

British Philatelic Bulletin

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Buff Tailed Bumble Bee

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Stamp Bug Club fifth anniversary handstamp: further details will appear in the March Philatelic Bulletin.

Editorial

As the series on British Local Stamp issues is proving to be very popular with readers, we will be extending it during 1985. The series by John Holman on Railway Letter stamps will continue in March. On an historic note, an article is also included with an interesting theory on the origins of the Maltese Cross handstamp.

On 26 February, Super Stampex 1985 will open. As in previous years there will be a special Post Office philatelic sales counter and display at the Exhibition. There will also be another major exhibition during the year, called Manpex, to be held at Manchester during October 1985, and although not granted national status, will nevertheless be an important philatelic event. It is also refreshing to see a major exhibition taking place outside London, which is frequently accused of monopolising such events. Many of the official philatelic institutions are London and Home Counties based, which has tended to give a southern bias towards collecting. Further details of Manpex will be published in future Bulletins.

Next month the Stamp Bug Club will be celebrating its fifth birthday. With some 60,000 members it has gone from strength to strength since it was founded in 1980, and is probably the largest club of its kind in the world. However, a particularly disturbing development has arisen in recent months about which readers of the Bulletin might like to know. This has been the wrongful use of the Swap Special supplement to Stamp Bug News, by certain individuals and dealers to sell their wares or promote chain-letters. Whatever the legal position in these cases it is nonetheless morally wrong to adopt this approach to collectors, particularly children.

Such a problem is not exclusive to the Stamp Bug Club, but is something for which all collectors should be on the lookout. While every effort is made to verify all entries received for inclusion in the Philatelic Bulletin and Stamp Bug News, these can only be taken at face value as there is a limit to the checks that can be made. In the final event it comes down to the individual collector to check out any philatelic contacts, business or otherwise, that they may follow up, before committing themselves.

CHARLES GOWEN

The Local Stamps of the Channel Islands



The local posts are an interesting part of the story of the carriage of mail in the Channel Islands. Much has been written about them in the philatelic press and in various handbooks and a bibliography appears at the end of this article. It is only necessary, therefore, to give a brief outline of the various services.

Herm

The small island of Herm, three miles off Guernsey and reached by a regular boat service, is very popular with summer visitors and, apart from guests staying at the White House Hotel, several hundred thousand daily visitors make the trip from Guernsey annually.

Since 1737 the island has been leased to various tenants including Prince Blucher, Sir Compton Mackenzie and Sir Percival Perry (later Lord Perry) Chairman of Ford's.

During Sir Percival's tenancy, from 1925 to 1938, the Guernsey Head Postmaster opened a sub-office on Herm, but as it was open for only a very short period each day, the postmark (illustrated) is very rare.

After the 1939-45 War the States of Guernsey purchased the island from the Crown and leased it to

a Mr A G Jefferies. Mr Jefferies tried to get the sub-office re-opened, but the Guernsey Head Postmaster refused on the grounds of insufficient business. It was therefore decided to run a local post from Herm to Guernsey and a series of five stamps was prepared in 1948, four denominations for a boat service and one for a pigeon service. They were all inscribed 'Postage', however, and were banned by the Postmaster General as an infringement of his monopoly. The word was deleted from the printing plates and the stamps, ½d, 1d, 2d and 6d showing a map of Herm, and 1s. depicting a pigeon, were eventually issued on 26th May, 1949.

The lease of Herm was sold to Major and Mrs A G Wood in 1949 and they continued to issue definitive and commemorative stamps which were suppressed by the newly established Guernsey Post Office Board on 30th September, 1969.

A sub-post office of Guernsey was re-opened on 1st October, 1969, with the tenant of Herm as sub-postmaster, and continues to function.

Jethou

The next island to issue stamps was Jethou





(pronounced Jet-ho), half a mile from Herm. During the tenancy of Group Captain W H Cliff the island was opened to the public and a boat service provided. Stamps were issued for the carriage of mail in 1960 and the first series comprised five values, 1½d, 4d, 6d, 9d and 18d, featuring the island crest, a map and local views. The 6d and 18d carried the names of two offshore islets, Fauconniere and Crevichon.

Further issues appeared under Group Captain Cliff's tenancy and that of his successor, Mrs Susan Faed, until they were suppressed by the Guernsey Post Office Board on 30th September, 1969. The island is not now open to the public.

Of special interest to collectors are two cachets used around the turn of the century on postcards sold on board vessels making excursion trips to Jethou and applied at the time of sale. The cards were then posted in Guernsey. The first cachet was a two line JETHOU ISLAND date struck in black in 1907, and the second a circular datestamp inscribed JETHOU ISLAND/CHAN. ISLES. with the day and month in the centre. This was struck in violet in 1909. Both are rare.

Lihou

The little island of Lihou (pronounced Lee-oo), off the west coast of Guernsey, was leased from the Crown for some years by Lt Col Patrick Wootton. In 1966-67 he issued local stamps for use by daily visitors and members of the youth camps held on the island. These, too, were suppressed by the Guernsey Post Office Board on 30th September, 1969, but Col Wootton was given a licence to run a special strike post service to Britain in 1971 during the National Postal Strike in February and March of that year.

Brechou

This small island off Sark is owned by Mr Leonard Matcham. In 1969 he planned a series of stamps for use on mail sent by himself and his staff, but these did not appear until September 30th, and they were used on that day only as they came under the Guernsey Post Office Board's ban.

Commodore Shipping Company Ltd.

From 1950 the Commodore Shipping Company Ltd., of Guernsey, issued adhesive labels for carriage of parcels on its vessels plying between Guernsey and Sark. The early labels were typeset, but from 1961 pictorials were issued. In 1962 separate issues were made for carriage of parcels to Alderney.

There was a genuine need for some of these issues, but those overprinted EUROPA and in memory of Winston Churchill and John F Kennedy were made primarily for the philatelic market. The issues ceased on 30th September, 1969, when the shipping contracts changed hands.



Alderney Shipping Company Ltd.

From 1st October, 1969, the Alderney Shipping Company Ltd., which took over from the Commodore Shipping Company, issued typeset labels in denominations of 2s.3d. and 3s. for carriage of parcels to Alderney. The issue of these labels ceased at the end of 1975.

Alderney Parcel Delivery Service

In Alderney Peter Kelley started a parcel delivery service in 1975, using first of all a handstamp to denote payment. On 7th July, 1975, the first adhesives appeared, a series of four stamps showing local forms of transport and inscribed Alderney Packet. Many other issues followed up to July 1981. Packets and parcels were carried by motor vehicle or cycle and local taxis were also used to make express deliveries to or from the airport; no letters were carried. The service was banned by the Guernsey Post Office Board in June 1983 when the Alderney regionals were issued.

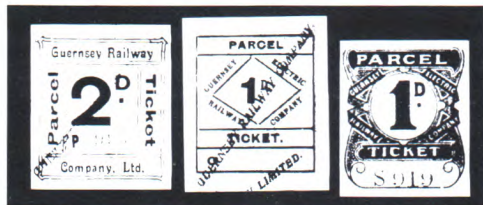
Isle of Sark Shipping Company Ltd.

On 1st October, 1989, the Isle of Sark Shipping Company Ltd. issued typeset labels in denominations of 1s.6d., 2s. and 2.6d. for carriage of parcels to Sark on its vessels. The labels were superseded in 1978 by a rubber stamp inscribed 'SARK PARCELS', with a lion and 10p in the centre of an oval. This was struck in violet directly on to the parcel. If a higher fee was required several examples were struck.

In July 1980 a series of five pictorial stamps was issued and in 1981 these were overprinted 'Royal Wedding'.

Sark 400th Anniversary

In 1965 the Dame of Sark authorised the issue of four adhesive pictorial labels to commemorate the quatercentenary of the island's settlement. Although they bear denominations of 3d, 6d, 9d and 1s., they performed no postal service.



Guernsey Railway Company

In 1879 the Guernsey Railway Company Ltd. issued a 2d green on yellow-buff label for carriage of parcels on its steam tramway which ran between St. Peter Port and St. Sampson. It was replaced in 1892 by a similar label in black on yellow. In 1893 the tramway was electrified and 1d and 2d labels were issued inscribed Guernsey Electric Railway Company. These were replaced in 1905 by 1d and 2d labels in a new design. All are extremely rare.

Burhou

The island of Burhou, a bird sanctuary about a mile off the west coast of Alderney, was visited by Ken Gibson, a Lundy stamp specialist, on 13th June, 1983 and he issued a souvenir label showing three puffins and inscribed 'Burhou Island Three Frats'.

JERSEY ISSUES

Jersey Railways and Tramways Ltd.

In 1910 the Jersey Railway Company, which ran trains between St. Helier and Corbiere, issued adhesive labels in denominations of 1d, 3d, 6d, 8d and 1s. for prepayment of carriage of parcels, but I have seen only the 1d, which is printed in black on pink paper. It is likely that the Jersey Eastern



Railway, which ran from St. Helier to Gorey, also issued labels, because they also carried parcels, but I have not seen any.

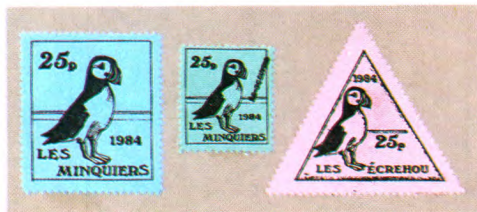
Jersey Motor Transport Company Ltd.

From 1923 to about 1960 the Jersey Motor Transport Company Ltd. carried parcels on its buses and special double labels were issued in various denominations. One was affixed to the parcel and the other was given to the sender as a receipt.

Jersey has no inhabited offshore islands, so has not had any other local issues apart from those prepared in 1984 by Ken Gibson for his short stays on the Ecrehou and Minquiers (pronounced Minkies), which were more in the nature of souvenirs than proper local stamps. I mention them here in case you come across them.

Ecrehou

25p black on pink triangular stamp showing a puffin and inscribed LES ECREHOU 25p and the year 1984. Printed in sheets of nine, perf. 11(line). Issued 16th August, 1984. Cancelled with green double-circle with Jersey Arms in centre and inscribed LES ECREHOU/CHANNEL IS.



Minquiers

25p black on green with puffin facing right. Inscribed LES MINQUIERS 1984 25p, with diagonal overprint at top RE-OCCUPIED. Small format, sheets of nine, perf. 11(line). Cancelled with black single-circle with puffin's head and inscribed LES MINQUIERS/CHANNEL IS. and with single-line datestamp 10 AUG 1984.

25p black on pale blue, large format, with puffin facing right. Sheets of nine, perf. 11 (line).

Imperforate miniature sheet with Jersey Arms in centre and with 25p black on yellow stamp on either side in large format. The cancellation device appears in the top centre overprinted Re-Occupied!! The sheet is cancelled with the single-circle type in blue. It also bears the single-line datestamp 11 AUG 1984.

There is also a much larger souvenir sheet in the same colours, but with the cancellation device in the top centre printed in green. This was not used on letters.

Bibliography

Stamps and Postal History of the Channel Islands, William Newport (Heinemann, 1972).

Specialised Priced Catalogue of Channel Islands Stamps, 1976-77, William Newport (Channel Islands Specialists' Society, 1976).

The Island of Herm and its Posts, William Newport (Channel Islands Specialists' Society, 1970).

Stamps of Alderney, Peter Kelley & Peter E Newell (Picton Publishing, 1982).

The Postage Stamps of the Smaller Channel Islands, Anders Backman & Bob Forrester (Channel Islands Specialists' Society, 1981).

BILL NEWPORT

New Postcards

Wales and The Marches Postal Board

A new set of four Regional postcards will be issued by the Wales and the Marches Postal Board on 4 March 1985. The cards will feature the work of the Regional Mobile Exhibition Unit (RMEU) at the following locations:—

WMPB 24—The RMEU at the Llangollen International Eisteddfod

WMPB 25—The RMEU at the Royal Welsh Show

WMPB 26—The RMEU at the National Eisteddfod

WMPB 27—An exhibition at the Shrewsbury Flower Show.

The price of the cards is 14p each, or 56p for a mint set of four cards. Serviced cards, bearing a 17p Welsh country definitive stamp cancelled with a first day of issue handstamp, are also available at 44p each or £1.76 for the set of four. The mint cards will be on sale at all crown post offices and philatelic counters in Wales and at the National Postal Museum. Bulk orders for mint cards are only available from the British Philatelic Bureau in Edinburgh, where normal handling charges will apply. Orders with remittances for serviced cards should be sent to EX1 Marketing Section, Cardiff Head Post Office, 220-228 Penarth Road, CARDIFF, CF1 1AA. Please allow 28 days for completion of orders.

Midland Postal Region

A new picture postcard depicting the mural in the philatelic counter at Worcester Head Post Office will be available from 22 February 1985 at all philatelic sales counters in the Midland Postal Region, price 14p. Bulk orders for mint cards may be obtained from the British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, EDINBURGH, EH3 5TT, where normal handling charges will apply.

Serviced cards bearing a 17p stamp cancelled with a first day of sale handstamp may be ordered by post from: The Head Postmaster, Head Post Office, 8-10 Forgate Street, WORCESTER, WR1 1AA for a charge of 45p each. Orders must be received by 15 February 1985, and remittances should be made payable to 'The Post Office' or by direct Giro Bank Transfer account number 409 7017.

National Postal Museum: Postcard SS29

This postcard issued in recognition of the bicentenary of The Times newspaper is currently on sale at the National Postal Museum. The illustration is that of two gentlemen sitting at a table reading and discussing an edition of the newspaper.

The cost of the card is 20p; bulk orders of 100 to 249 will receive a discount of 10%, and for 250 cards or more the discount is 20%. A handling charge of 18p will apply to orders of up to £18 in value. All orders in excess of £18 will be despatched by registered post and a handling charge of £1.28 will apply.

Orders should be addressed to the National Postal Museum, King Edward Building, King Edward Street, LONDON, EC1A 1LP.

The Post Office Charity Auction for African Famine Relief

An auction will take place in the National Postal Museum, King Edward Building, King Edward Street, LONDON EC1, on 19 February 1985 for the following items given by The Post Office. The proceeds will be donated to, 'The African Famine Relief Fund'. An imprimatur (imperforate) block of four, and a imprimatur single of all stamps issued since 1936 (reign of King Edward VIII) to 'Christmas' 1970, including QE II High Value stamps. A catalogue, price £3, is being prepared by Christie-Robson Lowe, 47 Duke Street, St. James's, LONDON, SW1Y 6DD, to whom all enquiries should be sent.

1985 Special Stamp Programme

Further details are now available on the following special stamp issues for 1985:—

30/7/85 350th Anniversary for The Post Office

This set will consist of four designs by Paul Hogarth reflecting the diverse roles of The Post Office serving today's community.

3/9/85 Arthurian Legend

This will consist of four designs depicting: Arthur and Merlin, The Lady of the Lake, Guinevere and Lancelot, Galahad.

19/11/85 Christmas

This issue will consist of five stamps on the theme of Pantomime depicting: Pantomime Animal, Genie, Principal Boy, Dame, Good Fairy.

1986 Special Stamp Programme

Nine subjects have been chosen in all for the 1986 special stamp issue programme. 1986 has been designated Industry Year with the slogan 'Thanks to Industry', and this is the subject of the first set.

Next is an issue on Astronomy which will feature in particular Halley's Comet which will reappear in 1986, making its maximum appearance over the United Kingdom in February.

Following on from the astronomy set will be an issue celebrating Her Majesty the Queen's 60th Birthday.

Next will be the annual Europa issue: the subject chosen by the Conference of European Posts and Telecommunications is the Protection of Nature and the Environment.

Medieval Life will be featured in the subsequent issue which commemorates the 900th anniversary of the Domesday Book.

The 'Sport' theme will be continued in 1986 with a set which will also celebrate the Commonwealth Games to be held in Edinburgh that year.

Continuing the Commonwealth theme, the next set will commemorate the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Conference which will be held in London.

This will be followed by a set featuring the

R.A.F., and continuing the theme of 'Forces' on stamps covered previously by the Maritime Heritage and Army issues.

The year's programme will be completed with the Christmas issue, which in 1986 will feature religious traditions.

Famous Trains Stamps

The following cylinder numbers were used in the printing of the 'Famous Trains' stamps:

17p: 1a, 1b, 1c, 3d, 1e, 1f.

22p: 1a, 1b, 2c, 1d, 1e, 1f.

29p: 1a, 2b, 3c, 1d, 2e, 1f.

31p: 1a, 1b, 3c, 2d, 3e, 1f.

34p: 1a, 1b, 2c, 3d, 2e, 1f.

Special Issues 1983

Issue and Date	Value	Number issued (Sheets)
British River Fishes	15½p	38,353,600
	19½p	7,957,400
	26p	7,427,300
	29p	7,093,400
Commonwealth Day	15½p	37,646,000
	19½p	7,919,300
	26p	7,385,900
	29p	7,046,400
Engineering Achievements	16p	39,498,300
	20½p	8,365,000
	28p	7,988,900
British Army	16p	41,007,000
	20½p	8,251,200
	26p	10,235,400
	28p	7,615,300
	31p	7,323,700
British Gardens	16p	40,620,700
	20p½	7,571,100
	28p	7,062,100
	31p	6,765,000
British Fairs	16p	38,000,300
	20½p	7,938,600
	28p	7,442,000
	31p	7,113,400
Christmas	12½p	289,209,100
	16p	150,863,200
	20½p	16,798,600
	28p	15,709,200
	31p	13,985,900

Treasury Competition – Entries

The majority of submitted entries were either printed or embossed, but there were a number that were in fact hand-drawn. Many of these hand-drawn entries were submitted by private individuals and were more or less crude. Among the more interesting of these was entry TN20413, submitted 12 September 1839, by a George Dickinson.

While they were not destined to be successful, Dickinson incorporated two ideas into his designs that were subsequently to be used for issued stamps. The most important idea was the use of a security watermark in the paper on which the stamps were to be printed. Watermarked paper was in fact used by the Post Office for British Postage stamps until comparatively recently. The second idea was the principle of different value stamps for different postal services, rather than the two basic values for inland postage as was proposed. Mr Dickinson even included provision for a 'surcharge' stamp for underpaid items.

The R M Phillips Collection at the National Postal Museum (volume 1, page 18) contains eight of these pen and ink drawings in grey and wove paper stuck on a portion of letter sheet (illustrated). As can be seen they bear the words (left to right), One

Penny, Twopence, Money Letter, Sixpence, American Letter, One Shilling, Treasury Free, Past Seven, Sixpence, Foreign Letter, One Penny, Surcharge Sixpence.

It can also be seen that there is a space between the drawing endorsed, Past Seven, Sixpence and the drawing endorsed, Foreign Letter, and thereby hangs a little mystery.

The original entry was of nine drawings, the ninth and missing drawing occupying the now vacant space. This drawing bore the legend, French Letter, Sixpence. This can be verified by reference to the illustration on page 84 of the 'Penny Postage Centenary' published by The Postal History Society, 1940.

Clearly, at some stage between the submission of the entry, and its inclusion in the R M Phillips Collection, this drawing either became detached or was deliberately detached from the sheet. If it was the latter, what could possibly cause such an act to take place?

I cannot find any reference to this drawing's removal and would be delighted to hear from readers who can throw light on this mystery.

JOHN MEMMOTT Assistant Curator



Royal Mail Postage Labels Vending Machines

The trial period of operation for these machines has been extended to the end of April 1985, because they have been 're-programmed' to reject ½p coins and to issue labels in the range 1p to 17p in 1p steps only i.e. no ½p values at any step will be issued. The four machines are located at the following Post Offices.

Windsor Branch Office, 38-39 Peascod Street,

WINDSOR, Berks SL4 1AA.

London Chief Office, King Edward Building, King Edward Street, LONDON, EC1A 1AA.

Shirley Branch Office, Shirley Avenue, SOUTHAMPTON, SO9 1DQ.

Cambridge HPO, 9-11 St Andrews Street, CAMBRIDGE, CB1 1AA.

National Postal Museum News

Following the recent exhibition on postal orders held in the National Postal Museum, readers may be interested in the following article sent to the Bulletin by Tony Gammons, exhibitions officer in the Museum.

The 'Bank of England' Mackennal

One of the last 'heads' to be prepared for Post Office on the accession of a new monarch is normally that for Postal Orders. In June 1913, with the change from the 'Downey' to the profile 'Mackennal' head, The Post Office was faced with the task of changing the design of the poundage stamp on Postal Orders. It was decided that as the poundage surround had only recently been completely redesigned for the 'Downey' issue all that would be required was a new head. The Post Office had a choice of three:—

The 'Medal', for the 1d, 2½d postage stamps.

The 'Coinage' for the ½d, 1½d, 2d, 3d and 4d postage stamps.

The 'Reduced Medal' for the 5d — 1/- postage stamps.

George V preferred the Medal but this design was too large for the Postal Order poundage frame. It therefore seemed advisable to use the Reduced Medal, but as this die was still being prepared by the Royal Mint it was thought wise to postpone the Postal Order redesign for one month.

In August 1913 the Bank reported that the Mint still could not supply a head die of the correct size, the new reduced head for the 5d postage stamp being too small for the poundage surround. The 'Downey' Postal Order head had been the same size as that used for postcards and as the Mint were preparing a head die of intermediate size for use on the new postcard issue it was decided, yet again, to hold over the Postal Order redesign until the new die was ready. Unfortunately this die also proved unsuitable and on 3 September 1913 the Bank submitted proofs from a head die engraved by themselves, based on the head for the new 8d postage stamp (fig. 1). The Post Office were unable to accept the design as the die had to be 'one approved by the monarch for use on postage stamps'.

It was not until July 1914 that the Bank was able to obtain a suitable die from the Mint and further refinement was needed before the final, approved, proof was submitted on 17 January 1915. (fig. 2 example shows the head of an Old Age Pension Order). It is odd that the choice of head took so long when the approved version seems hardly, if any larger than the reduced head rejected in August 1913 and is certainly not as impressive as the Bank's submission. Apart from trial pulls taken at the Bank the examples held by The Post Office are probably unique examples of the 'Mackennal' head.



Figure 1

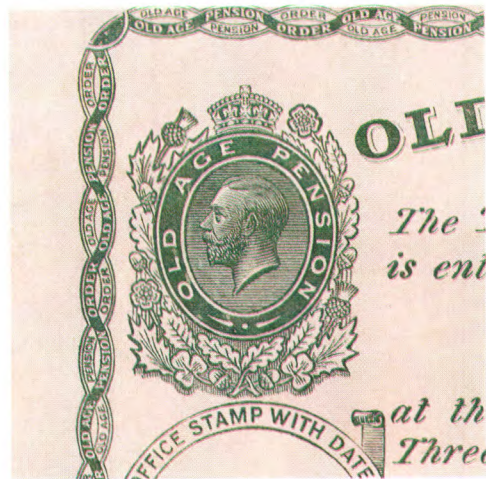


Figure 2

Insects Stamps Issue

12 March 1985

Insects are the most successful life form on our planet, if one judges by the sheer number and diversity of species, and this is reflected in the varied insect population of the British Isles. It is a pity that the small number of species that sting, bite or carry diseases have given insects a bad name. The vast majority are harmless, are often very beautiful in their own way and many have fascinating habits and life histories.

Insects are an essential ingredient in the balance of nature. They help to re-cycle many things such as dead wood and they provide food for a wide range of birds and animals.

Britain has made an enormous contribution to the study of entomology in the last hundred years and this is reflected in the centenary of the Royal Entomological Society, which these stamps, issued by The Post Office, commemorate. The denominations and subjects are:

17p Buff Tailed Bumble Bee.

22p Seven Spotted Ladybird.

29p Wart-Biter Bush-Cricket.

31p Stag Beetle.

34p Emperor Dragonfly.

Printing details

The five stamps were designed by Gordon Beningfield and printed in photogravure by



Harrison & Sons (High Wycombe) Ltd on unwatermarked, phosphor coated paper. The format is vertical and the size is 30mm x 41mm with 14 x 15 perforations. There are 100 stamps per sheet, and the adhesive is PVA Dextrin.

Reposting facility

Those customers who wish to send their own stamped and fully addressed covers for cancellation with the 'London SW' postmark, should enclose them in an outer envelope, fully addressed and stamped, and send them to: The Philatelic Duty, SWDO, 53 Nine Elms Lane, LONDON, SW8 5BB.

Postcards

Postcard size reproductions of each of the five stamps will be available from 26 February 1985, price 14p each.

Presentation pack

A presentation pack, number 160, and first day cover are designed by John Gibbs with illustrations by Peter Barrett. The pack will cost £1.54.

Souvenir cover

A souvenir cover — price 15p — designed by John Gibbs, will go on sale on the day after the stamp issue 13 March 1985.





Insects are
just one of the
many creatures
in the garden
which are
harmless
fascinating
Insects



5. The Mulready Caricatures

Public criticism of the letter sheets and envelopes designed by William Mulready, R.A., and introduced by Rowland Hill on 1 May 1840 was immediate. *The Times* of 2 May published a sarcastic letter from a reader, enquiring whether the new envelopes (one of which he enclosed) were genuine. A leading article in the same newspaper declared that they (the editors) "had never beheld anything more ludicrous . . ." Thereafter there was much similar adverse comment from all quarters and a week after the issue of the controversial postal stationery, Rowland Hill commented sadly in his *Journal* — "I fear we shall be obliged to substitute some other stamp for that designed by Mulready, which is abused and ridiculed on all sides".

As the late Tony Rigo de Righi, former curator of the National Postal Museum, told us in his splendid book, *The Story of the Penny Black*, what really killed Mulready's stamped covers were the caricatures — the first and most famous of which was drawn by John Leech and published (as an envelope) by Fores

of Piccadilly in the same month of May. It gleefully lampooned every aspect of Mulready's design and it was swiftly followed by other caricatures in similar vein by numerous artists, notably 'Phiz' and William Spooner. 'Phiz' was the pseudonym of Hablot Knight Brown who, in 1836, became the illustrator of Charles Dickens' *Pickwick Papers* and other works. Among other contributors to the discomfort of both Hill and Mulready were the noted caricaturist, John Doyle (whose son Richard designed the cover of *Punch* in 1843) and the artist, Madeley.

My example of a Mulready caricature envelope was designed by William Spooner of 377 Strand, London — it depicts Britannia smoking a pipe and holding a somnolent lion's tail, with different characters reading their letters from 'little Maria', 'Charles — how tender he writes, to be sure', 'my scamp of a nephew — wants money I suppose', 'my sweetheart', 'the captain — well really I don't like to refuse him', an unpaid letter, a 'beggin' letter and a 'hinfernal' lawyer's letter.

MALCOLM JAMES



The Maltese Cross Cancellation

The handstamp used to cancel British postage stamps from 1840 to 1841 has long been known as the Maltese Cross Cancellation (Fig 1) but this is a misnomer; although it is roughly cruciform it does not conform in general or in detail to a Maltese Cross. The equally armed cross with widely expanding arms, truncated at right angles forming a square figure (the cross formé or cross patée) is known to French heralds as the 'Croix de Malte' (Fig 2) although it has never appeared on the armorial bearings used by Malta. However, this device was long used as a badge by the Knights of the Order of Saint John of Jerusalem. (The Knights Hospitaliers) who, expelled from Rhodes by the Turks in 1522, established themselves in Malta and remained there until 1798. Hence no doubt the name 'Maltese Cross' given to the device by the French Heralds.



Figure 1

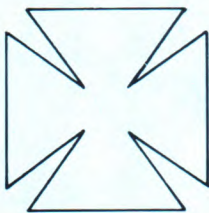


Figure 2

A similar cross, but with bifurcated ends to the limbs, forming an eight-pointed figure (Fig 3) was used in Maltese postage stamps from 1886 (SG30) until the 1970s. It is defined in the Encyclopedia Britannica as the Maltese Cross and must, I consider, be accepted as the true Maltese Cross although it differs from the Croix de Malte, the Croix Formé, and still more from the 1840-41 cancellation.

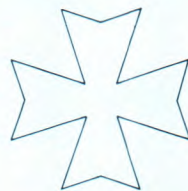


Figure 3

Allcock and Holland in 'The Postmarks of Great Britain and Ireland' (1940) devote 16 pages and 42 illustrations to the 1840-41 cancellations, saying that it is erroneously termed by philatelists 'The Maltese Cross' but do not give any proof of the origin of the design. However, they quote and illustrate an ingenious suggestion made by a Mr Chaplin in 'The Philatelic Adviser' for March 1936 that it is a mixture of the cross patée, the Maltese Cross and a four-petalled Tudor rose. The four-petalled Tudor rose is recognisable in the cancellation, but the two crosses are not easily identified.

Before proceeding further we ought to consider the 1840-41 cancellation in detail. Within the four-petalled Tudor rose, is an equally-armed cross whose limbs are curved and truncated at their ends. Within this again is a lozenge, this description applying exactly, item by item, to the designs from pre-historic Crete published by Sir Arthur Evans in 1935.

The late Tony Rigo de Righi, when Curator of the National Postal Museum, pointed out in 'The Story of the Penny Black' (1980) that the first appearance of the Maltese Cross cancellation was in an internal minute sent to the Secretary of the Post Office saying "I beg to submit to your notice specimens of the stamps proposed for destroying the One Penny and Two Penny Letter Stamps...". The minute was dated 31 March 1840.

The stamps were evidently approved by the Secretary as two thousand handstamps, at a cost of one shilling each, were supplied to post offices during April 1840. As the Secretary could not have taken any action earlier than 9 April, the provision of two thousand handstamps by the end of the month (evidently made by hand as there are minute differences in some specimens), was a considerable achievement. Tony de Righi concluded that, as the

minute was an internal one, the handstamp had been designed by someone in the General Post Office, but he was unable to identify him or the source of his design.

Sir Arthur Evans, the discoverer of the prehistoric Minoan civilisation of Crete, published between 1901 and 1936 six large volumes on 'The Palace of Minos at Knossos'. When working through these volumes some years ago I found two illustrations so remarkably like the Maltese Cross cancellation that I made careful tracings of them (Figs 4 and 5). Unfortunately I did not record anything else except the date attributed to them by Evans — Middle Minoan iii (now merged into the neo-palatial period — 1700-1900BC). I cannot add any further information as the volumes are no longer available to me.



Figure 4

A Evans 'The Palace of Minos' Vol iv figure 186, from Knossos.



Figure 5

A Evans 'The Palace Of Minos' Vol iv figure 187, from Zakro.

It would appear that in 1840 an unknown official of the General Post Office produced a complex, arbitrary and quite original design — evidently quite original as no prototype has been found. It remained unique until Sir Arthur Evans published the illustration to volume iv of 'The Palace of Minos' in 1935 (Figs 4 and 5), some 95 years later. Their resemblance to the 1840 design is remarkable, even uncanny.

It would be easy, perhaps too easy, to dismiss the whole matter as a coincidence, but in view of the arbitrary and complex design and the lapse of time during which no comparable design has appeared, this is perhaps stretching the long arm of coincidence too far to be acceptable. Far-fetched as the coincidence theory may be, it would seem that the provision of any alternative explanation would belong rather to the Society for Psychical Research than to the archaeologist or the philatelist.

WILLIAM BULMER MA FSA

Perforations on Stamps

An interesting question was recently raised about the perforation sizes quoted for stamps in the Bulletin. The normal convention is for the top (horizontal) perforation to be stated first, followed by the side (vertical) perforation. These can be measured by perforation gauges, but findings do not always agree exactly with the published figures. Where for example a 15 x 14 figure is quoted this has in fact been 'rounded', and does not reflect any small decimal differences. These are not normally published for the following reasons: —

- i. printers are allowed a tolerance of $\pm 0.2\text{mm}$ on the dimensions of the stamps whereas the number of perforation holes must remain constant.
- ii. Owing to the shrinkage and stretching of the paper during processing, the final size of the stamps is somewhat variable and this also affects the 'perforation gauge'.

This means that any minor differences in perforation sizes which are found are within accepted production guidelines.

Letter to the Editor



Dear Mr. Gowen,

The Post Office is to be congratulated on a year of truly excellent stamp designs. I have never felt able to say this in previous years but some very difficult subjects have been interpreted in most ingenious ways and with eye-catching results. If I have any criticism to make, perhaps you tried too hard with the July 'Mail Coach' issue.

The 1980 London Landmarks set from the brush of Sir Hugh Casson is still my favourite set and will take some beating.

I look forward to seeing what your goodselves and the Stamp Advisory Committee are producing for us in 1985.

BOSTON
Lincolnshire

Best wishes,
Yours sincerely,
Eric N. Cowley

Posting Boxes



No. 68. The setting of this month's posting box is more interesting than the box itself. It is no longer the property of The Post Office and is therefore non-operational, and has been purchased by the West Lulworth Parish Council in Dorset. Under the terms of the sale it had to be sited where it could no longer be used, hence its somewhat elevated position. The box is a Wall type C cast by W. T. Allen & Company during 1881-1904. We offer our thanks to Mr P R Smart of Halesowen, West Midlands for sending us the photograph.

Christmas 1984 Discount Stamp Book



Illustrated above

Normal book showing colour cylinder numbers in the binding margin. The phosphor cylinder number P79, not visible in the illustration, is superimposed on the colour number BIB. Other related positions of the phosphor cylinder number are known. The cutting bars are at top and bottom of margin.

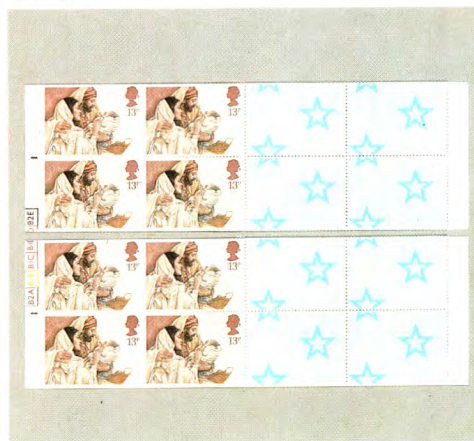
Below

Matched pair of miscut books showing the colour cylinder numbers spread over the two books. Again the phosphor number is superimposed on the colour number BIB and other related positions known.

The cutting bars are now in the centre of the margin.

The security stars, printed over the gum, have a random wallpaper effect. The ends of the panes are folded back to show the true matching from a consecutive pair of books.

L NEWBERRY



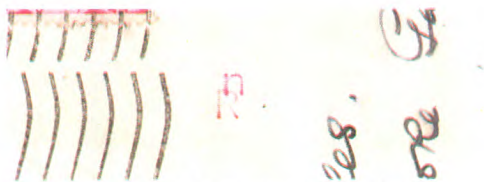
2. The Transorma

Both the management and the workers were very interested in the machine and its use, though from rather different standpoints. From the management's point of view, efficiency and accuracy were important. From the workers' it was more the disruption to their routine, the noise of the machine and the fear that some might eventually be out of a job. Naturally, there was also a battle for more money for working the machine, something which more or less cancelled out any financial savings which might be have been made. A joint management-union committee was set up which monitored complaints until 1940. And the management also carried out a lot of tests recording, in particular, missorts. The Christmas rush of 1935/6 was the first big test and the Transorma was found to have passed, but without marks of 10 out of 10.

Missorts are avidly looked for by collectors of Transorma material. You can tell that the item was missorted by its having more than one ident on it. Some letters can have up to 10 different idents, though two or three are more common. They make a most attractive addition to any collection. This is particularly the case if two of the idents come in different shades or colours.

A listing of all the idents and their dates of use would occupy too much space but some points about them can be brought out. To begin with some are quite scarce and some had a relatively short life. Also there are quite a number of variations. The upper case Y, for example, had at least four different types, one of which is very large indeed. On the other hand some of the numerals, especially those from 32 upwards and some replacement dies of the early 20s, are quite tiny. Disregarding particular types, the upper case letters J and K only seem to have been in use from late '35/early '36 to late '39/early '40. They are therefore not common. The higher numerals were not introduced until about 1961 and so some are scarce. Indeed, the numeral 35 has yet to be found and there seems to be only one example of 36.

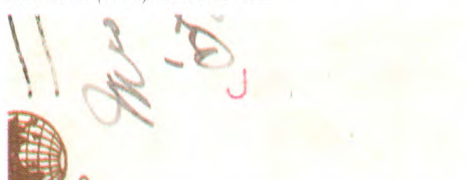
In general, the upper case letters A to Z, lower case letters a to z and the numerals up to 9 would appear to have been introduced in 1935 or shortly afterwards. Large numerals 10 to 15 came into use in 1936. There is then a gap with no new idents for



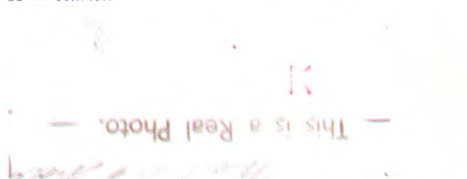
R n together The first two colour types used on the same cover (1939) R scarlet n magenta.



W H together The second two colour types used on the same cover (1950) W red H rose.



J Rare ident used from 1935 to the early part of World War II — scarlet.



K Rare ident used from 1935 to the outbreak of World War II — magenta.

quite some time. Some operators obviously went to war in 1939/40 and their replacements may have taken over their idents. Some of these replacements were women. Very few Transorma letters seem to have survived from the war period, 1944 being an especially blank time. Medium sized numerals were introduced from 1943 to 1945, and those from 24 to 31 in large size from 1948 to 1950. The very small numerals 32 to 37 and replacements for 19, 21, 22 and 31 came into use from 1961 onwards. Thus from artefacts you can trace the changing pattern of operators on the machine.

Some idents do not exist in any form. These are the lower case letters c, l, s, v and w and the numeral 1. This was to avoid confusion.

Variations occur not only in type but also, as I have mentioned in shade and colour. This is a contentious field. To describe colours or shades in

words is always difficult. It depends on the viewer, the light and the background colour of the envelope or card. However, some things can be said without fear of contradiction. The idents were printed on to the item of mail through a ribbon which was inked. The ink was normally red in colour. But after the war from November 1945 to June 1946 and then again in August 1947 black or red/black idents appear. These are not common. What seems to have happened is that a normal typewriter ribbon was used in one operator's position. This would explain the small numbers of covers still extant. Certainly, not all the positions had black ribbons and it must be remembered that the idents represented people who would not necessarily sit in the same operating position every time. These red/black idents clearly show their origin, coming as they must from a normal red/black typewriter ribbon. All covers with black or red/black idents are highly prized.

Where the contention arises is in the shades of red. There are certain clear shades but the quality of printing sometimes makes it difficult to distinguish them. This is particularly true after 1950 when different shades came into being and is even worse in the 1960s when idents were worn and you often find only part impressions on mail.

However, a study took place recently with a large sample of mail of about 5,000 items from some of the main collections. We did manage to separate out the colours to a large degree. From 1935 to 1949 there are two distinct colours which I call "magenta" and "scarlet". When seen together or under a magnifying glass they are very clear. Later about 1950 the colours change to a different red and a paler, watery rose colour, most distinctive under a glass. That there should be shades or different colours is not very surprising. After all the ribbons would have to be changed from time to time. It was only afterwards, when going through the study sheets, that it became clear that the colours alternated every nine or ten months or so. This minor bombshell meant that the colours were changed *deliberately* on all the positions, probably as a check that the ribbons had been changed. Not all were changed on the same day, though, and a very few fine covers exist with two idents on them, one of one colour and one of the other. A complete listing of periods of use of idents and when the colours were used is in course of preparation but is not yet complete.

The Transorma machines worked efficiently until 1968 when they were dismantled, the last mail going through in late June. The exact date of dismantling is not yet known. Their departure was delayed by protests from the operators and the

Union. Apparently, they had come to like them.

Although development work on the Transorma continued in Holland, in Britain matters took a different course. It was never intended that more Transormas should be imported but rather that a British machine should be built based on experience gained from working the imported version. And this is what happened.!

However, the manufacturers did sell many more of their machines to other countries and of course to other offices in Holland. Brazil, Venezuela, Argentina, Canada, the United States are only some of the countries where Transormas were used. Idents from the two machines in Germany are particularly sought after. They were in Berlin-Steglitz and Mönchengladbach, but only for a short period during the war. And the machine at The Hague continued until the late '70s.

Transorma idents are quite widely collected today. This was not always the case and there was a time when hundreds were available. One of the best places to find them was under 'Brighton' or 'Sussex' in postcard dealers' boxes. Now almost all have gone. But any mail into or out of Brighton between 1935 and 1968 ought to have a Transorma ident on it. Careful inspection may be required but is almost always rewarded. And there is still a great deal more to be learnt!

The year 1985 is an important year for Transorma studies. It marks the 50th anniversary of the introduction of the machine and various celebrations are in hand. A book is in preparation and it is hoped to have an exhibition at Brighton itself. More details will be announced in good time!

A specialist society exists which includes Transormas in its scope. It is the Postal Mechanisation Study Circle whose Secretary is John Lush, 9 Leighton Avenue, PINNER, Middlesex HA5 3BW. Their journal *Ident* has recently been publishing a 14 part serial on the background to the Transorma in Britain and details about the society and its activities are available from Mr Lush.

DOUGLAS N MUIR

Withdrawn Items

The following items will be withdrawn from sale during February 1985:

21.2.85. 5p and 75p definitive stamps with the old perforations 13½ x 14.

28.2.85. 12½p and 16p Northern Ireland definitive stamps with old perforations 13½ x 14.

117. Commonwealth Conference, 1977

A single commemorative stamp was issued on 8 June 1977 to mark the meeting of the Commonwealth Heads of Government at Lancaster House, St. James's, London, at the time of the celebrations of the Silver Jubilee of the Queen's accession as Head of the Commonwealth. The Government Heads meet every two years to discuss international developments and exchange opinions on an informal basis, enabling individual governments to seek and obtain advice on their ideas and policies. A previous meeting was held in London in 1969 and subsequent meetings were held in Singapore, where the Commonwealth Declaration was made (1971); Ottawa — the statement on Nuclear Weapon Tests (1973); and Kingston, Jamaica (1975). The London meeting (1977) was important for the statement on Apartheid in Sport.

The 13p stamp, designed by Peter Murdoch, showed a symbolic pattern of pentagons representing the 36 member countries, ringing the five continents — 'The Gathering of Nations'. The printing, by Harrison and Sons, was by the combined processes of photogravure and recess, the inscription and pentagon lines being engraved in rose-red and black to blackish green respectively. It proved to be a more successful production than the previous attempt to print in a combination of photogravure and recess on the 'Jumelle' press — the 'Sailing' issue of 1975.

The stamps were printed in sheets of 100 (two panes of 50, 5 x 10) on unwatermarked paper with 'all-over' phosphor. No major printing flaws were recorded, but some of the stamps were pre-released at Stevenage, Herts., on 3 June, and at least two

covers are known postmarked there on 4 June 1977. The quantity issued was 8,560,000 and the stamps were sold out by December 1977. The Post Office issued a presentation pack, first day cover (with a 'pentagon' postmark) and a PHQ postcard.

JAMES WATSON

Forthcoming Events

Society of Olympic Collectors

There will be a meeting of the Society of Olympic Collectors (SOC) on 2 March 1985 at Stampex in London. This will be held in the New Hall restaurant, and anyone interested in Olympics and sports philately are welcome to attend. Further details of the SOC and membership application forms are available from the Secretary, Mr J Osborne, 233 Bexley Lane, SIDCUP, Kent DA14 4JH.

GM Stamp Fairs

Fairs will be held by GM Stamps at the following locations:

LETCWORTH: to be held on 17 February and 7 April at The Plinston Hall, Broadway, LETCWORTH.

SAFFRON WALDEN: to be held on 2 March at The Lord Butler Leisure Centre, SAFFRON WALDEN.

ST ALBANS: to be held on 9 March and 27 April at The Jubilee Centre, Catherine Street, ST ALBANS.

DUNSTABLE: to be held on 16 March at the Queensway Hall, Queensway, DUNSTABLE.

HERTFORD: to be held on 31 March at The Castle Hall, Fore Street, HERTFORD.

Admission is 20p at all venues (children free) and further details can be obtained from G A Sinclair, GM Stamps, c/o National Westminster Bank, WARE, Herts.

Ray Watts — Stamp Fairs

Fairs to be held by Ray Watts — Stamp Fairs — at the following locations:—

ILFORD: to be held on 16 February, 16 March and 20 April at Ilford Labour Hall, 400 High Road, ILFORD.

BRENTWOOD: to be held on 9 March and 11 May at the Cathedral Social Centre, Ingrave Road BRENTWOOD.

ROMFORD: to be held on 9 February and 8 June at Wykeham Hall, Romford Market, ROMFORD.

Further details can be obtained from M M Watts, Ray Watts — Stamp Fairs, 157 Chelmsford Road, SHENFIELD, Essex.



The Scout Stamps Collectors Club

The annual philatelic Exhibition of the Scout Stamps Collectors Club will be held on 23/24 February 1985 at Baden-Powell House, Queen's Gate, South Kensington, LONDON, SW7 5JS. The theme of the exhibition will be the 75th Anniversary of the Girl Guides. Admission is free, and the opening times are 11 am to 6 pm on 23 February and 11 am to 4 pm on 24 February. The venue will be the Library on the second floor of Baden-Powell House.

Stevens' Stamp Sales

Fairs will be held by Stevens Stamp Sales at the following locations:—

SIDCUP: to be held on 9 February at Emmanuel Church, Hadlow Road, SIDCUP.

LOUGHTON: to be held on 16 February at the Methodist Church Hall, High Road, LOUGHTON.

ROCHESTER: to be held on 23 February at the King's Head Hotel, High Street, ROCHESTER.

Admission is free at all venues, and the fairs will be open from 10.00 am to 4.00 pm. Further details can be obtained from: Dave Stevens, 18 Gayhurst Close, Rainham, GILLINGHAM, Kent, ME8 9EA.

Cambridge Stamp Fair

A new monthly Stamp Fair will be held in Cambridge at the Arbury Community Centre on the second Saturday of each month, (except for December when it will be held on the first Saturday). It will be open from 10.00 am to 4.30 pm with free admission and car parking. The dates for 1985 are 9 February, 9 March, 13 April, 11 May, 8 June, 13 July, 10 August, 7 September, 12 October, 9 November and 7 December. Further details can be obtained from the organiser, Mr B A Downham, 70 Metcalfe Road, CAMBRIDGE CB4 2DD.

Fleetex

The eleventh annual Fleetex will be held on Saturday 30 March 1985 at 11.00 am in the Assembly Halls, Fleet, Hampshire. The exhibition is sponsored by the Fleet and North Hants Philatelic Society and the RAE Farnborough Philatelic Society. There will be several displays including the prize-winning entries of the sponsoring societies' and local schools' annual competitions, together with a large exhibit of the Philatelic Congress of Great Britain. The invited display has been contributed by members of The Hong Kong Study Circle, showing a cross-section of the subject illustrating the philately of Hong Kong and the Treaty Ports of China and Japan. There will also be meetings during the afternoon of the British

West Indies Study Circle and The Precancel Stamp Society, Great Britain, to which visitors are cordially invited. Several dealers will be in attendance, and refreshments will also be available throughout the day. Admission is 25p, 10p for juniors, or 50p for families. Further information can be obtained from Mike Czuczman, 15 Curzon Drive, Church Crookham, ALDERSHOT, Hants GR13 0JL.

Forces Cover

The Gordon Boys' School Centenary

A special philatelic cover has been produced to commemorate the centenary of the death of General Gordon and the founding of the Gordon Boys' School. The latter was founded as a National memorial at the instigation of Queen Victoria in recognition of General Gordon's outstanding service. The cover depicts 'General Gordon's Last Stand', painted by G W Joy. Bearing a 17p definitive stamp, the covers have been cancelled on 26 January 1985 with a special pictorial handstamp, BFPS 1885. The cost of the covers is £1.00 each. A limited number of covers signed by General Sir Charles Richards GCB CBE DSO BA, Chairman of the Centenary Foundation, Rear Admiral CK T Wheen, CB, Chairman of the Governors, and Mr E Firth, BA DCL, Headmaster of Gordons Boys' School, are also available at £1.50 each. Orders with the appropriate remittance made payable to Number 9 Account PCD RE (Giro Account 536 0102) should be sent to: The Philatelic Officer PCD RE, Inglis Barracks, Mill Hill, LONDON NW7 1PX, together with a 9" x 5" stamped addressed envelope.

Commemorative Covers

The British Beekeepers' Association

A special philatelic cover is being produced by the British Beekeepers' Association to coincide with the issue of the Insects stamps on 12 March 1985. The specially designed cover is printed in colour and depicts honeybees on a comb and the logo of the Association. The British Beekeepers' Association has its headquarters at Stoneleigh in Warwickshire, and has member Associations and affiliated Branches throughout the country. It was founded in 1874 to protect the interests of its members and promote the craft of beekeeping.

The cost of the cover bearing the 17p Insect stamp depicting the bumblebee and cancelled with a

special handstamp is £2.25. The cover is also available bearing the full set of Insects stamps at £4.00 each; a limited number have been signed by the President of the Beekeepers' Association and are available at £6.00 each. All prices are inclusive of postage and packing, but overseas customers should add 50p to cover airmail costs and are requested to pay in sterling. Orders with the appropriate remittance made payable to A G Bradbury should be sent to him at 2 Fairholme Road, LEICESTER, LE2 6GL.

Railriders Club

A special philatelic cover was produced for the Rail Riders Club to coincide with the issue of the Famous Trains stamps on 22 January 1985. The cover depicts the locomotive, Rail Riders 47406, and has the full set of the Famous Trains stamps affixed, cancelled with a special handstamp. The cost of the cover is £3.75 including postage and packing, and only a limited number have been produced. The Rail Riders Club is for young people between the ages of 5 and 15, and is prepared to offer free membership to people applying for this philatelic cover. Orders with the appropriate remittance made payable to Rail Riders FDC should be sent to: Rail Riders First Day Cover, PO Box 20, WETHERBY, W Yorks, LS23 7EB.

Order of St John Musical Society

A special philatelic cover has been commissioned by The Order of St John Musical Society to commemorate the occasion of the Gala Concert being held on 3 February 1985. The specially designed cover features the symbol of the Musical Society. The cover has a 17p Welsh definitive stamp affixed, cancelled with a special pictorial handstamp. The cost of the covers is £1 each including postage and packing. A limited number of covers signed by Lord Aberdare, the Prior of the Priory for Wales, and Donald McDougall, the Chancellor of the Priory, are also available at £1.50 each. All proceeds from the sale of these covers will go to the Order of St John Ophthalmic Hospital in Jerusalem. Orders with the appropriate remittance made payable to The Post Office and should be sent to: The Order of St John Commemorative Cover, PO Box 400, 220/8 Penarth Road, CARDIFF, CF1 1RA.

The Firefly Trust

A special philatelic cover was produced on 22 January 1985 for the Firefly Trust to coincide with the issue of the Famous Trains stamps. The cover is diastamped in three colours and the stamps have been cancelled with a special handstamp. The cost of the cover is £4.00 and signed versions are also

available. Further details can be obtained on application to: Cotswold Covers Limited, Liege House, Marshfield, CHIPPENHAM, Wilts., SN14 8LZ.

The Flying Scotsman

A special gold-foiled philatelic cover featuring the 'Flying Scotsman' engine was produced to coincide with the Famous Trains stamp issue on 22 January 1985. The engine 'Flying Scotsman' was built at Doncaster and is a source of local pride. The covers are available at £2.25 each bearing the 17p 'Flying Scotsman' stamp, and at £4.00 each bearing the full set of Famous Trains stamps. The covers have been cancelled with a specially commissioned 'Flying Scotsman' handstamp on 22 January 1985. Prices include postage and packing, but an extra £1.00 should be added for overseas orders which should be in £ sterling. Orders with the appropriate remittance made payable to A G Bradbury (specifying the Doncaster postmark) should be sent to him at: 2 Fairholme Road, LEICESTER, LE2 6GL.

Philatelic Bulletin

Editor Charles Gowen

Assistant Editor Frank Brench

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