

Philatelic Bulletin

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Editorial

In this Jubilee Year souvenirs have not been hard to find. Among the most popular have been the special covers we produced to mark Her Majesty's tour, for we know of tens of thousands who have specimens in their collections. Our Silver Jubilee Bulletin contained an article which described some of the cancellations used on the covers and because we have had so many requests for complete details we are grateful to Charity Boxall for providing descriptions of the remainder. Speaking of the Tour reminds us that albums specially designed to hold the sets of Tour covers have been produced by a well known manufacturer. Your local dealer may well have details.

Sources of Energy Special Stamp Issue 25 January 1978

Four special postage stamps, values 9p, 10½p, 11p, and 13p, depicting the following sources of energy are to be issued on 25 January 1978. Oil: Coal: Natural Gas and Electricity.

First Day Cover Services

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

Service A

This consists of the official Post Office cover, addressed to the correct postal address of the destination required, and bearing all four stamps. The cover will be cancelled, 'Philatelic Bureau, Edinburgh' and despatched for a charge of 61½p. For deposit account customers the charge will be 57p.

Service B

Customers own pre-addressed covers bearing the correct postal address, will be given the full set of stamps, cancelled and despatched for a charge of 51½p.

Service C

For bulk orders of 50 or more covers all to the same address, under the conditions of Service A, the charge is 59p.

A special pictorial handstamp will be applied.

The usual first day of issue facilities will be available at offices with philatelic posting boxes. Application forms, available from the Philatelic Bureau, Edinburgh and at all Head Post Offices, should be returned not later than 16 January 1978.



The Editor wishes the readers of the Philatelic Bulletin a very happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year.



Gems from the R M Phillips Collection

LI The 1858 Proof of the 1840 One Penny Black Die



Heath's die showing the numeral and lettering

The proof illustrated above was for a long time thought to be unique, although the purpose for which it was struck is still a mystery. Recently what appeared to be a second copy, without any inscription and in a different shade of rose, has been found.

This proof of 26 January 1858 is apparently the last to have been taken off Heath's master die before the numeral '1' and the words 'OLD ORIGINAL' were engraved on the die between 1860 and 1870.

AG RIGO DE RIGHI

New Stamp Vending Machine Roll

A new stamp vending machine roll — supplying a strip of five stamps for 10p in values of 7p, two at 1p and two at ½p — will be on sale from 14 December at the Philatelic Bureau and from philatelic counters. Each of the stamps has one

centrally placed phosphor bar. The roll costs £50.00.

The new rolls will be used in vending machines when stocks of the present multi-value roll (6p; 2p; 1p: 2 × ½p) are exhausted.

The Caledonian Philatelic Society Jubilee Cup Competition

The Caledonian Philatelic Society holds annually, the Jubilee Cup Competition for Junior Collectors in Scotland 18 years of age and under. Entries for the 1978 Competition should be in the hands of the Convenor, Mr W Colley, 22 Victoria Road, Lenzie, Kirkintilloch, Glasgow G66 5AN by Saturday 11 March 1978, from whom further details may be obtained.

The awards will be presented and the winning entries displayed at a meeting of the Caledonian Philatelic Society to be held at the Institute of Engineers and Shipbuilders, 183 Bath Street, Glasgow at 7.30 pm on Thursday 23 March 1978.

Competitors, their parents and teachers are welcome to attend this meeting.

British Special Stamps

37. The Battle of Britain – 25th Anniversary, 1965

‘Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few’ declared Winston Churchill in his tribute to the Royal Air Force as the air battles over Britain neared their peak in August 1940. It was the second great crisis of that year — the first was the evacuation at Dunkirk — when the survival of Britain depended, not on ships, but on the skill and courage of our Hurricane and Spitfire pilots against the massive formations of German bombers.

It was one of the most crucial and decisive phases in our history and, for the 25th anniversary of the event, the Post Office showed that they recognised its significance with an issue of eight commemorative stamps — six 4d (issued together *se-tenant* in blocks, 3 × 2), a 9d and a 1s 3d — on 13 September 1965. Never before had the Post Office issued so many stamps on a single theme, while for collectors there was the innovation of a block of six stamps, ‘ready-made’ for mounting in the album!

Seven of the new stamps — the six 4d and the 1s 3d — were the work of the David Gentleman — Rosalind Dease team who, just a few months previously, had designed the striking Churchill commemoratives; the 9d, styled in close harmony with the other stamps, was evolved by Andrew Restall, designer of the Forth Road Bridge stamps, who was subsequently awarded a Fellowship in Minuscule Art at the Royal College of Art.

The designs for the 4d stamps showed (1) a flight of Spitfires peeling off for an attack; (2) silhouette of a pilot in a Hurricane fighter’s cockpit; (3) the distinctive wing-tips of a Spitfire and a Messerschmitt ‘Me-109’ superimposed; (4) Spitfires attacking a Heinkel ‘He-111’ bomber; (5) a Spitfire (originally described as ‘Hurricanes’) attacking a Junkers ‘Stuka’ dive-bomber, and (6) Hurricanes flying over the wreck of a Dornier bomber. Mr Restall’s 9d stamp depicted an ‘ack-ack’ gun battery in action, his vivid purple, orange and black colours contrasting strongly with the ‘camouflage’ olive-green and black of the 4d stamps.

The subject of the 1s 3d stamp was a distant



view of St Paul’s Cathedral, its dome representing a bastion of defiance amidst bomb-shattered buildings, the sky a clear blue wreathed with the white vapour trails of battle during one of the numerous raids on the City of London.

Originally the designers of the 4d stamps had hoped to devote the entire space of each stamp to the aircraft designs, the omission of the Queen’s head providing more space and scope for developing their ideas — five of their six submitted essays omitted the Queen’s portrait which, however, was dutifully reinstated, à la Wilding, on the issued stamps. The prominence given to the German cross (Messerschmitt wing) and the Nazi swastika (Dornier wreck) aroused some criticism and controversy which was effectively quashed by the PMG, Mr Wedgwood Benn, who, in reference to the ‘swastika’, declined to withdraw the stamps. ‘This is what the Battle of Britain was all about,’ he said.

The stamps were photogravure-printed by Harrison and Sons in sheets of 120 (6 x 20) on



ordinary and phosphor-banded paper, watermark multiple crowns. Comparatively few major varieties are recorded in Gibbons' 'Elizabethan Catalogue' — mainly damage and consequential retouching of a line through the wing, cross and roundel on No 3 (above); and another line across the upper part of the tailplane of the Dornier (No 6); also a retouch on the fuselage of the Stuka (No 5), all occurring on both ordinary and

phosphor paper versions. One of the 4d stamps (No 6) is known with the 'new blue' colour omitted, while the 9d (ordinary) and 1s 3d (ordinary and phosphor) are recorded with inverted watermarks.

Quantities issued (phosphor in brackets) were: 4d 103,417,440 (11,560,440); 9d 6,195,960 (1,143,120); and 1s 3d 6,469,440 (1,239,840). Presentation packs, 28,374. JAMES WATSON

Post Office Helps Tate Gallery Appeal

To help save two famous paintings for the nation the Post Office has presented to the Tate Gallery three of the famous £1 King George V Seahorse stamps.

The stamps which are on view in the Gallery will be auctioned by Robson Lowe Ltd on 19 January 1978 and the proceeds given to the appeal fund launched to purchase 'Haymakers' and 'Reapers' by George Stubbs.

The Post Office has a particular interest in the paintings as one of Stubbs' paintings 'Mares and Foals in a Landscape' was shown on a stamp in 1967.

Those unable to attend the auction and who



wish to bid for the stamps may send postal bids for one stamp or the pair to Mr John Van Haeften, Robson Lowe Ltd, 50 Pall Mall, London SW1Y 5JZ by 18 January 1978.

The Handstamps for The Queen's Silver Jubilee Tour



The twenty-four handstamps used on the special souvenir covers commemorating The Queen's Silver Jubilee Tour were designed by Jeffery Matthews. Each make pictorial reference to the designation and lead to historical facts, traditions, legends, about the area they represent. Some of the thinking behind the designs together with brief details and reproductions of fourteen of them have been given in a previous issue, and the ten shown here complete the set.

The Roundle charged with three chevrons, used for the West Glamorgan handstamp, is from the Badge which consists of an echo of the Shield and Crest of the Armorial Bearings of West Glamorgan County Council. A white shield with three red chevrons was the traditional Arms of the old princes of Gŵyr. The device of a black diamond represents the coal industry.

The Dragon of Wales is an ancient symbol and has figured in Welsh history since earliest times. This fabulous animal was chosen to represent Cardiff as it is on the Arms of the City and is a supporter for the Arms of the County of South Glamorgan. The red dragon is one of The Queen's Beasts and appears on the Royal Badge for Wales.

Another legendary animal, and also one of The Queen's Beasts, is the Unicorn. The Bristol handstamp is taken from the Crest of the new Armorial Bearings of the County of Avon which combines the Unicorn from the Arms of the City of Bristol with the Sword of St Paul and the Crown of King Edgar from the Arms of the City of Bath. King Edgar was crowned King of all England in Bath Abbey AD 973.

The historic royal badge of the White Rose was the obvious choice for York. It appears frequently in the civic heraldry of Yorkshire.



When Henry VII married Elizabeth of York he united the red rose of Lancaster and the white rose of York in the Tudor rose. This is still the Royal Badge for England.

Four of the designs are taken from the shield of the armorial bearings of the city or borough designated. A three masted Ship on water with two Fish beneath is the ancient Badge of Truro, reproduced on the Arms of the City.

The Borough of Derby is represented by the 'Buck in the Park' — a stag reposing between two oak trees in fruit within park palings — the sign used by the Corporation since time immemorial.

A rough wooden Cross with three open Crowns denotes that Nottingham is a Royal Forest Town. The Arms were officially recognised by the College of Arms in 1614, but it is not known how long they had then been in use.

The handstamp for the City of Plymouth depicts the Cross of St Andrew, to whom the Mother Church of Plymouth is dedicated, and the four Turrets which formed the corners of the Castle Quadrangle which stood above the Barbican commanding the entrance to Sutton Pool.

The Flax Plant, symbolising Northern Ireland's connection with linen, should be used for both the Belfast and Londonderry handstamps. Linen was the staple manufacture of the county of Londonderry and the flax flower is represented on the Arms of the County. The spinning and weaving of linen was conducted as



a cottage industry and Belfast was its chief port and market centre. Mechanised industrial methods were gradually established and Northern Ireland became the greatest centre of the linen industry in the world.

Each of the twenty-four handstamps gives particular interest and individuality to the souvenir covers whilst linking them in a unique manner, so that one or all of the covers serves equally well as a memento of a notable year.

Book Reviews

The Collectors Guide to Great Britain First Day Covers

This is the sixth edition of this guide/catalogue to GB covers

It lists in order, all FDC's with the various cancellations, and includes sections on booklet panes, air letters, presentation packs and PO postcards.

Published by BB Philatelic Publications Ltd, The Collectors Guide to Great Britain First Day Covers is priced 75p.

Stanley Gibbons Elizabethan Specialised Catalogue, 1978

For the many collectors of modern Commonwealth stamps and their varieties, this 14th edition of the Elizabethan is an essential guide to the stamps issued and their market values. This new edition includes practically all the commemoratives for the Queen's Silver Jubilee, including the Crown Agents territories' attractive omnibus series, and also lists more than 24,000 stamps (2,600 up on last year) and 5,500 varieties, including 400 new discoveries.

A number of important developments in this edition include, under Great Britain, the latest Machin definitives, together with the recent imperforate errors, the Canada 1972-76

definitive series rewritten in the light of new information, additions to India since 1971, improved listings of the varieties of the Malaysian States 'Orchids' issues, and the inclusion of hitherto unlisted stamps of Nigeria and Tasmania. The 'Arms'-types of New Zealand have been reclassified as postal-fiscals in line with the British Commonwealth Catalogue. Price £7.50

Isle of Man Catalogue of Stamps and Postal History 1978 Edition

by Dr A J Whitney MALCP

This is the first catalogue which attempts to bring together all known aspects of the Island's stamps and postal markings. The first edition, published in 1976, was based on pioneer publications and three leading collections. Readers were asked to compare the 1976 edition with their own collections and send in any information they felt should have been included *eg* earlier dates and additional marks. The result has been a thorough revision in every section. Price including return postage: UK £2.12; Europe £2.15; US and elsewhere £2.50. Remittances must accompany all orders which should be sent to: Dr A J Whitney MA LCP, 38 Hazlemere Road, Thundersley, Benfleet, Essex SS7 4AE.

Red Squirrel Competition



Two of the judges Johnnie Johnson and Penny McHale with the prizewinners Trudy Meakes and Andrew Coppin

'Go forth and paint this line drawing of the Red Squirrel Wildlife Postage Stamp', said the competition in Colchester's *Evening Gazette* sponsored by the Eastern Postal Region. The Judges Johnnie Johnson and Paul Diggins from Eastern Postal Region Public Relations, Penny McHale of *Essex County Newspapers* and the Editor of the *Philatelic Bulletin* said that the standard of painting from the 200 children who entered was very high and it was difficult to decide on the winners. The overall winner, who received £10 worth of premium bonds and books

on stamps was Trudy Meakes aged 14 of Maldon, Essex followed by Andrew Coppin from Tiptree as winner of the under 8 section and Paul Hughes of Kelvedon of the 8-14 section. They each received books on postage stamps. The three runners-up in each group were given postcards for the Wildlife Stamps and copies of the *Philatelic Bulletin*.

The prizes were presented at a ceremony at the Colchester Public Library on 8 October, and a gallery of all the paintings was put on view to the public.

An Italian Philatelist Looks at British Stamps

At a time when Great Britain, the Commonwealth and other countries are celebrating the Silver Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth the Second with a joyful selection of colourful issues, British stamps are at the height of their popularity in Italy. When I suggested about ten years ago that a boom in British stamps was just over the horizon, some people thought that it would be no more than a nine days wonder. The success of your stamps in my country has more than justified my forecast.

At the end of the second world war, Britain's stamps excited very little enthusiasm among Italian collectors. There was a tendency to complain about the difficulties of understanding the fascinating mysteries of the 'classic' period; the first issues, the varieties, the watermarks, and the plate numbers. As far as the modern issues were concerned, we noted with regret the undoubted monotony about the ordinary issues with their pale colours and the virtual non-existence of commemoratives. The few pictorials that had appeared aroused little enthusiasm, in spite of their qualities. The Italian collector tends sometimes to become rather superficial with an eye to format, gay or glaring colours and the emotional effect of a stamp rather than an appreciation of its intrinsic meaning. Not surprisingly, therefore, few collectors were interested in GB. There were signs however that things were going to change with the introduction of the first commemoratives issued after the Queen came to the throne. The Seventh Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (1961) hinted at a change of style, and this was confirmed by the three values issued for the National Productivity Year (1962). In 1964 no particular attention was paid to the fact that five attractive stamps were issued to commemorate not Shakespeare himself, but the Shakespeare Festival. Much emphasis on the other hand was placed on the fact that a portrait of a commoner appeared on a British stamp for the first time. Shakespeare could be seen portrayed on the left, while the Queen's portrait appeared on the right. This very significant change paved the way for many other noted British subjects. The door had

been opened by the creator of Hamlet, allowing Winston Churchill, the great statesman who had carried Britain and the free world to victory through the storms of war, to pass through in 1965.

For the Italian collector however, even though he now felt more attracted to British commemoratives, there was still the complaint that the ordinary issues continued to be dull and monotonous. Surely, he asked, was it not possible to produce something more lively, something that would show the world the beauties of Britain and her achievements? After all this was already being done, sometimes for the purpose of attracting tourists, by many other countries. The question was being asked with even greater insistence in Great Britain itself. In 1965 for example, an interesting idea appeared in the form of an unofficial miniature sheet, described as 'a new approach to British definitive postage stamps' and intended as a step forward. It contained attractive designs prepared by Jock Kinnier FSIA that had been sponsored by Stanley Gibbons Ltd and printed in an attractive blue colour by the photogravure process by Harrison & Sons. Depicted was the Hovercraft, the Jodrell Bank radio-telescope and the Wind-scale reactor, all of which eventually appeared on postage stamps. There were traditional English scenes, such as the Tower of London, a view of Westminster with Big Ben, the Queen on horseback during the Trooping of the Colour, and again the Queen in the state coach on her way to the opening of Parliament. This private venture had a greater effect than could have been foreseen. Big changes were afoot and Italian collectors soon saw which way the wind was blowing.

An attractive series of birds; a series honouring the advances made by British technology; a spectacular issue commemorating the 900th anniversary of the Battle of Hastings and the boom was on its way with a vengeance. The Italian market reacted quickly; there was an almost immediate increase in the demand for albums to house British stamps from the accession of Queen Elizabeth. Collectors with a

deeper knowledge of the subject also found time to take a look at the past and study the postage stamp from its beginnings during the early years of Queen Victoria's reign. The pictorials which followed reinforced this success: radar and penicillin were commemorated along with the works of Lawrence and Constable; famous ships, architecture and great names in English literature.

When I received letters from collectors asking whether they should start collecting British stamps now that there was such a promising flow of issues, I realised that the boom had an essentially solid foundation and the continual increase in prices confirmed this view. British stamps now presented themselves as an excellent commercial proposition due to the intelligent way they were being handled. The pound was shaky: the lire kept diving deeper, British stamps on the other hand, not only held their ground but tended to increase in value because of the ever growing number of Italian collectors looking to them as an investment.

Now it is all a matter of how much one can afford to pay. The 'penny-black' and 'two-penny blue' in first class condition fetch astoundingly high prices — indeed, they are much more expensive in Rome, Turin and Milan than in London. The £5 and £1 values from the Victorian series are beyond the pocket of the average collector, while many KG V and KG VI are worth a great deal both new and postally used.

Simple and elegant in design, the British stamps exude a distinct personality and are immediately recognisable. Italian philatelists are appreciative of these attributes, particularly as Queen Elizabeth celebrates her Silver Jubilee exactly 80 years after the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria. Those who, like myself, have patiently waited for this change, certain that one day it would come, cannot refrain from expressing their joy and satisfaction.

A continuous thread links the famous 'penny-black' to the Silver Jubilee issue of Queen Elizabeth II; a thread that is woven of history, custom and culture. Way beyond the cliffs of Dover the mounting interest on the part of both

collectors and dealers comes about because of the dynamic qualities and intelligent approach to the stamp designs of the country where the postage stamp was born. We can be sure that Sir Rowland Hill, intent on carrying through his measures for the reform of the British postal service, never foresaw what would result. Looking back over the many years that separate us from his small yet great invention we must certainly express our gratitude to him for his magnificent innovation.

RENZO ROSSOTTI

Forces Covers

RAF Cover HA19 commemorates Air Commodore A C Deere, DSO, OBE, DFC, the great Battle of Britain Ace. The covers have been cancelled with a special handstamp commemorating the 37th anniversary of the Battle of Britain, BFPS 1592, and are available from Flt Lt C R Field, RAF Catterick, Richmond, N Yorks at 35p plus 7p postage.

RAF Cover C49 commemorates the Open Day at RAF Lossiemouth on 13 August 1977. The cover depicts the Jaguar, Shackleton, Gannet and Whirlwind in which the covers were flown. They have been cancelled with a special handstamp, BFPS 1582, and are available from Sqn Ldr B McDonald, AFC, 1 Squadron, 226 OCU, RAF Lossiemouth, Morayshire at 35p plus 7p postage.

RAF Cover C50 commemorates the granting of the freedom of the city of Ely to the RAF Hospital, Ely. The covers have been flown by the Red Arrows Royal Air Force Aerobatic Team in preparation for their display over the hospital and have been cancelled with a special handstamp, BFPS 1585. They are available from Flt Lt K F Lees, RAF Hospital, Ely, Cambridgeshire at 40p plus 7p postage.

Please note that overseas orders should include additional postage. All proceeds from these covers will be devoted to the Battle of Britain Museum Appeal Fund.

Stamps for Pleasure

11. The Aviation Theme

Aviation — the word means 'mechanical flying' — is an ideal subject to commence this series of individual themes. Enough British stamps have been issued to form the nucleus of a small but select collection illustrating the development of aircraft from the primitive Farman of 1911 to the ultimate in technical achievement — Concorde. The stamp designs and the events commemorated can be assembled approximately in chronological order, and Gibbons Catalogue numbers are quoted (in brackets) for easy reference.

Page 1 in our album should comprise a brief introduction to the subject or, alternatively, could be devoted to some form of artistic frontispiece representing the aviation theme. Remember that the style of presentation is your choice and yours alone, and that you have complete freedom to arrange the stamps and descriptive text in an original and individual way. And, as mentioned in my previous article, you are at liberty to include appropriate photographs, drawings or picture postcards to supplement the theme.

The Farman biplane (955), issued as one of the UPU Centenary series in 1974, is the earliest flying machine in our collection, and in this instance it represents also the earliest days of airmail services — the historic Coronation Aerial Post between London and Windsor in September 1911, operated by Farman machines from Claude Grahame-White's flying school at Hendon.

Henri Farman was one of the great pioneers of aviation in France. His early biplanes of 1910-1912 owed much to the Wright brothers, but later he and his brother, Maurice, established an aircraft factory at Billancourt which made military planes for use in World War 1. Also belonging to this period was the Sopwith 'Camel' biplane, depicted with a trio of 'Lightning' fighters on the stamp (769) of 1968, marking the 50th anniversary of the Royal Air Force. T O M Sopwith was chief of the two companies which gave Britain the world's finest fighter aircraft in the two world wars, notably the Hawker Hurricanes in World War 2. He became

chairman of the giant Hawker-Siddeley Group.

The RAF originated as the Royal Flying Corps in May 1912. It had military and naval wings, but the latter became independent in July 1914, while the RFC military flyers battled on against formidable German opposition in France. In April 1918 the Corps and the Royal Naval Air Service joined together again as the Royal Air Force under the newly formed Air Ministry.

Two important anniversaries were commemorated by stamps in 1969 — both concerned pioneer flights in Vickers 'Vimy' bombers, first by Alcock and Brown who made the first non-stop flight across the Atlantic (from St John's, Newfoundland, to Clifden on the Irish coast) in June 1919, the second by Ross and Keith Smith who began their successful flight to Australia in 12 November 1919, and arrived in Melbourne on 20 February 1920. The Alcock and Brown stamp shows their portraits from a contemporary *Daily Mail* and their 'Vimy' (791), while the Smiths' stamp features the plane and a route-map marked on the globe (795). The dates on the stamp record the actual flying time; after an adventurous flight, the Smith brothers touched down at Darwin on 10 December 1919.

The stamps for the 25th anniversary of the Battle of Britain (issued in September 1965) were described in my 'British Special Stamps' feature No 37 (this month's *Bulletin*): here it will suffice to mention that Hurricanes and Spitfires are seen in air battles with German warplanes, and that the contrasting wing-tips, dormant Dornier and anti-aircraft guns are all part of the action. The six 4d stamps were issued together in a block of 3 x 2 format and should be mounted thus in the album, with the two singles well-spaced below. Any relevant photographs or ephemera could be arranged on a following page. The catalogue numbers (671/8) do not take account of the phosphor-band varieties.

Another UPU stamp (957) showed the Imperial Airways 'C' class flying-boat of 1937, the year in which the airline, formed in 1924 by the amalgamation of four existing companies, inaugurated its flying-boat service to South

Africa and carried out test flights on the transatlantic route.

Four other stamps of miscellaneous subjects could be grouped together — the 2½d 'sea-rescue' helicopter (639) in the Lifeboat series of 1963; the SR N6 hovercraft (703), 'British Technology', 1966; the EFTA air freighter — it's a BEA 'Argosy' (716), issued in 1967; and the Vickers-Armstrong 'VC-10' jet engine (754) in the 'British Discoveries' series, also 1967. The helicopter, by the way, is a Westland 'Wigeon'.

So we come right up-to-date with British aviation's supersonic marvel, Concorde. Three stamps commemorating its first flight were issued in 1969 — 4d Concorde in flight over Britain and France, the joint sponsors of the

project (784), designed by Michael and Sylvia Goaman; 9d Plan and elevation diagrams, and 1s 6d a stylised version of Concorde's nose superimposed on its tail (785/6), both designed by David Gentleman.

Concorde is 193 feet in length with a delta wing spanning 83 feet, powered by four Rolls-Royce turbojets and has an estimated range of 4,000 miles. An unusual feature of this revolutionary aircraft is its droop nose which is lowered during take-off and landing to give the pilot a clear view of the ground (and provides that extraordinary bird-like appearance). The French Concorde, '001', made its maiden flight on 2 March 1969 — BAC's '002' first flew on 9 April 1969.

JAMES WATSON

Sport on British Stamps

It is obvious that stamp-issuing authorities must take some account of public taste and interests when considering what subjects to depict on stamps. Failure to do this can and does result in virtual neglect by collectors, this accounting, at least in part, for the high degree of unpopularity of certain countries.

Sports would seem to be universally popular activities, either on the active or passive plane, for people in most countries, and the number of sporting events of a national or international character is more than sufficient to provide ample 'hooks' on which to hang postage stamps illustrating them. This interest in and relative profusion of sports stamps are also reflected in the fact that there have been at least two books on the subject in English and several more in other languages.

Sports stamps made their appearance at a fairly early stage, namely with the fine set issued by Greece in 1896 to mark the revival of the Olympic Games at the suggestion of the Frenchman, Baron Pierre de Coubertin, who has himself been featured on the stamps of several countries. Since the first modern Games, held in Athens, their twenty or so successors have given

rise to innumerable stamps which form an interesting subject for a sub-collection within the sports field as well as offering a fascinating insight into the way in which various countries have approached the Games philatelically.

In the earlier modern Olympic Games it was by no means always the custom for the host country to issue special stamps. There were, for example, no special stamps for the Games held in London in 1908. Similarly it has only since World War II become the custom for competing as well as host countries to issue special stamps.

The four stamps issued by Great Britain to mark the first post-war Games, held in London in 1948, were allegorical in design, as had, in many ways, been those issued by France to mark the 1924 Games held in Paris. Other approaches have shown unidentified competitors in the various categories, while there have also been more recent examples showing specific competitors.

The Olympic Games can be said to be truly international. Other sporting events exist which involve specific groups of countries, such as the former Empire Games, later to become the Commonwealth Games. The 6th British Empire

and Commonwealth Games were held in Cardiff in 1958 and resulted in the issuing of three stamps, once again with a basically allegorical design in which the Welsh dragon played a significant part. The 9th Games, held in 1970, were marked by three stamps of highly interesting and original design suggesting very successfully the motion and speed inherent in running, swimming and cycling.

Sporting events in individual fields have also produced a profusion of special stamps. The best example from Great Britain must surely be the set of three stamps issued in 1966 when the final of the World Cup Football Competition was held at Wembley. Not only was the final played at Wembley, but Great Britain was one of the teams and Great Britain beat West Germany! To mark this victory, the 4d value was overprinted 'England Winners' and was issued on 18 August following the final. It was expected, possibly not unnaturally, that this overprinted stamp would increase greatly in value, so that many speculators bought up as many copies as they could. This was not, however, to be the case, and this stamp stands as a solemn warning to those hoping to make a quick pound or two from philatelic speculation.

Apart from sports stamps for international and national competitions, there have been many issues devoted to individual sports popular in given countries. These range from sports having a world-wide appeal, such as tennis and sailing, to those of a very national character, such as pelota and hurling.

Falling within the category we find British sets devoted to county cricket (1973), sailing (1975) and racket sports (1976), to be followed later this year by cycling. The 1973 county cricket centenary set was of special interest in that the designs showed caricatures of W G Grace by Harry Furniss. They remind one of a set from Czechoslovakia devoted to caricatures, one of which was of the writer G K Chesterton.

National and folk dances, too, must be included within the field of sports, and stamps featuring them are amongst the most colourful in the stamp catalogue, particularly those from

various countries in Africa. A welcome British example occurred in the 1976 cultural traditions set and features morris dancing.

Skating as a pastime, if not a sport, can be seen on Sir Henry Raeburn's painting of the Rev R Walker from the 1973 artistic anniversaries set.

The inventiveness of stamp-issuing authorities is as infinite as the number of stamps they are willing to issue! With the great wave of nostalgia prevalent at the moment, not only in Britain, but in many other countries, would it not be of interest to have a set of stamps devoted, say, to British pub games, a subject on which I recently came across a book. There have already been sets devoted to peripheral sporting subjects, such as historical playing cards, while the number of chess stamps is quite large. Motor racing, too, offers fine opportunities for colourful sets of which there are already quite a few examples. Shortly before writing this contribution I noticed a picture of the prime minister trying his skill at skateboarding! One wonders how long it will be before this recent craze will make its philatelic debut.

All in all, then, there is much scope for more British sports stamps, even if those which have appeared so far can be regarded as fairly representative of the popularity of the subject.

IAN F FINLAY

The British Philatelic Federation Ltd

A leaflet which outlines the purposes of the British Philatelic Federation and explains the benefits to be gained from membership — by collectors, philatelic societies and federations, and traders — is now available from the Honorary Secretary, British Philatelic Federation, 1 Whitehall Place, London SW1A 2HE.

Collector's Pack 1977

We offer our apologies for printing the out of date handling charges in the November Bulletin. The current UK Charges should be 10p and 70p and not as previously shown.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor

Although Reginald M Phillips is no longer in this life, his name will long be revered in philatelic circles for his generosity in handing over his very valuable collection of Victorian stamps to the Post Office in trust for the Nation.

In retrospect perhaps even more important than the stamps and the substantial cash gift Mr Phillips made was his astute insistence that, without delay, a National Postal Museum should be established, and that his stamps should be publicly shown. It is a fitting tribute to his skill as a negotiator to record that he saw to it that there could be no escape from the terms of the deed of gift.

In a very real sense RMP was indeed the founder of the National Postal Museum for had he not tied all the knots as carefully as he did, the era of financial stringency which overtook the postal service soon after the Museum opened must surely have seen the indefinite postponement of the project. Phillips forced the pace knowing that in the country as a whole almost ninety per cent of Museum collections are held in store awaiting the provision of premises when funds can be spared for the purpose.

It was RMP's insistence that gave me my curatorship in the last years of my service. It was an unforgettable experience for which I shall always be grateful. To set up from scratch the Phillips, the Post Office, and the Berne collections of stamps so as to make them sight-available to all comers gave me delight.

He was over conscious of the monetary value of almost every stamp in his collection (I confess to having no interest in stamps for investment) but behind that facade was a mind which readily assimilated other values. He often expressed approval of my philatelically unorthodox historical asides. Certain it is that Reginald M Phillips derived great satisfaction from collecting stamps and that in founding the NPM he took care that those who came afterwards may enjoy the stimulus of his treasures.

For this our grateful thanks. RMP — RIP.

Yours sincerely

Bromley, Kent

F Marcus Arman

Sir

First Airmails to and from London & Glasgow 1919

Since my article was first published early in 1976, I have obtained further information which may be of interest to your readers.

Post Office records show that there were 10 flights in all, five in each direction: Glasgow to London flights took place on the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th October when the letters carried totalled 204, 217, 248, 161 and 45 items respectively. From London to Glasgow there were flights on 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 6th October with 113, 138, 134, 113 and 46 items respectively. The 'Special fees' collected varied from £5 to £32.18s per flight, much less than the cost of the service. Civilian machines were used for the first two flights in each direction, but the later services utilised Air Ministry machines which flew to and from Kenley.

Yours sincerely

Dunblane, Perthshire

Richard Beith

Dear Sir

Shapes of Commemorative Stamps

Referring to the contributions to your pages by Mr Micklem and Mr Crane I would draw the attention of your readers to the proportions of the present commemorative stamp shape, the length of which is approximately equal to the diagonal of an imaginary square based on the shorter side. That proportion is regarded by many to be a pleasant shape. Clearly, the problem that stamp designers have, is to make use in full of this shape in a simple manner and without overcrowding. If a white border or a coloured frame line is introduced, then the problem is increased by a reduction of the available area and the production of a rectangle that differs in proportion to the agreed pleasant shape.

You will note that in most issues where the stamp design has a white background (or if this is coloured, it is allowed to 'bleed off' over the perforations rather than have a white border) the design benefits by seeming to be less cramped.

The two sets of Explorers and the Village Churches set of 1972 and 1973 are examples of 'bleeding off' while there are several sets with unframed white backgrounds such as Inigo Jones in 1973 and in other issues during later years.

Anyone who is sufficiently interested, has only to use coloured panels to extend the background colours of all the values of the Silver Jubilee set onto the perforations to see what a difference this makes by way of simplification. As a fellow Old Carthusian, I do not criticise Prof Guyatt's design, which in my opinion is sufficiently bold to hang together without being cramped in by a white border which detracts from the effect of the white figures and lettering.

What really worries me is the way in which the value and the Queen's portrait are crowded on the current high values of £1 to £5. If it were possible to 'bleed off' the background onto the perforations, so as to slightly separate the value from the portrait by making use of the increased width, then the appearance in my view would be

immensely improved. Anyone who has trimmed the white borders from the family photographs will know what I mean. You might also care to consider making full use of the stamp width as above and introducing a very thin white border line which should be omitted behind the £ sign and at the back edge of the royal crown, but I emphasise that this should be very thin if practical from the printers' point of view. To my mind this portrait of a very charming Queen is magnificent and should be given more room.

If in a few months time the Post Office could bring about improvements then the current cramped issue would in the future be known as the Jubilee High Values. The Post Office could print the Jubilee set and this High Value set on mini-sheets using the above suggestions in a limited issue for sale by the Jubilee Fund organisers with a Windsor Castle cancellation for those collectors who required them used.

Yours faithfully

London NW1

K E CURRY

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'.

31 October-14 December 1977

3 January-28 October 1978

Oldham for Industrial Development 061-678-4000. To be used at Oldham. 1st and 2nd class.

31 October-14 December 1977

3 January-28 October 1978

Ring 061-678-4000 The Industrial Number. To be used at Oldham. 1st and 2nd class.

14 November-24 December 1977 (P)

Warrington Market Serves The People

1277-1977 700th Anniversary. To be used at Warrington. 1st and 2nd class.

10 October 1977 until further notice

Cambridge Is A Mechanised Office Please Use The Postcode. To be used at Cambridge. 1st and 2nd class.

Repeat Campaigns

1 October-31 December 1977 (P)

South Woodham Ferrers The Place For Your New Home. To be reused at Chelmsford.

15 October-10 December 1977

27 December 1977-13 April 1978.

Llandudno Wonderland of Wales. To be reused at Llandudno. 1st and 2nd class.

P denotes Pictorial

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