

Philatelic Bulletin

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Year of the Child Postmarking Facilities

Stourbridge, West Midlands, will be a first day of issue office for the Year of the Child stamp on 18 July 1979 only. Items for reposting should be sent to the Head Postmaster, Stourbridge, West Midlands DY8 1DJ.

Editorial

One hundred years ago next month Sir Rowland Hill died and was accorded as a last great honour, a resting place in Westminster Abbey. The enquiring mind may, justifiably, ask, why?

Hill was a visionary and a man of persistence. It was during the first half of the 19th century that he and a group of like-minded men saw the need to reform the postal service of this country, and try to persuade the government of the day that a system could be evolved enabling everyone the opportunity of using the service at a price they could afford.

Hill's proposals were not immediately accepted by the establishment, on the contrary he had to face much criticism and many disappointments before his revolutionary 'penny post' received the royal assent on 17 August 1839 from the young Queen Victoria.

Penny postage would begin on 10 January 1840.

At last an end came to the charge according to the number of sheets of paper posted: a letter weighing $\frac{1}{2}$ ounce 'may be sent from any part of the United Kingdom to any other part for one penny if paid when posted'.

The flood gates were opened and for the first time in our history — soon to be introduced in other countries — a new interchange of words was possible and a more acceptable form of communication had begun.

It behoves us at this time to pause and consider the man whose name is synonymous with postal reform — Sir Rowland Hill.

We have a month to reflect upon all the changes — which Rowland Hill unwittingly started — until the August Bulletin which will feature the stamps issued to commemorate the great man's death.

The Postcard Story

4. Cards for all Seasons

Since Victorian times the traditional greetings card has turned full circle. A hundred years ago the manufacturer and stationers vied with each other to design and produce the most appealing and attractive cards for Christmas, Easter and the New Year, for St Valentine's Day and for birthdays. They ranged from the dainty, simple card with a short, sentimental verse or greeting to the elaborate, folded concoction with embossing, illuminated lettering, cut-out novelties and cut-to-shape embellishments (such as hand-mirrors and 'stand-up' figures) or trimmed with delicate overlays of paper-lace. Some were hand-painted, others were in the form of booklets, lavishly beribboned with verses from a complete poem on each page. Most, if not all, required an envelope for transit through the post.

After World War I, the folded greetings card (as we know it today) came into vogue again, following the period of about 20 to 25 years when greetings were conveyed — by the hundreds of millions — in the form of 'open' picture postcards. Only the birthday greetings postcards continued in use throughout the 1920s and well into the 1930s; invariably these were the glossy, deckle-edged, coloured cards depicting flowers, birds on the bough, cottages and rural scenes, pretty ladies and children.

Virtually the first greetings postcards originated on the Continent about 1880, ten years after the introduction of the official postcard in Britain. They were published initially in Germany and Austria (the innovators), later in Switzerland and Italy, Belgium and Luxembourg, France and, on a smaller scale, in other countries. At first the pictures comprised small, line-drawn sketches of towns and holiday resorts, usually without formal greetings, but in the 1890s these became beautifully-printed, chromolithographed vignetted pictures and 'multi-views' (several little scenes on the one card) with elaborate lettering and decoration, all inscribed 'Gruss aus' ('Greetings from') or the French equivalent, 'Souvenir de', with the name of the town or resort. Visitors in their hundreds of thousands bought these cards and sent them home or kept them as souvenirs — they were the

first 'holiday postcards', and I described them in greater detail in my second article, 'The First Picture Postcards'.

In Britain the advent of the birthday and seasonal greetings postcards, as well as the 'topographicals' (views), comics, art studies and other categories, came with the long-denied Post Office consent to the 'standard' size of picture card which had been adopted years previously by the Continental publishers, $5\frac{1}{2} \times 3\frac{1}{2}$ inches, effective from November 1899. Thus began the flood of picture postcards which triggered off the Edwardian collecting craze and which reached its peak at about 1914, upon the outbreak of World War I.

Christmas and New Year cards were printed and published in infinite variety — all the usual themes were employed in their designs: Father Christmas ('Santa Claus' on American cards), robin redbreasts, Christmas angels, children and toys, snow-men and winter scenes (trees glittering with artificial 'frost'), carols and carol-singers, and the Nativity, while for the New Year there were cards giving prominence to the year in large figures, ornate clocks with the hands approaching 12 o'clock and joyous bells. Often the Christmas and New Year greetings were combined, and some publishers simply overprinted their ordinary view-cards with seasonal greetings and/or embossed sprigs of holly and mistletoe. Many cards were elaborately embossed, gilded, silvered and jewelled or tinselled, and there were novelty 'hold-to-light' cards which illuminated cottage windows and the moon when held in front of a lamp.

Easter cards usually had a more religious fervour and design, invariably with a prominent cross and Easter lilies or sprays of lily of the valley, though many pictured Easter eggs, chicks and rabbits. As with most 'period' greetings cards, the excellence of the design and the superior quality of the printing, has a greater attraction than the subject to a collector.

Valentine cards were predictably sentimental 'hearts-and-flowers' types, often humorous and usually featuring mischievous cupids and children. Hallowe'en and Thanksgiving cards,

the former picturing witches, goblins and bats, the latter, turkeys, were published almost exclusively in the United States, while cards for St Patrick's Day depicted typically Irish symbols and motifs — the Blarney-stone, four-leaf

clovers, shamrocks and the Celtic harp. Among the most picturesque greetings cards were the 'Hands Across the Sea' types linking overseas friends and relations, and showing a handclasp, globes and ships.

MALCOLM JAMES

Gems from the R M Phillips Collection LXVIII

A Beautiful Problem Cover



This month's 'gem' must certainly be one of the most glamorous covers in the Reginald M Phillips collection. It is also one of the most baffling to explain. The first comment that can and should be made is that prepayment of overseas postal charges *by means of postage stamps* was not obligatory until the 1850s and indeed was very uncommon. Prepayment was almost invariably made in cash. Rowland Hill is on record (in December 1839) as considering 'that adhesive stamps of values above Twopence were not necessary'. On this cover there is hardly room for the address, and of course, higher values were in fact considered necessary in 1847-48.

Secondly, the nine 1840 Twopenny stamps include eight stamps from row G of Plate 1, GC-GJ in two strips of four, each clearly and individually cancelled with the red Maltese Cross.

The real problem lies in the routing and the 1s 7d rate. Unfortunately this is a front and it is not

possible to identify the post office of origin; any transit markings there may have been on the reverse of the cover are also lost. The 'ANGL/CALAIS' transit mark of 24 June 1840 gives us a date and proves the cover went overland via France to Italy. But was this all the way by land or did it arrive at Leghorn by sea? The 'VIA DI Pt BEAUVOIS' handstamp (? an Italian entry mark) might help if I had found it possible to locate 'Pt BEAUVOIS', which I haven't. Is this an obsolete place name?

The cover seems to have been redirected from Leghorn to Florence, and the manuscript '12' may indicate a 12 crazie redirection fee to be paid on delivery. I can only throw the question open to readers of the Bulletin who may have the expertise to give us the story behind this cover, including the postage rates to Tuscany in 1840.

A G RIGO DERIGHI

The Development and Use of Post Office Phosphors

Part 2

Before 1957, phosphorescence in organic materials, at least in the present context of emitting a useful afterglow after prior irradiation, existed only under very low temperature conditions and in dilute solutions. Usually liquid nitrogen cooling would be necessary, hardly the thing for use in Sorting Offices. Phosphorescence in the solid state had been reported as existing in boric acid glasses, but the soft-textured resins which form the basis of the phosphors currently used in this country for letter handling were discovered partly by accident.

Research on fluorescence was undertaken at the PO Research Station, then at Dollis Hill, by Charles Forster early in 1957. His initial experiments comprised soaking filter paper in solutions of fluorescent substances (amongst which was Amino G acid) and drying them in an oven. When examined under an ultraviolet (UV) lamp it was observed that as well as being fluorescent

there was also a very noticeable afterglow which persisted after switching off the UV. However this phenomenon ceased within a minute or so when the paper picked up its normal moisture content from the atmosphere. In an endeavour to improve the durability of the phosphorescent effect gelatine was added to the solution and when this was dried a marked improvement was observed. However this only delayed the moisture regain for about two days. The further addition of formaldehyde to harden the gelatine and render it insoluble in water effected a further improvement and gave rise to the notion of adding urea as well, which when heated with the formaldehyde would form an insoluble resin. Urea formaldehyde is well known as one of the earliest thermosetting resins and has the advantage of being colourless. The results of this experiment exceeded all expectations. The impregnated paper was brilliantly phosphorescent

SORTED BY DUTCH "TRANSORMA"
EQUIPMENT
USED UNTIL 1968/69
(RED "F", ARROWED)



The Secretary,
Tottenham Group Hospital
Management Committee,
(Group 4),
The Queen,
London, N. 15.

Readers who have read part 1 of Aubrey Walker's article, 'The Development and Use of Post Office Phosphors' will have noticed that some of the illustrations numbers are inaccurate on page 6 of the June Bulletin. Fig 1 should read fig 2 and figs 2 and 3 should read 3 and 4 respectively.

We are taking the opportunity of reproducing again the cover (fig 2), a little larger, in order that the 'Operator ident' can be seen clearly.

giving a glow lasting several seconds and furthermore the effect was permanent and unaffected by atmospheric moisture. A similar result was also achieved with melamine and cyanuric acid in place of the urea. Both these compounds have a similarity to urea in the way they link up with formaldehyde to form stable resins. Cyanuric acid was eventually preferred because it can be made very easily by heating urea and can then be reacted with a solid polymer of formaldehyde to form a crunchy solid material within a few seconds. The resulting mass can be powdered to fine state of subdivision in marked contrast to melamine formaldehyde and urea formaldehyde which form tough horny substances — quite difficult to pulverise.

The original fluorescent substance, later called the activator, used in these experiments was 2-naphthylamine — 6 : 8 — disulphonic acid commonly known as 'Amino G acid'. This material is harmless but because of the unfavourable connotations arising from the word 'naphthylamine' in its chemical designation further experiments were carried out to find an alternative.

One of these was a non-fluorescent chemical called para hydroxy diphenyl (PHD) which when incorporated into the resin formed a phosphor giving a bright blue (with a tendency to green) emission. This was medically acceptable and the blue emission was nearer to the peak sensitivity of the photocell as an added bonus. British Patent 870,504 filed in February 1959, published in June 1961, inventor Charles Forster, was taken out to protect the discovery of these new organic phosphorescent substances, the first of their type in the world.

Messrs Harrison Ltd, the printers of the current British postage stamps, undertook to manufacture the material under licence from the Post Office. Under the direction of Ernest Harrison, then Technical Director, and their chief Chemist Mr J Armitage a small plant capable of making 25 lbs at a time was installed. There were difficulties due to the rapidity with which the molten mixture reacts to the solid state causing everything to seize up. A pneumatic drill had to be used to get the first batch out of the pot.

Another drawback was that the reaction did not go to completion causing the material to be more sensitive to moisture than that made on a laboratory scale. This caused some adverse comment from foreign sources who had obtained some of this material for test. Harrisons got over this difficulty by a postcure treatment in an oven.

Harrisons were allowed to market these materials commercially under their own trade name of Lettalite Y for yellow amino G acid and Lettalite B (= Blue) for the PHD.

The first postage stamps bearing phosphorescent marking (or tagging as the Americans prefer to call it) were issued in November 1959. This was a provisional issue on stamps with graphite lines on the backs. Previous to this certain experimental printings were made for trial on the Dollis Hill prototype ALF. The paper used was the normal 'crowns' watermarked paper and also some of the same mix but without the watermark. In addition some of the wet pulp was obtained from Messrs Portals, the paper makers, for experiments involving incorporating the phosphor in the actual furnish of the paper. Paper from this pulp containing cyanuric acid, formaldehyde and activator was made on a hand sieve by the old traditional method of shaking the sieve and applying suction to draw out the water.

The paper was then blown off the mesh and dried on a photograph dryer to cure the phosphor. The phosphorescence was reasonably good but at that time the paper makers were not keen to use formaldehyde in their process because of its irritating odour.

Untreated sheets of paper were made phosphorescent by coating them with the finely ground phosphor suspended in a medium such as a gelatine size or a varnish of polystyrene in xylene or an aqueous solution of poly vinyl-acetate. All these mixtures were satisfactory. Polystyrene varnish was particularly good in that it is very translucent to ultraviolet light and gave a very smooth finish to the paper which took a very sharp print of the stamp image in contrast to the print on unsurfaced paper.

The phosphor used in all these trials was the

'blue' PHD or Lettalite B. However on cost grounds it was decided to print the phosphor in the form of vertical bars on the stamps. The original issue was printed on surplus graphited stamp paper. Harrisons used a simple letterpress forme for this consisting of standard printers rule 4 mm wide and a phosphor ink based on a yellow-brown vegetable drying oil. Trial printings using bars of different thicknesses were produced on 3d stamps from Cylinder 11 which was that used for the graphite issue. The thicknesses were 4 mm or 2 mm wide placed centrally or down the vertical gutters — but these were not issued. Some were also printed under the stamp image. At the time there was a requirement that they should be as inconspicuous as possible and not mar the Queen's portrait in any way whatever. However, the final choice was for 4 mm wide bands printed on top of the stamp. These trials were printed from a photo-etched cylinder as were the subsequent issue of June 1960 of PHD phosphor. However, the letterpress printing capability was kept in reserve and was brought into use on various occasions for small printings or in emergency situations when a particular stamp was wanted in a hurry. An example of this was the printing of 2½d stamps with one bar when the second class rate was raised from 2d in October 1961. Many of the earlier commemoratives were treated in this way, 8 mm wide bars being made up by placing two 4 mm bars together. Very often the split can be seen on the stamps. Later on the low values needed in greater quantities were overprinted with bars in photogravure while the higher values were overprinted by letterpress and sometimes by rubber stereotypes. These latter are easily recognised by the uneven edges and irregular width of the bars which often exceeded 8 mm, probably as a result of swelling of the rubber. Some values exist with the bars printed by photogravure or letterpress. The Churchill 1s 3d and ITU 1s 6d issues of 1965 exist in both forms.

With the possibility of using phosphors for address code marks as well as on stamps investigation of other possible activators continued. Several hundred potential activators were ex-

amined by Charles Forster.

These all bore some chemical similarity to each other but the resulting phosphors covered quite a range of properties. The majority are excited by long wavelengths (greater than say 300 nanometres) some only by shorter wavelengths (predominantly 253.7 nanometres) and some are of an intermediate character excited by either long or short wavelengths.

By appropriate choice of phosphors for stamp recognition and for address code marks it was shown that it would be possible to excite the code marks without eliciting any response from the stamps. For this purpose a phosphor having carbazole sulphonic acid or CSA as activator was selected for code marks. This phosphor emits a bright blue emission when excited by long wave UV which had very little effect on the PHD used on the stamps. The extra brightness of CSA was so attractive that the engineers 'borrowed' it for use on stamps.

CSA or Lettalite B2 as Harrisons called it gave excellent results in the Automatic Letter Facing Machine with a very low failure rate, but it was only 'on loan' and in October 1965 the address coding engineers required it for their own project. By this time Charles Forster had several more suitable phosphors available. Among these terephthalic acid and sulphanilic acid were outstanding. Terephthalic acid was initially chosen because of its commercial availability, cheapness and non-toxicity. It is the basis of 'polyester' textiles and films. Its violet afterglow is not impressive to the human eye which is not at its best in this region. However it is ideal for use with photo-multipliers and as it is not unduly excited by 'long wave' UV at 365 nm emitting only a faint yellow afterglow, it causes no problems for the code marks when they are excited by such radiation. This new phosphor was called TPA by the PO and Lettalite B3 by Harrisons who considered it to be a sort of blue. It is still in current use for gravure printed bars but a change is imminent.

TPA stamps with letterpress printed bars first appeared at Norwich on 13 August 1965 where the first address coders were in operation.

Philatelists have to differentiate between phosphors by eye rather than by more scientific measurements of wavelength and called PHD green as a distinction from the more positive blue of CSA and the violet of TPA. Colour recognition is a very subjective phenomenon and as it

varies with different individuals it may be helpful to indicate the colours as observed by the author at different wavelengths and then indicate the emission wavelengths of the most commonly used phosphors.

Wavelengths in nanometres (nm)

Table 1

400-455	Violet
455-490	Blue
495	Blue-green
500-555	Green
570	Green-yellow
580	Yellow (Very narrow band)
585	Yellow-orange
588	Orange
605	Red
715	Deep Red

Table 2

Phosphor	Emission Spectrum
PHD	440 to 480, peak 460
CSA	410 to 480, peak 445
TPA	380 to 480, peak 430
SA	370 to 490, peak 430
PABA(s)	375 to 510, peak 440 approx

Some of these materials are dealt with later in the article.

AUBREY WALKER

Advertising Surrounds

Readers will remember that we published in the March edition of the Philatelic Bulletin two examples of advertising surrounds made available to us by our friend Mr Edward Proud.

Mr Tony Rigo de Righi, the Curator of the National Postal Museum, has kindly sent us a similar example — from his private collection — which we are happy to reproduce in this month's

Bulletin together with his observations.

'In spite of these cards (there were at least 6 designs) having been issued by the National War Savings Committee, with the help of the Ministry of Information, the Post Office insisted on them being withdrawn. Only a few were used without being intercepted by the Post Office.'



The Proud Collection

Reproduced by kind permission of Mr Edward Proud



Our Victorian forebears were always looking for a different approach to the 'postcard'. Our first illustration depicts a horse drawn parcels van, but the second illustration demonstrates,

through the use of a pull-out tag on the right-hand side, that the van opened to reveal a message in prose or poetry.

Commemorative Covers

Salvation Army Cover

The William Booth Memorial Training College

The Golden Jubilee of the opening of the William Booth Memorial Training College at Denmark Hill, London is commemorated on Sunday 8 July 1979. To mark the occasion a special philatelic cover is available illustrating the exterior of the building. A 9p 'Primrose' stamp is affixed and cancelled with a pictorial handstamp dated 9 July. The cost is 45p. Orders and further details are obtainable from Major Ken Daws, The Salvation Army, 101 Queen Victoria Street, London, EC4P 4EP.

Boy Scouts Commemorative Cover

The Kidderminster and District Scout Council will produce two special covers commemorating the centenary of the death of Sir Rowland Hill. One cover will bear the four Rowland Hill stamps while the second will have the miniature sheet of the four stamps affixed. Both will be cancelled in Kidderminster — the birth place of Sir Rowland — on 22 August, the date of issue of the stamps and miniature sheets. The cost of the covers is £1.50 each and can be obtained from Mr B Wood, 6 Comberton Park Road, Kidderminster, Warwickshire, DY10 3DY. Remittances should be made payable to, The Kidderminster District Scout Council.

3rd World Jamboree 1929

To commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Arrowe Park Jamboree 1929, a special cover will be on sale from 18 July 1979 — the day of issue of the 'Year of the Child' stamps. The cover, bearing the 9p 'Peter the Rabbit' stamp and cancelled with a pictorial handstamp will cost 45p. In addition it is also available with all 4 of the commemorative stamps affixed, and similarly cancelled — price 80p.

Orders addressed to, Philatelic Officer, Birkenhead District Scout Council, Harding House, 76 Park Road West, Birkenhead, Merseyside L43 8SF, should include an extra 15p for return postage and packing. Remittances to be made payable to:— Birkenhead District Scout Council.

Esperanto Cover

Swanwick, Derbyshire, will be the venue for an Esperanto Conference to take place between 13-20 July 1979. To mark the event a special philatelic cover with an 11p 'Winnie the Pooh' stamp affixed, cancelled with a pictorial handstamp is now available, price 50p. Orders and further details should be addressed to Mr F J Rogers, 46 New Road, Ilford, Essex, IG3 8AR, with a stamped addressed envelope for reply.

Fife Historic Vehicle Club

An 1879 Shand Mason fire engine, on permanent loan to the Fife Historic Vehicle Club, celebrates its centenary this year. A commemorative cover will be available from 23 July, bearing an 11p 'Welsh Pony' stamp, cancelled with a special pictorial handstamp depicting a fireman's helmet, at a cost of 55p.

A limited number of covers are also for sale with a 'Welsh Pony' gutter pair affixed — price £1.00.

Orders and enquiries should be sent to: Mr R J Pedrick, 6 Knockhouse Road, Crossford, Dunfermline, Fife, KY12 8PX, together with a 7" x 5" stamped addressed envelope for reply. Remittances to be made payable to, 'The Fife Historic Vehicle Club'. Proceeds of the sale of these covers will be donated to the restoration and full working order of the fire engine.

Clacton Philatelic Society

To celebrate the 10th Anniversary of Clacton-on-Sea, Essex, and Valence sur Rhone, France town twinning, the CPS held a three day stamp exhibition between 23-25 May at the Town Hall, Clacton, during which displays from Valence and Clacton were on show. Special commemorative covers are currently available, price 50p and 80p, cancelled with a circular handstamp. Full details may be obtained from Mr F W Wright, 4 Howard Road, Clacton-on-Sea, Essex, CO15 5HW, enclosing a stamped addressed envelope for reply.

City of Durham Commemorative Cover

This year marks the 800th anniversary of the

granting of Durham's first Charter. As part of the general celebrations a commemorative philatelic cover is now available.

It depicts a 1745 etching of the City of Durham, reproduced as a tapestry, and bears a 9p 'Primrose' stamp cancelled with a pictorial handstamp. The handstamp illustrates a bishop's mitre and the shield of the City as well as the dates 1179-1779.

The cover which is postmarked 1 June 1979 is available for 25p. Orders should be sent to Mrs Jean Middlemas, 53 Grange Road, Belmont, Durham, DH1 1AL, from whom further enquiries may be made. A stamped addressed envelope must be included for reply. Remittances should be made payable to '800 Committee' and a 7" x 5" stamped addressed envelope attached for despatch of cover.

350th Anniversary of Chigwell School

Chigwell School issued an illustrated cover and special handstamp to celebrate the 350th anniversary of the School.

Serviced covers at £1 each may be obtained from FDC, Chigwell School, High Road, Chigwell, Essex IG7 6QF.

Sudbury and District Philatelic Society

The S&DPS produced a commemorative cover in connection with the Sudbury Olde Tyme Rallye held at Melford Hall, Long Melford, Sudbury on 30 June and 1 July. A limited number of these attractively designed covers are still available at 45p each. Orders and information can be supplied by Mr C Merritt, S&DPS, 3 Westropps, Long Melford, Sudbury, Suffolk CO10 9D5. Please send a stamped addressed envelope for reply.

The Monmouthshire Bowls Association

The British Isles Bowls Championships and International Series 1979 will take place between 16-20 July at Pontypool, Gwent, and to mark the event a philatelic cover will be available. It will depict, on the front, the name of the event, a bowler delivering a wood and the emblems of the four countries.

The cover bearing a full set of the 'Year of the Child' stamps, cancelled with a pictorial handstamp will be on sale, price 85p. In addition, the cover with an 8p Welsh definitive stamp affixed, and similarly cancelled, will cost 45p.

Orders including a 7" x 5" stamped addressed envelope should be sent to Pilgrim Philatelics, 13 Best Lane, Canterbury, Kent, CT1 2XX. For those who wish to post their own covers, a special posting box will be sited at the venue, ICI Fibres Club, Pontypool, Gwent, NP4 8YD. Proceeds will go to the Monmouthshire Bowling Association.

Warwickshire Scouts International Camp

A special commemorative cover marking the Warwickshire Scouts International Camp on 26 July 1979 will be on sale, price 45p. A 9p European Assembly stamp will be affixed cancelled with a rectangular handstamp.

Orders and remittances accompanied by a 7" x 5" stamped addressed envelope should be sent to John Negus, 19 Meadow Close, Sheepy Magna, Atherstone, Warwickshire, CV9 9RA.

Forces Covers

Royal Navy Covers

On 19 April 1979 the freedom of Harrogate was granted to HMS 'Cleopatra'. The event was marked by the introduction of a commemorative cover illustrating HMS 'Cleopatra' at sea, public gardens in Harrogate and the crests of both the town and the ship. The cover bears a 9p definitive stamp cancelled with a pictorial handstamp and is available at 50p. A few covers signed by the Mayor of Harrogate or the Captain of the 'Cleopatra' are available at £1.00 each. For further details and orders please write to:—

CCY K Stone
HMS 'Cleopatra'
BFPO Ships
LONDON

enclosing a 7" x 5" stamped addressed envelope. Proceeds of sales will be donated to Charities in Harrogate.

Royal Navy Cover

31 July is the 30th Anniversary of the escape of HMS Amethyst from Chinese shore batteries along the Yangtse river. In honour of the occasion a commemorative cover will be available from that day a 13p 'Horseracing' stamp affixed, cancelled by a BFPS 1655 handstamp. The cover illustrates HMS Amethyst, her crest, and a small map of the Yangtse river. The handstamp incorporates the ship's badge.

The cover signed by Cdr J S Kerans DSO RN (Ret) who was responsible for the famous escape, after the Captain had been mortally wounded, and Lieut Cdr K S Hett RN who was in the Amethyst throughout the incident — will cost £1.75.

Alternatively the cover signed by Lieut Cdr Hett only and bearing the 11p 'Horseracing' stamp will be available at 95p. Unsigned covers with a 9p 'Horseracing' stamp affixed cost 50p each.

Orders accompanied by cheque or postal order made payable to the Fleet Air Arm Museum, should be sent together with a 7" x 5" stamped addressed envelope to R N Philatelic Officer, RNAS Yeovilton, Somerset, BA22 8HL.

RAF Cover HA37

RAF Quedgeley commemorated the career of Squan Ldr Pattle — perhaps the highest scoring RAF pilot in World War II — with a cover depicting him in action over Greece in 1941. It has been cancelled with a special handstamp BFPS 1635 dated 14 April and flown on a commemorative flight from RAF Quedgeley. The cover is now available from Flt Lt S Barrett, RAF Quedgeley, Gloucester, GL2 65B at 50p plus 7p postage.

RAF Cover HA38

12 May 1979 marked the 30th Anniversary of the Raising of the Berlin Blockade. A philatelic cover honouring the career of Marshal of the 'Royal Air Force, Lord Douglas, cancelled with a BFPS 1641 handstamp was flown from RAF Gatow on a special commemorative flight. It is now available from Warrant Officer J Clarke

RAF Gatow, BFPO 45 at 50p plus 7p postage.

Both covers have 7p definitive stamps affixed.

All proceeds from sales will be devoted to the Battle of Britain Museum Appeal Fund.

Posting Boxes



No. 11: This unusual pillar box can be seen outside the Gloddaeth Street sub Post Office, Llandudno. Its distinctive pointed roof, surmounted by a ball, shows it to be one of the type made for use at railway stations. Another example of this type of box but with EvliR Royal Cipher, can be seen at Waterloo Railway Station, London where it has been adapted for 'Town and Country' postings by having a double posting aperture fitted.

British Special Stamps

55. British Bridges, 1968

The bridges featured on the four special stamps issued on 29 April 1968 represented Britain's history, architecture and engineering, and were apparently a continuation and development of the theme of the 'Landscapes' issue of May 1966. The choice of design was a careful selection of 'bridges through the ages', illustrating and dating the oldest and newest in bridge-building (in England), and thoughtfully including structures representing Scotland and Wales.

Three artists were involved in the design of the stamps, which were attractively uniform in style and presentation, and all three had previous stamp designs to their credit — Jeffery Matthews, Andrew Restall and L. Rosoman.

Jeffery Matthews, who designed two of the stamps, presented the typical picture postcard view of the Tarr Steps, Exmoor, the oldest Roman bridge in England, on the 4d stamp. These oversize 'stepping-stones' could not have been easy to portray in the small design area of the stamp, which has a nicely balanced design. This prehistoric clapper bridge (from the Latin, *claperium*, 'a heap of stones') stands near Dulverton in Somerset. Mr Matthews, a Londoner, was probably more at home with the M4 motorway viaduct on the 1s 9d stamp with its sweeping approach roads — it is an impressive aerial view of what was said to be the longest elevated section of motorway in Europe, 9,680 feet in length, which carries the M4 out of London to the west country. The viaduct was completed in 1965.

Andrew Restall designed the selected 9d stamp — the stone bridge at Aberfeldy in Perthshire, built in 1733 by William Adams of the four famous architect brothers (the others were Robert, the most celebrated, James and John), under the direction of General George Wade who, following the rebellion of 1715, was responsible for the construction of all the military roads into the Highlands. Wade, an English general, was subsequently created field-marshal in 1743. The bridge over the Tay is just a mile from the picturesque Falls of Moness. L. Rosoman, who designed the aforementioned Landscapes of 1966, was responsible for the 1s 6d stamp depicting the Menai suspension bridge in North



Wales, incidentally the first British stamp to be inscribed additionally in Welsh — 'Pont Menai'. Telford's bridge crosses the Menai Straits in Anglesey, forming part of his great highway between London and Holyhead, completed in 1826.

The stamps were photogravure-printed by Harrison and Sons in sheets of 120 (6 × 20) on unwatermarked paper with two phosphor bands. Recorded varieties include the 4d printed on the gummed side, with an 'O' retouch just above and left of the '4' and with no curve left of the central slab. The 9d is known with the imprints 'HARRISON' and 'RESTALL' redrawn by hand, and with the ultramarine omitted; the 1s 6d with broken corner-stones and the red-orange colour omitted. Other omissions include the gold Queen's head and the phosphor bands.

Quantities sold were: 4d 97,458,120; 9d 8,773,080; 1s 6d 9,451,400; and 1s 9d 5,924,800; presentation packs 69,646. JAMES WATSON

Book Reviews

Islands Postal History Series

by James A Mackay

No 8 **Shetland** Price £3.00 (plus 25p post UK)
(£1.00 postage o'seas)

Available from the Author at 11 Newall Terrace,
Dumfries DG1 1LN.

Ask the average Southerner what he knows of Shetland and he will probably tell you that it is a few acres of large collie dogs, small ponies, an arctic climate and warm knitwear.

In fact it is a very prosperous community of some 23,000 persons and covers an area of 500 square miles. It has traditionally been more directly connected with Norway and Holland than with the rest of the British Isles.

Its Viking heritage is too well known to need emphasis but its commerce was for five centuries closely associated with huge fleets of Dutch herring-fishers. The consequent trade produced an efficient local postal service long before the GPO took a hand in the proceedings.

It is also a place where the words 'Post Office' usually evoke a mischievous smile. This is because the Admiralty celebrated the outbreak of World War I by frog-marching the entire Head Post Office staff off to Lerwick Gaol after mislaying one of its own despatches. The locals have very long memories and a fine feeling for folklore!

Mr Mackay recounts the incident and many more in his usual readable and well informed manner in this eighth of a ten volume series. Like the others it is compulsive reading.

The Postal History of Caernarfon 1840-1940

by R G Jones

Price 90p (plus 7p postage)

Available from The Newsletter Editor, Welsh Philatelic Society, 12 Beaconsfield Way, Sketty, Swansea SA2 9JR.

This monograph covers one hundred years of postal history but the author has been much more generous. He has prefaced his study with an historical memoir from 1284 thus linking the

town's social history with its postal development. A very sound principle.

Extracts from contemporary guide books and local directories provide much useful information while the listing of marks in use between 1840 and 1940 is very comprehensive.

A number of postal cancellations have been carefully reproduced from PO proof books and other sources and the whole booklet is nicely printed and laid out.

For serious students it seems excellent value for money at 90 pence.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Sir,

I was intrigued by the post-box with spiked cap illustrated in the April 1979 Bulletin and I shall be interested in any explanations that may be forthcoming.

Meanwhile I write to point out a further apparent anomaly, the fact that no Royal Cypher is visible in the photograph.

Yours faithfully

Gibraltar

S B COOMBE

Controller of Philately

Dear Sir,

Perhaps the reason for the spikes on the Cambridge Victorian pillar box featured in your April issue is due to its being in a University town and subject to undergraduate pranks?

You suggest it may have been moved. It was pictured in the Post Office Magazine in 1966 in an article dealing with the hunt for Victorian boxes and there is no wall behind it. It appears to be on the edge of a pavement. The wall in your latest picture certainly appears to be a new one.

You did not mention the box is of the anonymous type with high aperture (1879-1883) and therefore almost 100 years old.

Yours truly

Oxford

ARTHUR E BISSELL

Dear Sir,

I refer to page 13 of Philatelic Bulletin April 1979 (Vol 16 No 8).

I would have thought the most probable reason for the spikes on the pillar box would be as a deterrent to the late return of undergraduates to college via the college wall, or vice versa as a means of egress at night.

Yours sincerely

Heswall, Wirral

A C WRIGHT

Special Handstamps

Unless otherwise stated, items for reposting should bear 1p 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'.

21 July 1979 (P/D)

W I Diamond Jubilee Swindon 21 July 79.

Special posting box at Pewsey Comprehensive School, Pewsey, Wilts.

13 July 1979 (P/C)

Visit of HM The Queen Westminster Cathedral 13 July 1979 London SW1.

Special posting box at Westminster Cathedral, London SW1.

18 July 1979 (P/R)

International Year of the Child Westminster Cathedral 18th July 1979 London SW1.

Special posting box at Westminster Cathedral, London SW1. As this stamp will be used in the upright position care should be taken in addressing the cover.

18 July 1979 (C)

New Parks Boys School Jubilee 1954-1979 Leicester 18 July 1979.

Special posting box at New Parks Boys School, St Oswalds Road, Leicester LE3 6RJ. Items sent to the Head Postmaster Leicester for stamping should be endorsed NPBS.

31 July 1979 (P/C)

30th Anniversary of the Escape of HMS Amethyst Yangtse Amethyst 31 July 79 British Forces 1655 Postal Service.

Special posting box at Postal and Courier

Depot RE Inglis Barracks, Mill Hill, London NW7 1PX. Items for reposting to Philatelic Officer at same address.

16-17-18 August 1979 (FD)(C)

From The Showground Southport Merseyside.

Special posting box at Mobile Post Office, Southport Flower Show, Victoria Park, Southport, Merseyside PR8 2BZ.

25 August 1979 (P/C)

Plymouth Navy Days 1979 25 Aug 1979 British Forces 1639 Postal Service.

Special posting box at Postal and Courier Depot RE Inglis Barracks, Mill Hill, London NW7 1PX. Items for reposting to Philatelic Officer at above address.

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'.

Until 28 July 1979

Freshwater Biological Association 50 Years Scientific Achievement. To be used at Ambleside. 1st and 2nd class.

Until 8 Sept 1979 (P)

Lena Zavaroni Britain's Brightest Star at Bridlington. To be used at York. 1st class.

Until 13 July 1979 (P)

Strathallan Air Display 14-15 July 1979 Auchterarder Perthshire. To be used at Perth. 1st and 2nd class.

15 July-29 Dec 1979 (P)

Durham 800 Years a City 1179-1979 City of Durham. To be used at Durham. 1st class.

P denotes Pictorial

C denotes Circular

R denotes Rectangular

D denotes Diamond

FD denotes Fixed Date

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