

Philatelic Bulletin

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Contents

Introduction	2
RAF Cover	2
New Definitive Stamps	2
Stamped Stationery	2
The Second Line-Engraved Twopenny Blue	3, 4, 5, 6
The Princess Anne and Captain Mark Phillips	7, 8
Christmas Stamps	8, 9
Christmas Stamps – First Day Cover Services	10
New Stamp Books	10
Philatelic Bulletin Back Numbers	10, 11
Special Handstamps	11
Postmark Slogans	11, 12
Christmas 1973 Air Letter	12, 13
The Ideal Postage Stamp	14, 15
Letters to the Editor	15

Introduction

Readers will know the importance we pay to the quality of stamp design and something of the lengths to which we go, through the Stamp Advisory Committee, to ensure that all shades of opinion are consulted during the selection of our new stamps. We are always pleased when collectors show an interest in the problems inherent in stamp design and we were delighted to hear from a reader who wonders which, if any of our special stamps will become as sought after in a hundred years time as antiques are in other spheres of collecting. We have our own views and will be glad to print a selection of readers' replies to this fascinating question.

RAF Cover

A flown cover will be issued to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Granting of the

Royal Charter to the Princess Mary's Royal Air Force Nursing Service. It will show the Vickers Vernon air ambulance of 1923 and the VCro which is now used for casualty evacuation, and it will be cancelled by a special BFPS commemorative handstamp on 21 November. It will then be flown from PARAF Hospital, Wroughton to PMRAF Hospital, Akrotiri, Cyprus. Covers should be available on or about 15 December from the Philatelic Officer, Princess Alexandra's Royal Air Force Hospital, Wroughton, Swindon, Wilts, at 25p plus 3p postage. All proceeds from this cover will be donated to Royal Air Force charities.

New Definitive Stamps

Three additional stamps were issued on 24 October 1973, values 4½p, 5½p and 8p. In design and format they are the same as the current decimal definitive issue, except that they are, of course, different colours. The colours were chosen with a view to avoiding visual confusion with other definitives and for their acceptability for use on Automatic Letter Facing machines.

Printing Details

<i>Printer :</i>	Harrison & Sons Ltd.
<i>Perforation :</i>	15 × 14
<i>Number to Sheet :</i>	200
<i>Paper :</i>	Coated unwatermarked phosphor. (2 bar phosphor)
<i>Format :</i>	Vertical
<i>Process :</i>	Photogravure
<i>Date of Issue :</i>	24 October 1973
<i>Colours :</i>	4½p – slate blue 5½p – deep purple 8p – red

Stamped Stationery

The new first class letter card will now be on sale from 14 November, not 24 October as previously announced.

The Second Line-Engraved Twopenny Blue

Fifty years ago senior collectors of British stamps rather tended to treat the 1841-56 Twopenny Blue as a poor relation of the aristocratic 1840 Twopenny stamp. This, of course, was both unfair and short-sighted and now that prices for the 1840 stamp are reaching levels which put them out of reach of almost all of us, collectors are really beginning to appreciate the attractions of the 1841 Twopenny. I would, indeed, go so far as to say that the later stamp is in many ways far more varied and interesting to collect while sharing with its older sister the unmistakable characteristics of a classic issue.

The modification to the design of the Twopenny stamps which was introduced with Plate 3 in 1841 seems to have been closely related to the changes in the One Penny value. Since experiments in mid-1840 had shown that the colour of the cancelling stamp inks had to be changed from red to black and that this meant that the colour of the One Penny stamp also had to be changed from black to red, Rowland Hill seems to have felt that changes should simultaneously be made to the Twopenny value. One change was to be in the shade of blue, the other in the actual design of the stamp as (according to a Treasury minute dated 19 December 1840) "it may be important hereafter to have the means of distinguishing the new Twopenny labels from the old ones".

The actual design change was the revival of an idea tried out experimentally by Rowland Hill or Henry Cole for the One Penny in February 1840. It was discussed between Rowland Hill and Mr J B Bacon (senior partner of Perkins Bacon, the printers) in October 1840 and some trials were made from amended transfer rollers of the effect of one or two white lines along the top and bottom.

Once the decision to add the white lines had been taken and approved a new Twopenny printing plate was ordered from Perkins Bacon but such plates took time to complete. The decision to bring out a new



Fig 1

issue of stamps during February 1841 had to be notified to all postmasters in January, but the new Twopenny plate was not available in mid-January to provide specimens to affix to the notices. Perkins Bacon therefore laid down a small Twopenny plate of twelve impressions only, with white lines but without any check letters (Fig 1). There are three of these rare proof sheets in the Reginald M Phillips Collection in the Museum, but the collection contains something far rarer and more interesting. The proof Twopennies were definitely not intended or available for postage; a few examples did however get through the post, and the R M Phillips collection contains the only recorded example on cover.

The change of colour for this value is far less obvious than the change of design. The altered shades seem to have resulted particularly from the use of new types of printing inks, particularly aqueous inks. The trials for the new blue colours were all printed from a trial plate of 12 impressions from the One Penny die, with the top right hand corner blanked out for printing by the insertion of wax. Like the other experimental impressions from this plate – for the colour of the new



Fig 2



Fig 3



Fig 4



(red) one penny and for cancellation removal – the blue colour trials are part of the series known as Rainbow Trials.

The first recorded trials in blue were sent to Rowland Hill by Perkins Bacon on 1 September 1840 and comprised six colour samples on white paper, some of which had been dipped in prussiate of potash. This is now in the R M Phillips Collection. On 2 November, following a further experiment, J B Bacon wrote to Rowland Hill forwarding “specimens of thirteen variations of colour for the blue or twopenny stamp, which are all we can add to our former trials, as possessing the capacity of printing and yet combining the other qualities you require”. Two of these thirteen sheets are in the R M Phillips Collection. From this trial Rowland Hill was able to select the colour actually used from 1841 onwards.

One problem, however, remained. It had been suggested that forgery of the stamps might be made even more difficult if Dickinson’s silk-thread paper were used instead of the Stacey Wise paper (with small crown watermark) used up to then. Although Rowland Hill himself had written in his diary (on 3 March 1841) of the Dickinson paper that “It is a very ingenious and successful arrangement, but I still consider his paper if employed for labels (as distinct from postal stationery) more open to imitation than that with the watermark”, trials were carried out. On 9 March a printing was made from the

Twopenny small plate of 12 impressions (see Fig 1) in both dark red and blue on five small pieces of Dickinson paper. One of the red trials is illustrated here as Fig 2. The idea was finally rejected in December 1841.

The first Twopenny plate with white lines is known as Plate 3 and it was completed on 25 February 1841; the earliest known dated example is 17 March. This plate continued in use until 1849 and during this period it was printed in a fascinating range of shades of blue. A most interesting page in the R M Phillips collection shows the original printing warrant, dated 26.2.41 for this plate.

Among the particularly interesting varieties and cancellations which are associated with plate 3 I have selected four for ‘illustration’. Firstly a particularly prominent corrosion flaw on the forehead of position ‘LE’ (Fig 3), secondly two fine blue cancellations, a Maltese Cross (Truro) and an 1844 numeral ‘87’ (Fig 4). The other two items are Plate 3 Twopennies used in multiples to prepay overseas rates; an 1842 cover to Moreton Bay (Queensland) franked with $4 \times 2d$ to pay the colonial private ship rate – such usage was most unusual, most such overseas letters being prepaid in cash until the mid-1850’s – and a cover with $7 \times 2d$ stamps to prepay the $1s/2d$ rate to the USA. (Figures 5 and 6).

The second plate of the twopenny with white lines (Plate 4) appeared early in 1850 and it remained in use until 1855. Although this is a pretty straightforward stamp it is



Fig 5

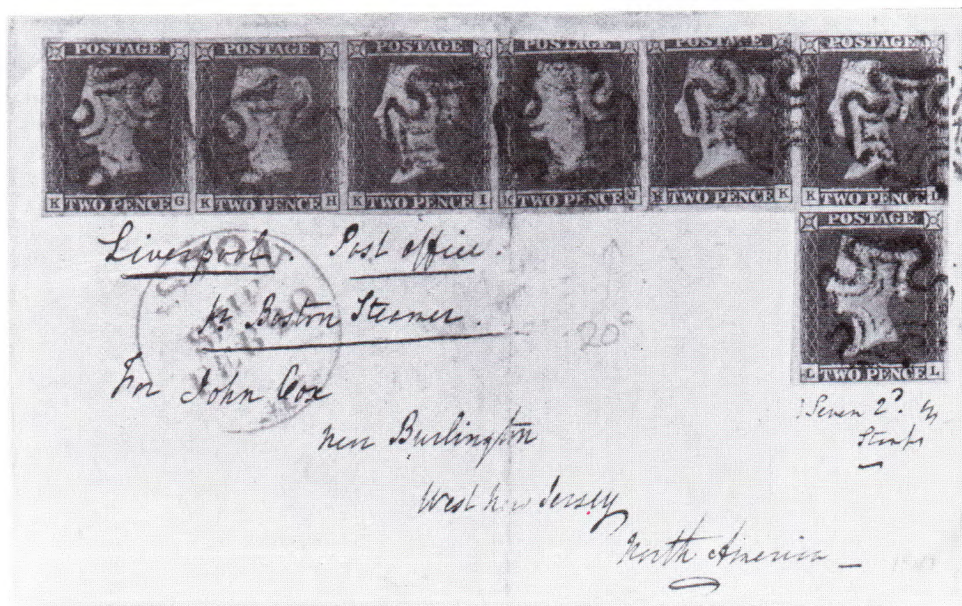


Fig 6



Fig 8



Fig 9



Fig 7



Fig 10

difficult to find in unit and used multiples and it exists in a rare and beautiful shade called violet-blue. Among the more unusual cancellations which exist on this plate is the Maltese Cross! (Fig 7). Early in the life of this plate two important changes were made (probably at the same time) in the marginal inscriptions and markings. The first was to alter the inscription along the top of the sheet to read 'Price . . . £1 per sheet' instead of '£2 per sheet'. This was because the printer's sheet of 240 stamps was divided into two counter sheets of 120 stamps each. The second change was to add vertical dividing marks in the top and bottom margins and twelve-pointed stars in the middle of the side margins as in the contemporary One Penny. Central marginal pieces of plate 4 *without* these alterations or additions are of some rarity. This plate also suffered exceptional wear on four stamps of the bottom row ('TA' to 'TD') and these were repaired.

The remaining items which are worth mention and illustration here are none of them issued stamps but collectors specialising in this value should be aware of them.

In 1871 Rowland Hill's nephew Ormonde,

a senior Post Office official, had proofs made from the die of the 1841 Twopenny (and other values) in black, blue and some fancy colours for the Postmaster General and for his own collection of specimens. (Fig 8 and 9).

Finally in 1878, Perkins Bacon who were threatened with the loss of their contracts because of the non-fugitive character of the inks used to print their stamps, tried experiments to secure more fugitive inks. These were made both from the dies (on paper watermarked small star) in violet for the twopenny (Fig 10) and from Twopenny Plate 15 in purple and blue. They are, of course, imperforate.

A G RIGO DE RIGHI

The Princess Anne and Captain Mark Phillips

The Princess Anne Elizabeth Alice Louise is fourth in line to the throne. She is the second child of HM The Queen and Prince Philip, and is now 23. As a child she was active in organised activities such as the Brownies and later the Guides, and in 1963 became a pupil at Benenden School.

She began attending public engagements at the age of 18, and made her first journey outside Britain in 1954, to Tobruk. Her first state visit was to Austria in 1969, and her recent tour to Ethiopia and the Sudan brought the Princess to a wide audience through its extensive coverage on television.

Princess Anne has inherited the Queen's love of horses, and is renowned for her equestrian skills. She took part in the Badminton Horse Trials in April 1971, gaining fifth place, and in September 1972 won the Raleigh Trophy in the Individual European Three Day Event at Burghley, Lincolnshire – the first member of the Royal Family to hold a European Equestrian title. She was first taught to ride on a Shetland pony at a mere three years old, with the Queen herself as teacher. Her participation in competitive riding dates from 1962 especially in connection with the horses "High Jinks" and later "Doublet".

Equestrian sports are of course a major mutual interest of the Princess and her fiancée, Mark Phillips. Captain Phillips also competed in the Badminton Horse Trials of 1971, and gained first place. At the Munich Olympics of 1972, Princess Anne was able to witness Captain Phillips riding to a gold medal.

Mark Anthony Peter Phillips was born at Tetbury, Gloucestershire, on 22 September 1948. He was educated at Marlborough where he excelled in sports of all kinds, making the first team in football, rugby and cricket. In his final year he was captain of athletics. He began riding at the age of two and later became a distinguished competitor, often against Princess Anne as at Badminton in 1971.

At the age of 19 he went to Sandhurst and two years later was commissioned into the Queen's Dragoon guards, an old and dis-

tinguished regiment initiated in 1685 by King James II. Both his father and his maternal grandfather were also connected with the Dragoon guards.

It is confirmed that Mark Phillips will stay in the forces after his marriage, as did Prince Philip after his marriage to the then Princess Elizabeth. Captain Phillips is due to be posted to Sandhurst about mid-February to take up duties as a Junior Instructor.

There are many strong connections between the couple reaching back into the past – his maternal grandfather was King George VI's *aide-de-camp*, for example. However, their strongest mutual interests are of course equestrian sports and the Army. Princess Anne is Colonel in Chief of the 14/20th King's Hussars, the Worcester and Sherwood Foresters Regiment and the 8th Canadian Hussars.

The engagement was officially announced from Buckingham Palace on 29 May 1973 after the couple had joined the Royal Family on holiday at Balmoral. Their first meeting, at the Mexico Olympics of 1968 was at a reception for the British equestrian team. Later the Princess was to become a regular visitor at the Phillips' 16th century manor house at Great Somerford, Wiltshire.

The wedding will take place on 14 November 1973 at Westminster Abbey and the service will be conducted by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Michael Ramsey. Prince Charles will be 25 years old on the day. The wedding will not be a state occasion and by royal standards it will be informal. There will be no special seating provided in the Abbey as with many public ceremonies and less than 1500 people are expected to attend. However, television and radio services provided will be far-reaching. It is anticipated that coverage will reach up to 90 million people, both at home and abroad. The last Royal wedding at the Abbey was that of Princess Alexandra to Mr Angus Ogilvy on 24 April 1963 at which Princess Anne was a bridesmaid. She is no stranger to royal wed-

dings at the Abbey, as she was also chief bridesmaid at the wedding of her aunt, Princess Margaret, to Anthony Armstrong-Jones in 1960.

Princess Anne's engagement ring is a simple design of three large stones – a sapphire in the centre with a diamond at each side. Her wedding dress is to be designed by Susan Small, one of the top British ready-to-wear specialists. This marks a breakthrough as previously all royal wedding dresses were designed by coutouriers – Norman Hartnell designed the wedding dresses for both

Princess Margaret and the Queen. The designer chosen is one from whom the Princess has already chosen many of her clothes.

The couple are to spend their honeymoon on the Royal yacht *Britannia*, cruising in the Caribbean. They then embark on an official tour to areas of Latin America, and after returning to England, join the Queen in the New Year for another official visit, this time to New Zealand. Thus they have a strenuous period of activities ahead.

Christmas Stamps

The story of Good King Wenceslas is featured on this years Christmas stamps values 3p and 3½p. The one 3½p stamp shows the main characters of the legend while the 5 se-tenant 3p shows the story from beginning to end. They are to be issued on 28 November 1973, and are designed by David Gentleman.

The carol was written by the Rev J M Neal, DD (1818-1866), a classical scholar. He wished to point out the duties of the rich towards the poor, especially at Christmas time. King Wenceslas, a real monarch, was Duke of Bohemia in the 10th century, and was very active in the promotion of Christianity in the country, which was at the time

partly pagan. The melody is the mediaeval tune of an old spring song.

Printing Details

<i>Printer :</i>	Harrison & Sons Ltd.
<i>Size :</i>	30mm × 41mm
<i>Perforation :</i>	15 × 14
<i>No. to Sheet :</i>	100
<i>Paper :</i>	Coated unwatermarked 3p one bar phosphor 3½p all over phosphor
<i>Format :</i>	Horizontal Combination
<i>Process :</i>	Photogravure
<i>Date of Issue :</i>	28 November 1973
<i>Designer :</i>	David Gentleman
<i>Colours :</i>	3p Blue, grey, brown, red, magenta, green, flesh, black, gold 3½p Blue, grey, brown, pink, magenta, green, flesh, black, gold





Christmas Stamps First Day Cover Services

Six stamps, five at 3p and one at 3½p are to be issued on 28 November 1973. The usual Christmas cancellations – the 'Philatelic Bureau' and 'Bethlehem Llandeilo Carms' will be available.

The following services will be provided:

SERVICE A. This, the full service, consists of the official Post Office Cover, addressed and cancelled as requested, with the full set of stamps affixed. The price is 30p or 27½p for customers with deposit accounts.

SERVICE B. For this, customer's own pre-addressed covers will be accepted for stamping and cancelling for 24p.

SERVICE C. For 50 or more covers to the same address, the conditions of Service A will apply except that the price will be 27½p.

Customers who specifically require the Bethlehem postmark should send their orders to the Head Postmaster (Philatelic Section), Llanelli, Carmarthen. All orders for cancellations other than Bethlehem only should be sent to the Philatelic Bureau, Edinburgh.

First day of issue cancellations will be given to covers bearing the Christmas stamps posted in special philatelic posting boxes in main offices throughout the country.

New Stamp Books

Three new stamp books are to be issued to replace the old issues. They are to be values 30p, 35p and 50p. The 10p book is to remain unchanged, but the format of the other books to be altered. The new 50p stamp book 'Canada Life' will be on sale at the Philatelic Bureau and all Post Offices from 14 November 1973. Full details of two other books to be released later are:—

Autumn 1973

- 10p 'Mellor double aperture pillar box'
- 30p 'Save the Children'
- 35p 'British Coins'

Philatelic Bulletin Back Numbers

Mr R B Camp, 56 Queen's Crescent, Clapham, Bedford, MK41 6DB would like Volumes 1, 2 and 3.

Mr P Beaumont, 'Stonegarth', 20 Tinker Lane, Meltham, Huddersfield, HD7 3EX, would like Volumes 1 and 2.

Mr R V Rice, 17 The Priory, Epsom Road, Croydon, Surrey, would like: Vol 1, Vol 2, Vol 3 (Nos 1-8 incl.), Vol 4 (Nos 1-4 incl.), Vol 5 (Nos 5 and 6).

Mr J R Cook, PO Box 318, Franklin, Georgia 30217, USA, would like to buy Volumes 1-9 inclusive.

Mrs M Hayward, 25 Middleton Close, Fareham, Hants PO14 1QN, has from Volume 5 number 8, to Volume 7 number 3 inclusive for disposal.

Mr I M Dickson, 50 Cheviot Drive, Newton Mearns, Glasgow G77 5AS, would like Volumes 1-3 inclusive.

Mr Randy Gottesfeld, 759 East 56th Street, Brooklyn, New York 11234, would like Volumes 1-8 inclusive.

Mr E Mytum, Quantocks, 7 The Ridgeway, Warwick, would like to buy Volumes 1-4 inclusive.

Mr J Riley, 16 Parliament Street, Upholland, Wigan, Lancs, would like to buy Volume 4 Nos 4-9 inclusive, and Volume 5 No. 3.

Mr D A Brown, 19 Melbourne Road, Ipswich, Suffolk IP4 5PP, would like Volumes 1-6 inclusive.

Mr E C Holdsworth, 23 Watkins Drive, Western Springs, Rugeley, Staffs, has Volume 10 for disposal.

Mr G Maton, 86 Copenhagen Towers, International Way, Weston, Southampton, would like to buy Volumes 1-4 inclusive.

Mr R G Callan, Woodlands, The Mains, Giggleswick, Settle, Yorks, would like to buy Volumes 1-5 inclusive.

Mr F G Hardy, 11 Windsor Avenue, South Gosforth, Newcastle-upon-Tyne NE3 1PS, would like Volumes 1-7 inclusive.

The Rev F G Harrison, All Saints Vicarage, Appleton Roebuck, York YO5 7DG, has Volumes 6-10 inclusive for sale, price £2.75 postage inclusive.

Mr R A Levesque, 10-11444 13281 Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T5M 1G1, would like to buy Volumes 1-9 inclusive.

Mr M Sanders, 12 Sunningdale Drive, Kirk Hallam, Ilkeston, Derbyshire, would like: Volume 7 (Nos 5-12 inclusive); and Volume 6 (Nos 1-3 inclusive).

SAC R J Christian, C4281567, TRC JOC Maastricht BFPO 18, would like to buy Volumes 1-8 inclusive.

Mr C J Wasser, 4 Deane Road, Rugby, Warwicks, CV21 4NZ, would like Volumes 1 and 2.

Mr G S Pyle, 3 Creighton Court, Creighton Avenue, London N2 9BS, would like to dispose of Volume 5, Nos 10-12 inclusive, Volumes 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10.

Since we began this feature some time ago, we have been inundated with requests from Bulletin subscribers, so much so that this article is threatening to take over the Bulletin.

It is with regret that we announce therefore that for the time being, we cannot accept any more requests for back numbers.

Special Handstamps

Unless otherwise stated items for reposting bearing at least 3½p in postage should be sent to the Head Postmaster of the town where the special posting box is located, or to the relevant district Postmaster in London, marking the outer cover "Special Handstamp".

21 November 1973 (P/C)

50th Anniversary of the Granting of the Royal Charter to Princess Mary's Royal Air Force Nursing Service
21 Nov 73 British Forces 1405 Postal Service. Special posting box at Inglis Barracks, Mill Hill, London NW7 1PX. Items for reposting to the Philatelic Officer at the same address.

14 November 1973 (P/C)

Royal Wedding Celebrations Felicitas 14 November 1973 Great Somerford Chippenham Wilts. Special posting box at Great Somerford Post Office.

27 November 1973 (P/R)

150th Anniversary St. John's Church 27 November 1973 Workington Cumberland. Special posting box at St John's Church Workington.

22 December 1973 (P/C)

December 22 1973 Echo Sunderland Centenary. Special posting box at the Echo Office Bridge St Sunderland.

Postmark Slogans

Unless otherwise stated, items for reposting should be forwarded to the Head Postmaster of the town where the slogan is to be used, with the outer cover marked "Postmark Slogan".

1 October-31 December 1973 (P)

Follow the Famous to Bath - the Georgian City. To be used at Bath.

14 October-17 November 1973

Ascot Races November 16 and 17. To be used at Ascot.

4-10 November 1973

6-19 January 1974 (P)

Costume Museum Leicester. To be used at Leicester.

23 September-24 November 1973

16-22 December 1973

27 February-16 March 1974 (P)

York Living History. To be used at York on 1st Class Mail only.

1 October 1973-24 February 1974 (P)

Barnsley Civic Tel 6757 Dec 22 to Feb 23 Ken Platt Jack Storey. Jack and the Beanstalk. To be used at Barnsley.

9-22 December 1973

Fire Kills: Be Safe And Take Extra Care. To be used at Leicester.

16 December 1973-12 January 1974 (P)

Blue Circle Day January 12 Ascot Races. To be used at Ascot.

22 October–18 November 1973

**Bedford Amateur Operatic Society
Corn Exchange November 19–24.** To be
used at Bedford.

2–15 November 1973 1 die

30 November–13 December 1973 1 die

15–28 February 1974 2 dies

3–16 May 1974 (P) 2 dies

**Croydon Philharmonic Society Fair-
field Halls Book Now.** To be used at
Croydon.

16 December 1973–12 January 1974 (P)

**Blue Circle Day January 12 Ascot
Races.** To be used at Ascot.

22 October–18 November 1973

**Bedford Amateur Operatic Society
Corn Exchange November 19–24.** To be
used at Bedford.

2–15 November 1973 1 die

30 November–13 December 1973 1 die

15–28 February 1974 2 dies

3–16 May 1974 2 dies (P)

**Croydon Philharmonic Society Fair-
field Halls Book Now.** To be used at
Croydon.

Repeat Campaigns

1 October 1973–31 January 1974

Stranraer Welcomes New Industry. To
be re-used at Stranraer.

7 October 1973–24 November 1973

**Tax Free Premium Savings Bonds
Prizes.** To be re-used at Lanark.

28 November–12 December 1973

**Are You On the New Voters List Check
Now.** To be used at 126 Offices in the UK.

1 October 1973–31 January 1974

Stranraer Welcomes New Industry. To
be re-used at Stranraer.

7 October 1973–24 November 1973

Tax Free Premium Bonds Prizes. To
be re-used at Lanark.

Until 13 July 1974

**Wolverhampton Workshop to the
World.** To be used at Wolverhampton.

Until 1 September 1974

**Hawick for Woollens Sport and Tour-
ism.** To continue in use at Hawick.

Until 11 September 1974

Dundee for Development. To continue
in use at Dundee.

15 October–31 December 1973

**Expanding Hastings. The Resort with
a Future.**

1 October 1973–30 September 1974

**Spacious and Gracious Folkestone
Holiday Guide Book from Official
Information Centre.** To be re-used at
Folkestone.

11 November–8 December 1973

**Enjoy a Sauna and Relax at St Mar-
garet's Baths'. To be used at Leicester.**

10 March–6 April 1974

**For Health and Safety Learn to Swim
Contact Your Local Baths.** To be used
at Leicester.

24 September–17 November 1973

**International Camping and Caravan
Show Earls Court 8–17 November.** To
be used at London: ECDO, NDO, NWDO,
Paddington, SEDO, Mount Pleasant,
SWDO.

1 October 1973 UFN (P)

**Humber Bridge for Completion 1977
Hull the City on Humberside.** To be
used at Hull.

1 October–31 March 1974

**Come Wednesday Shopping in
Bracknell.** To be used at Bracknell.

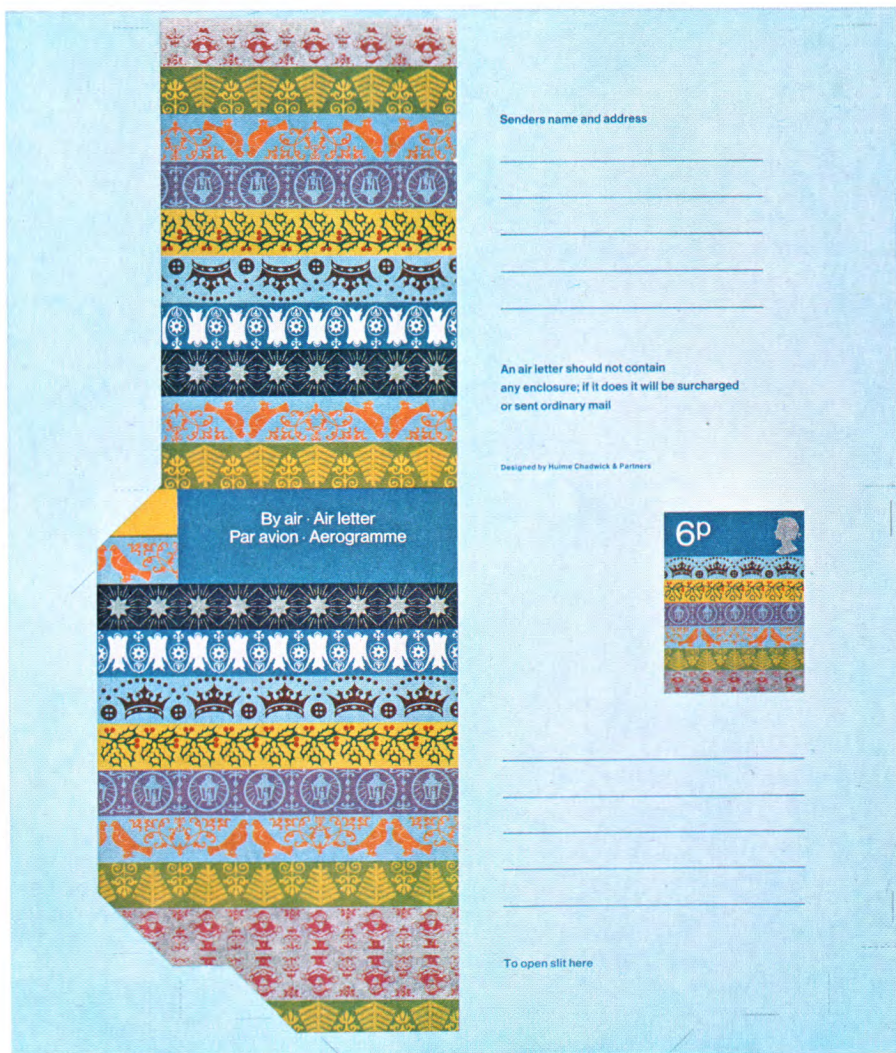
7 October–30 November 1973

**The British Philatelic Exhibition 1973
Seymour Hall London W1 31 October–
3 November.** To be used at London
WDO, WCDO.

**'P' denotes Pictorial, 'C' denotes Circular,
'R' denotes Rectangular**

Christmas 1973 Air Letter

This year's issue will be on sale from Post
Offices price 7p from 21 November 1973.
It was designed by Hulme Chadwick &
Partners, and printed by McCorquodale
Printers Ltd. The design is based on tradi-
tional ornaments and decorations.



The Ideal Postage Stamp



Occasionally a curious GB 1d 'Stamp' finds its way into a collection. Although it exhibits the head of King George V, surmounted by a crown and encircled by the words International Stamp Exhibition and bearing in its quartered background the four emblems of the British Isles, it is in fact not a stamp in the true sense, but known technically as a label.

To have been a true stamp it should have borne the words Postage or Postage and Revenue.

It came into being as an exercise in stamp printing by Waterlow Bros & Layton, while exhibiting their Elliott 'Wharfedale' printing machine at the International Stamp Exhibition held at the Royal Horticultural Hall from 11 to 19 August 1912, for which they received an award.

It was designed by Mr T S Harrison, stamp designer to the printers and is probably the first to employ vertical lines of shading for the face, this method later being used for the then new Australian one penny engraved stamp.

At the time of the exhibition it was known as the Ideal Postage Stamp owing to its unique method of production.

It was sold for its face value of 1d as a souvenir label, and was obtainable in one of five different single colourways, perforated or unperforated in unwatermarked paper.

I am indebted to Stanley Gibbons Ltd for allowing me to quote the following from their publication, 'Postage Stamps in the Making' by F J Melville.

"A New Photo-Etching Process. In con-

cluding this chapter on the construction of plates for typographical printing, reference must be made to a new method, having some resemblance to photo-etching but greatly superior to any forms of photo-etching heretofore known. This is the Printex process, which was used for the production of the so-called "Ideal" stamp of the Jubilee International Stamp Exhibition, and which bids fair to become a potent factor in the world's production of both surface-printed and recess printed stamps.

The complete details of the process are divulged only to officials of interested Governments, and it is obvious that many technicalities must necessarily exist in a method which produces such perfect results. A simple outline of the procedure will, however, lie well within the scope of this article and will serve at least to herald the arrival of a long-expected perfect photo-mechanical process. The fundamental principle of the process is mechanical precision.

The artist's design is first submitted to a most rigorous and scientific standardisation, whereby the actual proportion and value of every line and dot is determined and recorded so that before the printing plate is begun it is known to absolute certainty just how the final printed stamp will appear.

At this point an unalterable glass master record is made of the design, in exact mathematical proportion, which record remains for all time the direct parent of each individual stamp ever printed from that design. This record goes into the immediate custody of the authorities, for without the

actual possession of this identical record, no human agency, not even the Printex process, could produce a counterfeit that will escape detection.

From the moment this parent stamp is officially accredited, no personal factor enters into the problem. An elaborate machine of infinite precision receives the official original and repeats it in absolute accuracy any number of times, to any size, or any spacing, producing on glass a complete image of the desired printing plate, composed of any number of repetitions, each an exact copy of the original. Then it passes into another machine, which transfers infallibly this built-up design, in perfect alignment, to a slab of specially made copper, the design becoming an acid resistant. This copper in turn goes into a final machine, which, driven by a powerful motor, forces the special etching fluid into the finest hairlines and minutest dots, producing thereby either relief or recess plates, according to whether the acid resistant has been applied negative or positive.

For the first time in stamp history plates are produced absolutely perfect in spacing, so that no cutting is needed to bring the different sections of the plate into correct relation with the rest. Where key plates are printed in one colour, and duty plates in another, these come into perfect registration, with no local adjustment whatever. The chief reason for the neglect of photo-etching in stamp manufacture in the past has been the difficulty in securing the sharpness of line required for typographical stamps, a sharpness hitherto unobtainable except from engraved dies mechanically reproduced. Etching has a tendency to produce unequal lines, but in the Printex process, as was shown at the Stamp Exhibition of 1912, this difficulty has now been overcome, and philatelists will in due course note the use to which some of the leading stamp-printing establishments of the world are now preparing to put this beautiful process."

M A P Tuckey

Letters to the Editor

Sir,

I wonder how many people who call themselves 'Philatelists' are really entitled to use the name? According to my encyclopaedia philately is an 'intellectual pursuit' which 'connotes geography, history, art and science, and stimulates research in many fields.' Although without doubt a few dedicated collectors do try and find out about the subjects depicted on their stamps, I have found that the vast majority of so-called 'philatelists' are just not interested in the subject matter of the stamp. And so, to my distress, I am forced to conclude that the only real philatelists are those who collect by theme rather than country. Are we lovers of the postage stamp going to have to be relegated to the ranks of the common 'stamp collector'?

Yours faithfully

MARTIN C BROKER

Burnham-on-Sea
Somerset

Sir,

A recent television programme attempted to guess what contemporary items would become valuable as antiques in a hundred years time.

I was prompted to wonder if any of this country's special stamps, which are so often derided today, will in their turn, become valued collectors items by 2073.

Apart from the obvious PUC £1 and the 1948 Silver Wedding £1, I would nominate the 2s. 6d Westminster Abbey which has a timeless quality, the British Ships of 1969, the Commonwealth Games set of 1970 which may be better understood in years to come and which so nearly succeeded when issued, and the BBC set of 1972 for their historical content.

Yours faithfully,

M K YOUNG

Lupset
Wakefield, Yorkshire

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