

Philatelic Bulletin

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English Embroidery c.1320



11^p

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Editorial

English mediaeval embroidery combined both artistry and skill unequalled in perfection between 1250 and 1350. The skill and dexterity which resulted in such beautiful embroideries was applied by men and women, working mostly in the London workshops of City Companies. Their talents were borne out of a long tradition of fine needlework throughout the British Isles, and a strict apprenticeship. These people were superb artists who used their needles like paint brushes.

No other English works of art have enjoyed so much renown in Europe as the embroideries chosen as the subjects for the forthcoming Christmas stamps illustrated on pages 8 and 9 of this edition. So highly regarded and sought after by dignitaries of Church and State, that the English work, or 'Opus Anglicanum' as it was known, was listed, more than any other comparable work, in the great Vatican inventory of 1295.

Only a few names of the artists and craftsmen have come down to us through the centuries, and but a fraction of 'Opus Anglicanum' has survived. That which remains is treasured in churches all over the continent, in the collections of great museums, or in private families.

Many of the embroideries were stripped by plunderers of their gold thread and seed pearls; the Reformation also accounted for considerable destruction. Virtually all the pieces which remain are of ecclesiastical subjects, though the 'jupon' or close fitting sleeveless coat, worn over his armour by the Black Prince, is still treasured in Canterbury Cathedral.

Everyman His Own Caxton

Visitors to the Press Review of the Caxton stamps in Postal Headquarters on 17 August were invited to take a proof of this Keepsake on a small Albion hand-press provided by the Excelsior Printing Company.

A range of hand-made papers from Barcham Green Mill on which the proofs were taken also contributed to this light-hearted re-creation of Caxton's world, even though some of the press-work was not always quite up to his mediaeval standards.



THIS KEEPSAKE

was printed at the Press Preview of
the William Caxton Commemorative
Stamps held in Postal Headquarters
St Martins-le-Grand London on
Tuesday 17 August 1976



National Postal Museum Notes
Gems from the RM Phillips Collection

XLI Two Original Designs of the 1870's

The Reginald M Phillips Collection shows great strength in original designs (many the accepted ones) for Victorian surface-printed stamps. Amongst the most attractive of these are two for values in the 1873-80 series (with large coloured letters in the corners) which are illustrated above as this month's 'gem'.

The Fourpenny design shows some differences from the issued stamp, in the size and shape of the inscriptions and the plate numbers (there was of course NO plate 2 in this issue). Also the bands ornamenting the outside frame, between the corner letters, were replaced by lined shading.

The Eightpenny design is very close indeed to the issued stamp. The main change was to have a larger plate number within a single instead of a double-lined circle. It is interesting that the colour is purple-brown, like the unissued stamp (SG 156A), not orange, as issued. Again, there was never a Plate 6 for these stamps.

A G RIGO DE RIGHI



Coming Events

Shoreham by Sea Philatelic Society

The Society, which was founded in 1926, will celebrate its 50th anniversary with a stamp exhibition on Saturday 13 November 1976 between 10.30 am and 4 pm. The exhibition to be opened by the local Postmaster Mr Prior, and held at the Community Centre, Pond Road, Shoreham by Sea will consist of displays by Society members. Further information from publicity secretary:

Rev J G White
St Gile's House
15 The Drive
SHOREHAM BY SEA
Sussex
BN4 5GA

Wessex Philatelic Federation Exhibition

The Wessex Federation will stage an Exhibition on Saturday, November 20 at Oldway Mansion, Paignton, Devon, from 10 am to 5 pm. The exhibition will include displays by

member-clubs of the Wessex Federation, an auction and dealers' stands.

There will be ample parking space, and refreshments will also be available. The Exhibition is being promoted by the Torquay, Paignton and South Hams Philatelic Societies. All will be welcomed. Further particulars from:

K M Fox
Adastra
Stoke Gabriel
TOTNES
Devon
TQ9 6RA

National Postal Museum The Penny Post

Through the kindness of Mr Frank Staff, author of the book 'The Penny Post 1680-1918' (Lutterworth Press, 1964) and owner of a comprehensive collection of documents and covers tracing the story of UK and Imperial 'penny postage', the National Postal Museum is planning a special Winter exhibition devoted to this subject.

For this special exhibition the Museum also draw upon unique items in its own collections and material held in Post Office archives.

The story will begin with London's first organised postal service—Dockwra's penny post of 1680–82—and continue with the development of other local penny posts; the 1d concessionary rate from 1812 for soldiers' and sailors' letters; the vigorous campaign of the late 1830s for Uniform Penny Postage, and its eventual introduction in 1840; and the later campaigns for Ocean and Imperial Penny Postage. Also featured in this exhibition will be items related to American and Australian local penny posts; the Penny Postage Jubilee celebrations of 1890 and the Centenary of Penny Postage in 1940.

It is hoped to open this special exhibition in early December.

Chelmsford and District Philatelic Society

The Chelmsford and District Philatelic Society are arranging a further Philatelic Week-end, in their successful series, at the Wansfell College of Residential Adult Education, Theydon Bois, Epping, Essex, from Friday evening 14 January to Sunday afternoon 16 January 1977. The programme will include lectures on, Postal History, The Zeppelin Story (covering the life of Count Zeppelin, the building of airships and the philatelic implications), Stamp Designing, Preparing a Thematic Entry for Competition, World War Postal History of South Africa and Philatelic Aids. Further details are obtainable from:

Mr C Raunch
353 Baddow Road
CHELMSFORD
Essex
CM2 7QF

Hinckley and District Philatelic Society

The Society will hold its third annual one day Exhibition and Fair at the St John Ambulance Hall, Brunel Road, Hinckley, Leicester, on Saturday 13 November from 10 am until 5 pm.

The Exhibition will include displays of members' collections, trade stands, and a Post Office display.

Racket Sports Special Stamp Issue 12 January 1977

1977 is the centenary year of the Wimbledon Lawn Tennis Championship's and the staging of the World Table Tennis Championships at the National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham. The Post Office will issue a set of four postage stamp depicting lawn tennis, table tennis, squash and badminton in the following values: 8½p, 10p, 11p and 13p.

First Day Cover Services

The following first day cover services will be offered by the Philatelic Bureau, Edinburgh.

Service A

This consists of the official Post Office cover, addressed to the correct postal address of the destination required, and bearing all four stamps. The cover will be cancelled, 'Philatelic Bureau, Edinburgh' and despatched for a charge of 60½p. For deposit account customers the charge will be 56p.

Service B

Customers own pre-addressed covers, bearing the correct postal address, will be given the full set of stamps, cancelled and despatched for a charge of 50½p.

Service C

For bulk orders of 50 or more covers all to the same address, under the conditions of Service A, the charge is 58p per item.

A special pictorial handstamp will be applied.

The usual first day of issue facilities will be available at offices with philatelic posting boxes.

Application forms, available from the Philatelic Bureau, Edinburgh and at all Head Post Offices, should be returned not later than 20 December 1976.

25. Ninth International Lifeboat Conference, 1963

There were three commemorative issues in May, 1963. The third was for the International Lifeboat Conference held in Edinburgh 3rd to 5th June, and the three stamps marking the event were released on May 31st. These were David Gentleman's second successful designs, following the National Productivity Year issue, and he demonstrated his versatility by employing an entirely different and original design technique, using woodcuts he had himself specially engraved for the job. Thus he made effective use of one of the oldest art forms for his stamp pictures.

The 2½d blue, black and red stamp showed a rescue at sea—a Westland 'Widgeon' heli-

copter lifting an injured man from a lifeboat, one of the 37-foot 'Oakley' type. Combined helicopter and lifeboat 'ops' have been a recognised *modus operandi* for rescue at sea. The 4d red, yellow, brown, black and blue stamp (the printers' second successful five-colour stamp: the first was last month's 'Nature Week' 4½d issue, earlier in May, 1963) depicted a sailing lifeboat of the 19th century—this particular boat was clinker-built (the hull made of overlapping planks, as opposed to carvel-built) and was used at Aldeburgh, Suffolk, in 1900. Both stamps had plain, rather stark, white backgrounds.

The 1s 6d sepia, yellow and grey-blue (for the background) showed three lifeboatmen in formal pose, wearing traditional gear—yellow oilskins and life-jackets, two wearing sou'westers (for land-lubbers these are waterproof hats with flaps at the back of the neck), the third a white service cap, probably the coxswain. A lifebuoy is prominent in the foreground. For those who failed to appreciate the 'cut-out' (woodcut) technique employed, the designs seemed to have a child's picture-book quality, nevertheless they made a strong impact and amply illustrated the work of the Royal National Life-boat Institution.

The stamps were photogravure-printed by Harrisons and Sons in sheets of 120 (6 × 20) on 'multiple crowns' watermarked paper, ordinary and phosphor-banded. Several minor flaws and varieties are listed.

Quantities sold (phosphor in brackets) were: 2½d 81,405,000 (4,239,000); 4d 7,475,040 (840,000); and 1s 6d 7,484,780 (886,000).

JAMES WATSON



Postcards for Christmas

For the first time, postcards featuring its special Christmas stamps are to be sold by the Post Office from early November. There will be four postcards, each bearing a reproduction of a different Christmas stamp, and they will be available at all Head Post Offices, philatelic counters and the Philatelic Bureau, price 7p.

Engraving and Printing the 'Downey Head' Issues

King Edward VII died on May 6 1910 and a few months later the Royal Mint contracted a freelance engraver to produce the first head die for the $\frac{1}{2}d$ and $1d$ stamps.

This was John Augustus Charles Harrison, who, prior to this time (September 1910), had specialised in 'intaglio' or 'line engraving' where the metal die is cut so that what is required to print is chiseled out of the die and the 'well' so formed is filled with ink. Under pressure the die will leave its impression on paper so that the ink stands proud of the surface and can be felt with the finger tip. The new Georgian stamps were to be printed by the same typographic method perfected by Thomas De La Rue and Sons who had held stamp contracts from the Inland Revenue since 1853 but had just recently lost the contract to Messrs Harrison and Sons (no relationship whatsoever to J A C Harrison), who were old established printers but without experience in stamp printing. It had also been decided (26 July 1910) by the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury that the Royal Mint would in future manufacture all dies and plates—something which they had not done for nearly 50 years as all dies and plates had previously been manufactured by De La Rue.

Typography is, by definition exactly the opposite to intaglio. The engraver cuts away from the die what he does not want to show and the ink does not fill the 'wells' but remains only on the surface of the die. Thus under pressure the die will print out so that the 'wells' provide the non-coloured areas and the surface the actual design.

In June 1910, the Court photographers, W & D Downey, had supplied the GPO with photographs of King George V which were taken from official photographs of the King as Admiral of the Fleet (figure 1). Apparently Queen Mary expressed her preference for a three quarter face view which gave the best likeness and it was from an especially retouched version of this head that J A C Harrison produced his first working drawings. The steel from which dies were cut was manufac-

tured by Miles Druce and Co and was initially in a soft condition to facilitate engraving.

By November 1910, Harrison had produced his first head die which he proofed himself with a small press that was available near his home. The best way an engraver has of examining his work is to produce proofs from it. Sometimes Harrison sent his dies back to the Royal Mint where they were proofed and comments made and sometimes he proofed them himself. Consequently several different stages of proof exist indicating the progression made by the engraver from the simple setting out of his die to the finally completed item.

The NPM contains examples from most of J A C Harrison's early head-only dies. Not only from the originally accepted head die (figure 2) but also from other dies produced by a transfer process using rollers to take up an impression from one die and lay it out on another (figure 3).

Eventually by mid January 1911 Harrison's accepted head die was transferred to eight different pieces of die steel which in turn would have different frames and values engraved around them. Apart from the obvious economy of transferring heads, the Royal Mint also ensured continuity of design and if the engraver made a mistake or somebody else did and damaged the die—at least the engraver didn't have to do the head over again as well!

The GPO meanwhile had been experiencing all sorts of difficulties over which designs would be used for what values. They had basically accepted drawings from both Mackennal and George Eve but it had been decided that priority should be given to Mackennal's 'Dolphins' and 'Lion' designs for the lowest values.

J A C Harrison was given the agreed 'Dolphins' design for the $\frac{1}{2}d$ and $1\frac{1}{2}d$ values early in January 1911 and he had a completed master die (fig. 4) for these values ready by 22 February 1911 and the first completed $\frac{1}{2}d$ die ready by 8 March 1911 (fig. 5).

The 'Lion' design which was intended for the first $1d$ and $2\frac{1}{2}d$ values was late in being



Fig. 1



Fig. 2

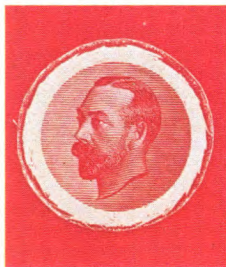


Fig. 3



Fig. 4



Fig. 6



Fig. 5



Fig. 7

approved and J A C Harrison did not complete his master die for these values until the 2 March 1911 (fig. 6) and his completed 1d die (fig. 7) was ready on 23 March 1911.

In fact both the master dies and the accepted dies passed between the Royal Mint and J A C Harrison several times as small detail changes were made to such areas of the design as the King's neck, his ear, strength of shading to the numerals etc etc.

By 29 April 1911 J A C Harrison had also engraved frames for the proposed 2d value and the 3d value (both from another Mackennal design) and although proofs were produced and accepted and printing plates manufactured—no stamps of these denominations with a Downey Head were ever issued.

Although the Postmaster General had promised originally to have as many denominations on sale as possible by Coronation Day (22 June 1922)—severe delays in plate manufacture meant in fact that only the $\frac{1}{2}d$ and 1d values were ready by that date. Their appearance pleased neither the King nor the public.

The first $\frac{1}{2}d$ and 1d stamps, known to collectors as die Ia were subsequently recut (die Ib) and completely re-engraved with new heads (die II). After lengthy questions in parliament, much debate and discussion, it was decided to do away with the threequarter profile head altogether and replace it with a full profile version (taken from Mackennal's head on the coins of the realm) which had received royal approval. Consequently, although plates had been manufactured for several other Downey Head values and in some cases, printing actually commenced—no further denominations were ever made.

Although this 'Downey Head' issue failed in the eyes of the public—it does make a particularly interesting subject for collectors. Apart from the three dies in which both values were issued, there are a wealth of shades and varieties, different papers and it was the first time since 1880 that low values had been printed on paper with a watermark other than the Imperial Crown.

A G RIGO DE RIGHI AND ALAIN DE CADENET

Christmas 1976 Stamp Issue 24 November 1976





Four special postage stamps, values 6½p, 8½p, 11p and 13p to celebrate Christmas, depict scenes taken from 13th and 14th century English mediaeval embroidery.

The stamps, first day cover and presentation pack were all designed by Enid Marx RDI. The subjects of the stamps are as follows:

6½p The Virgin and Child, 1272-1294: from the Clare Chasuble, a fine example of embroidery fashionable during Henry III's reign.
8½p An angel holding a crown, 1340-1370: taken from one of a pair of panels found in a Hampshire chapel.

11p Angel appearing to the shepherds, 1320-1340: from one of three panels which were part of the decoration of the vestment known as the alb.

13p The three kings bearing gifts, 1330-1350: from the Butler-Bowden cope, one of the finest of the few surviving examples of 'Opus Anglicanum' in Britain.

Printing Details

Printer: Harrison & Sons Ltd

Process: Photogravure Size: 41 × 30 mm

Format: Horizontal Perforation: 15 × 14

Paper: Coated, unwatermarked

Sheet Size: 100

Phosphor: 6½p single band. Remainder all over
Colours: 6½p blue, stone, light brown, bright orange. 8½p deep yellow green, bistre yellow, yellow brown, red brown, grey black. 11p Dull orange, flesh, new blue, bright purple, grey black. 13p Rosine, new blue, brownish ochre, dull green, grey black.

Stamp Collecting for the Beginner

Part VI—Competition or Display?

The principal difference between a display and a competition is that the competition is governed by rules which it is wise to read and follow, whereas a display has no rules but those of common sense plus the ingenuity of the collector in displaying his collection.

Let us first deal with the display. The basic points are that the display should have a pleasing visual impact as a whole as well as with each particular sheet. The focal point is the imparting of information and the way in which it is presented. Relative facts are put together by the collector who decides just how much he should put on each sheet, depending on the material he has at his disposal. He can use a large map to illustrate points to his audience, whereas this same map would be out of place in a competition entry where the number of sheets allowed is limited.

To a railway enthusiast, the inclusion of time tables and tickets can be of interest in a display on Railways, but it is the TPOs (Travelling Post Office) cancellations mentioned in those time tables or on those tickets which form the philatelic factors of such a display.

To display is to show one's collection, usually to other Philatelic Societies. It is easier to display on frames, and most Societies now have them or can borrow them from other Societies. Album sheets should be enclosed in transparent protective covers to prevent damage and as safeguard for the material on show, and also permits the handling of a sheet if a particular point needs further explanation.

What should one say and for how long should one speak?

This depends very much on one's ability as a speaker, and whether the display be sparsely written up and need explaining, as well as the need to draw the audience's attention to a specific item. If you are a beginner, and we all have been at one time, then here are a few hints which you might find helpful to start with. Try to give your first display to members of your own philatelic Society on an evening when a

group of your own members are also entertaining, being amongst your own members will help you to gain confidence. Get the basic facts of your speech outlined on paper as a reminder of the points you wish to emphasise. Speak to your audience and not to your stamps; the audience can listen and ask questions, your stamps will not. Do not speak at length on each sheet that you are displaying, 45 seconds spent on each of 60 sheets will not leave enough time for your audience to view your stamps or to ask questions about points of interest. Remember that your particular subject, familiar to yourself, may be quite new to your audience, so allow enough time for questions to be asked. Bring some point to their notice and ask for information about it, draw their interest, start a discussion, audience participation engenders friendly philatelic meetings.

How many sheets should one display?

The numbers vary with each Society, the size of the display frames and the length of time the meeting room is available. If you are part of a team, conform to the number of sheets asked for by the team leader. If 20 sheets are asked for, then 20 sheets it should be. However, if your display cannot be fitted into the number allocated, then discuss the problem with the team leader who can then reorganise the time allocation for each participant. Practice putting up and arranging your display, and your speech, so that these take but half the time allocated to your share of the evening, this will give your audience the other half time to view your display. By the time that you are able to give an evening's display on your own, experience should have taught you what to do and what not to do.

What about Competitions?

Competitions have rules, reading and understanding them is of the utmost importance as they do vary from one competition to another. Special attention should be given to the allocation of points. Good presentation and writing up will cost you nothing more than care, time

and attention, and can earn you a lot of points. Presentation is your shop window; it is there that you should draw the judge's attention to salient points. Include only good quality material, for quality counts, it shows your discrimination when selecting items, and remember that second class items will always remain second class. In a competition, your sheets must tell the judges what you want them to know; unlike the display, you will not be able to speak about your sheets and explain points you would wish emphasised, so these should be highlighted judiciously in your writing up. There is a time factor too in judging; the long explanation, appropriate to a display where time is not so important, may need to be condensed to salient points for a competition entry, so that the judges can read them within the time at their disposal. To gain experience in competitions, the reader is advised to enter his own Society's competitions. Such competitions usually ask for 9 to 12 sheets per entry, and to make an interesting story within such a small number of sheets, these would need to be specially prepared. There should be a Title Heading on the first page, so that the judges will know instantly the subject of your entry; it is for you to tell them eg 'Differences between Dies A and B of the $\frac{1}{2}d$ Mackennal designs of the George V issue of 1910-1911'.

The stamp study is then spread over the required number of pages for the particular competition. At present, National Competitions require 32 or 36 sheets per entry (except for juniors). This number makes it easier to prepare the study of a single stamp, or issue, or of a Postal History or Thematic entry.

In writing up your information, avoid copying texts directly from recognised handbooks; explanatory statements should be in your own words. If you can contribute newly discovered information, include this in your statements. By arriving at different conclusions, you can turn an otherwise well worn subject into an unusual and interesting entry.

Philatelic knowledge is nearly always included in the allocation of points for a compe-

tition entry, so the information you accumulate concerning your intended entry, when carefully written up and presented, will enable the judges to read and understand your statements, and will go a long way in gaining high marks. This can only happen when your statements are relevant to both your stamps and the entry; avoid the direct use of catalogue references as to dates of issue or perfs., unless these are exceptional. See as many displays and competitions as possible in order to learn what can be done. As tastes differ so much, it is not possible to lay down rules as to what should or should not be done, except for the one concerning the use of quality material. If you have the opportunity to speak to the judges then do so; ask for criticism of your entry and also their comments as to why certain entries have higher awards than others. Make a note of all that you are told. You may thereafter have to alter your way of thinking, but remember that in so doing you are also learning a great deal concerning the hobby, and the more you know about it, the more you will appreciate and enjoy all its facets.

As this series of articles has been written for the beginner, there is no point in dealing with International Exhibitions, which are in a different class. If, however you have the occasion of viewing such an exhibition where the gems of the hobby are on show, then by all means do so. It could well be, that participating in your Society Competition this year will lead on to a National Competition later, and then perhaps to gain recognition at International level.

I trust that this series of articles will have helped the reader to greater enjoyment and participation in the whole field of stamp collecting, and will also have brought new converts to the hobby. ALMA GRUNBERG

On page 6, paragraph 3 of part V 'The Thematic Collection' (September Bulletin), the word 'postmark' was incorrectly printed on two occasions; it should have been, 'watermark'. We apologize for the error.

Christmas Pictorial Airletter

A Christmas air letter will be issued on 17 November price 12p of which 10½p is postage. Designed by Nina Klein, it illustrates Victorian Christmas scenes.

Nine colours were used by McCorquodale Ltd to print the form by the lithography process.



Forces Covers

75th Anniversary of the Formation of 1st British Corps

A Commemorative Cover will go on sale on 24 November 1976 to commemorate the formation of the 1st British Corps.

The design of the cover will incorporate the Coat of Arms of Aldershot where the Corps was formed, the Coat of Arms of Bielefeld, Germany, where the Corps is at present located, and the Crest of 1st British Corps. The 8½p stamp of the Christmas 1976 issue, due to be issued on 24 November 1976, will be affixed to the cover and in consequence the Commemorative cover will also be a F D C.

Two special Handstamps are to be used for cancellation purposes.

Items posted at British Forces Post Office, Aldershot will carry the Coat of Arms and the following text:

British Forces 1901 Postal Service
75th Anniversary
1st British Corps
Aldershot. 24 Nov 1976.

Items posted at British Forces Post Office, Bielefeld will carry the Coat of Arms and the following text:

British Forces 1923 Postal Service
75th Anniversary
1st British Corps
Bielefeld. 24 Nov 1976.

The covers posted at BFPO Aldershot will be flown to BFPO Bielefeld and those posted at BFPO Bielefeld flown to BFPO Aldershot, by the Royal Air Force and the Army Air Corps. Cachets will confirm the flights used.

The cost of the covers are:

- Cover with 8½p stamp affixed—50p or DM 2.50. Customers should indicate which Handstamp impression is required.
- Two covers, with 8½p stamp affixed, forming a 'matched pair', will be provided at a cost of 80p or DM 4.50.
- Covers bearing any additional stamp of the Christmas 1976 issue will be supplied on request. The cost of the stamps involved will be added to the basic prices advised above.

d. A limited number of the Commemorative covers bearing the full range of Christmas 1976 postage stamps and signed by the present Commander of 1st British Corps, Lieutenant General Sir Richard Worsley KCB OBE, will be available at a cost of £2 or DM 10.00.

Advanced orders may be placed with:

The Philatelic Officer
1 (BR) Corps Postal & Courier
Communications Unit RE
British Forces Post Office 33.

Royal Air Force Covers

The next Royal Air Force Cover (HA9) will commemorate the exploits of Miss Jean Batten particularly identified with the 40th Anniversary of her record breaking flight from England to New Zealand. It will show her flying the Percival Gull G A-DPR along the Malaysia coast in October 1936 and issued with a special commemorative handstamp, (BFPS 1537) on October 5th. It will then be flown to New Zealand most likely in the company of Miss Batten and should be available from the Project Officer: Sgt A Newton, RAF Northolt, Middlesex, on or about 15 November 1976 at 35p plus postage 6½p.

This cover will be followed by HA11 devoted to Flt Lt D S A Lord VC DFC. It shows the scene at Arnhem when he won the Victoria Cross in 1944 and has been cancelled with BFPS 1518. It was air-dropped from a Dakota aircraft, as used by Flt Lt Lord, during September 1976 at Arnhem. This cover is available from the Project Officer, Chief Technician S Bastick, Royal Air Force, Northolt, Middlesex at 40p plus postage 6½p.

The 1976 Programme of RAF Air Display covers finishes with the closure of the air display season. In August and September the final covers appeared:

RAF(AD)21—Worlds Aerobatic Championships—BFPS 1549

RAF(AD)22—Les Diables Rouges—BFPS 1534

RAF(AD)23—Patrouille de France—BFPS 1534

RAF(AD)24—Hawker Siddeley Aviation—BFPS 1550

These covers should be available together on or about 1 November 1976 from the PRO RAF Museum, Aerodrome Road, Hendon NW9 5LL at 35p each plus 9p postage.

Collector's Pack 1976

The 1976 Collector's Pack of Stamps containing all the year's special commemorative issues, will go on sale on 24 November.

The packs, costing £2.90 each, will be available from Philatelic counters, most main Post Offices, and the Philatelic Bureau. To cover handling and postage on Philatelic Bureau orders, there is a charge of 9½p on orders of £10 or less and 52½p on orders of more than £10 (sent by registered post).

Book Reviews

The Stanley Gibbons British Commonwealth Stamp Catalogue 1977

Collectors, who by now must be painfully aware of the effect of inflation on stamp prices, will have looked forward to the publication of the 1977 SG 'commonwealth'. The format is unchanged and comment is best reserved for its essence—the new price levels.

With auctions and dealers' advertisement to buy setting new records week by week, comparisons with the 1976 edition are academic. It is more realistic to consider, where direct comparison is possible, how prices have changed since the 18 edition of 'Collect British Stamps' appeared in June. It is immediately clear that there has been a major advance in the line engraved, embossed and surface printed issues up to the 1883 definitives. The following selection of prices demonstrates this (shown as mint/used).

	SG	CB
	Commonwealth 1977	18th Edition
SG2	£350/£25	£275/£20
5	£1,100/£75	£700/£70
62	£750/£40	£600/£28
86	£200/£25	£150/£22

From the 1887 'Jubilees' increases are con-

finer to the better items: the KE VIII high values; the KG V 'seahorses' (but not the used re-engraved ones); and the PUC £1. There is no change to the prices for 'to pay' labels, but the official over-prints are generally increased. With the keen market for the better QE II stamps, one must assume that a revision will appear in 1977 'Elizabethan' due later this Autumn.

The Stanley Gibbons British Commonwealth Catalogue 1977 is published by Stanley Gibbons Publications Ltd, 391 Strand London WC2R 0LX, price £6.25.

Slogan Postmarks of the United Kingdom 1974-75

In our review of this new book (see August Bulletin) we referred, from the press notice received, to the authors Colin Peachey and George Pearson. Since this fact was published we have heard from Mr Cyril Parsons that reference was not made to his involvement in the creation of this series of publications. We further understand that because of pressure of business and other commitments, Mr Parsons retired from his partnership with Messrs Peachey and Pearson, although he still continues to give technical advice to his former colleagues.

Mr Pearson has written to us in the meantime asking us to express both his and Mr Peachey's regrets at Mr Parsons' retirement from the partnership and also for their appreciation of his considerable efforts in connection with the preparation of the catalogues.

The Mechanised Sorting of Mail By H Dagnall

Mr Dagnall has produced a work of great interest and explanation for the mechanisation of the post. Everyone sends a letter sometime and the Post Office over recent years has endeavoured by postmark slogans, leaflets, and Press publicity, to campaign the Public for the use of Post Codes. This book will explain ALL to those who in the past have been sceptical.

For the postal historian, philatelist, or

student of social services history, Mr Dagnall has given us a fascinating story of the historical background of the early Post Office trials and attempts of mechanisation and the success it has now achieved in sending a letter from A to B by means of machines instead of lengthy sorting stages by hand. Mr Dagnall can be complimented on his efforts in giving us a most interesting well documented history of the British Post Office. It is a 'must' for every bookshelf.

Published by Mr H Dagnall, 10 Abbots Road, Leicester LE5 1DA at £1.95 (£2.10 inland post free)

Letters to the Editor

Dear Sir,

I felt that I must put pen to paper and state how pleasing the designs of the British Commemorative stamps are, now that someone other than David Gentleman is designing them. I admit that the subjects of the Social Reformers issue was a reminder of grim times gone by, but did he *have* to design such drab miserable looking stamps. It is a refreshing change now to see bright cheerful looking stamps on one's mail.

Perhaps you will be kind enough to publish my views in your publication.

Yours faithfully,

Norwood Green, Middx.

ALAN SABEY

Editors Note

I would respectfully remind Mr Sabey that the last time David Gentleman was responsible for the design of a series of British postage stamps, was on the occasion of the 200th anniversary of Public Fire Services, commemorated in April 1974. Eleven different designers were responsible for the intervening issues. The former Design Adviser to the Post Office, Mr Stuart Rose, in his published reply recently to a similar letter said, 'Blame the Post Office by all means for choosing a miserable subject, but not David Gentleman for finding such a brilliant answer'.

Special Handstamps

Unless otherwise stated, items for reposting should bear $\frac{1}{2}p$ in excess of the normal postage and should be sent to the Head Postmaster of the Town where the Special Posting Box is located or the relevant District Postmaster in London, marking the outer cover 'Special Handstamp'.

29 September 1976–31 January 1977 (C)

The William Caxton Exhibition British Library London WC. Special Posting Box at the British Library British Museum London WC1B 3DG.

6 November 1976 (P/C)

Sunderland v Liverpool Meeting of Champions 6 Nov 76 Sunderland. Special posting box at Sunderland AFC Souvenir Shop Roker Park Sunderland SR6 9SW.

Postmark Slogans

Unless otherwise stated, items for reposting bearing the appropriate postage rate should be forwarded to the Head Postmaster of the Town where the slogan is to be used marking the outer cover 'Postmark Slogan'.

20 September–7 December 1976

21 December 1976–9 April 1977

Don't Waste Water. To be used at Redhill. 1st and 2nd Class.

13 September–24 December

Oldham North Central Ring Shaw 44411. To be used at Oldham. 1st and 2nd Class.

1 October–31 December 1976 (P)

South Woodham Ferrers an Essex Riverside Town. To be used at Chelmsford. 1st and 2nd Class.

4 October 1976–UFN

Sheffield is a Mechanised Letter Office Please use Postcodes. To be used at Sheffield. 1st and 2nd Class.

4 October 1976–UFN

Doncaster is a Mechanised Letter Office

Please use Postcodes. To be used at Doncaster. 1st and 2nd Class.

4 October 1976–UFN

Huddersfield is a Mechanised Letter Office Please use Postcodes. To be used at Huddersfield. 1st and 2nd Class.

4 October 1976–UFN

York is a Mechanised Letter Office Please use Postcodes. To be used at York. 1st and 2nd Class.

4 October–31 December 1976 (P)

Save Water. To be used at Cardiff and Newport. Cardiff 1st and 2nd Class. Newport 2nd Class.

17 October 1976–5 February 1977

Aladdin Dec 24–Feb 5 Tameside Theatre Ashton-under-Lyne 061 308 3223. To be used at Ashton-under-Lyne 1st and 2nd Class.

Repeat Campaigns

15 July 1976–14 July 1977 (P)

Barnardo's Care About Children Dr Barnardo's PO Box 1 Ilford IG 6 1QG. To be re-used at Ilford Harrow and Hounslow.

6 September–30 November 1976

For Your Conferences Bridlington with Hospitality plus Contact with Spa Tel 78255. To be reused at Bridlington. 1st and 2nd Class.

27 September–20 November

Caravan Camping Holiday Show. To be reused at the following offices: EDO, Paddington SWDO, NWDO, Mount Pleasant, ECDO and NDO.

8 November–4 December 1976

Enjoy a Sauna and Relax at St Margarets Baths. To be reused at Leicester. 1st and 2nd Class.

1–23 December 1976

A Happy Christmas from Bridlington see you next Summer. To be reused at Bridlington. 1st and 2nd Class.

'P' denotes Pictorial

'C' denotes Circular

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