

Philatelic Bulletin



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One shilling and sixpence

LOUIS LE NAIN

HARRISON

Contents

INTRODUCTION	2
THE PHILATELIC BUREAU	3
NATIONAL POSTAL MUSEUM NOTES	5
THE BUREAU IN BRUSSELS	7
POSTMARK SLOGANS	8
BINDERS FOR THE BULLETIN	9
CORRECTIONS	9
WITHDRAWAL OF BUREAU STOCK ITEMS	9
MAIL COACH HALFPENNIES	9
CHRISTMAS STAMPS	
FIRST DAY COVER SERVICES	10
SPECIAL HANDSTAMP	10
GIFT PACKS	10
UNACCEPTED STAMP DESIGNS	11
CONDITIONS	15

Introduction

We had intended to introduce this month our promised 'Letters to the Editor' column but this has had to be postponed and will now start in the December issue.

A mixed bag of articles and features is offered in this edition and we hope that our readers will be interested in the behind-the-scenes photographs of the Bureau.

The Christmas presents problem for many will be solved by our special Gift Packs which will be available from 27th November — full details are given in this issue.

The Philatelic Bureau

Now that the Bureau has settled down in Edinburgh our readers may like to know a little of the workings and see some pictures of the layout.

The Bureau is divided into several sections and although they work in close liaison, one with the other, each is responsible for its separate functions.

The first section we will look at is the Inward Mails department where letters addressed to the Bureau are opened and sorted. All orders for stamps, first day covers, Bulletin subscriptions and Deposit Account credits are dealt with here and other letters and requests are passed to the appropriate section. The largest number of letters received in one day since the Bureau moved to Edinburgh was 4,800 on 3rd July 1967, the closing date for the British Paintings issue first day cover services. In the eight days from 26th June until 3rd July a total of 30,000 orders of various types was received and attended to.

The hundreds of stamp orders from customers

First day cover unit.



Deposit account section.

all over the world — from those of small boys wanting one or two stamps to dealers requiring thousands — are each summarised in the Inward Mails section and passed to the Accountants Section.

In this section the necessary stamps are taken from stock and the accounting done before passing the stamps to the Outward Remittance Section. Here the goods are checked and packed ready for despatch by registered or ordinary post.

The largest department in the Bureau is the Deposit Account section which looks after the accounts for 17,000 customers. On these duties no cash or stamps are handled by the clerks, their whole responsibility being to record credits received; to make out orders in accordance with the customers' detailed requirements; and to debit the account correctly, seeing that sufficient credit remains to meet further requirements.

Modern methods of accounting and filing are



Outward remittance section.

in use and each clerk has one of the latest adding and listing machines to assist him in attaining a daily balance of credits.

One of the biggest difficulties is where the customer omits to quote his account number or misquotes it, and much valuable time is expended in tracing. It would assist the rapid handling of orders if customers would show their correct account number clearly on any communications, and, in addition, the name of the account holder in block capital letters.

A special Correspondence Section deals with enquiries from customers and answers queries and complaints. About 80 of these are dealt with each day in addition to 250 requests for information about Bureau services. Extensive use is made of the telephone and telex and these personal touches are appreciated by our customers.

One of the most highly mechanised branches of the Bureau is that which deals with the despatch of your Bulletin each month. In spite

of modern machinery the prompt issue of over 40,000 copies is a major task and with the ever increasing popularity of the Bulletin new equipment is being installed to cope with the demand.

The First Day Cover section is responsible for arranging that all the Service A covers are typed correctly by a team of first-class typists and for the date-stamping and despatch of both A and B service envelopes, which may reach 50,000 for each issue. A team of volunteer postmen take a personal pride in the quality of the date-stamp impressions and so well do they perform their task that complaints of bad postmarking are extremely rare.

We are not able in a fairly short article to go into great detail about the working of the Bureau. We hope, however, that from what we have said, and the photographs reproduced, we reflect the efficient manner in which we carry out our business of supplying our customers' needs.

Sales counter.



National Postal Museum Notes

CHARLES DICKENS VISITS THE STAMP PRINTING WORKS IN 1852

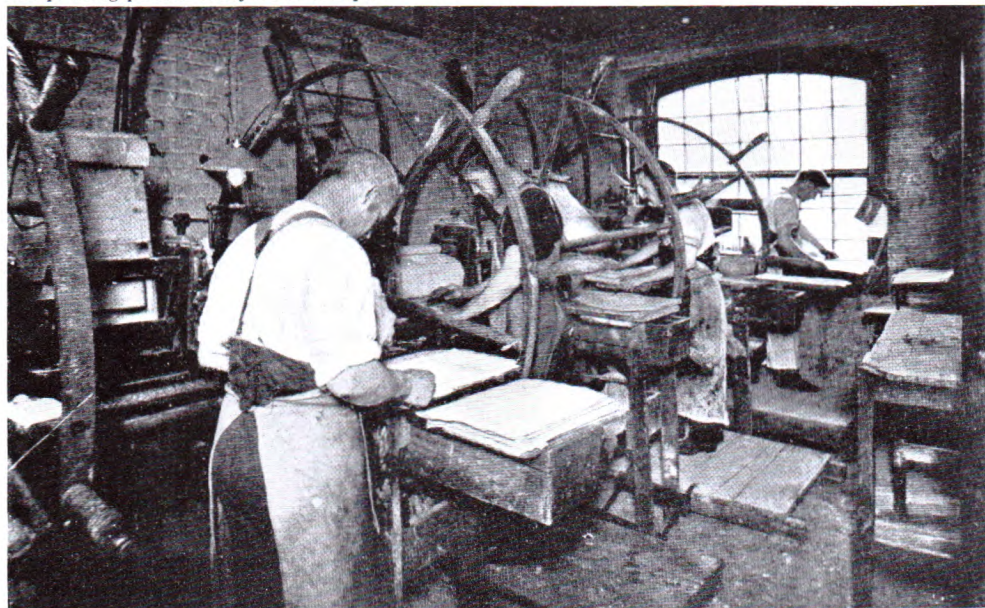
Among the great Victorian writers few had a better professional nose for good copy than Charles Dickens. As the 'conductor' of *Household Words*, the popular magazine he edited from 1849 to 1858, and much of which he wrote himself, Dickens showed a lively interest in stamp production and design. The account he published in 1852 of a visit to the printing works of Messrs. Perkins, Bacon & Petch in Fleet Street still reads well despite the somewhat flamboyant language employed. The style is that of Dickens himself although whether he wrote it we do not know.

Be that as it may, this *Household Words* eyewitness account of the printing of the line engraved stamps of the period may interest students of the 19th century postage stamp and particularly those who have seen items from the Reginald M. Phillips collection in the

National Postal Museum, which is particularly rich in this material. Here is the account Charles Dickens printed:

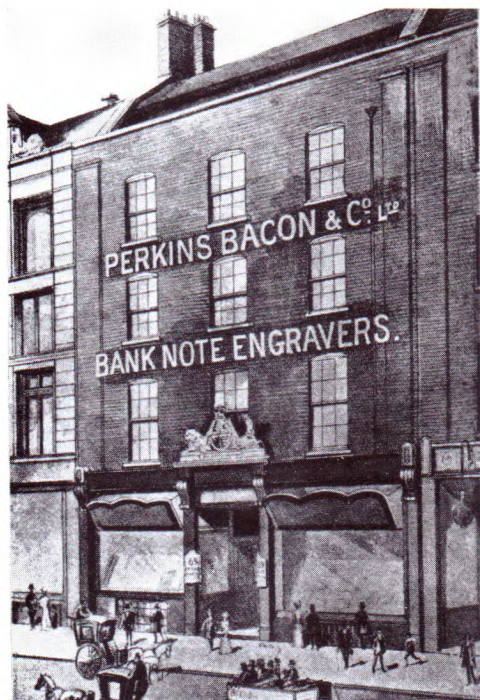
'In making the postage label, the hardening and softening process comes first into play. The "might of fire" is employed. A flat steel die — softened by having been put into a box surrounded with articles that have, when heated, a strong attraction for carbon, and which thus draw the carbon out of it — was the first requisite. On it, thus prepared, the square of fine net-work from which the profile is relieved, was engraved by the aid of the improved Rose engine. A portion was then scraped out in the rude shape of a head; and over this, Mr Heath executed his exquisite vignette. The die once more went to the furnace; and being surrounded, this time, with articles having NO affinity to carbon, was

The printing presses used for the stamps.



hardened again, — harder than it had originally been. This became the matrix: the mother of that prodigious family of Queen's heads — amounting to two billions during the last dozen years — which have passed through the post-offices of the United Kingdom. This steel die is almost imperishable, and its powers of reproduction upon the plates from which the adhesive labels are actually printed, is all but inexhaustible. As every subsequent impression is primarily derived from this one original, not merely uniformity is produced, but actual identity. The manner of the process of transferring the "Queen's Head" from the mother to her progeny is this: A circular steel die, or "roller", is softened. The dies go into a powerful pressing machine together — the hard and soft, the flat and circular. The intense pressure transfers the figure to the "roller" in relief, — which is also hardened in its turn, and is then in a condition to transfer, by indentation, the subject to the printing plates, by another passage through the press. After this, the flat die is seldom wanted. The roller assumes its office, and is used for the "plates".

'The plates employed for printing the postage stamps are fine oblong pieces of steel — gleaming like the steel mirrors which the Roman girls used to see themselves in — (mirrors well adapted to such a stern people). Each plate is large enough to have ranged upon it two hundred and forty penny "Queen's Heads"; — one pound's worth. The effect, therefore, is that of a beautiful mirror, in which you see Her Majesty's countenance repeated two hundred and forty times in close lines. The security against forgery lies in the engineering on the "basis" or ground, on which the head is done; in the great excellence of Mr Charles Heath's design; in the exquisite beauty of its execution, and in the perfect identity — barring, of course the accidents of printing —



Exterior of Messrs Perkins, Bacon & Co.'s premises, 69 Fleet Street, E.C.

of every Queen's Head, one with another. But the chief advantage of the invention is the power it confers of rapid production. The number of postage labels required for the public service is — casting out Sundays — upwards of one million a day; it was nearly three hundred millions for the three hundred and sixty-five days of 1851; fifty-two of them being Sundays. Let us see, then, what labour would have been required to keep pace with the prodigious demand, had Mr Perkins's invention not been in existence: It took Mr Heath a fortnight's hard work to engrave, on the original steel die, the profile which is the progenitor of all the rest. Had there been no power to transfer that work to other plates for printing, of course every head must have been separately

The Bureau in Brussels

engraved by hand on the printing plates, each at an equal expenditure of time. What, therefore, occupied originally a couple of weeks, and which now occupies no more than a few minutes to manufacture plates for printing from, would have taken — how many years? We shall see:

‘Since the introduction of cheap postage, Messrs. Perkins, Bacon, and Petch have transferred the matrix upon one hundred and forty-two plates, each having two hundred and forty heads upon it; in other words, the number of single impressions given off from steel to steel has been thirty-four thousand and eighty. Every one of these, but for the transferring process, must have been engraved laboriously by hand, at the expense of a fortnight’s time. If the Wandering Jew were an engraver and had that little order to execute, he could not have completed it under thirteen hundred and ten years. Had a Rowland Hill of the time of Henry the Eighth set him at work in 1542, he must have been “cutting away” ever since, and could not have laid down his graver yet. The thirty-four thousand and eight heads which Mr Perkins’s plan has produced on steel, since 1840, would have occupied the miniature bayonets of an army of hand engravers one hundred and ten strong! Had it not been, therefore, for the transferring process, the Government must have employed the less elegant and coarser appliances of stereotype plates and letter-press printing, to produce postage labels at the inordinate rate per diem at which they are demanded by an eminently epistolary public.’

Charles Heath’s original die which so impressed Charles Dickens is in the National Postal Museum which also contains numerous die proofs and the first full plate proof of the Penny Black.

F. MARCUS ARMAN

As part of the recent ‘British Week’ in Brussels the Post Office exhibited a selection of its stamps and the Bureau set up a philatelic sales point which proved very popular with visitors to the show.

A very large number of Bureau deposit account customers and Bulletin subscribers visited our stand to say hello and this gave us a welcome opportunity of meeting some of our customers face to face.

The occasion was made even more pleasant when our hosts presented the GPO with the Grand Prix Philatelique and a commemorative medallion, which we are proud to reproduce.



Postmark Slogans

'Beautiful Bournemouth for Sun, Sea and Sands' will be re-used at Bournemouth from 26th December 1967 to 29th February 1968.

'Beautiful Bournemouth for Winter Holidays and Residence' will be re-used in the transposed position at Bournemouth from 1st November 1967 to 11th December 1967.

'Bournemouth wishes you a Merry Xmas. A Welcome always awaits you' will be re-used in the transposed position at Bournemouth from 12th December 1967 to 25th December 1967.

'A Happy Christmas from Bridlington. See you next Summer' will be used in the transposed position at Bridlington from 1st December 1967 to 24th December 1967.

'Buxton — Send for Guide' will be in continued use at Buxton from 27th December 1967 to 14th April 1968.

'Come to Captivating Colwyn Bay' will be in continued use at Colwyn Bay from 24th December 1967 to 22nd April 1968.

'First ever Christmas Present — God Gave His Son' will be in use in the transposed position at Coleraine from 27th November 1967 to 24th December 1967.

'Exmouth, Devon. Sea, Sands, Scenery, Col-our Guide P.O. 1/-. Room 16. Information Bureau' will be in use in the transposed position at Exmouth from 1st December 1967 to 30th November 1968.

'See Harlow's Christmas Lights' will be re-used at Harlow from 1st December 1967 to 31st December 1967.

'Jersey for Christmas Holidays' will be used in the transposed position at Jersey from 1st November 1967 to 31st December 1967.

'Royal Leamington Spa, Garden Town of Shakespeareland' will be re-used at Leamington Spa from 23rd December 1967 to 3rd February 1968.

'Christmas Shopping Illuminations. Shrewsbury December January' will be in continued use at Shrewsbury from 4th December 1967 to 7th January 1968.

'Skegness is so bracing—Lincolnshire's Holiday Playground Guide 1/- Room PS. Town Hall' will be in use at Skegness from 14th December 1967 until further notice.

'Have you Taken out Your Licence for Radio/TV?' will be used again this year in the standard position at 67 offices, a selection of which is as follows: Walton, Watford, Newry, Bournemouth, Bristol, Dundee, Edinburgh H.O., Hockley, Walsall (from 1st November 1967 to 30th November 1967); at Dagenham, Uxbridge, Reading, Richmond, Swansea, Pontypridd (from 20th November 1967 to 30th November 1967).

'Are You On The Voters List. Check Now' will be used again this year in the standard position at 110 offices, a selection of which is as follows: Aberdeen, Glasgow, Chingford, Ballymena, Bangor, Neath, Windsor, Newbury, Canterbury, Maidstone, Andover, Exeter, Winchester, Warrington, Preston, Wigan, Peterborough, Crewe, Nuneaton, Halifax, Lincoln, Darlington, Luton, Chelmsford, from 28th November 1967 to 12th December 1967.

Covers for re-posting to Head or District Postmasters concerned.

Binders for the Bulletin



Some of our new readers may not know that an excellent binder is available in which copies of the Bulletin may be bound. Each binder holds 24 copies firmly and neatly and enables loose copies to be held as a reference volume.

The Philatelic Bureau crest and the words 'Philatelic Bulletin' are gold blocked on the spine of the binder which is covered with a dark red rexine cloth.

The binders cost 15s 0d each and remittances should be sent to Philatelic Bureau, 2-4 Waterloo Place, Edinburgh 1.

Corrections

The artist's name on page 11 of the September Bulletin should read S. R. Badmin and not as shown and the bottom design on page 12 was by Mr A. S. B. New and not as indicated. We offer our apologies to both designers.

Withdrawal of Bureau Stock Items

Stocks of the following stamps are exhausted and no further orders for them can be accepted

	Plain	Phosphor
Christmas 1966	3d	1s 6d
British Paintings		4d
Definitive	3d, 4d, 6d	
Northern Ireland	3d	
Jersey	3d	

Presentation Packs

Christmas 1966
British Paintings

Mail Coach Halfpennies



Mail Coach Halfpenny c.1797, metal token dedicated to John Palmer, the originator of the Mail Coach service.

Following our recent article on the mail coach era, a reader was kind enough to send details of a coin in her possession which she thought would be of interest.

This prompted some research into our archives and we found that the coin is a mail coach halfpenny which was struck about 1797. The coin is inscribed to John Palmer as a token of gratitude for benefits received from the establishment of mail coaches.

The halfpennies were issued in large numbers and are thought to have been legal tender. They were readily accepted at the inns along the mail coach routes which had benefited so much by the improved system of coaching which Palmer had introduced in 1784.

Christmas Stamps First Day Cover Services

In addition to those offices listed on page 7 of the October Bulletin, philatelic posting boxes will be provided at Scarborough, Bognor Regis and Kendal.

Special Handstamp

'South Midlands Branch Palestine Police O.C.A.' will be used at Swindon HO on 25th November 1967. Circular design with badge motif in centre.

Gift Packs

In time for Christmas we are to issue an attractive gift pack which will contain a phosphor lined specimen of each of this year's special stamps. The contents of the Gift Pack will be:

EFTA	— 9d, 1s 6d
British Flora	— 4 × 4d, 9d, 1s 9d
British Paintings	— 4d, 9d, 1s 6d
Sir Francis Chichester	— 1s 9d
British Discovery	— 4d, 1s 0d, 1s 6d, 1s 9d
Christmas	— 3d, 4d, 1s 6d

The stamps will be contained in a specially designed folder which will give details of the artists etc. As the face value of the stamps is 17s 1d we have no hesitation in recommending them as an ideal present at the exceptionally low price of £1 1s 0d per pack. This price is inclusive of the normal handling charge and includes dispatch by registered post.

The packs will be put on sale on 27th November 1967, at the Bureau and at all offices which have philatelic posting boxes.

The Post Office Railway

We have been asked by the Director, London Postal Region, to draw our readers attention to an exhibition to be held shortly in celebration of the 40th Anniversary of the opening of the Post Office Railway. This will take place in the King Edward Building, King Edward Street, London EC1, on the 5th, 6th and 7th of December.

An official commemorative cover (price 8d) will shortly be issued, and as well as being on sale at the Exhibition Hall and the London Chief Office, will be available by post from the Philatelic Bureau, 2-4 Waterloo Place, Edinburgh 1. Remittances should include the usual handling charge.

A different handstamp for each day will be used on covers posted in the special boxes at the London Chief Office and the Exhibition Hall. Readers outside London may obtain the cancellation by sending stamped covers for reposting to the PRO, LPR, Room 205, K.E.B., London EC1.

Unaccepted Stamp Designs

National Productivity Year.

Issued 14th November 1962.

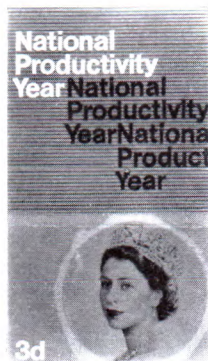
Harrison & Son



De la Rue



Kenneth Briggs



Jeffrey Matthews



Bradbury Wilkinson



David Gentleman



Faith Jaques



Peter Gauld



Conditions

The Philatelic Bureau, 2-4 Waterloo Place, Edinburgh 1, will be pleased to supply any number of stamps shown on its current stock list, subject to stocks being available, in mint condition only. For stamps not shown on the list, enquiries should be made of a stamp dealer.

We do not guarantee to supply stamps from particular cylinders or plates, position or cylinder blocks, particular editions of books or books with selected watermark.

Stamps are NOT supplied cancelled to order. Remittances, which *must* be sent with orders should be made payable to 'GPO Philatelic Bureau' and should include a handling charge of 6d for orders under 10s, and 3s 9d for orders of 10s and over (9d and 4/- respectively for orders to Overseas Countries, other than the Commonwealth). For orders to be sent by Air Mail the cost of the airmail postage should be added. Stamps are not accepted as payment for orders.

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