
Philatelic Bulletin

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Editorial

When our 'Letters to the Editor' feature was started some years ago we hoped that it would be used as a forum for readers' views on all aspects of British philately. We try, whenever possible, to give contributors space in which they can air their views and do not object to those which contain constructive criticism. The November Bulletin included a letter which seemed to suggest that our special stamps were issued

almost entirely to raise money from philatelists. Our editorial comment sought to put the facts into perspective and to reassure the writer that there were many other reasons why such stamps are issued. Our postbag since has been full of replies from our readers. Most tend to agree that our policy is ethical and not designed to extort collectors, but a few remain unconvinced.

It would be foolish to deny that, in common with all other administrations, we are grateful for the revenue which accrues from the desire of collectors to buy our stamps, but we reiterate that this is not the specific reason for which they are issued.

It is a proven fact that the vast majority of our special stamps are used for postal purposes and show to the world both at home and abroad the various aspects of British life and culture depicted on them. No one knows with any accuracy how many mint stamps are bought by collectors but if it is assumed that about 5 million per issue ultimately find their way into albums, that still leaves about 70 million per issue from the total number sold which are postally used. We are happy to be judged on that record. It is unlikely that we have heard the last of this fascinating topic and will return to it later. In the meantime may we remind our readers that the policy under which our special stamps are issued was announced to Parliament in 1964 and is not treated lightly.

New 7p, 9p and 10½p "Country" Definitive Stamps

Three new 'Country' definitive postage stamps, details of which were announced with the December Bulletin, will be issued on 18 January 1978. The 7p and 9p stamp will be the same basic design and colour as the corresponding values in the UK range, i.e. red-brown and blue respectively. The 10½p stamp will also be in the same basic design but will be printed in steel-blue.

The stamps will bear the emblems of the countries as are shown on the current range.

Gems from the R M Phillips Collection

LII Imperf. from Alexandria



From time to time, throughout the whole period since perforations were introduced, an imperforate sheet or two of a normally perforated stamp has been put on sale by accident. Examples range from the Twopence line-engraved plate 5 (1855) to the 8½p Racket Sports commemorative of 1977.

This month's 'gem' (illustrated above) from the Reginald M Phillips' collection, is a used strip of four of the 1869 Sixpenny plate 5, imperforate. The stamps are cancelled by the 'BO1' handstamp of the British Post Office at Alexandria.

It will be noticed that the left-hand stamp in

this strip is lettered 'QA'; a second copy of this imperforate Sixpenny also lettered 'QA' is mounted on the same page in the Phillips' collection and this is also cancelled 'BO1'. This proves that more than one imperforate sheet was issued (at least two of which went to Alexandria).

It is perhaps also worth noting that, of the four plates prepared for the 1869-72 no-hyphen Sixpenny stamps, one (Plate 7) was defective and destroyed, and another (Plate 10) was registered but never used, while imperforate copies of both the two issued plates (8 and 9) were issued.

A G RIGO DE RIGHI

National Postal Museum Publications

Readers of the Bulletin who are unable to visit the National Postal Museum in London may be unaware of the variety of Museum publications that are currently available — items such as modestly-priced booklets on postal history or philatelic themes, and postcards of philatelic interest.

Among the most popular of the booklets — particularly in this Silver Jubilee year — is **The Stamp of Royalty**, a profusely illustrated (75 plates in colour study of British Com-

memorative stamps issued to celebrate six Royal events between 1935 and 1972 (price 95p). A close runner-up in popularity with our American visitors is **350 Years of Anglo-American postal links**, a short, illustrated account of the development of Trans-Atlantic mail services since 1620 (25p). Another popular booklet on postal history — particularly so this year, the 50th Anniversary of the Post Office (London) Railway, is **Railways and the Post**, an illustrated history of the long and close

connection between the Post Office and the Railways (tracing the evolution of the locomotive) from 1830 when mail was first carried by rail, with chapters on the Post Office's own Travelling Post Office service and underground (London) railway (30p). Another popular booklet with a transport theme is **Britain's Pioneer Airmails**, an illustrated study covering the dawn of aerial posts (the experimental balloon posts from 1784 and the first official British airmail service in 1911) and their subsequent development, closing with Hovercraft mail of the early 1960s (35p). And those wishing to begin a thematic collection would find very useful **Ships on Stamps**, an illustrated thematic study of postage stamps whose design features ships and boats of all kinds tracing the evolution of this form of transport from the sailing ships of the ancient world to modern vessels or war (15p). Another useful booklet, for the collector of both British and overseas issues, is **Postage Stamps of De La Rue**, an illustrated study of the century long connection of Messrs Thomas De La Rue, security printers, with the design and production of British and other postage stamps from 1855 to 1955; it also includes a most useful list, with dates, of the countries to whom De La Rue supplied stamps during this period (45p). Last, but by no means least, is **The Reginald M Phillips Collection of 19th century British postage stamps**, a short but profusely illustrated account of the Phillips Collection by Marcus Arman (25p). And, still available but now in very short supply at the original price (£3.75), Robson Lowe's **The British Postage Stamp of the 19th century**; hard-back, 272 pages and indexed, and profusely illustrated (192 plates in colour), this is surely a must for the bookshelf of every collector of early British issues.

The collecting of postcards is, of course, quickly growing in popularity as a hobby in its own right — and high on the list of every serious postcard collector is surely the series of postcards published by the Museum featuring gems of the Phillips' Collection and personalities connected

with the story traced by the Collection; the quality of reproduction is superb and these five sets of cards are well worth collecting in their right (6 cards per set, price 25p a set).

For visitors to the Museum all these items are, of course, available direct from the Museum's sales counter — but *orders by post* should be addressed to:

The British Philatelic Bureau, Lothian House,
124 Lothian Road, EDINBURGH EH3 9BB.

Forces Covers

35th Anniversary of the Attack by Human Torpedoes on Palermo Harbour 3rd Jan 1943

A cover will be produced by the Royal Navy to commemorate the above event when five chariots each with a crew of two attacked enemy ships in Palermo Harbour. They were carried and launched by the submarines *Trooper* and *Thunderbolt* outside the harbour who then withdrew leaving HMS/m *Unruffled* to act as recovery ship. Two chariots penetrated the harbour defences and laid charges which sank one new cruiser and severely damaged the liner *Viminale*. The chariots' crews were taken prisoner.

The covers, cancelled with BFPS 1500 hand-stamp, will portray the action showing the chariots and the crest of HMS/m *Thunderbolt*.

Covers signed by:—

Captain J S Stevens DSO DSC RN
(Captain HMS/m *Unruffled*)

Captain G M Sladen DSO DSC RN (Ret)
(Operation Organiser)
and bearing a 10p stamp are available at
£1.67.

Captain G M Sladen only and bearing a 9p stamp will cost 87p.

Unsigned and bearing an 8½p stamp are 40p each.

Applications for covers, and cheques together with stamped addressed envelope approx. 7"×5" must be sent to Fleet Air Arm Museum RNAS Yeovilton, Somerset BA22 8HT.

British Special Stamps

38. Opening of the Post Office Tower, 1965

From a distance of 12 miles or so, the slender Post Office Tower in London is reduced to the scale of a pin with a bulbous head, rising above the haze which invariably clothes the metropolis. In its immediate vicinity it dominates the environment and one is impressed not only by its height, but also by its substantial girth.

Completed at a cost of more than £1 million and heralded as London's tallest building — it rises to 620 feet including the 40-foot aerial on top — the Tower became operational towards the end of 1965, and the two commemorative stamps were issued on 8 October that year. Fundamentally a nucleus of telecommunications, providing additional long-distance telephone circuits and television channels, it also has a first-class revolving restaurant — a complete revolution takes one hour, I believe — and a public observation platform, both contained within the head of the 'pin'.

The stamps, a 3d in vertical format and a 1s3d in a horizontal arrangement, were both designed by Clive Abbott, his first stamps though he had previously designed greetings telegrams for the Post Office, and has since notched up many designs for British and Commonwealth stamps. Born in 1933, he studied at Wimbledon Art School and later became an art director in a London advertising agency. He is married to the eldest daughter of the late Sid Field, the comedian, and has two daughters.

In both formats, the designer showed the 'Tower of Babel' (as it was nicknamed by the Press) full-length in vertical panels which emphasised its height, flanked, on the 3d, by 'Georgian-type buildings which are a feature of the vicinity' and, on the 1s3d, by the splendid curve of the 'Nash' terrace at Regent's Park, actually Park Crescent. For the first time the names of both the designer and printers were shown in the form of imprints at the foot of the stamps — this became a regular feature for many later issues.

The Post Office Tower was first opened to the public on 19 May 1966, some seven months after the official inauguration, and the stamps were given a new lease of life, being issued at the



Tower Post Office in blocks of four of the 3d and pairs of the 1s3d from automatic vending machines which also dispensed packs. These continued to be available to visitors after the stamps were withdrawn from general sale on 30 June 1966, and later, phosphor-banded stamps replaced the ordinary issues.

The stamps were photogravure-printed by Harrison and Sons in sheets of 120 (3d — 20×6, 1s3d — 6×20) on ordinary and phosphor-banded paper, watermark multiple crowns (sideways on the 3d). They are inscribed simply 'POST OFFICE TOWER' and show the Wilding portrait of the Queen in the adjoining vertical panels to the main design. The colours were olive-yellow, new blue and bronze-green for the 3d, and bronze-green, yellow-green and blue for the 1s3d.

The 3d (ordinary) stamp is known with the olive-yellow colour (the tower) omitted, while the most prominent of the minor constant flaws, an 'extra window' at the base of the tower, may be found on both ordinary and phosphor versions of the 3d. Also, both types of the 1s3d are recorded with the watermark inverted.

Quantities issues, which (recorded in Gibbons' *Specialised Catalogue*) are presumed to include 'tower' stocks (phosphor in brackets) were: 3d 51,291,120 (4,274,880); 1s3d 5,722,320 (1,107,480).

JAMES WATSON

British Stamps—A Personal View

Before one can assess what makes a 'good' stamp criteria of excellence must be established. That sounds almost too easy, for at the grass roots the soil from which stamps spring is purely functional. They have a work-a-day job to do and if the revenue of the issuing authorities is not to suffer they must do that job effectively. Having said that it soon becomes clear that a far more detailed definition of the task of a postage stamp is needed.

The little sticky-backed labels we call stamps are in fact tokens — we buy them in advance for services not yet rendered. They only begin to fulfil their mission when they have been stuck on a letter and that letter has been 'posted', i.e. entrusted to the Post Office for transmission to the addressee. Stamps represent money and are therefore security documents and proper to be treated as such. There is no very great danger of fraudulent postage stamps being made today because modern stamp production methods demand the use of very large and complicated plant. It was not always so, however, and in the 19th century the authorities showed an almost pathological fear lest the revenue should be cheated by the production of forged stamps. Perhaps the biggest risk today is in the international post, for phoney stamps from abroad would be almost impossible to detect once they had travelled beyond the country of issue. There are so many varieties in use that no one could distinguish between the true and the false.

In designing stamps regard must be paid to the fact that they have to adhere to a wide range of surfaces and that envelopes come in different sizes, whereas parcels and packets have odd shapes. The size of stamps is therefore important. A stamp which obscures the address would be useless. It is also important to remember that stamps have to be read — they have to communicate FACTS. They tell both the poster and Post Office officials whether or not the letter has been properly pre-paid. To facilitate value recognition both for Post Office purposes and for the convenience of customers the distinctive colouring of stamps of different values has obvious attractions. Even this is not

simple for the colour differences must be plainly recognised both by day and artificial light. Moreover the chosen colours must not upset the operation of photo-electric cells which operate the sophisticated machines which are being increasingly introduced into Sorting Offices all over the world. Colour choice becomes therefore a matter for scientists as well as artist designers. The British Post Office a few years ago obtained advice on this complicated matter from a Cambridge team of scientists, psychologists, and lay assessors. But however good the colour scheme, values must also be indicated in money terms as conventionally expressed — e.g. 10p — and then because stamps are used for overseas mail an indication of the country of origin is necessary. In most cases this is printed on the stamp itself: Malta, Magyar, or Republique Française are examples. The exception is the United Kingdom, for as Britain was the first country in the world to use postage stamps and they always bear the Sovereign's portrait, that portrait in itself is accepted internationally as evidence of the stamp's origin.

The requirements so far mentioned are all purely functional and before looking at aesthetic and other matters it is perhaps desirable to summarise them. They are:—

- (1) Postage stamps are security documents.
- (2) They are accountable.
- (3) They must stick on a variety of surfaces.
- (4) They must be of convenient size.
- (5) They must be recognisable values.
- (6) They must be photo-electric cell sensitive.
- (7) They must indicate the country of origin.

Provided that these functional requirements have been met the designer has to decide what should appear on the surface of the stamp. As I see it the iconographic principles which ideally govern the pictorial content of stamps are singularly restrictive. There is an enormous gulf between an officially issued postage stamp and, for instance, a trading stamp. For the officially issued postage stamp must surely have an unmistakable dignity and this is particularly true about British stamps which bear the portrait of the Sovereign by which they enjoy world-wide

recognition. The current series of G.B. definitives which give maximum prominence to the Arnold Machin head of Queen Elizabeth II plus the functionally necessary denomination of the stamp, seems to fulfil all the criteria on which the design of a stamp should be judged: that it is a postage stamp, officially issued, of a certain value indicated conventionally and by colour, and that it is a British stamp is plain for all to see. Its purpose and message are unequivocal. Nothing more would be necessary were it practicable to ignore anything other than purely functional considerations. Artists often refer to the canvas or boards on which they produce pictures as the SUPPORT and even the most casual observer must see that the postage stamps of Great Britain, in common with those of most other countries, are required to support burdens much more than necessity demands. And there's the rub, for 'good' stamps on a strict application of the criteria I have suggested are very rare.

The truth of this is demonstrable: one has only to look at a cross-section of the stamps issued throughout the world in a single month to see how far many of them fall below reasonable standards. What has given rise to the malaise in stamp design is that new issues help to make money and add to postal revenues. It all began in the toy principalities of Europe, one of which boasts that 20% of the entire revenue of the State is derived from stamp sales, and the idea spread with epidemic intensity all over the world. The result is that some 5,000 new stamps are issued every year and it stands to reason that they are not all well conceived. Whereas, on purist grounds the case for special issues may be arguable, there are some economic justifications for continuing the present policy, and it is within that framework that I now propose to identify some design considerations which I believe could usefully be re-examined.

It is I suggest disconcerting when the message of a special stamp issue is not instantly obvious to the user and to the recipient of the communication to which it is affixed. Moreover the primary vehicle for communicating that message

is the very small pictorial device, whatever it may be, which occupies all but a tiny fraction of the stamp's surface. Any caption which must be in tiny print is surely an admission that the particular picture is an inadequate message carrier which needs a prop. Even less happy are the occasions, and there have been many of them, where the stamp picture subject requires a Press release of a full foolscap page of typescript to 'explain' what it's all about. There is patently a confusion here between book (or article) illustration and pictorial matter which can communicate effectively without literary support.

Next comes the George Stubbs, Thomas Lawrence, W H M Turner school of stamp 'design'. If these British Old Masters could but see the 'stamps' they are credited with, they would be astonished at the technical virtuosity of Harrisons printing and furious at the violence done to the scale of their works. We really ought to face up to the fact that these famous pictures, lovely as they are were produced the size they really are — not by accident or arbitrary whim but by the artist's deliberate design. They were never intended to be used as postage stamps on which could be pasted the Queen's head in profile and likewise the inevitable 9p. If the reader doubts the validity of these contentions I suggest that he takes an 8p Turner stamp of THE ARSENAL VENICE and compares it with the original in the Tate Gallery.

Another hazard for stamp designers is the temptation to use them as a miniature advertising hoarding in the National Interest: maybe to attract tourists to our shores or to help the sale of British goods overseas or simply to show our prowess in sport or architecture. These are not in themselves unworthy objectives but it does not follow that on what after all is a tiny piece of paper the idea one seeks to pass on to other people can be successfully communicated in this particular way. Not all ideas can be expressed in graphic terms.

Finally. A British Stamp is a British Stamp, is a British Stamp. It must be functional, dignified, worthy of Her Majesty and say plainly what it is intended to say.

F MARCUS ARMAN

Energy Special Stamp Issue 25 January 1978

Energy, represented by oil, coal, gas or electricity, and taken so much for granted, is in danger of running out. The problem is world-wide, and those responsible for providing energy are more than aware of the necessity to find other sources of supply. To remind us all of the need to use energy as efficiently as possible, the Post Office will issue a set of four special postage stamps depicting an oil rig, a pit head, a gas flame and a nuclear power station. The denominations are 9p, 10½p, 11p and 13p.

Values and Colours

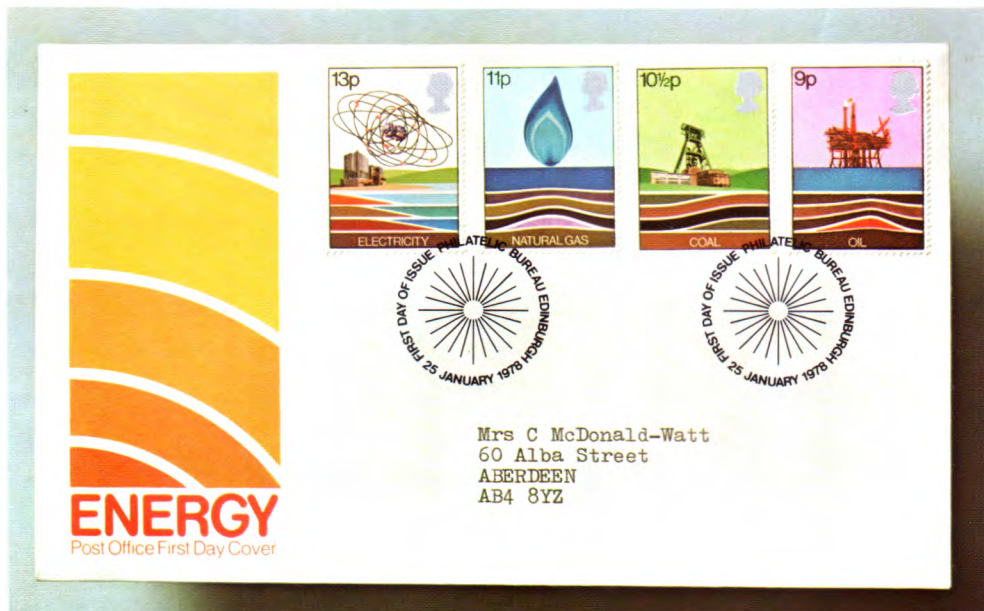
9p:	weak rosine, red-brown, new blue, orange-vermillion, lemon, black, silver.
10½p:	apple green, light green, chestnut, brown-olive, black, silver.
11p:	weak new blue, dull ultra-marine, bright reddish-violet, brown-olive, black, silver.
13p:	chocolate, light brown, greenish-yellow, vermillion, new blue, black, silver.

Printing Details

Designer:	Peter Murdoch FSIAD
Printer:	Harrison & Sons Ltd
Process:	Photogravure
Format:	Vertical
Size:	30×41 mm
Perforation:	14×15
Paper:	Coated unwatermarked
Phosphor:	All over
Adhesive:	PVA Dextrin
Sheet No:	100

Postcards

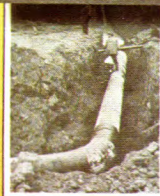
Postcard reproduction of each of the four 'Energy' stamps will be available by early January from the Philatelic Bureau, all philatelic counters, and selected main Post Offices, price 7p each.





ENERGY

British Post Office Mint Stamps



Gas pipes being laid on Sugar Loaf Mountain — Wales
and the scene one year later



Drilling from a rig off the Shetland Islands



The History and Redevelopment of Britain's Major Sources of Energy

Oil

Natural gas in the North Sea comes largely from coal-bearing beds but the spectacular finds encouraged the oil companies to search on for oil bearing rocks further north. Conditions for drilling were extremely difficult in some of the worst weather areas of the world but in 1970 Philipps in the Norwegian sector struck oil on a grand scale, when they discovered the gigantic Ekofisk field. Rigs from all parts of the globe were hastily moved up to this sector and at an enormous cost of over £2 million a time exploratory wells were sunk. Then in 1970 BP found a massive field in the British sector, north east of Aberdeen, known as the Forties field, and this was followed shortly after by Shell—Esso discovering the Brent field, north east of the Shetlands. By 1973 over £1,500 million had been spent on exploration and development, proving this to be one of the world's major fields.

Just over two years ago Her Majesty the Queen ceremonially opened the pipeline bringing ashore the first supplies. The eight fields are now contributing 860,000 barrels daily which represents £7 million in sales going back to the oil companies. The proven reserves are 2.3 billion tons, with an estimated further 2.2 billion tons, making the UK the 13th oil producing nation in the world. Estimates suggest a production of 150 million tons per annum by 1982 by which time we will be self sufficient in oil. How long it *lasts*, however, is a political decision. It will be determined by the rate of exploitation.

Coal

The British have used coal for hundreds of years but in early days there was no need for mining — the women and children of the Northumberland coast, the main area used for this purpose, merely had to pick the coal off the beach where waves had broken down out-crops of the black rock. By 1228 this 'sea' coal was being shipped down to London and surface deposits were already becoming exhausted. Shafts had to be dug to reach the rich lower seams. However, on digging deeper not only coal but damp, foul air,

flooding, and explosive methane gas were found. From here onwards the story of British mining is one of bravery and endurance on the part of the miners and skill and inventiveness from the engineers who ventilated and drained the shafts using first muscle and horsepower, then steam and finally electricity. Britain's vast supplies of coal became the basis of the Industrial Revolution providing the heat that drove the steam, and the coke that fired the furnaces that combined to make Britain the world's leading industrial nation. Since 1913 however and a peak production of 287 million tons there has been a gradual rundown to today's annual production of 120 million tons. Between 1947 and 1971 the number of collieries plummeted from 958 to 292, and the number of workers from 707,500 to 286,300. Competition from other fuels, specially oil, and increasing mechanisation account for this. However, future prospect are excellent. As supplies of oil dwindle the miners at the proposed collieries of Selby and Belvoir will only be scratching away at the vast reserves of untouched coal dipping eastwards under the English countryside. Conditions will be safer and electronic mining will herald a new era of the miner.

Gas

At one time, no industrial townscape was complete without its gas holder, slowly rising and falling as the coal gas was pumped into or out of it. Nearby the gas works would roast vast supplies of low grade coal in closed retorts, catch the streams of gas that emitted and pump them off for use in house, factory and street. Nowadays it is quite different. After a courageous decision by the Gas Council in 1967 to convert virtually every household and factory in Britain to 'natural' gas we are now tapping the methane rich fields of the North Sea. The new gas is cleaner, safer, and more controllable and burns with twice the heat of old coal gas. Ironically the Gas Council are obliged to put a smell into it so that we can detect its presence.

After the Geneva Conference of 1958 the North Sea was parcelled into blocks with the

bordering countries receiving appropriate shares. This was just in time, for the discovery of an enormous field at Groningen, Netherlands, in 1959 suggested to the oil companies that geologically similar strata under the North Sea might also contain gas. It did. In 1965 BP discovered the West Sole field, and in 1966 Shell Esso discovered the Leman Bank. By 1967 four major fields had been discovered and were being linked to a pipeline system based in Great Yarmouth and Canvey Island. Reserves are enormous and should last well into the foreseeable future. The Gas Council's gamble has paid off.

Electricity

Coal and petroleum, already discussed above, are the major fuels used to generate electricity in Britain. The power they produce is shared out through a Supergrid by cables capable of transmitting 400 kilovolts. Nuclear fission and hydro electric power are the other main sources of energy used today, together accounting for ten per cent of our power needs.

Hydro electric power is centred on the mountainous areas of North Wales, the Lake District, and the Scottish Highlands where there are natural rock basins for reservoirs and some of the wettest weather in Britain to keep them topped up. Water is cheap and clean and, above all in these conservation conscious times, can be

recycled. The North of Scotland Hydro Electricity Board was set up in 1943 and has been responsible for injecting new life into this depressed rural area, particularly by providing cheap electricity to scattered isolated crofts, and to the big aluminium smelters at Kinlochleven. However, all the power produced in the Scottish Highlands cannot match the output of just one of the large coal powered stations such as West Burton.

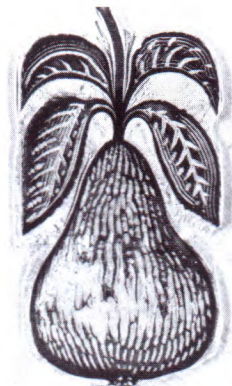
The possibilities of using the heat from the controlled nuclear fission or uranium to drive conventional steam turbines led British energy planners to build eleven nuclear power stations by the end of the sixties, and plans for at least six more using uranium oxide in the seventies. Their vast consumption of water has pushed them out to the far corners of Britain's coastline to places as remote as lonely Wylfa on Anglesey. However, this distribution also reflects on many critics fears of this new power source. They point to the new stations such as Dounreay and its deadly harvest of plutonium, stating that its potency survives for thousands of years no matter how many coffins of lead and concrete we bury it in. Yet the champions of nuclear power point to the efficiency of fast breeder reactors as a cheap and long lasting power source, especially as fossil fuels are running out. All sides of the argument await with interest the outcome of such enquiries as that held recently at Windscale.

Wood Engraving

Stamp designers, according to their skills, use varying techniques to create the accepted designs of a particular stamp issue. The Christmas stamps for 1977, designed by David Gentleman illustrating the song, 'Twelve Days of Christmas', is an excellent example of artistry and craftsmanship. The final artwork from which the stamps were printed is made up of prints from wood engravings. The black parts of an image are printed from the surface of the block; the

white parts have been engraved away. Although these prints are sometimes loosely called woodcuts, there is a difference.

Pictures printed from woodcuts existed in medieval times, even before moveable type, when the design was cut on a piece of soft wood along its grain and the result appeared in relief. Fine detail was, to some extent, limited by the texture of the wood and also by the further limitations of the cutting knives. Wood



A selection of wood engravings used to make up the artwork for the Christmas stamps



The block showing the partridge together with a 'pull'.

engraving which is incised, really came into its own from the early nineteenth century with the use of box wood, an extremely heavy and hard wood of exceptionally fine grain. The design to be illustrated is engraved on the end grain with instruments known as gravers, scorers and occasionally multiple tools with teeth which enable several lines of a fine nature to be engraved at the same time. Wood engravings have not the coarseness of some woodcuts, and it is possible therefore to obtain subtle tonal effects.

The most famous British engraver was Thomas Bewick, who developed the medium to perfection with his, 'History of British Birds'. The twentieth century has produced some fine engravers, among them the late Eric Gill, himself a stamp designer.

David Gentleman, who works in a light and

airy studio not far from London's Regents Park, makes his own proofs from his wood engravings, on a small mid-19th century table model 'Albion' press. This is convenient for the artist; alterations to the block are usually necessary after the first proof; these can be done immediately and the block reproofed. Black proofing ink is rolled onto the block — by means of a plastic or gelatine-coated roller — and a sheet of paper placed onto the inked surface. Block and paper are then slid into the press where an all-over pressure, by a hand lever, applied. By this means the image is transferred to the paper.

The subjects of the Christmas stamps give the impression of very simple prints; this is intentional because of the simplicity of the Christmas song itself. In fact, to achieve these results, skill, expertise and patience are necessary.

British Wildlife

A portfolio of five lithographic prints, made from Patrick Oxenham's original paintings of animals for this issue of stamps, has been published by:—

All Seasons Publishing
11-13 Broad Court
Covent Garden
LONDON
WC2B 5QZ
Price £12.88

The portfolio also includes descriptive notes by Sir Peter Scott, in aid of the World Wildlife Fund. The artist has signed 850 sets which are also available at £50 per set.

This is the first time that paintings commissioned specially for stamps have been reproduced as frameable prints. The paintings have been printed four times stamp size, i.e. 160×120 mm, and each print measures overall 350×270 mm.



Stamps for Pleasure 12. Fair Ladies

My theme this month was inspired by a (repeat!) television showing of the film based on Shaw's 'Pygmalion', featuring the suave Professor Higgins and his efforts, phonetically speaking, to transform Eliza Doolittle, the Cockney flower-seller, into 'a person possessing the refinements of speech proper to a duchess'.

'Ladies on Stamps' is a perfectly feasible theme — it embraces royalty, Christmas nativity scenes, celebrities and prominent characters in literature and the arts, as well as nurses, a housewife and a Salvation Army lass. One has to be selective of course. The same profile of Queen Victoria was used on all the British stamps issued throughout her reign, yet she can be represented in our collection in modern style — no need to spend pounds on a Penny Black or any of the other rather expensive Victorian stamps! Here

are my suggestions — Gibbons' catalogue numbers quoted for easy reference.

So let's start with the 'Royals', and with page 1 exclusive to Queen Victoria. The three stamps I have in mind were issued for the 'Philympia 70' Stamp Exhibition (835/7): they show the 1d black of 1840, the embossed 1s green of 1847 and the lovely 4d carmine, first of the surface-printed issues, of 1855. Just a little ingenuity is needed to complete the page — a short biography of the Queen, perhaps, a picture-postcard portrait or any appropriate item of printed ephemera. The stamp profile was based on William Wyon's City Medal of 1837.

Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother, has been depicted on three British stamps, all from photographs by Dorothy Wilding. The first of these was the 1½d stamp issued for the

Coronation of King George VI (461), designed by Edmund Dulac, the second and third were the two stamps, 2½d and £1 (493/4), designed by G T Knipe and Joan Hassall respectively, for the Royal Silver Wedding in 1948, again from photographs by Dorothy Wilding. Joan Hassall, by the way, was Britain's first woman to design a postage stamp — she was the daughter of John Hassall, the poster artist.

There are two basic stamp portraits of our present Queen (excluding the contemporary small-size silhouettes), and my 'Queen Elizabeth II' page would start with Dulac's superb 1s 3d Coronation stamp of 1953 (534), followed by examples of the first 'Wilding' definitives in the five main types of frame (570, etc. or the phosphors, 610 on), a short selection of the 'Machin' heads (841 etc.) with one of the current large-size high values (1026), and including the Silver Wedding issue (916/7) and one or all of the Silver Jubilee stamps showing new profile of the Queen. The Royal Wedding picture of Princess Anne and Captain Mark Phillips would nicely complete the page.

The choice of nativity scenes, children with toys and angels depicted on the various Christmas issues from 1967 onwards is a matter of personal preference, but I would certainly include Murillo's beautiful 'Madonna and Child' on the 4d stamp of the 1967 series. The original painting is located in Amsterdam's Rijksmuseum (757).

Other paintings whose subjects merit inclusion are the portraits of 'Queen Elizabeth I' by an unknown artist (771), 'Pinkie' by Sir Thomas Lawrence, 1769-1830 (772), 'Nelly O'Brien' by Sir Joshua Reynolds, 1723-92 (933) and, though not a painting, the 'Prison Bars' stamp for Elizabeth Fry in the 'Social Reformers' series of 1976 (1004), drawn by David Gentleman. Elizabeth Fry, 1780-1845, a Quaker, devoted her life to prison reform.

'Ladies in literature' include Juliet in William Shakespeare's 'Romeo and Juliet' (648), the Charles Dickens' characters, Mrs Micawber and Betsy Trotwood, both from 'David Copperfield' and sketched by Rosalind Dease (825/6), and,

from the novels of Jane Austen, 1775-1817, Emma and Mr Woodhouse ('Emma'), Catherine Morland ('Northanger Abbey') and Mary and Henry Crawford ('Mansfield Park') (989, etc.), drawn for the stamps by Barbara Brown.

Next, two celebrities — Emmeline Pankhurst and the almost legendary Florence Nightingale. Mrs Pankhurst, 1854-1928 (768), was imprisoned several times for her militant feminist activities to secure 'votes for women'. She founded the suffragette movement. Florence Nightingale, 1820-1910 (820), took a team of nurses to the Crimea in 1854 and, on her return, founded a training college for nurses at St Thomas's. Nurses also appear on the 'British Legion' stamp (887) and on one of the 'Telephone Centenary' issues (999), along with the housewife (997). You'll find the uniformed Salvationist on the centenary 1s 6d stamp of 1965 (666), and a Welsh lady harpist on the 13p 'Cultural Traditions' stamp (1013).

JAMES WATSON

The Thematic Collector

Sir David Wilkie RA was buried on 1 June 1841 and not 1840 as quoted in the November Bulletin.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Sir

May I add my voice to the excellent tribute paid by your Bulletin to the late Mr Reginald M Phillips. He has given pleasure to many people and by donating his unique collection to the Nation has in a way achieved every philatelists dream, to have the efforts of a lifetime preserved somehow. So often, after one's death, a treasured collection is 'strewn to the wind', as it were and might as well not have existed, when sold off in job lots at auction. At least one man has had the foresight to preserve his endeavours and leave a memorial that transcends monetary gain.

Yours faithfully

Wigston, Leicester

T F ESSINGER

Dear Sir

I would not support Mr Wadsworth's strictures on issuing policy of commemorative stamps. I am quite happy with things as they are.

However, after reading Mr Finlay's article I spent some while trying to decide why the 1978 issues were chosen and which of the four criteria each issue satisfied. The Coronation issue is obvious but what of the others. Historic buildings scrapes in under three and perhaps, four. But cycling and horses? Hardly of national or international importance; I fail to see how they can be anniversaries or a particularly British contribution to anything. So perhaps they must rely on satisfying the fourth criterion — we must wait and see!

Yours faithfully

Sittingbourne, Kent

WILLIAM HILL

Editor's Note

The Horses issue celebrates the centenary year of the Shire Horse Society and the Cycling stamps coincide with the centenary year of the Cyclists Touring Club and the British Cycling Federation.

Special Handstamps

Unless otherwise stated, items for reposting should bear $\frac{1}{2}p$ in excess of the normal postage and should be sent to the Head Postmaster of the town where the special posting box is located or the relevant District Postmaster in London marking the outer cover 'Special Handstamp'.

5-15 January 1978 (P/C)

British Olympic Yachting International Boat Show London SW5. Special posting box at The British Olympic Yachting Appeal Stand, International Boat Show, Earls Court, London SW5.

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'.

3 January-28 October 1978

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

3 January-28 October 1978

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

9 January-4 February 1978

Operation Gatepost Help Emergency and Public Services put a Number on Your Gate. To be used at Derby. 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.

28 November — until further notice

Norwich is a Mechanised Letter Office Please Use Postcodes. To be used at Norwich.

1 December 1977-31 March 1978 (P)

Great Yarmouth Wish You Were Here. To be used at Great Yarmouth. 1st class machine to be used for full period. 2nd class from 1st-21st December 1977.

5 December 1977-3 June 1978 (P)

Skegness Hoteliers Association Skegness Passport to Pleasure. To be used at Skegness. 2nd class.

23 December 1977-28 April 1978 (P)

The Fermoy Centre The Best in Music Drama Films and Art. To be used at Kings Lynn. 2nd class.

Repeat Campaign

27 December 1977-13 April 1978

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

P denotes Pictorial
C denotes Circular
O denotes Oval

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