

Philatelic Bulletin

Volume 7 Number 5 January 1970



Contents

BRITISH ARCHITECTURE STAMPS – FIRST-DAY COVER SERVICES	2
PHILYMPIA STAMP BOOKLET	2
POSTAGE STAMPS ALL OVER PHOSPHOR	2
NATIONAL POSTAL MUSEUM NOTES	3
THE BRITISH POSTAGE STAMP POSTMARK SLOGANS	6
THE LETTER BOX	7
NATIONAL POSTAL MUSEUM – POSTCARDS	7
NATIONAL ARMY MUSEUM SERIES – MILITARY COVERS	8
THE FLYING SCOTSMAN IN USA	10
BRITISH ARCHITECTURE STAMPS	11
INTERNATIONAL AWARD FOR POST OFFICE	12
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR	13
HOW TO GET POSTMARKS	13
SPECIAL HANDSTAMP	14
	15

British Architecture Stamps – First-Day Cover Services

For the first of the 1970 special issues the Bureau is again offering its various first-day cover services and the application forms are enclosed.

Four stamps depicting British Architecture will be issued on 11 February, values *5d*, *9d*, *1s* and *1s 6d*.

Our charges for the services are:

Service A: The Official Post Office cover with typed address, the full set of stamps and Philatelic Bureau cancellation – *6s 8d*.

Service B: The full set of stamps affixed to customer's own pre-addressed envelopes and Philatelic Bureau cancellation – *4s 8d*.

Service C: As Service A except that a minimum of 50 covers to the same address is required and the envelopes will be addressed by machine plate – *5s 8d*.

The usual philatelic posting boxes will be available on 11 February for the use of those who would rather prepare and post their own covers. Boxes will be opened at Harlow, Essex, Deal, Kent, and Lowestoft, Suffolk, from this issue and at Aberaeron, Cardiganshire, on 11 February only.

Philympia Stamp Booklet

A special Philympia issue of the *5s* stamp booklets will be made during April 1970. A reserve stock will be held and sold exclusively at Philympia from 18 to 26 September. The date of issue and other details will be announced as soon as possible.

Postage Stamps All Over Phosphor

A limited number of sheets of *1s 6d* definitive postage stamps have been printed in phosphor 'all over' for test purposes.

These stamps were on sale on 10 December 1969 from the Philatelic Bureau, Edinburgh, London Chief Office Philatelic Counter and all Head Offices with philatelic counters. It is not possible at this stage to say when they will be on sale at other offices.

Introduction

In addition to reminding readers about Robson Lowe's book 'The British Postage Stamp' we print this month a review of a new book 'The Pillar Box' which is sure to interest the many who make a study of that fascinating branch of postal history.

Our main article, apart from the details of the British Architecture stamps, is on another branch of the hobby – postmark collecting.

Marcus Arman has contributed another of his fascinating stories of the postal life of the 1840s and he has asked me to thank all those who write to him as a result of reading his articles.

National Postal Museum Notes

The Commercial Importance of the Postal Reforms of 1840

Some 40 million letters are posted in Britain every day. Some of these letters commemorate social events, there are greetings cards and so on, others are more serious letters between friends and relatives but the bulk of these communications form the sinews of the mercantile world we inhabit. Without them business could not flourish, accounts could not be rendered, and the life of the nation would stagnate.

It was not always thus. Before the Postal Reforms of 1840, with which the name of Rowland Hill will ever be associated, the postal system in this country did very little to assist the mercantile or social life of the nation, and, indeed, tended to inhibit the growth of literacy – the technological tool which was essential to a growing Industrial Nation. The unreformed Post Office early in the days of the nineteenth century was not only costly but pretty ineffective. The average charge for sending a letter from one part of the country to another was as high as 9d and very often the rate rose to as much as 1s 2d or even 1s 3d. The tariff was based not on the weight of a letter but on the distance it was carried, and if you used more than one sheet of paper for your communication double postage was charged.

The great change in the shape of Britain following the industrial revolution and the development of society somewhat on the lines that we know it today necessitated radical change so as to permit correspondence between people who had moved from the small hamlets and towns they previously lived in into big conurbations of population particularly in the manufacturing districts and, of course, to London.

The Select Committee of the House of Commons which examined Rowland Hill's proposals for Postal Reform was very conscious of the difficulties which arose because of high postage rates. They devoted a considerable part of their report to a section 'Suppression of Correspondence' from which I now quote:

'In very many affairs of business unless the announcement be immediate the occasion for

writing has gone-by; unless parties therefore find it profitable to use the post they forbear writing at all. Bills for moderate amounts are not drawn, small orders for goods are not given or received, remittances of money are not acknowledged. The sailing or arrival of ships are not announced and insurances thereon are thereby prevented from being effected. Printers do not send their proofs, the town dealer does not inform his country customers when to expect the arrival of his traveller, the County Attorney delays writing to his London Agent, the commercial traveller to his principal; Branch Banks delay remitting to their central bank. Communication which is the sole of business is dispensed with.'

The Report continues:

'Thus the distribution of circulars from Land Agents announcing properties for sale, from wine agents stating the prospects of the vintage and corn salesmen of the harvest, from brokers of every description advising the market movements, from traders recommending their goods, from printers, publishers and booksellers forwarding their prospectuses and announcing new publications, from Fire and Life Insurance Companies stating the terms of their insurances; from Manufacturers enclosing new patterns and dealers enclosing samples are suppressed or greatly restricted.

'Charitable institutions, unions for the establishment of Sunday Schools, Associations for the improvement of Education or the diffusion of knowledge and many other bodies are greatly crippled in their exertions by the limitations which the postage rates imposed on their issue of printed notices and documents.'

It is plain that without the post the ordinary business of Britain could not be transacted. It was to overcome these difficulties and the social consequences which flowed from the high postage rates that Rowland Hill and his associates produced the Postal Reform of 1840. Robert Wallace, Member of Parliament for Greenock, who looked after the Parliamentary Lobby for Postal Reform, and was, indeed, the Chairman of the Committee of both Houses of

Parliament, which, by his casting vote, resulted in Rowland Hill's proposals becoming law, suggested that '*every rank and class of person had an interest more or less immediate in the safe speedy and economical transmission of Post Office communications.*' Egalitarian minded witnesses to the Select Committee pointed out that many men were earning no more than 6s 6d or 7s 6d a week and that when they had to pay *rod* for a letter it represented one eighth and one tenth of their income.

It is significant that a letter today at the 5d 1st-class rate takes a one thousandth part of a weekly wage of about £20!

The plight of men in search of work concerned other witnesses: 'we often see poor men travelling the country for work and sometimes they come back and it appears that they have been in a wrong direction. If the postage were low they would write first and know whether they were likely to succeed.' A Mr James Simpson of Edinburgh claimed that 'Literacy itself was inhibited by the high postage rates this resulted in the poorer classes losing their very power of writing for want of use', and this at a time when the development of literacy so that working men at the factory bench and engaged in commerce could read and assimilate written instructions and keep records was essential to the growth of the economy.

Understandably the campaign for literacy and that for cheap postage were complementary causes in which many men of good will played an important part. Rowland Hill, himself a school master, played his part in the campaign for literacy through 'The Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge among the Working Classes' a beautiful Do-gooding Victorian title for a society which played a remarkable part in the development of literacy among working men.

Whereas Rowland Hill in his famous pamphlet 'Post Office Reform its Importance and Practicability' presented the case for reform in a manner which confounded his critics, it is important to remember that without the help of Robert Wallace in the Parliamentary Lobby

and merchants of the City of London, it is doubtful whether his reforms would, in fact, have reached the statute book. The Mercantile Committee of the City of London whose Secretary, Henry Cole, was later to become Rowland Hill's Assistant at the Treasury, was the premier pressure group for the reform of the posts between 1837-9. Cole was later to become the Secretary for Science and Art at South Kensington, and most of the learned Institutions in that area owe their origin to his initiative and resourcefulness, as indeed does the Great Exhibition of 1851 which was his brainchild.

Cole was a Civil Servant: he knew his way about statutory rules and orders and exercised his skill in his unofficial work as Secretary of the Mercantile Committee. Among other things he took to Charing Cross Post Office a large sheet of paper addressed to a correspondent in the country and the counter man told him that the single postage would be charged. Cole then produced a tiny envelope with a small communication inside it, almost as small as a wedding cake envelope today, and the clerk told him that he would have to pay double! By this means he used the arts of derision in furtherance of the cause for reform: it was plainly absurd to charge a single postage for a large sheet of paper and double for a tiny communication. Cole's other clever device was to introduce the *Post Circular*, a blatant propaganda journal in favour of postal reform which the Government of the day were reluctant to concede. Cole registered the *Post Circular* as a newspaper and it had to be carried by the Post Office for a penny! By this device the campaign for postal reform grew and petitions and resolutions from public meetings all over the country were forwarded to the Government. It was a brilliant way of making the Post Office dig its own grave under the old system!

Cole had no illusions as to the importance of the task in which he was engaged. In his biography he writes '*of all the events of which my career has been connected no one I feel surpasses or, indeed, is equal in value to the world at large*

as the adoption of uniform Penny Postage all the progress of mankind is helped on by freedom of thought expressed in writing: the progress of religion, morals, health, science, education, arts, manufacturers, commerce and international peace are all advanced by correspondence which is next to nothing without the Post Office.

'It will be to the glory of England for all time that she was the first country to adopt this way of light and the fame of Rowland Hill will be imperishable as having discovered uniform Penny Postage.'

No sooner had the British Post Office reforms of 1840 been implemented than the idea of the adhesive postage stamp was copied by other countries whose administrations began to issue their own postage stamps. Very many of these stamps were printed in this country and we are at present printing some 3,000 million postage stamps in Great Britain for Overseas Administrations bringing us in something over a million pounds in overseas currency.

Before 1874 bilateral agreements between countries were made to facilitate the passage of mails throughout the world and these were extremely complicated.

Internationally standardized charges were introduced in 1874 which with a minimum of formality facilitated the international Postal Services. The Agency employed was the newly established Universal Postal Union with its Secretariat at Berne in Switzerland: the Swiss Government convened the first convention at the suggestion of Heinrich von Stephan, a high-ranking official of the Postal Administration of the Confederation of Nuremberg in Germany.

It is the authority, the Universal Postal Union, which ensures and still ensures that there are no frontiers for the post. A letter must reach the addressee regardless of his social status, political views, religion or race, anywhere on earth. By allowing free postage for items concerning prisoners of war and civilian internees as well as literature for the blind, and by conveying periodicals at a reduced rate the

Union has achieved the humanitarian aims which have ever been its objective. Even in the critical days of two world wars the Union has proved its stability. By pursuing its efforts to intensify international co-operation it contributes daily to bringing men and nations closer together in understanding in trade and in commerce. It is against this background that you can post a letter here in London addressed to Iceland or Tierra del Fuego, or anywhere in between, and be assured that, barring accidents, it will reach its destination.

We could not live as we do were it not for this international service, cradled in Britain in 1840.

F. MARCUS ARMAN

NATIONAL POSTAL MUSEUM

Christmas Holiday Lectures for Children

During the school holiday period from Monday 29 December until Friday 9 January 1970 (Saturdays and Sundays excepted) there will be special lectures and film shows for young stamp collectors at 2.30 pm daily at the National Postal Museum. Admission is free and no tickets are required, but to avoid disappointment come early as space in the Lecture Theatre is limited.

In addition to these special talks for young people the usual Wednesday one o'clock lectures and film shows will be given as follows:

7 January
Lecture David Gentleman – Stamp Designer

14 January
Film The Story of the Post

21 January
Lecture The Commercial Importance of the Postal Reforms of 1840

28 January
Film The Story of Mail Transport

All the talks will be given by the Museum's Curator, Mr F. Marcus Arman.

The British Postage Stamp

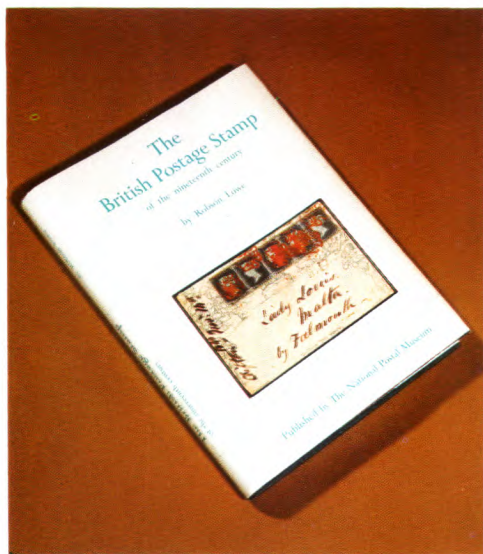
by Robson Lowe

May we again suggest a use for all those book tokens received as Christmas presents? All philatelists should have a copy of Robson Lowe's very fine book 'The British Postage Stamp of the Nineteenth Century' as a reference volume to the first years of adhesive postage stamps.

Beautifully produced, lavishly illustrated in both colour and black and white, the book is considered the authoritative work on the subject and has proved popular since it was first published in 1968.

The author, Robson Lowe, is well known as a professional philatelist. He has edited 'The Philatelist' for over thirty years and has written or edited many other fine works. He is, in addition to his many other interests, philatelic adviser to the National Postal Museum.

The book may be obtained price 75s (\$9) post free from the Philatelic Bureau, Edinburgh, or from leading booksellers.



Postmark Slogans

Make fast to the London International Boat Show Earls Court Jan 7-12 will be used transposed where possible from 15 December-13 January 1970 at ten London offices including Battersea, Northern District Office, North Western District Office and Paddington.

Great Yarmouth & Gorleston on Sea for Fine Holidays is continuing in use at Great Yarmouth until 30 November 1970.

Dudley & Zoo, Brierley Hill, Coseley, Dudley, Sedgley for Shopping & Free car parks is continuing in use at Dudley until 21 July 1970.

Tenby send for Guide 2/- Dept PO Guild-hall is continuing at Tenby until further notice. There is an alteration in the advertised price for Guide.

Remember to use the Postcode will be used transposed where possible at Worcester, Droitwich, Malvern, Pershore and Evesham from 9 March 1970 until further notice.

1970 Edmund Year - Bury St Edmunds to be used transposed at Bury St Edmunds from early in December 1969 until further notice. Starting date not yet finalized.

Durham Charities Rag Week 1970 24 February-9 March will be used transposed at Durham from 24 February-9 March 1970.

Wycombe Arts Festival March 1970 will be used transposed at High Wycombe from 1 January-31 March 1970.

My Fair Lady Shrewsbury Amateur Operatic Society Shrewsbury 16-21 February 1970 will be used transposed at Shrewsbury from 29 December-20 February 1970.

Haven under the Hill Whitby for Holidays will be used transposed at Whitby from early in December 1969 until further notice. Starting date not yet finalized.

The Letter Box

by Jean Young Farrugia

We have printed over the years articles covering a wide range of both philatelic and postal history subjects. The single feature which has attracted the most attention was published five years ago under the title 'Pillar Box Designs'. We are naturally delighted therefore that the author of that article has produced a book on the same subject.

In her book 'The Letter Box' Jean Farrugia traces the history and manufacture of letter boxes and describes their development. In her scholarly and detailed work Mrs Farrugia gives a most readable and fascinating account, and a wealth of photographs, line drawings and an exhaustive index enables the reader to identify the many designs from the mid-nineteenth century, and to date them with accuracy. A chapter on USA boxes traces the development of city and rural posts in the United States and this alone makes the book a worthwhile purchase for the many interested in that fascinating story.

The history of pillar and wall boxes, and other types of letter boxes such as those on trams, trains and ships are fully covered as are those in the British Commonwealth and Europe.

The letter box has already begun to attract its devotees and some private and public collections are being put together. In addition to these collectors others will find the book invaluable. Students of the industrial revolution, or those interested in the history of iron foundries for instance, as well as postal historians and amateur box spotters.

Mrs Farrugia is to be congratulated on producing an authoritative work which fills a gap in such records. We are certain that her book will become the accepted work of reference on the subject.

'The Letter Box' by Jean Young Farrugia is published by Centaur Press Ltd, price 84s.

National Postal Museum—Postcards

The National Postal Museum have now published five series, each of six postcards, illustrating the evolution of the British postage stamps of Queen Victoria's reign. In selecting the subject matter for these cards, the majority of which are coloured, we have tried to make every picture tell a story in a manner which will complement and enrich the album pages of modest collectors of classic Victoriana. To this

end the captions instead of appearing on the address side of the cards are shown on the picture side – the 'write up' being associated with the picture.

Details of the contents of each set of cards are given below. They are on sale in the Museum and can also be obtained, post free, from the Philatelic Bureau, Edinburgh – price 3s 6d for each set of six cards.

The Wyon City Medal 1837. Engraved by William Wyon and struck to commemorate Queen Victoria's Accession visit to the City of London. Drawings made from this medal by Henry Corbould were incorporated in all the stamps of the Queen's Reign.

National Postal Museum, R M Phillips Collection



Series Number 1 :

Jacob Perkins (1766–1849).
Charles Heath (1785–1848).
Rowland Hill (1795–1879).
William Wyon, RA (1795–1851).
Henry Cole (1808–1882).
Henry Corbould, FSA (1787–1844).

Series Number 2 :

The Wyon City Medal 1837.
Henry Corbould's Drawing.
Specimen for Cabinet 1840.
The 'Penny Black'.
Water Colour Sketch.
The Two Penny 'Blue'.

Series Number 3 :

William Mulready, RA.
Mulready Envelope.
Mulready Caricature.
Temperance Envelope.
Propaganda Envelope.
The 'Penny Pink'.

Series Number 4 :

Embossed Adhesive Stamps.
Thomas De La Rue 1793–1866.
The 4d Carmine of 1855 (Joubert).
1856 Die Proof of 6d.
1856 Die Proofs of 1s Essay.
Progressive Die Proof 9d.

Series Number 5 :

1887. De La Rue Essays.
1880. Artists Drawing 1½d.
W. Adams's Scheme 1884.
Thomas Jeffrey's Scheme 1881.
The 1887 'Jubilee' Issue.
High Values of 1883–1884.

Propaganda Envelope
engraved and printed by
Valentine of Dundee
used 28th March 1853.

A reduction from the
original in the
National Postal Museum
R M Phillips Collection
Vol. IX P.43.



The Embossed Adhesive Stamps 1847-1854.

William Wyon's original
design for the 1/- stamp
printed at Somerset
House on a machine invented
by Rowland Hill's brother
Edwin Hill.

National Postal Museum
R M Phillips Collection
Vol. XXX P.6



The 1887 'Jubilee' Issue.

The work of the Stamp Committees of 1884 and 1886 resulted in these stamps of 1887. They were not intended to mark the Queen's Jubilee.

National Postal Museum
R M Phillips Collection
Vol. XLI



National Army Museum Series—Military Covers

Group I, Cover No. 1.

Famous Regiments of the British Army



The Queen's Regiment

The cover, to be issued on 14 February 1970, will feature the badge of the Regiment embossed in gold and silver, surrounded by the badges of the four Regiments from which it was amalgamated in 1966. These were, The Queen's Surreys, The Queen's Own Buffs, The Royal Sussex and the Middlesex Regiment.

The handstamp also features the Regimental badge and will be used at Canterbury, Kent, which is the Depot of the Queen's Regiment,

where a posting box will be provided on the day.

Fully serviced covers are available at 5s each from:

The Philatelic Officer,
National Army Museum Building Fund,
HM Tower of London,
LONDON EC3.

In addition pre-addressed, pre-stamped envelopes received at the above address before 14 February will be cancelled with the special handstamp and returned to addressee.

The Flying Scotsman in USA



The Flying Scotsman came to the end of its tour in America when it drew into Union Station in Houston on 10 November after a memorable rail journey of over 2,000 miles.

However large the commercial achievements of the first Flying Scotsman tour add up to for the Post Office and other exhibitors, the train will have made unusual railway history. If, in later years, few people in the United Kingdom recall the event this will not be so in those States through which London and North Eastern Railways former crack engine No. 4472 whistled its way in October and November 1969.

The fact that its former regular speed of 100 miles an hour was reduced by half because of local security reasons in no way detracted from this revival of the steam era.

Whilst many people, some of necessity, had advance news of our passage many could not have known about our coming until the be-flagged exhibition train actually arrived. It whistled its way through both city suburbs and the cotton fields of the deep South alike. Every living thing stopped, looked and reacted – the people to wave, the steers to run and the dogs to dismiss us after their first curiosity.

The people of the 40,000 population town of Anniston, Alabama, today still largely of British stock, will remember the day of the 150th anniversary of the city's founding because on this 2 November they took part in a 'Steamorama' organized by their own Southern Railway to celebrate its 75th anniversary. The arrival of the Flying Scotsman from England to participate in the celebrations was one of the highlights of the event.

Perhaps the incident that the children – and perhaps the grown-ups as well – will remember most from the reception, speeches, dancing, pipe playing, etc. . . . will be the whistle fanfare which was played in turn by experts on all three of the veteran steam locomotives which had been brought together on parallel tracks at Anniston.

The 'Steamorama' was commemorated by the issue of a special cover which bore the Alabama 6c stamp.

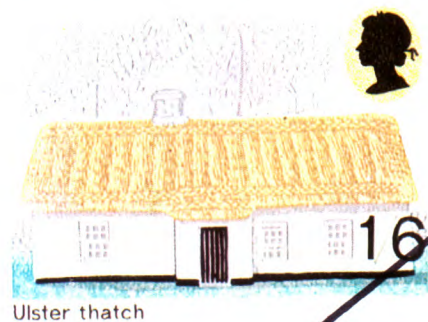
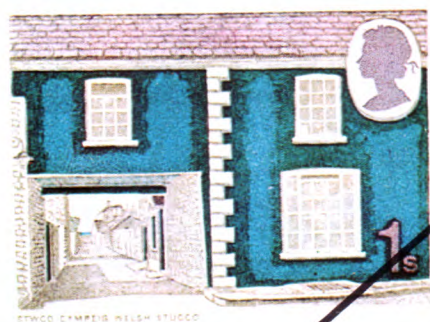
As a postscript to the very successful enterprise in which the Post Office played a large part we reproduce one of the covers carried by the train between London and Liverpool.

Robert Wallace – Postal Reformer

Our issue of August 1969 showed an alleged portrait of Robert Wallace. We were wrong and apologize for the error. To correct the record we now illustrate Robert Wallace, the postal reformer.



British Architecture Stamps



As a distinct change from the 1969 British Architecture stamps which showed cathedrals, the next issue on 11 February depicts specimens of rural architecture.

The set comprises four stamps 5d, 9d, 1s and 1s 6d. The first two were designed by David Gentleman and the 1s and 1s 6d by Sheila Robinson.

The 5d stamp shows an example of Fife harling which consists of rendering the surface with a light-coloured cement wash. This has the effect of emphasizing the darker stone around windows and doors.

The famous Cotswold stone is depicted on the 9d stamp which is based on houses in Bibury, Gloucestershire. Because limestone is used in almost all building in the whole area of

the Cotswolds a feeling of unity exists which links and blends together buildings of all periods. The limestone used splits easily into regular shapes and is consequently ideal for building purposes.

A town-house overlooking the harbour at Aberaeron in Wales is shown on the 1s stamp. The building principle is that of stucco which involves the laying of a rendering coat onto walls. When this is dry successive coats of mortar made of quicklime and sand are laid to the desired thickness.

An example of Irish cottages with Ulster thatching forms the design of the 1s 6d stamp. This type of thatching is the local equivalent of Norfolk reed and is completely waterproof. Bundles of straw are laid on the roof and

stitched with twine. Pegs or 'scollops' are then driven in to hold the thatch in position.

Presentation packs price 4s 8d each are available from the Bureau or from any Head Post Office.

Printing details

Printer : Harrison & Sons

Sizes : 5d 41 × 24mm

9d 41 × 24mm

1s 41 × 31mm

1s 6d 41 × 31mm

(all landscape)

Perforation : 15 × 14

No. to sheet : 5d 120

9d 120

1s 60

1s 6d 60

Colours : 5d Grey, yellow, brown/black, light grey, dark blue, light blue, green

9d Grey, light grey, yellow, brown/black, green

1s Grey, purple, light blue, dark blue

1s 6d Black, lilac, green, yellow

International Award for Post Office

Picture to Post, the Post Office's first wide-screen colour film, has won second prize in the Tenth International Industrial Film Festival in Berlin. The film, which also gained a silver award at the British Industrial Film Festival at Brighton in June, shows how postage stamps are designed and produced.

Picture to Post at the German festival faced competition from thirty other films produced by eleven other countries in its category of a 'prestige industrial film aimed at general audiences'.

Already plans are being made for it to be dubbed in other languages for release in Germany, Italy, Latin-America and Japan, supporting the Post Office's philatelic export drive.

Dear Sir,

Can any of your readers help? I would like information, hints, any ideas that would help to make our stamp club a success. At the present time all it could be called is a 'swap' club.

We are raising club funds by a monthly subscription and with this we buy stamps which we sell to members thus making more money for the club. We are also thinking of attempting an exhibition to try and encourage other collectors to join, and it would be greatly appreciated if any reader could give me some ideas on the best way to go about organizing an exhibition.

Yours faithfully,

R. S. MARSHALL

7 Swallow Road,

Ashby de la Launde, Lincoln

(Replies to Mr Marshall and NOT to me please – EDITOR)

Dear Sir,

I read with interest Mr Howard Emmen's letter in the November issue of the *Philatelic Bulletin*, concerning commemorative issues. I completely agree with his views on the sale of these issues and would like to see them displayed at the majority of Post Offices for at least the period of one month, and not as he pointed out for two hours! But I cannot say that I support his idea of having alternative stamps always on sale, which could be used instead of the new definitive series if this method was adopted; surely it would cause a certain amount of confusion among the public, who have now got used to the colours and nominations of the new definitives? Anyway I consider that our commemorative issues should be kept fairly unique, and not flooded on to the market for everyday use.

Finally a word of praise for the finest ever set of Christmas stamps to be issued. For once I can feel proud of the stamps which have been chosen, and I am sure many other readers will agree.

Yours faithfully,

ANTHONY PITCHERS

Bath, Somerset

How To Get Postmarks

Well, how does one? Of course philatelic material can often be sent under cover to Head Postmasters for re-posting – provided that the items concerned are within the regulations; and many serious collectors do not scorn such time-honoured sources as the office waste-paper basket. Another possibility which can give a collector an immense amount of fun is the old-fashioned postmark hunt taking the form of posting self-addressed letters at different places. However, disappointment may sometimes result from this, and readers might be interested to know something about the date-stamps which are likely to be used at various kinds of office with particular reference to their use – or not – on ordinary unregistered letters.

At the *smaller rural sub-office* there is usually one stamp only. This may be of the single-ring or double-ring pattern, and may or may not be used for postmarking ordinary letters. Generally, a sub-office which does not stamp correspondence posted there has a single-ring stamp; double-ring stamps are normally found at offices which do their own postmarking (with A and B and occasionally C to distinguish collections if there is more than one per day, otherwise a star). This is the general rule, but there are many exceptions, and single-ring stamps with A or B or star are often used on ordinary correspondence. The converse is also true; double-ring stamps are often found at offices where ordinary mail is not stamped.

At the *rather larger rural sub-offices* there is generally more than one stamp. Usually this is because it is not convenient to postmark a pile of letters which are due to go at a set time whilst irate customers are champing at the bit to buy their winning pools postal orders or cash their pensions – both of which important documents have to be impressed with a date-stamp. At offices such as these the (single-ring) counter date-stamp or stamps will normally have a star above the date, while the double-ringer kept for postmarking – and this may be visible or behind the scenes – will carry clock time plugs. There is very seldom more than one double-

ring stamp in a sub-office. Again there is no absolutely firm practice and all sorts of permutations occur. Rectangular rubber 'label' stamps for parcels are used when the number of posted parcels justifies them, and the same applies to round rubber packet stamps, but these are comparatively rare at sub-offices. Often they only appear at Christmas and these elusive marks make an interesting study.

All this is very well, but how is a casual visitor to weigh up whether a sub-office is due to stamp letters or not? On this, too, there is no hard and fast rule, and the basis varies from one Head Postmaster's District to another. In some cases every sub-office does its own stamping; in others virtually none do. The usual pattern is that it is restricted to offices from which a delivery is made, although strange to say it is not always the village postman who does the stamping! Many villages have no local delivery, the mail being delivered by the driver of a mail-van from a neighbouring town. However, one cardinal rule is that letters falling into a Sunday collection (and it must be remembered that the last clearance on a Saturday is often in the morning) never get stamped at the sub-office. The only sure way of finding whether stamping is due to be done or not is to enquire. When the answer is NO, it is as well to remember that to ask a sub-postmaster to break the rule is to invite him (a) to go against his instructions, and (b) to do something the Post Office does not pay him to do. Furthermore you, dear poster, because your letter would be collected with a bunch of uncanceled items, run the risk that it might be put through the Head Office cancelling machine and philatelically ruined!

Town sub-offices are a very different kettle of fish for the collector. Obviously they are in towns, and they can usually be recognized by the frequency and lateness of the collections from the posting box outside. A collection as late as 7.30 pm on Mondays to Fridays is an almost infallible clue; another is the designation of the box (e.g. NEWTOWN T.S.O.) as sometimes shown on the plate. Another pointer, not quite so reliable, is the arrangement of the

name of the office in the date-stamp, if you can get a glimpse of it. NEWTOWN, BLACKFORD/BLANKSHIRE (i.e. county standing alone at the bottom of the circle) will almost certainly be a T.S.O., whereas a stamp reading NEWTOWN/BLACKFORD, BLANKSHIRE (i.e. both post town and county at the bottom), although it may be a relic from a time when a slice of today's suburbia was still outside the confines of the town, usually indicates a rural office. The important feature of a T.S.O. is that it never clears its own letter-box or stamps its contents. Occasionally letter packets posted at a T.S.O. counter are stamped there, but this is not standard practice. In any case there is never an indication of time in a T.S.O. date-stamp, and such packets tend to get over stamped at the main office. Sometimes however at Christmas T.S.O.'s do exceptionally stamp packets and large letters handed in. Although not in a town area as such, those 'second offices in a village' – e.g. Hall Street, Soham, Ely, Cambs – function in the same way as T.S.O.'s as far as stamping is concerned. Stamps held at T.S.O.'s are almost invariably single ringers, such double-ring ones as there are either being heirlooms of a rural past (e.g. Chorley Wood, Rickmansworth, Herts) or oddities of more modern vintage (e.g. Albert Street, Aylesbury, Bucks; Albert Street, Slough, Bucks).

Crown Offices, i.e. offices operated by Post Office staff rather than agents, are only found in towns or very large villages, and here a much wider range of stamps is held, according to the size of the office and the amount of work done there. It is perhaps not always realized that an agency sub-office can have an address like EYE, Suffolk, or even MONTGOMERY, while a Crown Office, e.g. Swadlincote, BURTON-ON-TRENT, Staffs, or Holmfirth, HUDDERSFIELD, Yorkshire, can serve a place which is not a post town. In fact postal addresses and status of offices are two entirely different things. At Crown Offices there is always some stamping of ordinary letters, except at Branch Offices (usually indistinguishable as such from the window notice) which function rather as extensions, in

another part of the town, of the Head Office counter only. At Crown Offices the factor important to the collector is to what extent and when stamping is done. At the larger towns sailing is plain: they stamp at all times. At others, particularly in suburbs or localities closely adjoining other towns, arrangements vary widely. One common practice (e.g. Orpington, Kent) is for first-class letters collected on the earlier collections of the day – in the case quoted, up to 3.15 pm – to be stamped locally. All other letters are taken to the neighbouring Head Office (Bromley). Another common pattern is that the last collection at night (about 7.30 pm), plus perhaps all second-class letters, is concentrated on to a central point. Yet another practice (e.g. Stanmore, Middlesex) is the confinement of local stamping to those few letters posted at the main office box, say, before 9 am for delivery locally, and which would be delayed if they were not picked out and stamped on the spot. Otherwise all letters posted at Stanmore are stamped at Edgware. Thus to get a Stanmore postmark, one must somehow arrange to use an address which is local.

The foregoing gives an idea of some of the pitfalls which stand in the way of 100 per cent success with ordinary letters. But then, at least in the writer's opinion, this is where half the fun of collecting lies: 'If at first you don't succeed...'

Original article upon which the foregoing is based appeared in the Quarterly Bulletin of the British Postmark Society.

Special Handstamp

'25th Anniversary Reconquest of Burma Campaign BFPO 1201' will be used on 14 January 1970. It is circular and shows the crest of the 14th Army as a motif. A posting box will be available at Inglis Barracks, Mill Hill, NW7. Items for reposting should be sent to:

The Philatelic Officer,
The National Army Museum,
HM Tower of London,
LONDON EC3.

Articles and illustrations appearing in the *Bulletin* are the copyright of the Post Office. Requests to reproduce this material, which should be addressed to the Editor, Philatelic Bulletin, OOD/CSD, PO Headquarters, London EC1 will receive prompt and careful consideration. Annual subscription, 12 issues 7s 6d including postage by surface mail to anywhere in the world, or airmail to anywhere in Europe. For Air mail to countries outside Europe, subscription 25s 6d.

Subscriptions should be sent to the Philatelic Bureau, 2-4 Waterloo Place, EDINBURGH EH1 1AB

Printed in Great Britain by Westerham Press Ltd. for the Post Office, St. Martin's-le-Grand, LONDON EC1