

Philatelic Bulletin



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Introduction

The 19 February 1969 was a red-letter day in the history of the Post Office when Her Majesty the Queen opened the new National Postal Museum. A description of the opening ceremony and some information about the museum is given.

The main article this month ‘Valentines and the Post Office’ is by Frank Staff who is well known to our readers as an eminent postal historian. Mr Staff’s new book on the history of the Valentine was published on 27 January.

The forthcoming Anniversaries stamp details are given and the usual features complete this issue.

Opening of National Postal Museum

On 19 February the Queen accompanied by the Duke of Edinburgh opened the National Postal Museum in the presence of a distinguished gathering which included Mr Reginald M. Phillips of Brighton. The Queen was received by the Lord Mayor of London, Sir Charles Trinder, and then inspected a guard of honour mounted by the Royal Engineers (Postal Courier and Communications) of which she is Colonel-in-Chief.

A plaque commemorating the opening of the Museum was unveiled by Her Majesty who then toured the museum galleries. Mr Phillips, accompanied by the Postmaster General, the Rt Hon John Stonehouse, MP, showed the Queen the special exhibit from his collection illustrating the evolution of the British postage stamp during the 19th century. It was Mr Phillips gift of his magnificent collection of 19th-century postage stamps, together with a capital sum for its maintenance, which led to the inauguration of the museum on a small scale in 1966.

The enlarged museum opened by the Queen has display space for over one hundred and thirty times as many stamps as it was possible to show in the original premises.

Mr F. Marcus Arman, the Curator, showed Her Majesty some of the important material in the Post Office collection including a complete proof sheet of the famous penny black; the world’s first adhesive postage stamp of 1840 and the original master die from which these stamps were printed.

Mr G. R. Downes, CB, Director Operations and Overseas Department of the Post Office, showed the Queen the display of all the stamps of her reign which had been specially presented in her honour. Two hundred and eleven stamps of one hundred and sixty-seven different designs have been issued in the United Kingdom between the Queen’s accession and December 1968 compared with the one hundred and twenty-four stamps of one hundred and ninety-nine varying denominations which were issued between 1840 and 1952.

Before the Queen left the museum she



Photograph by courtesy of Press Association

posted in the museum's special posting box letters addressed to Prince Andrew, whose birthday it was, and to Prince Edward.

The Post Office intends that the museum should commemorate that unique 19th-century invention – the postage stamp. The museum will be of value to all sections of the community, by stimulating and enlarging the interest of collectors and also offering designers of postage stamps the opportunity to study design trends. The display, showing every British Postage stamp issued from 1840 to the end of 1968, together with every stamp issued elsewhere in the world, offers designers and philatelists a unique visual experience. The stamps demonstrate the excellence of British artists, designers and craftsmen in the production,

in vast quantities, of designs of a minuscule character, both for use in this country and overseas. Eighteen thousand million stamps are printed in Britain each year for postal administrations overseas, earning the country over £1,250,000 in foreign currency. The display of all these stamps, under one roof, can only stimulate British artists, designers and printers to greater endeavour in this world competitive business.

The museum, which adjoins the London Chief Post Office in King Edward Street, EC1 – near St. Paul's tube station – is open to the public from 20 February. Admission is free and it is open from 10 am to 4.30 pm Mondays to Saturdays.

Valentines and the Post Office



Coloured woodcut, about 1850. Published by S. Marks & Sons. Comic valentines of this sort caricatured every trade and profession.

In the early days of the valentine letter sheet, it was usual for the lover to leave it at his sweetheart's door. For, the post was costly – far more than it is today, and although the Act of 1765 made country and provincial penny posts possible, there were none. London had its Penny Post – followed by Dublin and Edinburgh in 1773 and it was not until the end of the century that provincial penny posts began to be set down. So that by the 1820s nearly every town and village throughout the kingdom was served by its local Penny Post.

This enabled valentines of the usual letter sheet type and size to be sent for one penny if posted and delivered within a prescribed Penny Post area. But, when sent to any place beyond, then the postage to be paid was often very costly, and this maybe explains why valentines in postally-used condition dated

before the advent of the Uniform Penny Post are decidedly uncommon and scarce.

A cruel trick sometimes played upon a person against whom one carried a grudge was to send a rude, unkindly drawn and worded valentine. Postage in those days was seldom pre-paid, but was collected on delivery, so that the person receiving it was doubly outraged by having to pay for a malicious and unkindly worded valentine.

Now, it had for long been the custom for valentines to be given anonymously, and Post Offices, especially in country districts, frequently obliged by causing the name stamp showing the place of posting to be blurred or so indistinctly marked as to be unreadable. This would make it easier for a nasty, unpleasant valentine to be sent quite anonymously through the post, for not even the clue of the place of origin would show.

Our GPO records possess a correspondence on the matter of rude valentines, for recipients having paid the postage on delivery would try to obtain refund from the Post Office. Reading over these complaints and the replies given, reveals that those in authority in the Post Office showed a very human understanding.

The opinion expressed by the Solicitor to the Post Office in 1817 was that postage should not be refunded. He stated that numerous persons are anxious to receive valentines, but after seeing the contents are anxious to have their postage refunded. He suggested they should be more cautious in taking in letters at this time of the season, and added that valentine letters were a good source of revenue.

But so many complaints came in that Sir Francis Freeling, the Secretary, was concerned, and in 1824 reported to the Postmaster-General:

'I am induced to bring the subject of the postage charged on *Valentines*, sent by Post, before your Lordship, more especially as I have this day 8 or 10 applications from the Country, claiming a return of such postage.

'I must premise that from time immemorial the Post Office has *not* refunded postage on

any thing of that description, but that in the year 1817 I made it a distinct question to the Law Officer of the Department, his opinion which, I now enclose, is clear and to the point, and has hitherto justified the old and immemorial practice of not returning the postage.

'We have however invariably relieved the applicants when there was anything gross or personally offensive in the communication, and I have even proceeded further by ordering the postage to be reduced to a single letter when the Valentine has been sent in an Envelope.

'Your Lordship is well aware that we are in the habit of using a discretionary power in cases of applications to be relieved from the payment of postage on Letters *evidently unnecessary*, viz. such as are sent for the wanton purpose of putting the parties to expense, anonymous letters, not relating to the occupation of the person to whom addressed, letters of a scurrilous and threatening nature, etc, etc. The Solicitor in his opinion as to the Valentines was aware of the exercise of that discretion and he draws the line distinctly. I am led now to place this matter before your Lordship because the number of applications already made in unusually great, and it is evident to common observation that the public considers Revenue-Laws and regulations less binding... than it formerly did. Your Lordship after perusing the Solicitor's opinion, will have the opportunity of deciding whether this construction and view of the case are sound and not to be departed from, with the exception of that discretion which I have already adverted to....'

To this, the Postmaster-General, Lord Chichester, replied that he agreed entirely with the Solicitor. But the Post Office continued to be bothered, and three years later, on 17 February 1827, Sir Francis Freeling again wrote to the Postmaster-General, referring instances where he thought fit to refund the postage. He says:

'In further elucidation of this subject I enclose 2 applications I have received this morning: the one from Mr Robinson of Hudders-

field claiming a return of the postage on 2 Valentines addressed to his Daughters. There is nothing immoral or offensive in these Letters; they appear to be in the usual strain of such productions at this season of the year, and may be fairly called legitimate Valentines, on these we should *not* return the postage.

'The other application from the Reverend Edward Kempe is different, this is an Enclosure and an Envelope, and on this we should return *one* rate even if the enclosed were a fair Valentine, but as it is a vulgar Engraving, with insulting lines under written we should consider this a case for a return of the whole postage....'

Apart from the question of making a return of the postage, the reference to the use of envelopes at this early date is very interesting. Those who collect old letters and postal history material will be aware that envelopes are seldom come by at this date – the 1820s. It is therefore interesting to have it recorded that envelopes were actually in use by persons other than those with the privilege of franking – for, the use of an envelope with an enclosure automatically accounted for a double rate of postage, which is the reason why envelopes were not in general use until the advent of a Uniform Penny Postage in 1840.

Comic and vulgar valentines continued to have a vogue; indeed, they contributed as much to the British sense of humour as the so-called comic seaside picture postcards do today. Actually, they went too far. From being vulgar, they often overstepped the mark, and became obscene, so that by the time the prettily printed Christmas cards were all the rage, the beautiful valentines were gradually being superseded by the comic and often unpleasant valentine.

In 1857 the Post Office issued an Order to all Post Offices forbidding the smudging of postmarks on valentines in order to conceal the place of origin:

Postmasters are now prohibited from aiding any attempt to conceal from those to whom letters are addressed the knowledge of the

Recent and Forthcoming Changes

place from where they originate – which knowledge is, under ordinary circumstances, obtainable from the postmark. Accordingly a number of valentines which have been sent this year to country postmasters at a distance from the place where they were written, with a request that they might be posted at those remote offices, have been sent to the dead letter office, and thence to the parties for whom they were destined, accompanied with a statement showing where the valentines were written, and the means that had been taken to elude detection.

By the end of the nineteenth century, the comic valentine had practically stifled the custom of sending valentines, and the greetings card manufacturers tried in vain to foster the revival of the valentine custom. Unanimously they agreed to maintain high standards both in quality and taste, and to discourage the sale of vulgar and distasteful cards. But it was too late, and the public did not respond, so that during the Edwardian era about the only valentines to be popularly used were those published as postcards, and with the coming of World War I, St Valentine's Day was almost forgotten.

Not until 1926 was the custom revived, and then purely as a commercial venture. But the old idea of sending a pretty card to one's particular friend caught hold again, and once more the shops had a gay and colourful display a few weeks before 14 February. In 1936, too, the Post Office entered into the spirit of things, by issuing a special Greetings Telegram. The first of these was designed by the well-known artist Rex Whistler, and although no mention of St Valentine's Day or the date was given it was in use as a greetings telegram for that day only. The next year – and for every successive year until the outbreak of World War II, the Post Office issued a St Valentine's Day telegram – with the saint's name and the year prominently printed. These Post Office Valentine's Day Telegrams are worth collecting. They are attractively designed and brightly coloured, and as they were in use for day of issue only there cannot be too many of them about.

Postage Due Labels

The 2d Postage Due Label issued on 26 November 1968 was on coated unwatermarked paper with PVA, but was not printed by photogravure as originally stated.

The 1s Postage Due Label was issued on 19 November 1968 on coated unwatermarked paper with PVA.

The 5d Postage Due Label on coated unwatermarked paper with PVA was issued on 3 January 1969.

Definitives

The 9d definitive was issued on 29 November 1968 on coated unwatermarked paper with PVA.

Regionals

The Scotland 1s 6d was issued on 12 December 1968 on coated unwatermarked paper with PVA (Dorothy Wilding design).

The Wales 1s 6d on coated unwatermarked paper with PVA gum is expected to be issued in June and the Northern Ireland 1s 6d in July.

Help Us to help You

When requesting an exchange of covers received in a damaged condition, please remember to return the spoiled covers with your application.

When applying for replacement of lost covers, always let us know whether or not you are a deposit account holder. This halves the field of search and doubles the speed of replacement.

Philatelic Posting Boxes

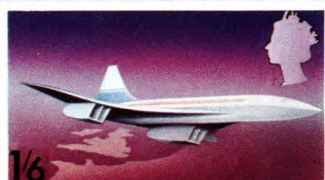
Special philatelic posting boxes will be provided at Stevenage, Herts, from 5 March 1969, and Basildon, Essex, from 2 April 1969.

Withdrawal of Bureau Stock Items

The British Bridges issue will be withdrawn from sale on 28 April and the British Anniversaries on 28 May 1969.

Unaccepted Stamp Designs

The designs featured this month are a selection of those which were not accepted for the Concorde issue



Goaman



Goaman



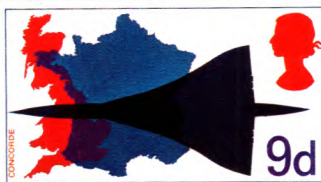
Sharland



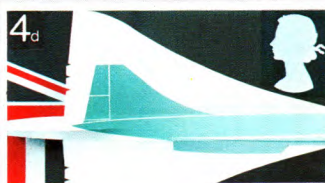
Sharland



Margaret Calvert



Margaret Calvert



Harrison



Harrison

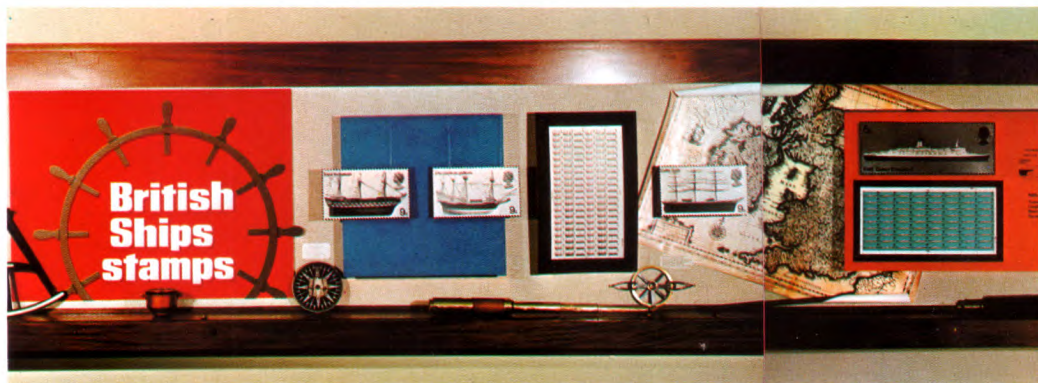


Harrison



Harrison

Ships Display at Edinburgh



To mark the British Ships stamp issue the Philatelic Bureau gallery at Edinburgh recently presented a colourful display with a distinctly nautical flavour.

Sheets of 'Ships' stamps were mounted among a fine selection of antique navigation instruments loaned by the Royal Scottish Museum and flanked by up to the minute

NATO 20th Anniversary

Twelve countries signed the North Atlantic Treaty in Washington on the 4 April 1949. These were Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxemburg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, United Kingdom and USA. In 1952 Greece and Turkey acceded to the Treaty and the Federal Republic of Germany in 1955.



The NATO Headquarters was originally located in Paris, but moved to Brussels in October 1967. A British Forces Post Office has served the Headquarters since 1951.

To commemorate the NATO 20th Anniver-

sary the British Forces Postal Service has produced a special first-day cover which will be on sale from the British Forces Post Offices at NATO in Brussels and at SHAPE (Supreme Headquarters Allied Power Europe) in Casteau near Mons, Belgium.

The commemoration covers will bear the British NATO 1s 6d Anniversary Stamp. Special date stamps will be used at the Forces Post Offices at NATO HQ and NATO (SHAPE) on the 2 April 1969.

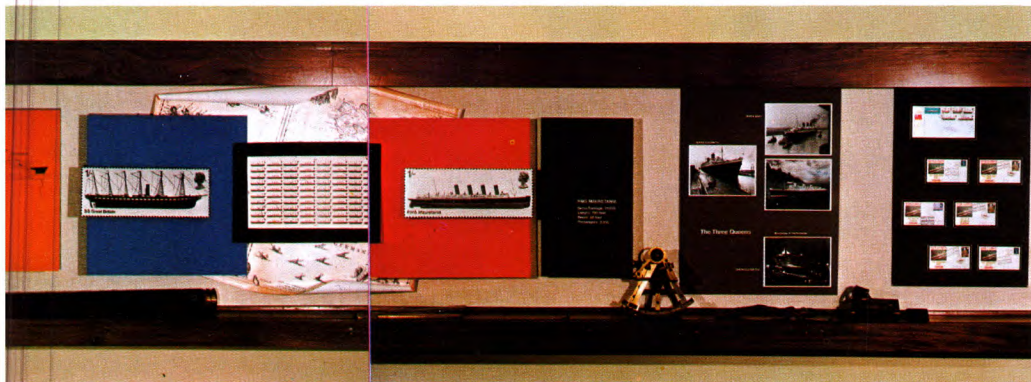
The following philatelic service will be available from:

Officer Commanding,
115 PCCU RE,
British Forces Post Office 49.

The special first-day covers with British NATO 1s 6d Anniversary Stamp cancelled with the special Date Stamp will be forwarded at a cost of 3s 4d each.

In addition pre-addressed, pre-stamped (minimum postage 9d) envelopes only will be cancelled with the date stamp and returned at a cost of 1s.

Payment should be made by British Postal Order or International Money Order.



photographs of the three great 'Queen' liners.

Enlarged reproductions of the stamps were displayed on suspended panels while the centre-piece showed a sectional diagram of the

new Cunarder backed by ancient charts of Britain's coastal waters. The effect was to provide a most interesting display for stamp collectors and aspiring mariners of all ages.



Postmark Slogans

'Select Bexhill-on-Sea Quiet Clean Good Music and Theatre Free colour Folders of PO 1/- for Town Guide to Publicity Department BPO Bexhill-on-Sea, Sussex' is in use at Bexhill-on-Sea until 30 April 1969.

'Bexhill-on-Sea Ideal for Children' will be re-used at Bexhill-on-Sea from 1-31 May 1969.

'Brecon South Wales for Industrial Sites in Pleasant Surroundings. Apply to: Town Clerk, Brecon' will be re-used at Brecon from 1-31 May 1969.

'Dartmouth Royal Regatta August 28th-30th' will be used at Dartmouth in the transposed position from 5 May until 24 August 1969.

'Holiday at Dunoon' is in use at Dunoon until 30 September 1969.

'Dial Carefully - All figure Telephone Numbers - Dial Correctly' will be re-used at Glasgow from 19 May until 27 December 1969.

'International TT Races June Isle of Man' will be re-used at Douglas from 31 March until 5 May 1969.

'International Cycle Races June Isle of Man' will be re-used at Douglas from 12 May until 8 June 1969.

'Jodrell Bank Open Daily 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. Easter-October' will be re-used at Manchester from 1 April until 11 May and again from 9 June until 30 September 1969.

'Book your place in the Sun Margate Free Guide from Dept. 97 Information Centre Margate' will be used at Margate in the transposed position until further notice.

'Sheffield and District Works Sports Association 1919-1969 Golden Jubilee' will be used at Sheffield in the transposed position from 1 May until 7 June.

'Industry Prospers in Peterlee' will be re-used at Peterlee until 30 June 1969.

'Roker and Seaburn Sunderland's Twin Resorts' will be re-used at Sunderland from 1 April until 31 July 1969.

'New Industry Thrives in Sunderland' will be re-used at Sunderland until 31 March 1969.

'York Races' will be used in the transposed position at York from 21 April until 11 May, 22 May until 11 June, 19 June until 10 July, 28 July until 17 August, 18 August until 1 September, and from 17 September until 7 October.

'East of England Show July 15th, 16th, 17th Peterborough' will be used in the transposed position at Peterborough, Huntingdon, Oundle, St Ives, St Neots, Stamford, Whittlesey, Boston, Oakham, Ely, Haverhill, Royston and Bedford from 1 May until 16 July 1969.

'Family Welfare Association Centenary Year COS 1869-1969 FWA' will be used in the standard position, transposed where possible at Paddington, Battersea Eastern, Northern, Eastern Central, South Eastern, Western, Western Central, North Western and South Western London District Offices from 10 February until 5 May 1969.

'Forestry Commission Jubilee 1919-1969 Visit the Forestry Exhibition Edinburgh June 5th 6th and 7th' will be used standard, transposed where possible at Carlisle, Manchester, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Leeds, London Eastern Central District Office, Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh and Glasgow from 13 April until 7 June 1969.

'South of England Show Ardingley (Sussex) June 5 6 7' will be used transposed at Haywards Heath from 4 March until 4 June.

'Newmarket Races' will be re-used at Newmarket from 17 March until 26 March.

'The "Mounties" are coming to the West Midlands Show Shrewsbury 21st-22nd May' will be used transposed at Shrewsbury from 10 March until 21 May.

'The Premier Provincial Antiques Fair April 22nd-26th Solihull Civic Hall' will be used transposed at Solihull from 16 March until 26 April.

'Southport Flower Show August 27 28 29' will be used transposed at Southport from 2 April until further notice.

'New Industry Thrives in Sunderland' is in use at Sunderland until 31 March.

Special Handstamps

'Croeso 69 Tywyn Merioneth' will be used at Barmouth, Merioneth, on 28 May 1969. The circular design has no motif.

'6th Derby Company The Boys Brigade Jubilee Year. 1919-1969 Derby' will be used on 26 April 1969. The Boys Brigade emblem is incorporated in the circular design.

'Scottish Annual Philatelic Congress - Bridge of Allan' will be used at Stirling on 19 April 1969. The circular design has a central motif of RMS Columba - the first travelling post office which was originally staffed from the Head Post Office, Greenock.

'Annual Delegate Meeting - National Union of Journalists Douglas - IofM' will be used at Douglas on 16 April 1969. The design is rectangular.

Two handstamps will be used at Chelmsford on 7 June 1969. Both incorporate the first slogans used in 1675.

1. Ingatestone Essex, Essex Post Goes and Coms Every Day.

2. Chelmsford Essex, SX Post Goes and Comes Every Day 1675.

All items for reposting for the above handstamp should be sent under cover to the Head Postmasters concerned with clear instructions regarding the impressions required.

'Guild of St. Gabriel Convention, St Paul's London EC1' will be used at East Central District Office on 29 March 1969. The rectangular design has a central motif of an angel bearing a cross. Items for reposting should be sent under cover to the Controller EC/FS London Chief Office EC1.

'Stampex Royal Horticultural Hall London SW1' will be used at South Western District Office 5 March-13 March 1969. The circular design has no motif. Items for reposting should be sent under cover to the District Postmaster SWDO.

'National Postal Museum London EC1' has been in use at Eastern Central District Office from 19 February 1969 and will continue until further notice. The circular design has central motif of the old Maltese Cross Obliterator. Items for reposting should be

sent, under cover, to the Controller EC/FS, King Edward Building, London EC1.

A special handstamp to commemorate the appearance of Swindon Football Club at the League Cup Final is to be used at Swindon on 15 March 1969 with a football as the central motif.

'Centenary Year of the Cycle Industry' will be used at Coventry on 2 June 1969. An old-fashion-style bicycle completes the central motif.

'The Royal Borough of Caernarvon - Investiture 1969 - BLWYDDYN YR ARWIS-GIAD 69' will be used from 1 March 1969 at Caernarvon to commemorate the investiture of the Prince of Wales year. The general design of the stamp is of castle form.

'Wiltshire Philatelic Federation 9th Convention - Wells Somerset' will be used at Bath on 31 May 1969 with the Bishops Palace as a central motif.

'Great Outdoors Exhibition - Kelvin Hall Glasgow' will be used at Glasgow from 22 March 1969 to 30 March 1969 inclusive, with a modern design tent as a central motif.

Items for re-posting for the above handstamps should be sent to the Head Postmaster concerned.

Pictorial Stamp Book Covers in 1969

After the February or March issues of the 4s 6d, 5s and 6s stamp books, the cover designs will be changed every four months. The designs of the 10s book will continue to be changed every six months.

New Stamp for Gandhi Centenary

In last month's *Bulletin* we said that an additional stamp would be issued in 1969 to mark the centenary of the birth of Mahatma Gandhi. This will be a 1s 6d value and the date of issue will be 13 August.

Notable Anniversary Stamps

A special issue of five stamps is to be made on 2 April commemorating Notable Anniversaries, the values are 5d, 9d, 1s, 1s 6d, 1s 9d.

The 5d stamp commemorates the 50th Anniversary of the first non-stop flight of the Atlantic by Alcock and Brown. It shows press portraits of the two fliers above the fuselage of

their aeroplane and was designed by Philip Sharland.

The 10th Anniversary of the Conference of European Postal and Telecommunications Administrations (CEPT) is depicted on the 9d stamp. Designed by Luigi Gasbarra and Giorgio Belli, Rome, it is common to all mem-



Notable Anniversaries – Some Background Information

ber countries who may wish to issue a stamp. Michael and Sylvia Goaman have adapted this for our own issue by the inclusion of the Queen's head.

The 1s value marks the 50th Anniversary of the International Labour Organization. A symbolic design by Philip Sharland shows a hand holding a spanner.

The 20th Anniversary of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization is the subject of the 1s 6d stamp. Philip Sharland designed this stamp which shows a flag comprising of the individual flags of all the member nations. These flags are in alphabetical order top left to right, down the rows.

The 1s 9d stamp commemorates the 50th Anniversary of the first flight from England to Australia. The stamp was designed by Michael and Sylvia Goaman and shows on the left the Vickers Vimy machine in which the flight was made. A globe, superimposed with the route of the flight, is shown on the right.

Printing details

Printer : Harrison and Sons

Paper : Coated unwatermarked phosphor lined

Process : Photogravure

Machines : 9d, 1s, 1s 6d, 1s 9d Sheet fed rotary
5d Reel fed rotary

Size : 5d 1.6" × .95" landscape

9d 1.6" × .95" landscape

1s 1.6" × .95" landscape

1s 6d 1.6" × .95" landscape

1s 9d 1.6" × .95" landscape

Perforation : 15 × 14

Number to sheet : 120

Colours : 5d Black, Blue, Brown, Stone

9d Light Blue, Dark Blue, Green,
Black

1s Mauve, Red, Blue

1s 6d Light Blue, Yellow, Red, Dark
Blue, Black, Green

1s 9d Yellow, Green, Sepia

For the first time all sheets will have their total face value printed on them – once in the margin of each quarter sheet.

First Non-stop Transatlantic Flight by Alcock and Brown

The first non-stop flight across the Atlantic was made in 1919 by Captain John Alcock and Lieut Arthur Brown in a Vickers Vimy. They flew the 1,890 miles from St. Johns, Newfoundland, to Clifden Galway in 16 hours 12 minutes.

C.E.P.T.

The Conference of European Postal and Telecommunications Administrations (C.E.P.T.) was founded in 1959 and now has 24 members. Its principal aim is to develop and improve the quality and range of services offered to the public. It pursues this objective through joint study of the various technical, operational and administrative problems involved and through the exchange of information and personnel.

The British Post Office plays a major part in this work of international co-operation and progress.

International Labour Organization

The International Labour Organization was set up in 1919 to advance the cause of social justice and in so doing, contribute to the establishment of universal and lasting peace.

It has a membership of 118 countries and is unique in having not only government representatives but also representatives of employers and workers taking a full part in its activities.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization

The North Atlantic Treaty was signed on 4 April 1949 by the Foreign Ministers of Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxemburg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, UK and USA.

There are now representatives of 15 sovereign states in permanent session in Paris.

First Flight to Australia

On 12 November, Ross and Keith Smith left Hounslow in a Vickers Vimy for the first flight to Australia. They arrived in Darwin in just under 28 days covering the 11,130 miles in 135 hours 55 minutes flying time.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Sir,

After reading the correspondence in the January issue, I feel that my letter in the November issue, in response to the request for suggestions for subjects to be illustrated on future stamps, may require some clarification. My former colleague, Mr Coxon, thinks that I and other correspondents were joking. May I assure him that I was quite serious. My suggestion concerning omnibus liveries was made in an attempt to portray the British way of life on British stamps by the illustration of a distinctively British form of transport which is widespread throughout the country and, moreover, is capable of being identified with all regions of the country.

Mr Hatfull thinks such designs would be expensive to produce. That may be so, but surely the British Post Office wishes to give value for money now that many special issues include high value stamps. Besides acknowledging major export manufacturers, my suggestion will allow towns and regions of all parts of Britain to be spotlighted both at home and abroad, and will allow much scope with colour processing. Railway locomotives are another possibility, but they do not possess the variety of local associations as buses, while ships, fishing and wallpaper are not, perhaps, distinctively British.

My suggestion was not aimed particularly at commemorative issues. I would like to see pictorial definitives. I will relieve Mr Hatfull of his concern for Post Office counter staff dealing with 90 sheets of one value. There are at least 60 current definitives, taking regional issues into account, and a subject such as my suggestion will allow of many variations on the one theme, each of the existing stamp regions having its own representation. A pictorial definitive issue could last for a number of years before the subject need be changed, thus making the expense to philatelists no greater than at present.

I agree with Mr Coxon and Mr Hatfull that the issue of stamps has become over-commercialized with many and multiple com-

memorative issues. We are now commemorating *tenth* anniversaries! Commemoratives up to the present reign appear to me to be skilfully designed, tasteful, and because of their infrequency, have become good investments. Therefore, let us have fewer commemoratives, no multiple designs for the same value, more pictorial definitives, and no anniversaries of less than (say) thirty years.

Finally, may I register my disappointment with the Christmas stamps for 1968. Even if this country is declining in Christianity, it is still a Christian country by Establishment, and the Christian festival of Christmas should be commemorated by the portrayal of Christian subjects. Our stamp designers have much to learn from New Zealand in this respect. The 1968 Christmas stamps would have been excellent for commemorating an international toy fair, but as commemoratives of Christmas they merely contribute towards the further secularization of our country.

Yours faithfully,

ERIC OGDEN

Grasscroft, Lancs

Dear Sir,

Many people have been writing suggesting topics for stamps. I think it would be best if Britain kept to issuing stamps to commemorate important events and anniversaries that occur in the year. I realize that this would be inconvenient to thematic collectors, but it would end arguments over different topics.

With one of Britain's greatest events coming up 'The Investiture of the Prince of Wales' would it be possible to issue a set taken from actual photographs instead of the normal drawing type. Many countries are issuing these 'photo-type' stamps and it seems annoying that we should be left out. I am sure many collectors would welcome these type of issues.

Yours faithfully,

IAN WARRICK

Reading, Berks

Caernarvon Castle 5s Stamp – Special Service

Dear Sir,

In spite of Miss Moore's support for Mrs Barlow's suggestion, please let us *NOT* have a series of stamps with 'the Coat of Arms of every County'. Surely no one wants a set of ninety-five stamps – and if some counties were omitted we might have civil war!

Instead, why not use Michael Goaman's beautiful though rejected designs (reproduced in the *Philatelic Bulletin* for September '66) for a second series of British Birds?

Yours faithfully,

J. R. C. HINDLE

Southborough, Tunbridge Wells

The current 5s stamp bearing a reproduction of Caernarvon Castle will remain on sale after 5 March 1969 when the new high value stamps are issued.

Letters bearing the 5s Caernarvon stamp posted in the special box at Caernarvon Head Office between 1 March and 31 December 1969 will be cancelled with a special handstamp to provide a Prince of Wales Investiture Year memento. The handstamp reads 'The Royal Borough of Caernarvon Investiture 1969, Blwyddyn yr Arwisgiad 69'.

Items for re-posting should be sent to the Head Postmaster, Caernarvon.

STOP PRESS

The Post Office Trophy

Our congratulations to Mr B. L. Barker, who is the first winner of the Post Office Trophy. His winning entry of *QE II Castle* issues will be displayed at Stampex.

Postmark Slogans

The postmark slogan 'The National Postal Museum London Chief Office E.C.1' will be re-used at ECDO, Mount Pleasant, from 19 February until further notice. The slogan will also be re-used at Edinburgh from 19 February until 18 March 1969.

'Park and Shop in Harlow in Comfort' will be used transposed at Harlow from 25 March until 9 April. This will replace 'Harlow Market for Better Bargains' which was advertised locally as being used during this period.

'Ideal Home Exhibition Olympia London March 4th–29th 69' will be used standard, transposed where possible, at SEDO, ECDO, PADD DO, SWDO, NDO, ECDO, Mt Pleasant and NWDO from 24 February until 30 March.

Special Handstamps

A special handstamp engraved 'National Postal Museum London E.C.1' will be used at ECDO from 19 February 1969 until further notice on all items posted in the special collecting box at the museum.

The design is circular with a Maltese Cross motif in the centre. All items for re-posting should be sent to the Controller, ECDO, King Edward Street, London EC1.

'Yorkshire Philatelic Association Twenty Third Annual Convention' will be used at Sheffield on 3 May 1969. The central motif shows the postmark used in 1869 at Sheffield.

'20th Anniversary Nato'. Two different design datestamps are to be used. The first bears a central motif of a four-cornered star with NATO above and SHAPE beneath while the other has HQ beneath the star. Both are to be used on 2 April 1969 by British Forces Postal Services. Items for re-posting should be sent to:

Officer Commanding, 115 Postal and
Courier Communications Unit BFPO 26.