

Philatelic Bulletin

Volume 14 Number 1 September 1976



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Editorial

After the record breaking weather we have experienced this summer, it is hard to realise that the 'season of mists and mellow fruitfulness' is almost upon us and we must put our summer activities behind us and concentrate on our collections once again. We need not entirely forget summer, for the recent 'Roses' issue, which has been very well received, will serve to remind us of the warm days.

In this edition, the first of the new volume, readers are introduced to the illustrations and text of the special 'Printing' stamps which are to go on sale during the latter part of September. Now is the time to pause and devote a moments thought to this old yet new method of communication—the printed word.

Peter Stockham has written a feature article, to appear in the October bulletin, which affords a glimpse at William Caxton, who was responsible for introducing printing to our shores in 1476. Printing has done more to stimulate and educate the human mind than any other single conquest made by man. The four postage stamps, soon to be issued are a timely reminder of this paramount achievement in engineering and scholarship.

Communication to our readers in the last volume has taken the form of extended series of articles rather than the individual feature. Readers response has been sufficiently gratifying for us to continue with this approach.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Sir,

Much has been written already about 'Roses' and the stamp issue of 30 June, 1976. I fear the following thoughtful extra endeavour may never be recorded unless you print it in the Bulletin.

It was obviously the team of the Glasgow Philatelic Section who thought of us all collecting our stamps on June 30, and who took it upon themselves to display glorious vases of roses at strategic positions in the bureau. The inevitable queue for first day purchases could admire the display, enjoy the fragrance and even endeavour to identify the specimens which were on the selection of stamps, for these varieties were actually present.

I do hope you can insert this item in the Bulletin to let our HPO Philatelic Team know that their special effort for 'Roses' together with the good service they so freely dispense is appreciated by many.

Yours sincerely,

Glasgow

J D MACLIVER

We are glad to learn of the initiative of the Glasgow philatelic staff which reflects the good service we aim to provide.

Editor

XXXIX The Chalmers Essays

Ever since August 1879 (shortly after the death of Sir Rowland Hill) the descendants of Rowland Hill and of James Chalmers, the Dundee bookseller, have disputed in a series of books and pamphlets the rival claims of the two men to be the inventor of the adhesive postage stamp.

In August 1839 the Treasury launched a public competition for ideas for stamped stationery, labels etc in connection with the forthcoming introduction of prepaid postage and a Uniform Penny Post, in response to which some 2,600 suggestions and designs were received.

Among the most interesting of these designs or essays were those submitted by James Chalmers. They were postage labels, of a suitable size, stuck on to dummy letters, and cancelled, as Chalmers proposed, with a handstamp giving the name of the Post town (Dundee) and the date. When he submitted his essays James Chalmers almost certainly genuinely believed that the idea of an adhesive label (or stamp) to prepay postage was his alone. He based this on a letter which he had written to Robert Wallace MP on 4 December 1837 suggesting 'adhesive pieces of paper'.

On 8 February 1838 Chalmers published a single sheet pamphlet 'Remarks on various modes proposed for franking letters' and as examples of the adhesive 'slips' he proposed, Chalmers printed alongside, in red, six typeset essays, two for twopenny 'slips' and four for one penny 'slips', one of the latter being cancelled 'Dundee 10 February 1838'. On that date he sent a copy of the pamphlet, complete with essays, to Lt Col Maberley, The Secretary of the Post Office, in London.

The copy sent by Chalmers to Maberley, complete with the six essays, is illustrated over as this month's 'Gem' from the Reginald M Phillips Collection in the National Postal Museum. These, the earliest known Chalmers essays, are amongst the most important items in the R M Phillips collection because, so far as is known, they are the first essays in the world for an adhesive postage

stamp.

In April 1838 the *Post Circular*, the propaganda newspaper of the movement for Uniform Penny Postage, published a letter from Chalmers and reproduced facsimilies of his essays. Chalmers's Treasury Competition essays (submitted on 30 September and 7 October 1839) were rather different. They were circular and somewhat larger, some printed in black and some in red. In his letter to Rowland Hill accompanying these essays Chalmers wrote "If slips or stamps are to be used I flatter myself that I have a claim to priority—it now being nearly two years since I first made it public . . .".

Chalmers's claim to have been the first to have *proposed* the idea, was, unfortunately for him, incorrect. In January 1840 Rowland Hill wrote to Chalmers pointing out that he (Hill) had suggested adhesive labels or stamps as part of his plan for postal reform set out in the first edition of his pamphlet published in February 1837. Actually, Rowland Hill had made the same point in the evidence he gave on 13 February 1837 before a Commission enquiring into the Management of the Post Office. He spoke of "... a bit of paper just large enough to bear the stamp, and covered at the back with a glutinous wash . . .".

On 18 May 1840 Chalmers replied to Rowland Hill virtually admitting his mistake "... having given publicity to my plan nearly two years before the Treasury Minute (announcing the competition) of August last appeared . . . I was naturally induced to believe that I was first in the field . . .". James Chalmers died in 1853.

To the impartial student the answer is that each of the two men concerned, Hill and Chalmers, contributed to the birth of the adhesive postage stamp. The credit for the idea must certainly go to Rowland Hill who may well have adapted it from the adhesive stamps which had been used for the payment of various fiscal duties for over a century before February 1837.

Chalmers' contribution was to be the first to

REMARKS ON VARIOUS MODES PROPOSED FOR FRANKING
LETTERS, UNDER MR. ROWLAND HILL'S PLAN OF
POST OFFICE REFORM.

In suggesting any method of improvement, it is only reasonable to expect, that what are supposed to be its advantages over any existing system, or is *opposite* to others that have been, or may be proposed, will be explicitly stated.

Therefore, if Mr Hill's plan of a uniform rate of postage,—and that all postages are to be paid by those sending letters, *before* they are deposited in the respective Post Offices,—become the law of the land, I conceive that the most simple and economical mode of making such an arrangement could be by Slips, prepared somewhat similar to the specimen here-with shown.

With this view, and in the hope that Mr Hill's plan may soon be carried into operation, I would suggest that sheets of Stamped Slips should be prepared at the Stamp Office, (on a paper made expressly for the purpose,) with a device on each from a die or cut resembling that on newspapers; that the sheet so printed or stamped should then be rubbed over on the back with a strong solution of gum, or other adhesive substance, and (when thoroughly dry) issued by the Stamp Office to town and country distributors, to stationers and others, for sale in sheets or singly, under the same laws and restrictions now applicable to those selling *and* or accept stamps, so as to prevent, as far as practicable, any fraud on the revenue.

Merchants and others, whose correspondence is extensive, could purchase these Slips in quantities, cut them singly, and affix one to a letter by means of wetting the back of the Slip with a sponge or brush, just with as much facility as applying a wafer, for which, in many cases (for instance circulars), the Slip might answer; while either a wafer or wax may also be applied at the option of the writer. Others, requiring only one or two Slips at a time, could purchase them along with sheets of paper at stationers' shops. The *great* only regulating the rate of postage in all cases, so as a stamp may be affixed according to the scale determined on.

Again, to prevent the possibility of these being used *as* and *as*, it should be made imperative on postmasters to put the Post Office town stamp (as represented on one of the specimens) across the Slip or postage stamp.

It appears to me that the advantages to be derived from this plan of Slips, over envelopes or stamped sheets of paper, must be obvious. The writers of letters will not be confined to any length of letter, or mode of folding it, in which they must often be guided by circumstances,—the time requisite for affixing the slip will scarcely exceed that of inserting a wafer,—and the weight of it little, if any thing more.

What appears to me to be objectionable to the use of envelopes—specimens of which we have seen exhibited in public places,—are, first, the expense which there must be in paper and printing, not less, in my opinion, than 25 per cent. on the proposed rate of postage—consequently an unnecessary sacrifice of the revenue; secondly, the various sizes requisite to suit all dimensions of paper and methods of folding letters; and, lastly, the great increase of weight and bulk they would unavoidably occasion; for, if Mr Hill's calculations should prove nearly correct, namely, that, by his proposed reduction of postage, there would be, in consequence, an increase of letters to *five* times their present number, the result would therefore be, by using envelopes, to increase the size and weight of the daily correspondence to about *five times* what it is just now.

Again, as to stamped sheets of paper, to answer for correspondence by post, such seems to me to be objectionable in so far as few writers of letters can calculate on perfecting or completing the letter on the sheet they first commence to write on; so that in numerous instances a sacrifice would unavoidably be made to the writer, both of the paper and stamp, should a second or third be required.

Taking all these disadvantages into consideration, the use of Stamped Slips is certainly the most preferable system; and, should others who take an interest in the proposed reform, view it in the same light as I do, it remains for them to petition Parliament to have such carried into operation.

JAMES CHALMERS.

1 Castle Street, Dundee,
25th February, 1838.



give the idea form, in the shape of the rather crude labels (essays) which he produced in February 1838 and again in September 1839. He should also be credited with the idea of using the town name and date to cancel the new postage stamp—a practice now almost universal but not adopted in Britain until towards the end of the century.

But equally Chalmers had little or no idea of the practical problems—security, fine design, cost and speed of printing—involved in the production of effective adhesive postage stamps. These problems Rowland Hill determined and solved with skill and taste and he is therefore rightly honoured as the Father of the Postage Stamp. A G RIGO DE RIGHI

Stamp Collecting for the Beginner

Part V—The Thematic Collection

A thematic collection is one which uses postage stamps and philatelic material for the purpose of telling a story. To develop the theme, it is necessary to use the subject of the stamp or other philatelic material to illustrate it instead of dealing with the stamps according to their country of origin.

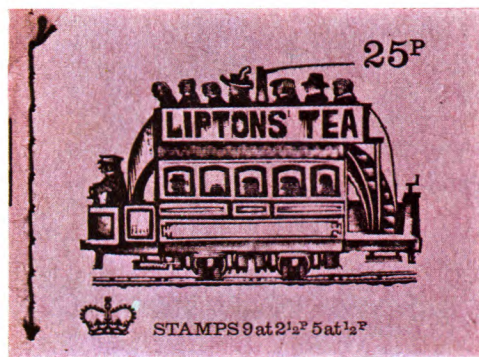
In the thematic collection, it is the subject matter of the stamp and its appropriate place in the story which are the all important factors. Quite ordinary, inexpensive stamps can be of inestimable value in this context. So long as they fit into the story and are well chosen examples of the subject, they will suitably enhance a thematic collection. Using older material as well as modern issues will enable the collector to expand on his philatelic knowledge.

How does one start a thematic collection?

It can be of help to have some knowledge of the chosen subject, but it is not imperative. It will be easier to pick out relevant material if some research has been undertaken before embarking on it, but knowledge gleaned in the course of collecting is an added interest to the collector.

A great deal of pleasure can be derived from embarking on a new subject and complementing the study with the accumulation of appropriate stamps, postal stationery, cancellations etc, which are relevant, and arranging them by 'chapter' in the stock book.

possible to tell at a glance which chapter seems to be nearing completion, and which still has many gaps to be closed with appropriate items. I would emphasize that philatelic material other than stamps should be included in a thematic collection, such as postal stationery, postmark slogans, meter marks, ship letters,



special one day cancels on appropriate stamps, occasional maximum cards, particularly the older ones. As long as they are all relevant to the theme, such material enhances the appearance of a thematic collection and increases its interest.

Collecting material and gathering information go hand in hand. If the subject chosen is narrow, it may be difficult to find relevant material to expand the collection; on the otherhand, if it is too wide one can easily be overwhelmed by its quantity. This can be overcome by keeping to set sub-divisions and dealing with one section at a time. Take 'Transport' as a subject; this is so broad and would include sections on ships, trains, aircraft, animals etc, each a subject in its own rights. If ships are shown within the transport subject, then ship covers would be appropriate, but not stamps depicting fishing smacks or dinghies. The fishing smack would fit in with the subject of 'Food supplies' whilst the dinghies would find their place amongst sport or leisure ships, and both be quite relevant in a general display of 'Ships'.

An important aspect of thematic collecting is

LEEDS
motorway city
of the seventies



Chapter headings

As the thematic collection is a story, and stories contain chapters, it is suggested that chapter headings should be set down in the sequence in which the story is to be told, and to arrange the stamps in that order in the stock book. If this procedure is adopted, it will be

originality of approach. A suggested topic under the general heading of 'Transport' could be the tracing of Thomas Cook's first tour of Europe. The many questions which would need to be examined are: 'What type of coach was used?' 'How long was the trip?' 'Which countries were visited and for how long?' 'Which hotels did the parties stay at?' Standards of travel then and now could be compared. A lot of study of available material consistent with the dates of the original tour would be required, and in such a story correctly cancelled covers or post-cards from one of the hotels included in the tour would be useful.

A different subject which could be tackled is that of Napoleon and his campaigns. Stamps about France's hero are plentiful and would make an interesting story. It would be possible to include campaign letters of the period even though such items would be difficult to find and expensive. The depth of any study is dependent on the resourcefulness of the collector. Recent issues of stamps on Napoleon with special appropriate first day cancellations could well be included in such a collection, but a plain recent cancellation of Ajaccio, his birthplace would be unsuitable as it would have no bearing on the story.

If the theme being dealt with is one on 'Animals' postmarks depicting animals should not be forgotten such as for instance, the elephant of India or the springbok of South Africa. These postmarks would be very appropriate and should be included in displays concerning these species of animals. Likewise a 'Pony Express' cover would enhance an animal section dealing with horses. It is up to the collector to seek out unusual material for his subject to bring greater interest to the display.

Maps can be useful provided that they are not over emphasized. For example, one general map of Napoleon's campaigns, used on the title page of a display would be good, but a map on each of the album pages would detract from the story, it is for the stamps to

tell it.

As in all forms of stamp collecting, non-philatelic material has little place in a thematic collection.

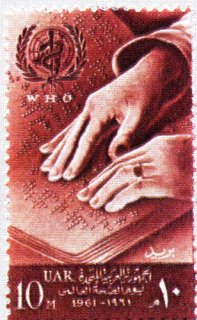
The Subject or Purpose of Issue collections are a part of thematic collecting. They involve a different approach, and should be treated in chronological order according to country and date of issue. Take for instance, the Red Cross: A collection displaying stamps issued



to commemorate the Red Cross should be displayed under the country headings and in their chronological date of issue, whereas a display dealing with the history and development of the Red Cross could start with a stamp depicting Henry Dunant's birthplace, and continue with the Battle of Solferino, which led to Dunant's conception of the creation of an agreement for the International Relief of Suffering and Treatment of Prisoners of War. It is up to the collector to decide on the manner in which he wants to treat the subject, and he should do this by including stamps and material not specifically issued to commemorate the Red Cross, but which nevertheless, because of their subject matter have their place in the collection.

Some stamps lend themselves to a number of different themes, as for instance, stamps concerning Louis Braille or the fingering of a Braille book; these could be used with equal effect in themes dealing with: the handi-

capped; teaching; mechanical aids; methods of writing; helpers of mankind; hands; famous men. The importance of course, is that they should be in their right place in the unfolding of the story.



The thematic collection is likely to expand fairly rapidly and will include a fair amount of material relevant to a display which would not be suitable and could overcrowd a competitive entry. International (and now National) rules demand that the competitor should present a title page which should give details of the

total number of pages within each section of the collection (at the time of the competition, for this alters as the collection grows). Next to these totals should be shown the number of pages (from the sections) which are being displayed in the entry. By proceeding in this way, judges have an opportunity of gauging the depth of research within the collection, they will check that the statements given concerning the numbers of pages being exhibited correspond to those given on the title page. This also makes it easier for them to follow the given chapters of the story. The competitive entry would of course, include the best material in the collection and this would imply that the non-exhibited sheets would contain the more easily obtained items.

Now; What about treating a thematic subject from a different point of view, collecting information and material to present a truly novel display?

ALMA GRUNBERG

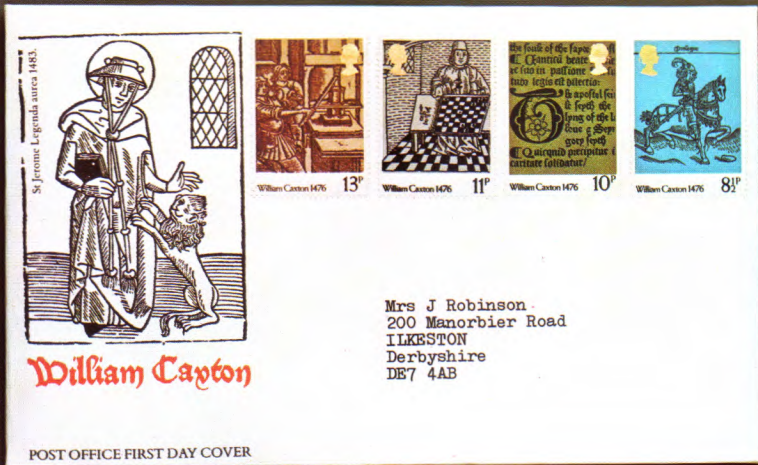
New Welsh Pictorial Air-Letter Form

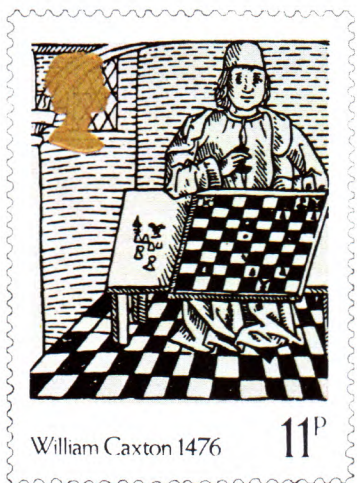
A third pictorial air-letter form for Wales will be issued on 29 September 1976. The air-letter will carry pictures of the Pen-y-garreg Dam in the Elan Valley (front panel), Conway Castle and Old Bridge (back panel) and a rugby scene with a background montage of Cardiff Castle and City Hall (inside panel).

The air-letter, designed by Mr David H Evans of Chepstow will cost 12p and be on sale at all Post Offices in Wales, the Philatelic Bureau and Philatelic Counters from 29 September 1976 previous air letter form introduced on 3 July 1974 will remain on sale.

First day of issue postmarking facilities will be available at nearly 200 offices throughout the United Kingdom which normally give this facility. The usual reposting facility will apply.

500th Anniversary of the First Printing in Britain Special Stamp Issue, 29 September 1976





The Royal Society of Arts' Industrial Design Students Bursary Competition for postage stamps, was won in 1974 by Richard Gay, a graphics design student at Southend School of Art and Design. The four postage stamps chosen to commemorate the 500th Anniversary of the First Printing in Britain have been developed from Richard Gay's winning entry. This is the first occasion on which the Post Office has issued the winning designs as an operational set of stamps.

Printing Details

Values and subjects

8½p Woodcut from 'The Canterbury Tales'

10p Decorative initial and type from the 'Tretyse of Love'

11p Woodcut from 'The Game and Playe of Chesse'

13p Woodcut of early Printing press

Designer : Richard Gay

Process : Photogravure

Printer : Harrison and Sons Ltd

Size : 30 × 41 mm

Format : Vertical

Perforation : 14 × 15

Paper : Coated unwatermarked

Sheet size : 100

Phosphor : All over

Colours : 8½p light new blue, indigo, gold. 10p light olive green, blackish olive, gold. 11p light brownish grey, black, gold. 13p light buff, reddish brown gold.

Presentation packs containing one each of the new stamps and costing 52½p will be available from the Bureau and all Head Offices from 29 September 1976.

A postcard reproduction of an enlarged version of each of the four 'Printing' stamps will be available from the Philatelic Bureau, all philatelic counters and selected main post offices during September, price 7p each.

Both the first day cover and presentation pack have been designed by Stuart Rose CBE FSI, Design Adviser to the Post Office.

New 'Country' Definitive Postage Stamps

New 10p and 11p 'Country' definitive stamps for Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales, will be issued on 20 October 1976. The design will be similar to the current range of 'Country' stamps.

Each stamp will be available from Post Offices in the appropriate country, and all six stamps may be obtained from the British Post Office Philatelic Bureau, Lothian House, 124 Lothian Road, EDINBURGH, EH1 9BB, and philatelic sales counters.

Separate First Day Covers, price 8p each, and pictorial handstamps will be provided by the Post Office for each of the countries. The three covers will be available from the Philatelic Bureau, and from all philatelic sales counters. Each country's covers will be available from Head Offices in the respective country.

For bulk orders, obtainable from the Bureau only, the costs are as follows: 250 for £12.50 or 1000 for £40.00.

The Philatelic Bureau will provide the following service for First Day Covers:

Service A

The Official Post Office cover will be addressed to the correct postal address of the destination required, and given both the 10p and 11p stamps, cancelled as requested with a Philatelic Bureau Edinburgh: Cardiff: Edinburgh or Belfast pictorial handstamp. The

charge is 39p or 34½p for customers with deposit accounts.

Service B

Customers own pre-addressed covers will be given both stamps, cancelled and despatched. The inclusive charge is 29p per cover.

Service C

For bulk orders of 50 or more covers to the same address, under the conditions of Service A the price is 36½p each.

Application forms for these services are available from the Philatelic Bureau and all Head Post Offices. They should be returned not later than Monday 11 October 1976.

For customers who wish to post their own covers on the day of issue, first day of issue cancellations will be in use at all offices which normally provide them in each of the three countries, and at the fourteen philatelic counter offices in England. Also on that day, the normal reposting facility will apply for special cancellations in use at each of the three countries capitals. Covers bearing a set of 'Country' stamps may be sent under cover to the Head Postmasters of Belfast, Edinburgh and Cardiff, marking the outer cover, 'First Day of Issue Cancellation'.

New Presentation Packs

Three new Presentation Packs containing the 6½p, 8½p, 10p and 11p Country Definitive postage stamps will be issued on 20 October 1976. They will be available from the Philatelic Bureau, Edinburgh, philatelic sales counters, and at all Head Post Offices in the respective countries, price 46p each.

Forces Cover

A Royal Air Force cover (HA5), commemorating Sir Thomas Sopwith and showing his famous Camel 1½ Strutter and Triplane designs, will be cancelled by a special handstamp (BFPS 1536) on 15 August 1976. It will be flown on a special flight and should be available on or about 15 September from the Project Officer: Flt Lt R Jevons, SCC, RAF Hendon, London NW9 5LL price 35p plus

6½p postage. All proceeds of the cover will be devoted to the Royal Air Force Museum Appeal Fund.

Coming Events

Lanarkshire Philatelic Society Annual Exhibition

The second annual exhibition of the Lanarkshire Philatelic Society will be opened by a former LPS member, Mr R Stirling of the *Motherwell Times*, on Friday 15 October 1976. The exhibition will take place in the Public Library, Motherwell, and visitors will be welcome from 16 to 23 October. Admission is free.

Hours of opening to the public

Sat 10 am to 5 pm

Mon & Tues 10 am to 7 pm

Weds Closed

Thurs & Fri 10 am to 7 pm

Sat 10 am to 5 pm

Displays will be mounted by the LPS and the Post Office Philatelic Bureau, together with a special exhibit by the Schweinfurt Philatelic Society. Schweinfurt, Bavaria, is Motherwell's twin town.

Further details may be obtained from Mr G McDowall, 17 Merrylees Road, Blantyre, Glasgow G72 9YG.

September Display at Stanley Gibbons

The Stanley Gibbons Romano House Gallery will stage during its September exhibition, a selection of London postmarks on covers—between 1840–1912. This is part of the collection of Dr E Wytenbach of Zurich, who has made an intensive study of this subject, and includes fine examples of London maltese crosses; numbered oblitors; experimental and unusual handstamps; machine cancels and so on.

The Great Britain Decimal Stamp Book Study Circle

The fifth AGM of The GB Decimal Stamp Book Study Circle will be held on the Saturday 16 October 1976 at The Victory Services Club, 63–79 Seymour Street, London W2 (near Marble Arch). The meeting will start at

11.00 am. For further information of the Circle's activities please contact Mr J Spiteri, 18 Henlow Close, Tipton, West Midlands DY4 8BE.

Berkhamsted Philatelic Society

Under the auspices of the Berkhamsted Philatelic Society, Dr Douglas Latto FRPS L will give a talk and display entitled, 'Design of Modern British Stamps', at the Berkhamsted Civic Centre on 4 November 1976 at 8 pm.

On 25 November 1976, Mr H Dagnall will address the BPS when the subject of his address will be 'John Dickinson and His Association with the Post'.

This will be followed on 24 February 1977 by the continuing story of 'Berkhamsted's Postal History from 1820 Onwards', told as usual, by Mr Harold J Waterton and illustrated with material from his collection.

Both meetings will take place in the Sacred Heart Church Hall, Park Street, Berkhamsted at 8 pm.

Stoke Poges School Centenary

On 29 September, the Stoke Poges School in Buckinghamshire, will celebrate its centenary. By coincidence, the 'Printing' stamps will be issued on the same day. The village of Stoke Poges has organised a commemorative exhibition to include a history of the School together with other Victorian 'treasures'. The Post Office will contribute an appropriate display, and the entire exhibition will be opened at 10.00 am by the designer of the stamps, Richard Gay. A special handstamp will be applied to all mail posted on the day, in the posting box provided.

Bristol and District PS

The Bristol and District Federation of Philatelic Societies are holding their annual convention at the Stamp and Coin Fair, Victoria Rooms, Clifton, Bristol on Friday 1 October (2–9 pm) and Saturday 2 October (10 am–6 pm).

The theme will be 'The History of Great Britain Postal Services'.

The New One Penny Design

The second article of this series described how almost everyone, and particularly King George V, were profoundly dissatisfied with the Half-penny and One Penny stamps issued on the day of the King's Coronation (22.6.1911). The decision to change over to a profile head and some improvements in the die and plates saved the $\frac{1}{2}d$ 'Dolphin' but similar modifications were not enough to save the 'Lion' design. The artist himself recognised this fact and early in January 1911 Mackennal decided to design a new frame. His first attempt only needed two minor modifications.

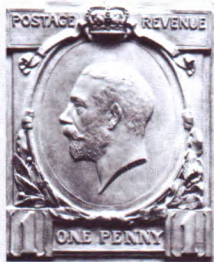


fig 1



fig 2

The design, as approved and signed by the King on 21 February, was not a piece of artwork but the photograph of a bas-relief plaque with a bas-relief of an approved profile coinage head inserted. The original plaque probably remained in Mackennal's studio—it cannot now be traced—but anyway the engraver worked from a copy of the approved photograph, (fig 1).

It seems as if Mackennal also considered the use of an alternative profile head of the King in



fig 3

Admiral's uniform—similar to that used for the Canadian stamps of 1912-18—because there exists an original photograph of the accepted plaque design with this 'admiral' head inserted (fig 2).

There is no evidence that this alternative design was ever submitted for approval.

The new 'Oak and Laurel Sprays' design was then further modified by Mackennal (larger crown, curved 'POSTAGE' and 'REVENUE' etc—fig 3) before replacing the 'Lion' design for both the 1d and 2½d values. A further change was the use with this modified design of Mackennal's 'Medal' head in place of the 'coinage' head used with the plaque approved by the King. Mackennal's design continued in use until 1936.

For political and operational reasons the Post Office and the Stamp Department of the Board of Inland Revenue* concentrated most of their energies during 1912 on getting the values from $\frac{1}{2}d$ to 3d on sale as quickly as possible and this had been completed by October 1912.

Although complete 4d and 5d essays in Eve's 'Wreath' design, and a master die for Eve's pillar design, all using the Downey head, were ready by late October 1911 the change to the profile head put the Eve design for the 4d to 1/- values into temporary cold storage.

A G RIGO DE RIGHI AND ALAIN DE CADENET

* From 1840 to 1914 the detailed control of stamp production was in the hands of the Treasury and the Inland Revenue (Somerset House). It is now a responsibility of the Supplies Department of the Post Office.

23. Paris Postal Conference Centenary, 1963

Ah, oui! Reynolds Stone's calligraphy in the style of 19th-century theatre posters, Toulouse-Lautrec and all that, brought a whiff of cigars and the Moulin Rouge to imaginative collectors and their albums. To anyone who knows anything about print and type-faces, the inscription '1863 PARIS POSTAL CONFERENCE CENTENARY' displayed upon a folded riband is readily identified with the past century—the style for 'CENTENARY' belongs to the 'wanted' posters of the old Wild West of America.

It was Montgomery Blair, then Postmaster-General of the United States, who, in August 1862, proposed the international conference on postal matters which opened in Paris on 11 May 1863, under the chairmanship of M. Vandal, Director-General of the French Postal Services, attended by the postal administrators of 15, mainly European, countries. The meeting led directly to the establishment of the Universal Postal Union in 1874. The 'centenary' conference was held in Paris during May 1963, and was attended by all but



two of the member-countries represented in 1863.

The 6d green and mauve stamp, with the Queen's portrait framed by foliage, was printed by Harrison and Sons in sheets of 120 (6 × 20) on ordinary and phosphor-banded paper, with the 'multiple crowns' watermark inverted; known with the green colour omitted. Quantities sold: 18,536,400, phosphor 1,430,800.

JAMES WATSON

'Roses' at Sissinghurst



Many readers will know of the lovely gardens at Sissinghurst Castle, Kent, maintained by the National Trust. Our photograph shows Kristin

Rosenberg, the designer of the 'Rose' stamps, autographing first day covers on the day of issue, at Sissinghurst.

Designing the British Culture Stamps

Friday 13th: Not an auspicious day in February for an important appointment. However, I crossed my fingers and set out hopefully for a briefing at Postal Headquarters.

It has been agreed that four stamps would be issued to celebrate the centuries old traditions which are part of the cultural heritage of the nation. Two stamps would be devoted to the Royal National Eisteddfod which this year celebrates its 800th anniversary, a third would mark the Highland Gatherings and the last would illustrate Morris Dancing.

The Stamps Advisory Committee had also decided on the subsidiary subject matter. One Welsh stamp would show the Archdruid, another a harpist. The Scottish stamp should show a highlander playing a set of bagpipes and the English one ought to show a dancer. In each background there should be a group or related figures to convey more of the atmosphere.

Such a tight brief is not at all usual as generally there is considerable scope for the designer to make a contribution on what interesting facts come to light during research. Nevertheless, time is always an important factor and with a clear directive one can concentrate on the approved lines so I welcomed the situation.

On starting work my first act was to find out something about the traditions being celebrated and trust that as I became even more interested in the subjects some colourful aspects would present themselves. It was fascinating to read that Morris dancing had been brought back to England from the moors by John of Gaunt in the reign of Edward III and that in Tudor times it was well established as a dance for May Day. A short summary of the Highland Games stated that the tradition probably originated when the chiefs of the clans gathered to discuss military exercises, hunting and business generally. Their followers would meet relatives from distant parts and would amuse themselves by contesting their strength and skills including those of music and dancing. Reading further I

found there is a tradition that the Eisteddfod, under the name of Gorsedd or Druidic Congress, was celebrated long before the Roman invasion. The Druids were invested with formidable power and this congress was the absolute authority on law, science and poetry. At the present ceremony of the Eisteddfod the formal offering of the Hirlas Horn (or horn of plenty) to the Archdruid is an allusion to the ancient ceremony in which Druids offered sacrifice and poured libations for a fruitful harvest.

The second act was the look for pictorial reference to support some of this information and while waiting for books and photographs to arrive I started putting down some ideas about the Archdruid. A number of alternative groupings presented themselves along with borders and divisions of various sorts. As the remaining stamps were tried out in similar ways difficulties appeared with one or another so the selection narrowed. Finally, a low eye-level gave an impression of the importance of the Druid while small figures holding the Gorsedd banner set the background scene. A parallel scheme for each of the other stamps proved practical and the Welsh harpist in her tall hat and striped apron promised to be a colourful unit. The sketches were submitted.

I waited anxiously and was relieved and happy when the preliminary outlines were passed as suitable for development. It seemed necessary to complete the work at least twice the size of a stamp in order to have some scope for dealing with small figures in the background, which in spite of being simple, could be hard to paint. There was also the question of colour to decide. Should I use a coloured ground? I tried several but decided against it after considering the problem raised by the unalterable colours of most of the clothes worn.

A Morris dancer wears a white shirt and white or black trousers. The Arch-Druid wears a cream robe with gold acorn-edged cap and the Hirlas horn is dark golden brown. It had also been found necessary to alter the harpist as it seems folk costume is not worn at

the Royal National Eisteddfod. The Welsh Tourist Board were helpful by saying the harpist could wear a robe and went on to explain the significance of the colours. Evidently a white robe is for the highest dignitaries, blue is the colour for those who have achieved modest distinction and green can be worn even by schoolchildren.

Considering this range of tones it seemed important that, to complete the set, the highlander should harmonise and green was the obvious choice.

Eventually the complete scheme was ready for the Committee. Sometime later, to my great delight, I heard that my work had been chosen. Inevitably there were a few adjustments and alterations including the removal of the Archdruid's rather splendid moustache, which unhappily, on reduction to stamp size did not do him justice.

At last the responsibility was out of my hands. The designs were to be made into stamps at Harrisons. At the Press show I saw for myself the magic words written along one side of the artwork—approved by HM The Queen.

So far in spite of Friday 13th. Can my luck hold? Will the public like the stamps?

MARJORIE SAYNOR

Book Review

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The annual subscription to the Philatelic Bulletin for 12 issues a year is £1.25 including postage by surface mail to anywhere in the world, or air mail to anywhere in Europe. For airmail to countries outside Europe the subscription is £2.15.

Subscriptions should be sent to the British Post Office Philatelic Bureau, Lothian House, Lothian Road, EDINBURGH EH3 9BB.

Printed in Great Britain by Cripplegate Printing Co Ltd, LONDON & EDENBRIDGE
for the Post Office, St Martin's-le-Grand, LONDON EC1A 1HQ