

Philatelic Bulletin

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Editorial

As was announced in the 'stop press' of the October issue of the Philatelic Bulletin, three new high value postage stamps are to be introduced on 2 February next year. We thought it appropriate therefore to start the new year with a series of articles, by Douglas Evans, on the current recess printed high values. Mr Evans has made a detailed study of the printing process, plating and characteristics of these particular stamps. The first instalment will appear in January.

Readers of James Watson's articles over the last few months will be pleased to know that he is to contribute an additional series shortly which he has called, 'Stamps for Pleasure.' The articles have been designed to answer the many questions which new collectors invariably ask.

We would like to express our thanks to Miss Alma Grunberg and Mr Peter Jennings for their respective series of articles during the year, both of which are now concluded.

International Stamp Exhibition 1980

The Post Office has agreed in principle to help the organisers of an international philatelic exhibition being planned for London in 1980.

While details have yet to be decided, proposals being considered are for money to be raised by the issue of miniature souvenir sheets consisting of stamps in the normal values for special issues plus a premium. The proceeds from the premium would be used in the first instance to help finance the exhibition and any residue would be used to create a special philatelic fund to support other activities connected with the hobby.

Two issues of miniature sheets would probably be made, one in 1978 and the other in 1980.

The stamps in the miniature sheets would also be available at post office counters in the usual sheet form at face value.

Cinderella Stamp Club Display

The 1-24 December display in Stanley Gibbons' Romano House Gallery, 399 Strand, London WC2, will feature some fascinating material provided by the Cinderella Stamp Club of Great Britain on the theme 'Local Stamps Of The World'.

The display will show a cross-section of private locally issued postage stamps from various parts of the world. Among these will be used and unused 19th century stamps of Hankow, Chinkiang and Wei-Hai-Wei, rare transatlantic steamship service stamps; two postcards carried by the Zwieselalp (Germany) local post; British circular delivery company labels; examples of the well-known Oxford and Cambridge college stamps; imitations of the famous Sutherland and Co stamps; Australian emergency post labels; People's League mail; Prisoner-of-War camp mail from World War I; Swiss Hotel post issues and many other interesting items.

Gems from the RM Phillips Collection

XLII: Post-1854 Imperforate Line Engraved



This month's (two) gems are fine imperforate examples of the One Penny and Two Penny stamps of the 1855 to 1858 issues, which were normally always perforated.

The Onepenny, exceptionally well tied on cover with a London EC postmark of June 1859, is plate 52. Similar imperforate varieties, all rare, are recorded from plates 41, 42, 45, 47, 48, 51, 55, 57, 60, 62, 66, and reserve plate 17. There is a second example in the R M Phillips Collection of plate 52, imperforate, on a cover dated January 1862. This is possible because this plate was printed from at various times between 1852 and 1864.

The TwoPenny stamp, illustrated here superimposed on the 1d cover, is even rarer. It is an exceptionally large margined copy of Plate 5, watermark Large Crown, the normal (perforated) stamps dating from 20 July 1855 onwards.

According to Wiggins ('The Postage Stamps of Great Britain' Part 2) the imperforate 1d errors probably come from complete imperforate sheets, but it has also been suggested that the errors were caused by a perforating comb jumping to miss one or more rows thus leaving some stamps wholly or partially imperforate.

A G RIGO DE RIGHI

Post Office Appoints Foreign Distributor

As part of its drive to boost world-wide philatelic sales of British postage stamps the Post Office has appointed a new philatelic distributor for Italy and Switzerland.

He is Signor Paolo de Rosa of Naples who will be responsible for promoting the sale of

Great Britain new issue stamps and meeting the requirements of stamp dealers in the two countries where interest in British stamps is high.

Signor Paola de Rosa's address is: Casella Postale 1044, 80100 Napoli, Vomero, Italy.

Security by a Silken Thread

Those threads of silk incorporated in the security paper used by Messrs. Clowes & Company of 1840 were only one of the many devices patented by John Dickinson, the paper maker of Apsley, Nash & Croxley Mills between 30th June 1807 and 23rd September 1847. The security paper he invented in 1828 and patented in 1829 had silk threads incorporated into it and it enjoyed Governmental approval, being used for Exchequer Bonds and other documents requiring authorisation.

One of the first patents taken out in 1807 was for 'Cannon Cartridge Paper,' which did not smoulder in the gun and cause premature explosions. It was a literal reminder that Britain was at war with Napoleonic France and that the South Coast Martello Towers and Forts were manned by day and night to repel 'Bony' should he dare to invade our shores. The writer, having discovered this early Dickinson patent looks at a sheet of 'cartridge Paper' with new respect! All the thirteen other patents John Dickinson registered between 1807 and 1847 were of civil rather than Military significance, and reflect the upheaval in paper making techniques as the old hand processes gave way to machine production. It is a sobering thought that had there been no paper making revolution there might never have been occasion for postal revolution in 1840. For without an adequate supply of cheap paper communication by both the handwritten letter and the printed word must perforce have been greatly restricted.

Until 1800 the craft of paper making had changed scarcely at all since the John Tate in 1490 established the first paper mill in England at Hertford. Tate boiled rags in a weak alkaline solution, bleached the resultant pulp and deposited the fibrous mess on a wire sieve suspended in water. The shaking and draining of this sieve caused the fibres to felt together and produce fine quality hand made paper. The process is still in use for making the special paper used by artists. Sheet by sheet fabrication of paper by this simple process had been all very well in earlier times

but the emergent mercantile world of the 1800's had outgrown such unsophisticated manufacturing processes.

As early as 1797 Nicholas Louis Robert, a Frenchman, devised a machine for producing paper on an endless web of woven wire moving continuously forward. The device shook the rag fibres together, drained them and finally pressed the paper, which was wound onto a reel. Henry Fourdrinier took out a patent in this country in 1806 (No. 2951) for 'Making a Machine for manufacturing paper of an indefinite length'. But it was not until he and his brother Sealy had spent £60,000 on the machine that it was made to work effectively. By 1810 the brothers were bankrupt. Meanwhile John Dickinson was working on a rival machine and in 1809 he patented improvements in his paper cutting machine and for a machine for manufacturing paper by a new method. The new machine, a complicated affair, produced a continuous stream of paper which it fed into an endless web of felt. By 1819-20, Apsley Mill was supplying paper to Constables, the Clarendon Press, Whittakers, Rivingtons, Parkers of Oxford, Eyre and Strahan the King's Printers, and the Cambridge University Press. Business was brisk.

Among the other specialities of the firm were papers for copper plate printing, for writing, drawing and letterpress work and thick card and paste boards. Making cardboard presented a domestic problem for Ann Dickinson, John's wife, for in 1821 she recorded in her diary: 'they began making the paste for the experiment of cardboards' on her kitchen stove; 'we had our dinner baked in consequence'. The next day she wrote that: 'they burned the paste in the Dairy Copper and were obliged to begin it again on the kitchen range—4 tubs of Paste and they have been all day at it.' Ann Dickinson's chagrin exemplifies how it was that so many, often self-educated, men of that period made an indelible contribution to the Nation's wealth. Their operations were human in scale and therefore controllable. Their research and

development work began at the kitchen sink or on the kitchen range. Although times have changed, could it be that big is not necessarily better after all?

Zealous in the promotion of his business interests as John Dickinson undoubtedly was, it was to be expected that he would ally himself with the protagonists for postal reform. Plainly the cheaper and more reliable the postal service the greater would be the demand for paper from his Mill. His particular concern was to develop the recently conceived 'Envelope' trade. 'Pockets' or 'Envelopes' were coming into fashion by 1835, for on 13th March Fanny Dickinson sent a letter 'on blue paper enclosed in a *pocket*'. A year later she recorded that she was busy making envelopes all day to send out invitations to a party. By July 1837 envelopes at 2/6d per 100 were to be had at 209 Regent Street. They were sold flat and ungummed and had to be folded and sealed with a wafer seal. Machine-made envelopes were some years away.

In the course of his lengthy examination by the Parliamentary Commission of 1838, Rowland Hill was asked whether he proposed that all stamped letter paper should be supplied by the stamp department. His reply was 'My own idea is that a peculiar paper—I will take Dickinson's for example—a paper which has lines of thread or silk stretched through its substance and apparent on each surface, is the best preventive of forgery I have seen . . .'. A few weeks later Dickinson himself appeared before the Commission bearing some demonstration letter sheets made somewhat in the manner of a banknote with elaborate engine turned ornament. Examples of these '*London District Post One Penny* (Not to exceed one ounce)' letter sheets in Ochre and the two pence ('to carry not exceeding 6 ounces') in Green, both printed on Dickinson's thread-embedded paper are in the Phillips Collection in the National Postal Museum.

Other paper manufacturers rose in their wrath for they feared a monopoly of Dickinson's thread paper. John Dickinson who had

an undoubted flare for public relations secured a review in the *Athenaeum* of 28 April 1838 of the evidence presented to the Commission which in part was printed on his 'thread' paper. Despite this masterly stroke it was not until the ill-fated Mulready postal stationery of 1840 was introduced that the thread paper was employed as a postal revenue security safeguard. Although the Mulready design had so short a life Dickinson's thread paper was in use postally for seventeen years. But that's another story. F. MARCUS ARMAN

Collector's Pack 1976



The Dies of the Mackennal Heads

As was noted in Part 2 of this series (see *Philatelic Bulletin* August 1976) it was decided in November 1911 to abandon the three-quarter-face Downey Head and the stamps bearing it (figs 1 and 2) in favour of a profile likeness of the King. Yet there is strong evidence to show that had the making of the plates and the actual printing of the 1911 stamps been undertaken by Thomas De La Rue and Co (instead of the inexperienced Royal Mint and Harrison and Sons) the public, and the King, might not have pressed for such a radical change.

In July 1911, using the J A C Harrison engraved master die the Royal Mint made a duplicate secondary Downey Head die which was sent to De La Rue for use with the new Post Office Savings Bank stamps (fig 3). The POSB stamps, which were printed bi-colour by De La Rue from plates made by themselves, demonstrate clearly that, in experienced hands the J A C Harrison die of the Downey Head was quite capable of producing a clear and acceptable portrait of the King.

The Coinage Head

The profile head of himself which King George V liked and had recommended to the Postmaster General in November 1911 was a proof of a De La Rue colonial stamp die based on Bertram Mackennal's Coinage Head (fig 4).

Mackennal's full profile head for the British coinage may possibly have been inspired by a 'pattern crown' designed by A G Wyon in 1910 as his idea of what the proposed crown piece should be like (fig 5). Mackennal (who was principally a sculptor) modelled a special version of his coinage head (with the letters BMSC in the truncation) and incorporated it into the plaque of his new 'Oak and Laurel Sprays' design which was approved by the King on 21 February 1912 (see fig 1, *Philatelic Bulletin* September 1976).

A photograph of the entire plaque was sent to J A C Harrison as the model from which to engrave separate head and frame master dies. First priority was naturally given the head die.

Harrison however had already been able to start work on the necessary line drawing (fig 6) from a photograph of the coinage head model supplied to him directly by Mackennal. Harrison commenced his engraving of the head die itself during January 1912. The first proofs (stage 1a) were made by Harrison himself towards the end of that month. The die was then passed a number of times during February 1912 between the engraver and the Royal Mint, proofs being taken at each stage of modification and clearance (see fig 7). The finally-approved master Coinage Head die was hardened on 1 April 1912 at the Mint.

In giving his approval to the proof of the completed die King George V also suggested that it might save time to use this same head for all values from $\frac{1}{2}d$ to 1s. However this was not possible in practice as the coinage head die was considered disproportionately small to be used in Mackennal's new 'Oak and Laurel Sprays' design for the One Penny and Twopenny-halfpenny values and there were also some doubts as to its suitability for Mackennal's Twopenny and Threepenny (wreath) design.

The Medal Head

The solution lay in making an entirely new head die for the One Penny and Twopenny-halfpenny design adapted from another head sculpted by Mackennal for the 1911 Coronation Medal.

The new Medal Head differed in various details (as well as size) from the Coinage Head; the most obvious points of difference in the die proofs are:

Medal Head: beard made up of curly lines, ear lobe long and ill-defined, heavy shading along front of throat.

Coinage Head: beard made up of mainly straight lines, ear lobe rounded and well defined, throat very lightly shaded.

The effect of using the larger medal head for the 'Oak and Laurel Spray' design can be seen in figure 8 which shows a model of the Medal head inserted into the original plaque of the



Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3

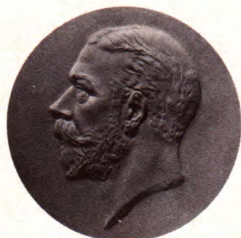


Fig. 4

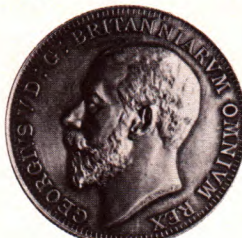


Fig. 5



Fig. 6



Fig. 7

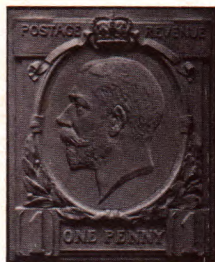


Fig. 8



Fig. 9

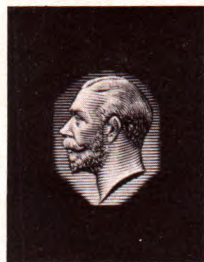


Fig. 10

One Penny design.

J A C Harrison's original pen and ink drawing of the medal head is illustrated as figure 9. The first proofs of the die were probably taken by Harrison himself in early April 1912 (at this stage the head is completely unclear). Figure 10 shows a later stage of the die.

The final solution of which heads to use for which value was arrived at in April 1912. The Medal Head was used for the 1d and 2½d and (in a smaller version) for the 5d to 1s values. The smaller Coinage Head was used for the ½d, 1½d, 2d, 3d and 4d values. This was to

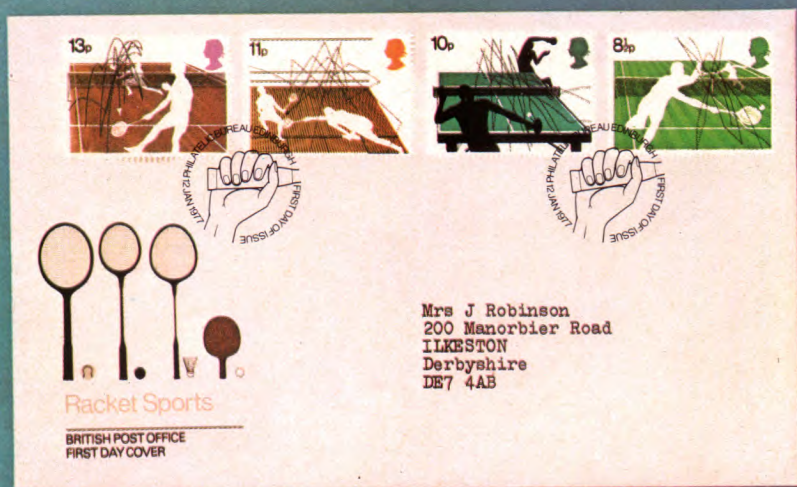
involve G W Eve in making a number of amendments in his 'Pillar' and 'Wreath' designs to accommodate the selected size of head.

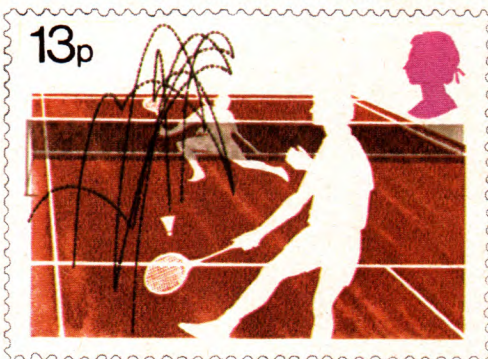
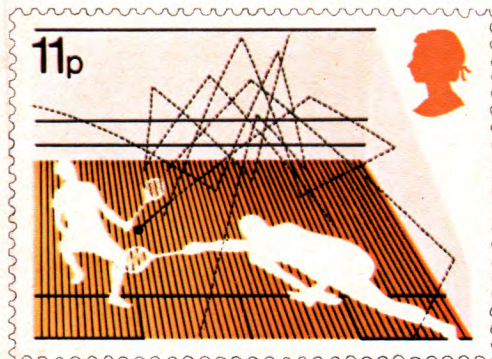
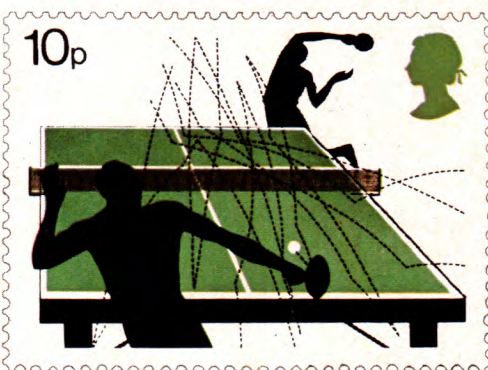
In the meantime there was the problem of trying to make use of the existing dies for all values from ½d to 3d, as the approved frames had been married (and used in essay form) with the Downey head. Trials to see if the Downey head could be erased from the existing dies and replaced by the selected profile head proved successful in April-May 1912 and many months of delay were thereby saved.

A G RIGO DE RIGHI & A DE CADENET

Racket Sports Special Stamp Issue

12 January 1977





The most popular racket sports played in Britain today are, lawn tennis, table tennis, squash and badminton. Acknowledging this fact the Post Office will issue four special postage stamps, each depicting one of these pursuits.

Printing Details

Values and Subjects

8½p Lawn Tennis, 10p Table Tennis,
11p Squash, 13p Badminton.

Designer : Andrew Restall

Printer : Harrison & Sons Ltd

Process : Photogravure. *Format* : Horizontal

Size : 41 mm × 30 mm. *Perforation* : 15 × 14

Sheet Size : 100

Paper : Overall phosphor coated

Colours : 8½p black, light green, grey. 10p black, emerald, grey, blue/green. 11p lemon, orange/red, grey, black. 13p reddish/brown, grey, black, bright reddish violet.

Postcards

A postcard reproduction of each of the four Racket Sports postage stamps, will also be available during the early part of January from the British Post Office Philatelic Bureau, and all philatelic counters, price 7p each.

The History of the Aerogramme and the Start of Commercial Air Mail — Part Seven

On 10 September 1973, a new scale of overseas charges came into operation and on 3 October, the small-size Air Letter at the revised charge of 6p was put on sale.

The larger form with nearly a third more writing space was not issued with a 7p stamp until 19 December. The old forms (6½p and 5p) could be used by adding a ½p or 1p adhesive stamp to make up the new rate.

On 29 September 1975, yet another new scale of overseas charges were introduced by the Post Office and the stamp values on the Air Letters changed to 10½p and 11p.

Welsh Air Letters

On 7 August 1973, a special pictorial Welsh Air Letter form showing a woman in traditional Welsh costume and an artist's impression of Snowdonia was launched at a special ceremony in Ruthin, Denbighshire, on the occasion of the Royal National Eisteddfod of Wales.

The form was designed by Douglas Halliday, ARCA, head of Graphic Design at Newport College of Art and Design, Monmouthshire, and carries Welsh and English inscriptions.

Douglas Halliday told me that the illustrations on the Air Letter were the result of visits he made to the Welsh Folk Museum at St. Fagans, Glamorgan, and Snowdonia.

A second special pictorial Air Letter was issued on 3 July 1974, on the occasion of the 28th International Musical Eisteddfod held at Llangollen. Designed by David Evans of Chepstow, the forms show an impression of a traditional Welsh harp and coracle fishermen in West Wales.

David Evans also designed the third special Air Letter issued on 29 September 1976. It features a rugby scene at the National Stadium in Cardiff, set against a background montage of well-known buildings in the Welsh capital. The other two panels of the form depict Conway Castle and Pennygarreg Dam in the Elan Valley.

Scottish Air Letters

The first special pictorial, bilingual, Scottish Air Letter form went on sale on 15 May 1974. Designed by Gordon Gunn, the form shows a view of Siloch and Loch Maree, Wester Ross, the Prince Charles Monument at Glenfinnan, Loch Shiel, and the Ring of Brogar, Stenness, Orkney. Descriptions of the scenes, all from colour-wash drawings, are given in both English and Gaelic.

A special form to commemorate the birth of Robert Burns (1759-96) was put on sale on 13 January 1974. Designed by Fraser Haston, the form features a traditional portrait of Burns, the famous Burn's mouse 'Wee, sleekit, cow'rin', tim'rous beastie' and a scene from the poem 'Tam O'Shanter', showing Tam being chased on his horse by three witches.

The City of Glasgow is featured on the third special form issued on 12 May 1975. Designed by James Smith, MSIA, the drawings show the 13th century Glasgow Cathedral in its modern setting, the Provand's Lordship built about 1471, and reputed to be Glasgow's oldest house, and the bird, tree, fish and bell incorporated in the city's coat of arms.

The Scottish Highlands and Islands were portrayed for a second time on the fourth special form issued on 18 June 1975. Designed by the Studio of Ruari McLean Associates, it features Oban Harbour, the Church of St Clements at Rodel on the Isle of Harris and Kildalton Cross on the Isle of Islay.

The City of Edinburgh was featured on the fifth special form issued on 23 July 1975. Designed by Peter Gauld, FSIA, it depicts Edinburgh Castle with the National Gallery in the foreground. John Knox's house in the High Street and the Scott Monument in Princes Street are also shown on the form.

Traditional Scottish folk scenes are shown on the sixth special form issued on 14 July 1976. One shows the burning of the Viking galley at the Up-Helly-Aa fire festival held each year at Lerwick in the Shetlands to celebrate the passing of the shortest day and the coming of the summer's days of light.

Another depicts Clarsach or harp playing at the National Mod of An Comunn Gaidhealach and the third shows a Standard Bearer on horseback at one of the Riding of the Marches ceremonies. These are held in a number of Scottish Border towns and date back to an early period in Scottish history when the powerful Border landowners of the time each year rode to the four corners of their lands to reassert their claims to them.

All the special Welsh and Scottish Air Letter forms were printed by one of the companies

in the McCorquodale Group and they all incorporate the impressed stamp designed by David Gentleman which shows representations of two VC-10 aircraft in flight and the profile of Her Majesty the Queen by Arnold Machin.

This is the final instalment of the series, much of which has been taken from my book "AEROGRAMMES" published by Picton Publishing (Citadel Works, Bath Road, Chippenham, Wilts) price £3.50.

PETER JENNINGS FRPSL

British Special Stamps

26. Red Cross Centenary Congress, 1963

The Congress which opened in Geneva on 2 September marked the centenary of the establishment of the Red Cross organization, and the Post Office issued three stamps to mark the auspicious occasion, ie, the Centenary Congress, not the anniversary as such. They were issued on 15 August 1963.

Three bold designs by H. Bartram, a newcomer to stamp design, featured the Red Cross emblem—a red cross on a white field, which is the Swiss flag in reverse (its founder was of



Swiss nationality—Henri Dunant)—in various settings, all with the Wilding portrait of the Queen prominently displayed and all inscribed 'Red Cross Centenary Congress'. The formats were uniformly square or rectangular, the 3d in red and deep lilac; 1s 3d red, blue and grey; and 1s 6d red, blue and bistre. Most member countries of the International Red Cross issued commemorative stamps for its centenary.

The British stamps were photogravure-printed by Harrison and Sons in sheets of 120 stamps (6 × 20) on 'multiple crowns' water-marked paper, ordinary and phosphor-banded. The 3d stamp is known with the red (cross) omitted, ordinary and phosphor, and there other, minor flaws. Quantities sold (phosphor in brackets) were: 3d 157,277,800 (10,349,280); 1s 3d 7,278,120 (929,040); and 1s 6d 6,995,160 (1,038,840).

JAMES WATSON



Background Notes on the Christmas Stamps

All the examples of English mediaeval embroidery depicted in this year's Christmas stamps are from the collection in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

The Post Office wishes to acknowledge the help given by members of the textile staff of the Museum.

Virgin and Child: From the Clare

Chasuble 1272-1294 6½p

This is the earliest piece of 'Opus Anglicanum' and is a fine late thirteenth century example, embroidered in the style fashionable in the reign of Henry III. It is believed to have been associated with Margaret of Clare, wife of the King's nephew, Edmund Plantagenet, because a companion piece had her coat of arms embroidered on it.

The section shown is in the centre of the chasuble; above, similarly framed, is a scene of the Crucifixion; below are St Peter with his key and St Paul with his sword; below them, a scene depicts the stoning of St Stephen.

Covering the rest of this vestment, which has been greatly mutilated, is a pattern of coiling stems containing lions and griffins.

The ground is blue satin worked with gold and silver thread and coloured silks.

Angel Holding a Crown 1340-1370 8½p

The figure of an angel holding a crown has been taken from one of a pair of panels which were found in a chapel in Hampshire. In each panel there are six figures of female saints and angels alternating. They are linked to each other with a design of stems and oak leaves.

The material is bronze green velvet, worked in gold and silver and coloured threads. The hair of the saints and angels is yellow, giving added lustre to the gold of the haloes. The couching of the gold on the angels' wings skillfully indicates feathers.

The treatment of the faces, in outline with slightly embossed nose, reflects the more naturalistic style of the fourteenth century.

The Angel Appears to the Shepherds

1320-1340 11p

This detail comes from one of three panels or bands which were part of the decoration of the vestment known as an alb. All the scenes depict events in the life of the Virgin Mary. This band contains five little scenes, each framed within an arch: the Annunciation, the Visitation, the Nativity and the Journey of the Magi, besides the one illustrated in the stamps.

The embroidery, done in the first half of the fourteenth century, is full of interesting little details, beautifully drawn and exquisitely worked, which often gives us glimpses into the life of the times; for instance, the seated shepherd playing his pipes and ringing a bell, whilst the dog sits up and howls, and his master, in cloak and gloves, stares up amazed as he listens to the angel whose message is written in the sky.

The background is velvet, the delicate embroidery is done in gold and silver threads and coloured silks in shades of blue, green, yellow, pink, buff, flesh tints, and white and black. The bright blue acts as a foil to the gold and makes it sparkle.

The Three Kings Bearing Gifts: From the Butler-Bowden Cope 1330-1350 13p

This cope is one of the finest surviving examples of 'Opus Anglicanum' in England. Made in the first half of the fourteenth century, it was preserved for generations in the Butler-Bowden family.

The overall design is in three concentric circles, each of which is sub-divided into compartments framed by arches supported on pillars made of intertwining stems, out of which spring oak leaves and acorns. Within these frames are three central scenes, one of which is the subject of the stamp, and twenty-four standing figures of saints. In the spaces between there are angels with spread wings, seated on thrones and holding stars.

The cope is worked on rich crimson velvet, with gold and pearl arcading, gold draperies and touches of coloured silks on such details as

cushions, linings of cloaks, and the lion masks the corbels of the pillars. Most of the hair is worked in yellow silk, though some is striped in different colours. Originally, the cope was further enriched with many seed pearls, green beads and small gold rings. Here and there some of the seed pearls can still be seen.

Charity Postage Stamps

No further issue of charity postage stamp is proposed by the Post Office following the final results of last year's charity stamp experiment.

These show that only a little over seven million stamps were purchased—of which about three million, it is estimated, were bought by collectors to keep their collections up-to-date, and by stamp dealers. The cost of raising about £65,000 for charity was disappointingly high; fully paid professional staff were being used to collect minuscule individual contributions to charity.

Because the Post Office recognises that its 23,000 offices could be of value in helping fund-raising for charity, it has put to the National Council of Social Service an alternative scheme for collecting donations to charities. This scheme has been devised in outline only and several interests have yet to be consulted before any decision can be made.

The new scheme would enable members of the public to buy 'charity savings' style stamps over the counter instead of postage stamps with a charity surcharge.

The Post Office believes this would enable more charities to take part and benefit direct, as people would be able to donate to charities of their choice within the scheme.

Last year's experiment was the first time charity postage stamps had been sold in Britain. Despite extensive television, radio and press publicity, sales were low.

The stamps were sold at 6p, of which the charity element amounted to 1½p. Gross revenue was £105,000 against which the Post Office expenses amounted to £27,000. This

total was reduced by a Post Office donation to the charity stamp fund. A total of £82,500 has been handed over to the Trustees who will deduct their own promotional costs before distributing the balance to the charities.

1977 Stamp Programme

We are now able to publish further information about the special stamps to be issued in 1977.

12 January

Racket Sports

Lawn Tennis, Table Tennis
Squash, Badminton

2 March

British Achievement in Chemistry

Steroids Conformational Analysis—Barton
Nobel Prize 1969.

Vitamin C—Synthesis—W N Haworth Nobel
Prize 1957.

Starch—Chromatography—Martin & Synge
Nobel Prize 1952

Salt—Crystallography—W H & W L Bragg
Nobel Prize 1915

11 May

Silver Jubilee of H.M. The Queen's Accession

4 Stamps

8 June

Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting

1 Stamp

5 October

British Wildlife

Badger, Hare, Hedgehog
Otter, Red Squirrel

23 November

Christmas

4 Stamps Details to be announced later.

Book Reviews

Great Britain First Day Covers

This is the fifth edition of this guide to British First Day Covers. It lists covers available and details the various cancellations. It also contains sections on booklet panes, Post Office cards, Air Letters and Presentation packs. The booklet is well produced, contains many illustrations and seems worthwhile at 60p. I do not feel competent to comment on the prices quoted.

'Great Britain First Day Covers' is compiled and published by BB Philatelic Publications Ltd. (Bredon Hill Stamps, PO Box 12, Evesham, Worcs., and Benham (A. Buckingham) Ltd, 53a High Street, Hythe Kent).

How to Identify Stamps

James Negus, the Managing Editor of Stanley Gibbons Publications Ltd has produced this booklet in the Gibbons Guides Series.

Identification of country of issue is the key to finding where stamps are listed in the catalogue. This newly compiled Stanley Gibbons Guide is meant for use with the Stamps of the World catalogue. It teaches how to study stamp inscriptions as the means of recognising the issuing countries and is packed with information on how to deal with both normal and unfamiliar scripts.

'How to Identify Stamps' is published by Stanley Gibbons Publications Ltd price 75p.

Forming a Specialised Stamp Collection

This is another in the Gibbons Guides Series and will be of help to those more experienced collectors who feel that they want to move beyond the elementary stage in the hobby and to restrict their collecting to one country or one area. In this guide the author shows how he travelled this road and gives the benefit of his wide-ranging experience. Chapters include: choosing a speciality, getting started, building on the foundation, and what specialist equipment can be helpful.

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