the neighbourhood of 200 tons a square inch – when a plunger hit the back of the die. The pressure forced the non-recesses of the engraving on the die into the face of the blank, which became a punch. A punch was the counterpart of the die. On the punch, the lines and areas which were eventually to print were sunk beneath the surface, while the non-printing areas were at surface height. The height difference was one millimetre or less. In some cases engraving could be carried out on the punch by removing part of the non-printing areas. A print from a punch produced a mirror print of the design as it appeared on the finished stamps.

In turn, the punch was hardened and had a wrought iron collar fitted. The punch would then be used to make any number of duplicates of the die. Design details could be added to duplicate dies; indeed, that was the normal course of events.

When the design was complete on a die it would be copied by the blank-punch-duplicate process and would become what was called a "working die". Often proofs on glazed card were pulled from working dies and were noted as "before striking".

The working die was used in the next step in the process, namely, to take reverse copies or counterparts of it in some soft material. Various materials were used over the years but the invariable practice later adopted was to use lead.

The next step was to use a piece of apparatus consisting of a massive steel ring or cylinder

This is the third part of the series coinciding with the new exhibition of the R M Phillips collection at the National Postal Museum. It continues next month on embossing.

with a rectangular channel drilled vertically through the centre. The area measurements of the rectangular channel were the height and width of the eventual stamp plus one-half of the width of the intended gutters between the stamps in the sheet.

One end of the channel could be temporarily sealed by a piece of steel with wedge-shaped edges, which fitted into a horizontal channel cut for the purpose, or hinged and secured by a catch.

Into the rectangular channel was placed a block – a parallelepiped – of lead. The die was placed face-upwards in the end of the channel and sealed in position with the piece of steel. The block of lead was pushed into contact with the face of the die by means of a plunger inserted into the other end of the rectangular channel. Then, in a press, the plunger was struck, forcing the lead on to the die and causing the design to be transferred, in reverse, to the lead. The lead partly liquified under the pressure and some lead was displaced; it escaped through small channels drilled for the purpose.

The operation was repeated as many times as were necessary to obtain the number of perfect leads required to make up a sheet of stamps.

It was a common practice for De La Rue to take a proof on glazed card from the die after leads had been struck and to inscribe the proof on its face with a notation that so many leads had been struck.

The leads were gathered together and held tightly in a frame called a "chase", which was immersed in an electrolytic bath. By electrodeposition a coating of copper – or, sometimes, some other metal such as silver or steel as a preliminary – was placed over the surface of the leads bearing the designs. When, by the action of the electrodepositing bath, the depo-

sited metal had acquired sufficient thickness, the assemblage was removed from the bath and separated. The shell of deposited metal was then filled from the back with molten type metal and, after planing and other treatment, it was fixed to an iron plate, which comprised the printing plate produced by electrotyping.

Complications

The comparatively simple, uncomplicated process of platemaking, which obtained while letterpress printed stamps bore no indication of the position which each stamp occupied in the sheet, did not last when sheet position indicia and plate numbers were adopted as security requirements. The stamps and the die proofs reveal something of the true complications.

Before 1873, where stamps had corner letters and plate numbers, they were individually engraved on the plate. However, De La Rue found that excessive time and man hours were involved in that work and difficulties of supply were likely to result if large numbers of stamps were required.

Accordingly, in 1872 the printers suggested a different procedure, whereby the corner letters

and plate numbers were inserted as plugs in recessed holes in the die when it was used for striking the leads. This procedure involved the infinitely tedious task of altering at least two letters for every lead after the first struck for the sheet. In the case, among other stamps, of the 8d issued on 11 September 1876, the sheets contained 240 stamps, and the fiddling nature of ringing the changes of lettering by removing and replacing the plugs can readily be imagined.

Printing from Letterpress Plates

Inking

The ink used for letterpress printing is spread by a roller over the non-recessed lines and areas of the printing plate. Only a thin, even covering of ink is required. The printed impression does not depend on differing thicknesses of ink – unlike printing from line-engraved recess plates.

Problems were caused when the colour of the Fourpence stamp was changed from carmine to red in 1862. The red contained vermilion, which was decomposed by the copper surface of the electrotype. The difficulty was overcome by electrodepositing silver as a preliminary to elec-

Mar. 21, 1874



Apr. 14, 1874

AFTER STRIKING



trodepositing copper; silver was impervious to the sulphide of mercury in vermilion and satisfactory printing in red containing vermilion was carried out. The amount of silver used was 12½ ounces.

De La Rue's success in obtaining contracts for stamp printing flowed from the firm's ability to assure the authorities about security against re-use of stamps by cleaning off cancellations. The firm was forever promoting the benefits to be derived from use of their fugitive and doubly fugitive inks.

Singly fugitive ink was not sensitive to bleaching agents involved in bleaching writing ink but was sensitive to "hydrocarbons", such as benzene. The doubly fugitive ink was, to use the words employed in a stamp printing contract of 1880*

"highly soluble in the hydrocarbons but not in water ... and ... also sensitive under such re-agents as would be used for the removal of ordinary writing ink."

Doubly fugitive inks were limited, virtually, to two colours, lilac and green. The awful apotheosis of the doubly fugitive ink cult is to be seen in the most undistinguished set of ½d to 1s stamps issued between 1 August and 1 April 1884.

*See *Great Britain: The De La Rue Years 1878-1910* vol. 1 by W A Wiseman (Bridger & Kay, 1984) page 339.

New Definitive Varieties

Two new definitive varieties will be issued on 23 February. Printed by The House of Questa, the 2p and 75p stamps will be produced by a two-colour printing process and with redrawn numerals.

The redrawn numerals bring the stamps into line with the new numerals being introduced on definitives. The two colour printing on certain stamps produced by offset litho is necessary to achieve an effect which is closer to the colour standard required for these particular stamps.

The 2p value will also be printed for the first time on paper supplied by Henry and Leigh Salter.

The stamps will be available from all philatelic counters and the British Philatelic Bureau from 23 February but as they are not regarded as new issues, no first day of issue facilities will be offered.

November Digest

Issued in November

- 3 November **Christmas PHQ cards (Nos. 106 A-E)** 15p each
- 17 November **Christmas stamps** 13p, 18p, 26p, 31p, 34p
designer: Mike Foreman
printing: Harrisons, photogravure, 41mm x 30mm, printed on unwatermarked, phosphor-coated paper, except for the 13p with one printed phosphor bar, in sheets of 100 on PVA Dextrin gum.
- Bureau f.d. service alternative handstamp:** Llandeilo (Bethlehem)
- presentation pack:** £1.44
- 17 November **Christmas stamp pack:** containing 36 x 13p (2 panes of 18) backprinted with a star design, £4.60
- 17 November **Christmas aerogramme:** 30p
printing: offset litho by McCorquodale Envelopes Ltd
- 17 November **1987 Yearbook:** £15.95
- 17 November **1987 Collectors Pack:** £9.28

Withdrawn in November

- 3 November **13p Scottish definitive** (issued 23 October 1984)
- 17 November **Christmas 1986:** all items
1986 Yearbook
1986 Collectors Pack

Northern Ireland 10p definitive (issued 23 July 1980): stock exhausted.

The following items were also withdrawn on 18 October, but were notified too late for inclusion in the October *Bulletin*.

- Definitives** 7p (issued 29.10.85)
 12p (1986 NPI)
 17p (issued 19.6.84)

Country Definitives

- Scotland** 12p (issued 29.4.86)
 17p (issued 29.4.86)

- Wales** 12p (issued 7.1.86)
 17p (issued 25.2.86)

- N Ireland** 12p (issued 7.1.86)
 17p (issued 25.2.86)

SA Stamp Roll £120

SA Stamp Strip 12p



Single Pane Printings

Sir,

There is a great deal of evidence, including the total absence of dot panes, the use of unique phosphor cylinders and the discovery of Halley-type sheet serial numbers in both margins of the registration sheets of Country 5½p and 8p values in the National Postal Museum, to suggest that in late 1973 (during the miners' strike) Harrison's Halley 3 press, which was normally double-pane, must have been modified to single-pane operation. It was then used firstly for printing the Country 5½p two band and 8p values issued on 23 January 1974; secondly for the subsequent Country 5½p Country central band issue of 21 May 1975, and thirdly for a printing of National 8p central band stamps ex cylinders 13 and 14 in September 1979. The question which thus arises is precisely how Halley 3 was adapted for these single pane printings.

By the end of 1973 Halley 3 must have been nearing the end of its useful life. It may also be relevant that during 1974 the Halley 2 press was also modified to take Jumelle ink cylinders with the phosphor applied first by normal Halley cylinders. One symptom of this ageing process could have been reduced cylinder pressure at the outward edges of the two panes. This might, incidentally, explain the partially missing phosphor on two marginal strips which I have of the 8p from cylinder 14 with widely different sheet serial numbers. A partial malfunction of this kind could perhaps have been overcome in an emergency by fitting a single-pane cylinder centrally to the press. But this possible conformation of Halley 3 leaves one phenomenon unexplained: as has been mentioned above, synchronised sheet serial numbers are to be found in both margins of Country 5½p and 8p values.

There is an even stranger phenomenon to be found on a whole sheet of 8p cylinder 14. There are no serial numbers at all in the left hand margin; instead, there are no fewer than three in the right hand margin with 121mm between the top two and 66mm between the lower two. In addition, the figures of the top one are notice-

ably less well-aligned than those of the other two.

It is to be supposed, perhaps erroneously, that there were two mechanically-operated security numbering devices for each unit of the press triggered by a revolution of the printing cylinder at intervals of 19.95 inches and that their logical position would be on the lateral frame at or just before the point at which the web was sheeted in preparation for Grover perforating (but the knives disengaged when the Swedish Rotary was used). If this was the case it is not easy to see how the two counters could be reinstalled and activated in an equivalent position with one on each side of a centrally-placed single pane cylinder, and even harder to envisage the set-up of the three counters in the right high margin of the 8p, cylinder 14.

It was this feature of the three series of printings from Halley 3 in single pane mode which led to the tentative theory that the lateral frames of the press might have been somehow contracted to single pane width, thus in one sense giving a slight plausibility to a claim that the press was in effect cut in half.

Some tenuous support for this unlikely theory is provided by the perforation of part of these printings which presents a somewhat similar mystery. The Country 5½p two bands and 8p values and a small part (possibly a top-up printing) of the 5½p central band issue was perforated by Grover. As this was sheet-fed with a two row comb no problem would arise in single pane operation. But the larger part of Country 5½p central band and all the National 8p of 1979 ex cylinders 13 and 14 were perforated by the Swedish rotary or "lawnmower" which was normally a double pane reel-fed machine. Presumably, a lawnmower cylinder could not be set centrally, and there is evidence that both the left hand side (no dot pane) and right hand side (dot pane) were put into use. Moreover, the only explanation to be seen of the varying number of extension holes found in cylinder blocks is that the right hand side of the lawnmower must have been periodically in use with the progressive removal of the inter-panneau pins.

One final clue is provided by the perforations of the 8p value in question. The regularity of the single extension hole in each margin strongly suggests that a new single pane lawnmower cylinder was specially prepared for this issue and lends credence to the proposition that the lawnmower was also reduced in width.

There are two other pertinent factors worth mentioning at this point. The first is that there is no record of any printing other than those mentioned above which emanated from either Halley 3 or the lawnmower between mid 1973 and 1979, or, indeed, thereafter.

The second is that in both late 1973 and the autumn of 1979 there were external events causing something of a production crisis at Harrisons – electricity shortages caused by the miners' strike in one case and rapid postal changes aggravating the effects of a prior strike at the Post Office's main distribution centre on the other. These handicaps to production could well explain why a moribund Halley 3 was pressed into service in order to maintain essential supplies, and lend support to the proposition that both Halley 3 and the lawnmower were irreversibly modified to take single pane cylinders. Such ingenuity on the part of Harrisons further suggests that a way might have been found of using the two machines in tandem without the need for intermediate rerolling and so engender a desirable economy of effort and electricity.

All of this is merely hypothesis based on such evidence as is so far available and some of the inferences may be way off beam. It would thus be a great help and of interest to other specialist collectors if authoritative answers could be obtained to some of the questions raised.

J M DUTTON, Leatherhead, Surrey

Harrisons have kindly provided the following information in reply to Mr Dutton's queries:

The Halley 3 press was never subjected to the drastic surgery of chopping it in half lengthwise and neither was the APS perforator on the Halley 3. In fact, the Halley 3 still operates today at its original width, nearly 10 years on from its last run for the Post Office and is therefore not at the end of its useful life.

The cylinder used for the single-pane printings was a full width cylinder but with the etch only one pane wide. The numbering boxes are mounted on a bar across the press.

As far as the APS perforator is concerned this only perforates at the points where there are pins on the pin cylinder. So, if pins were omitted it would be easy to do single-pane perforating instead of double-pane. It is this effect of only perforating at the pins which allows the easy use of different shaped stamps at an economic price. Mr Dutton is probably correct in that a pin cylinder was specially made for the 1979 print-

ing but that for earlier printings various pin cylinders were used. Concerning the accurate registration of the phosphor cylinder, this was no more of a problem than for any other phosphor cylinder. Nor was there any abnormal connection made between the Halley 3 press and the APS perforator.

Mount Stewart Stamp Books

The 50p books depicting the Mount Stewart House and Gardens which went on sale on 29 September had the misspelling Stuart for Stewart.

This was a typesetting error which was the responsibility of the Post Office and we apologise to our customers especially in Northern Ireland.

A second printing of the book covers has been made to correct the error and these were made available from the British Philatelic Bureau and philatelic counters by 30 October. Books with the correct spelling are also being sent to offices for use in the electronic vending machines.

As both printings have been distributed to philatelic counters there should be no shortage of either type for collectors.

British Philatelic Bulletin

Editor Douglas N. Muir

The *British Philatelic Bulletin* is published monthly by The Post Office.

Correspondence should be addressed to the Editor at:
National Postal Museum
King Edward Building
King Edward Street
LONDON
EC1A 1LP

Annual subscriptions
UK and Europe £4.00
Rest of the World (Airmail) £6.50

Subscriptions should be sent to:
British Philatelic Bureau
20 Brandon Street
EDINBURGH
EH3 5TT

Single copies from philatelic counters: 35p

Binders are available to hold 24 issues from the Philatelic Bureau price £5.00.

Printed in Great Britain by Moore & Matthes (Printers) Ltd for The Post Office.