

Philatelic Bulletin

Volume 8 Number 9 May 1971



Contents

INTRODUCTION	2
SPECIAL HANDSTAMPS	2
ADVERTISEMENTS ON BRITISH POSTAGE STAMPS	2, 3, 4
ULSTER PAINTINGS 1971	5
ULSTER PAINTINGS STAMPS - FIRST DAY COVER SERVICES	5
PHILATELIC POSTING BOXES	5
TWO SUMMER EXHIBITIONS AT THE NATIONAL POSTAL MUSEUM	6
GOOD NEWS FOR POSTMARK COLLECTORS	6, 7
FIRST DECIMAL AIR LETTER	7
YOUNG COLLECTOR'S CORNER	7
THE BRITISH POST OFFICE IN SCANDINAVIA	8, 9
POSTMARK ADVERTISING SLOGAN - A CHEAP WAY OF GETTING YOUR MESSAGE ACROSS	10
POSTMARK NEWS	10, 11
POSTMARK SLOGANS	11, 12
STAMPEX 1971	12, 13
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR	14, 15

Introduction

Two of the most important features of philately are new issues from the country of one's choice and cancellations. This month we give prominence to both as we have the first of the 1971 special issues - a fascinating Ulster Paintings set - and details of our new first day of issue postmarks. We hope that these charming heraldic designs will please the ever growing number of postmark collectors in addition to adding to the attraction of the covers.

There has been some correspondence about the first day postmarking of the Decimal stamps issued on 15 February to both the press and to us. We print a typical letter which queries our actions and give our point of view in justification of them.

Visitors to London will be interested in news of the items on display in the National Postal Museum.

The front cover illustrates the special "Scandinavia 71" cancellation.

Special Handstamps

Silverstone Daily Express 23rd International Trophy Meeting 8 May 1971
Towcester Northants will be used to cancel items in the special collecting box at the Silverstone Circuit.

Army Stand Ideal Home Exhibition British Forces Postal 1157 Service 28 April-15 May items for reposting to: Army Stand, Ideal Home Exhibition, Edinburgh.

Castle Anniversary 1071-1971 900 Richmond Yorkshire will be used 22-29 May 1971 to cancel items posted in the special box at Richmond Castle.

National Postal Museum Notes

Advertisements on British Postage Stamps

Most collectors of British postage stamps will associate advertising on stamps with The Pears Soap overprints of the last century and the advertisements in booklet panes of this century. But, in fact, there is more to the advertisements on stamps story than that, as I recently found when engaged in some delving in the Post Office Records room (which incidentally is freely open to all interested in the history and procedures of the Post Office).

Disregarding the overprints on GB 1d Reds by the Oxford Union Society and some firms (which were made for security purposes), the first country in the world to use postage stamps as a vehicle for advertising was New Zealand. In 1893 Messrs. Truebridge Miller and Reich of Wellington were appointed contractors for the sale of advertising space on the reverse (gummed) side of the low value postage stamps. Advertisements were printed

THE POST OFFICE SAVINGS BANK gives SECURITY.	THE POST OFFICE SAVINGS BANK gives SECURITY.	THE POST OFFICE SAVINGS BANK gives SECURITY.	THE POST OFFICE SAVINGS BANK gives SECURITY.	THE POST OFFICE SAVINGS BANK gives SECURITY.	THE POST OFFICE SAVINGS BANK gives SECURITY.
Instal the Telephone.	Instal the Telephone.	Instal the Telephone.	Instal the Telephone.	Instal the Telephone.	Instal the Telephone.
ROUTE CABLEGRAMS via IMPERIAL.	ROUTE CABLEGRAMS via IMPERIAL.	ROUTE CABLEGRAMS via IMPERIAL.	ROUTE CABLEGRAMS via IMPERIAL.	ROUTE CABLEGRAMS via IMPERIAL.	ROUTE CABLEGRAMS via IMPERIAL.

not only for New Zealand firms but also for Beechams Pills and Sunlight Soap. The contract expired after a year and was not renewed owing to objections from the public that it was dangerous to lick up printer's ink.

The earlier British 1d stamps with Pears Soap advertisements printed on the back are specimens prepared by the company to try (unsuccessfully) to persuade the GPO to adopt a similar scheme in 1888.

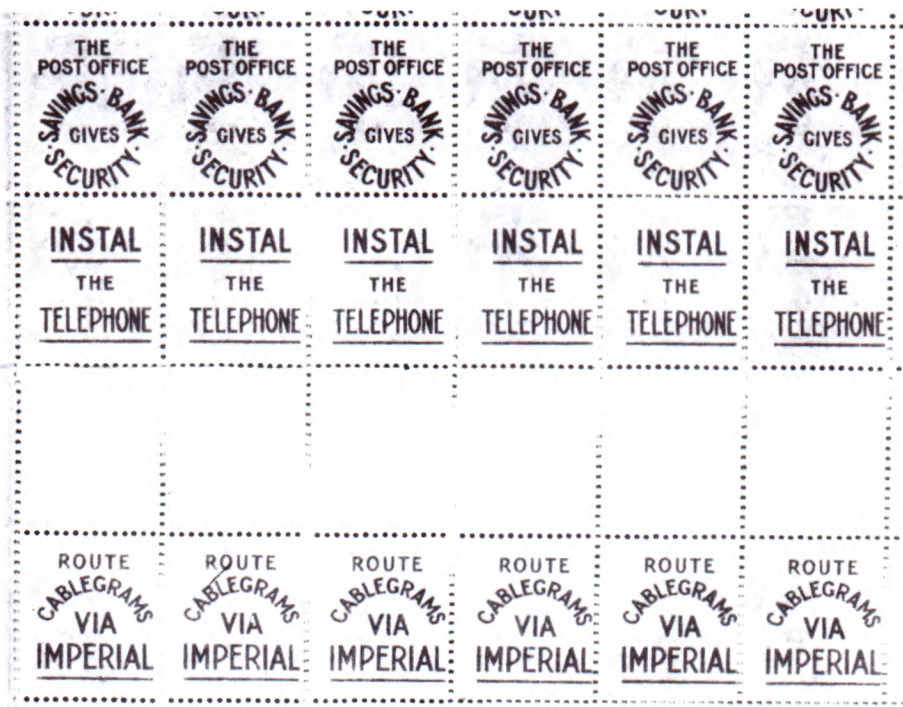
No further such experiments took place abroad until in 1923 Germany printed advertisements on the margins of sheets of stamps. In 1924-5 Italy printed (for only a few months) advertisements mixed up with the stamps in the sheets, and in 1924 France introduced advertising into the margins of booklet panes.

Paradoxically, it was the British Post Office which nearly took the advertising plunge in

earnest in 1921-22, when a sub-committee of the Post Office Advisory Council considered a scheme for raising revenues by selling advertising on postage stamps.

The proposals contemplated the use of units of 480 stamps (i.e. the double sheet of 2×240 stamps before separation for counter use) in denominations of $\frac{1}{2}d$, 1d, $1\frac{1}{2}d$ and 2d values only, i.e. up to the minimum inland letter rate. Each advertisement would be complete in itself and placed in a space on the back of the stamp which left 0.15" clear of the perforations.

Advertisers would be allowed up to 48 variations of text (minimum strips of 10 stamps) in a double sheet. The text would be printed in a colour similar to but lighter, than that used in printing the stamps themselves; it was laid down that only light-faced words,



figures or designs were to be used. Furthermore, no advertisements would be accepted which, in the opinion of the Postmaster General, might in any way be unsuitable, particularly those which "related to alcoholic liquors, lotteries, betting or gambling, might be contrary to public policy, or related to any illegal or immoral business or matter."

As far as the technical aspects of the scheme are concerned, it was proposed to print the advertisements on the (Royal Cypher) watermarked paper "before it was subjected to the gumming, plate glazing, stamp printing, etc., processes and that the ink used for the advertisements should be insoluble and applied thinly so as not to repel the gum."

Tests were carried out and in the National Postal Museum there are a number of sheets

with dummy advertisements printed on the back of each stamp, under the gum. The stamp used in each case is the 1d Red (Royal Cypher work) of the 1921-22 issue (see illustrations).

The project was however abandoned in mid-1922. It was probably felt that the prospective revenues from such advertisements might not overweigh the possible objections from the public.

In 1935 consideration was again given to a similar proposal and also for advertisements in the interpanneaux spaces. This latter idea would however have involved either larger sheets (and therefore new machinery), or less stamps per sheet which would, of course, mean difficulties for counter clerks. Both proposals were rejected.

A. G. RIGO DE RIGHI

Ulster Paintings 1971

To form part of the celebrations for the Ulster 1971 festival a set of stamps is to be issued on 16 June 1971 showing reproductions of paintings by three well known Ulster painters, T. P. Flanagan, Colin Middleton and Thomas Carr. The stamps were designed by Stuart Rose, Director of Design, Postal Services.

The 3p stamp features a painting by T. P. Flanagan entitled "A Mountain Road". It is one of a set of paintings of Irish bog landscapes which inspired "Bogland", a poem by the Ulster poet Seamus Heaney. T. P. Flanagan was born in Enniskillen, County Fermanagh, in 1929, brought up in Sligo and educated in Enniskillen. He held a scholarship at Belfast College of Art between 1949 and 1953 and is now principal lecturer in art at St. Mary's College of Education, Belfast. His paintings have been exhibited at the Royal Academy, the Royal Hibernian Academy and in the Arts Council of Northern Ireland exhibitions.

The 7½p stamp shows "Deer's Meadow" by Thomas Carr. A painting of a beautiful corner of the Mourne on a bright March day. He was born in Belfast and trained at the Slade School. He first exhibited in London in 1933 and has held numerous one-man shows in Belfast, Dublin and London. Thomas Carr is a member of the Royal Society of Watercolour Painters. His pictures are included in many public and private collections including that of the Queen Mother.

The 9p stamp shows "Slieve na brock" by Colin Middleton, MBE. It is from a series of paintings in the Tollymore Forest Park on the north slopes of Mourne Mountains in County Down; it was painted in 1965. Colin Middleton was born in Belfast in 1910 and like his father he trained and worked as a damask designer. His paintings have been shown in many exhibitions including the Royal Academy, London, and a one-man exhibition at the Arthur Tooth Galleries, London. His paintings feature in numerous

public and private collections. He was awarded the MBE in 1969.

Presentation packs priced 24½p will be on sale at all Head Offices.

Printing details

<i>Designer :</i>	Stuart Rose, FSIA
<i>Printer :</i>	Harrison & Sons
<i>Paper :</i>	White coated, unwatermarked, phosphor-lined
<i>Perforation :</i>	15 × 14
<i>Stamps per sheet :</i>	100
<i>Colours :</i>	3p Buff, Yellow, Brown, Blue, Black, Straw
	7½p Light Blue, Dark Blue, Light Brown, Grey, Yellow, Green
	9p Light Grey, Dark Grey, Brown, Yellow, Orange, Buff, Brown/Black

Ulster Paintings Stamps— First Day Cover Services

For the three stamps to be issued on 16 June 1971 featuring Ulster paintings a choice of two cancellations is offered. The stamps – 3p, 7½p and 9p – may be cancelled with either the Philatelic Bureau or Belfast handstamps at the following charges:

Service A	Deposit account holders	28p
	Non deposit account holders	30½p
Service B		24½p
Service C		28p

Philatelic posting boxes at over 170 offices throughout the United Kingdom will be opened for the use of those collectors who prepare and post their own covers.

Philatelic Posting Boxes

Special philatelic posting boxes at Epsom, Surrey; Uxbridge, Middlesex and Sutton, Surrey, will be brought into use from 16 June 1971.

Two Summer Exhibitions at the National Postal Museum

Bulletin readers who have decided (after seeing the preliminary notice on page 11 of the March issue) to make a point of visiting the "80 Years of British Stamp Books" exhibition at the National Postal Museum, may be interested in an extended description of some of the unique items which will be on display.

As well as the 1891 stamp book, visitors will be able to examine dummy booklets of essays produced by De La Rue's in 1884-5, experimental booklets of the 1903-14 period from the Post Office archives, unique unsevered *tête-beche* booklet panes of many Edwardian and Georgian issues and complete booklet sheets of the current Machin decimals. All these, in addition to the complete display of Post Office stamp books from 1904 to date.

Exhibition of New Acquisitions

Demonstrating that the NPM is constantly adding to its collections, visitors to the Museum from 11 May onwards will also see the most important and exciting acquisitions of the past two years. These will include dies, proofs, essays and actual printing plates from the Royal Mint, an original Dockwra letter of 1682, Rowland Hill relics, a Machin high-value printing cylinder and some remarkable experimental material (essays and complete sheets) ranging from 1839 to the mid-1920's. There should be something there to interest all philatelists and postal historians.

A. G. RIGO DE RIGHI

Good News for Postmark Collectors

As stamp collecting flourishes, the number of postmark collectors rises and, as interest in the subject mounts, so does the search for perfection.

There are the collectors of working materials who take postmarks as they come, warts and all, but there are many more whose sensibilities are offended by anything less than a properly inked, well placed and carefully applied postmark.

Such a requirement in a busy sorting office, concerned only with cancelling a stamp to prevent re-use and with getting the mail on its way, all in the shortest possible time, is to demand the impossible.

For some time now we have been providing special posting boxes on first days of issues of new postage stamps and on days on which special handstamps are in use to receive mail on which carefully applied postmarks are required.

We have now issued instructions to our staff that the prime object with items posted in the boxes is the quality of the postmarks and that, if necessary, to enable them to devote time and care to the work, the handling of the mail may be deferred to quiet times of the day. We have also told them that if a collector is dissatisfied with the quality of the handstamp impression on an item posted in such a box it is to be exchanged without quibble provided it is returned within 3 weeks of the date in the postmark.

Such treatment is costly in manpower but we are satisfied that where items bear stamps to a value greater than the appropriate postage, this additional cost is met. There are some collectors however, interested only in the postmarks, who put the minimum postage of $2\frac{1}{2}p$ on their items and, since their demands are just as expensive to meet, we must ask them for an extra $\frac{1}{2}p$ per item to be affixed either in stamps on each item or paid in bulk in cash if the items are already stamped or it is not wished to use the $3p$ stamp.

The special handstamps we use are also expensive to produce and our charges to sponsors for supplying them have remained unchanged for over 7 years. The charges now no longer cover our costs and for orders placed from the 1 April 1971 they will be £25

for a handstamp with a fixed date to be used on one day and £40 for a stamp with changeable date to be used over a period.

Advertisers and organisers might like to know that the Post Office will provide special handstamps for short periods, usually up to one month, in connection with a bona fide exhibitions, displays, conventions, anniversaries, philatelic event and other local or national events. The handstamps are used to postmark mail posted in special posting boxes at the event.

Further information can be obtained from the Head Postmaster of the area in which the event will be staged.

First Decimal Air Letter

Britain's first decimal Air Letter form, priced 4p, is now on sale at post offices.

The form is expected to be of special interest to collectors because of its limited "life". On 1 July, a 5p Air Letter form will be issued as part of the general increase in overseas postal tariffs announced last September.

Both the 4p and 5p forms have the same shape and design as the old 9d form introduced in July 1968, the only difference being the value printed on the "stamp" which shows the silhouette of a VC10 jetliner. People may still use the old 9d form, and will be able to go on using both it and the 4p form after 1 July by adding a 1p stamp.

Young Collector's Corner

Last month in this column, mention was made of the pioneer work of Frederick Melville, and the Melville Memorial Competition held in conjunction with the Philatelic Congress of Great Britain.

This year's Competition was judged on 1 March, and some very fine entries were re-

ceived, even though circumstances prevented the numbers of entries being as high as last year.

Among the award winning entries were some very good displays of Great Britain material. In the 17 to 21 age group, second prize was awarded to Robert Pocklington, with a display of plating the Queen Victoria One Penny stamps. Robert's display was entered by the Peterborough Philatelic Society.

The Essex Association submitted the entry of Simon Wall, who was placed first in the 15 to 17 age group. This entry included items of Great Britain postal stationery.

In the same age group, the entry of Paul Wreglesworth of Huddersfield was highly commended, and received the felicitations of the jury. His entry comprised booklet panes of Great Britain.

A thematic entry, entitled "Moving the Mail", gave first prize in the 12 to 15 age group to Carey Last of the Middlesex Federation.

Other prize winners were Michael Phelan, who was placed first in the 17 to 21 age group. Michael's entry was submitted by the Eire Philatelic Society. Kenneth Tomkin, of the Bromley and Beckenham Philatelic Society, was placed second in the 15 to 17 group. Second in the 12 to 15 age group was Miss Sarah Moorshead.

In the under 12 group, first prize went to Miss Alison Tonkin, of Bromley and Beckenham, whose entry was entitled "Transport through the Ages". Second in this group was Miss Ann Emberson of the Middlesex Federation.

The judges for this year's Competition were Mrs. Kay Horowicz, Lt.-Col. Charles Hinds, John Levett, Jack Simmonds and Thomas Traill. The awards will be presented on 18 June at the Philatelic Congress in Norwich.

Another recent successful junior collector was Martin Kite, who was awarded the Ferris Silver Bowl at this year's Stampex.

The British Post Office in Scandinavia



In last month's Bulletin we gave the first particulars of our tour of Scandinavia and this month we reproduce the special cover and pack.

The "Scandinavia 71" cover with its complementary postmark and 10p stamp illustrated on the page shows the Royal Coat of Arms and lists the main cities which will be visited on the tour. The covers will be cancelled with a special "Scandinavia 71" postmark.

A distinctive gift pack has also been produced which contains the 12 low value decimal definitive stamps $\frac{1}{2}p$, $1p$, $1\frac{1}{2}p$, $2p$, $2\frac{1}{2}p$, $3p$, $3\frac{1}{2}p$, $4p$, $5p$, $6p$, $7\frac{1}{2}p$ and $9p$.



In line with our promise to give all our customers an opportunity to purchase these special items we invite you to apply for them on the enclosed form. The fully serviced cover is available at 21p (18½p for Deposit Account holders) and the pack at 55p post free. Plain covers may be had at the normal discount rates of £5 for 250 and £18 for 1000. Covers will be serviced with a convenient cancellation between 20 April and 20 May, 1971.

Our Itinerary

This outline map shows the area in which the Bureau's mobile display and sales point will operate during its 1,000 mile journey.

Copenhagen	15-20 April
Malmö	22-25 April
Norrköping	27-28 April
Stockholm	30 April-5 May
Gothenburg	7-16 May
Oslo	17-20 May



Postmark Advertising Slogan—A Cheap Way of Getting Your Message Across

The Post Office has for many years used advertising slogans in the machines it uses for cancelling postage stamps. These slogans appear on hundreds of millions of letters every week and are a very cheap and effective way of advertising.

There are certain restrictions made necessary to avoid giving offence to the senders and recipients of letters but the slogans are used in ever growing numbers as more and more local authorities and community interests recognise their values. The charges, which have remained unchanged for over 7 years, have just been revised, but they still represent very good value for money. The new charges are:

for a campaign using one machine and one design of slogan, which can be repeated any number of times within 12 months—

£65

for every additional machine to be used—

£10

for any change of design of slogan—£15 for the first die and £10 for every copy plus £2 a week for each week each machine is in use.

Machines can be selected to be used in towns all over the country, the numbers ranging from one for a local campaign to 350 machines for a national campaign. An average weekly throughput would be 150,000 letters per machine. Inquiries for the use of the machine for the local campaign should be made to the Head Postmaster of the area in which the slogan is to be used; for national campaigns the inquiry should be made to Postal Headquarters, OOD/CSD/Postmark Publicity, St. Martin's-le-Grand, London EC1A 1HQ.

Advertisers may make use of the machines to publicise local amenities for tourists or

prestige purposes which have the support of the local authority; to support projects sponsored by, but not necessarily financed by, Government Departments; to mark events of local or national significance.

Postmark News

We have felt for some time now that our First Day of Issue postmarks do not do justice to the attractive designs of our special issues of postage stamps and also that collectors of postmarks were being rather neglected.

The postmark publicity team, led by Frank Langfield, whom many will remember as the man who brought the Philatelic Bureau into being, has therefore come up with some new pictorial postmarks for the 1971 series of special stamp issues. To provide a further source of interest, a heraldic theme has been adopted.

The postmarks will not be used at the whole range of Philatelic Posting Offices but only at selected offices throughout the year and we shall be publicising the offices later on.

Commencing with the Ulster Paintings Issue on 16 June, the postmark will contain the red hand of Ulster as a central motif. The stamp will be used at Belfast.

The Regional decimal definitive issue follows on 7 July and each Region will have a postmark showing its own emblem, i.e. the Scottish lion, the Welsh dragon, the red hand of Ulster and the legs of Man. They will be used at Edinburgh, Cardiff, Belfast and Douglas respectively. On 28 July, for the Literary Anniversaries Issue of Scott, Gray and Keats, we are using a postmark containing a motif which shows the shield from the coat of arms of the Worshipful Company of Stationers and Newspaper Makers.

For the general anniversaries of 25 August we are using a different design for each stamp. For the Rugby Union it will be a rose, for the British Legion a poppy and for York the City Shield of York.

The New Universities theme of this year's British Architecture series on 22 September will be supported by "Modern" heraldry showing shields from the coats of arms of the four Universities.

Plans for the 1971 Christmas issue are not yet finalised, but "watch this space".

Details of posting arrangements for the Ulster Paintings issue are described on page 5 of this issue.

Postmark Slogans

* **Remember to use the Postcode** will now be used from 19 April until further notice at 66 London Offices and not from 15 March as previously announced.

* **Aberystwyth for Sun Sea Scenery Haul Mar Golygfda Guide 5p from Town Hall** 15 February-29 November 1971.

* **Barnsley Confident in its own industrial progress** 1 March-August 1971.

* **Basildon Tomorrow's Town Today** 25 February-24 February 1972.

* **June 12th-September 25th Black and White Minstrels at Eastbourne** 29 February-25 September 1971.

* **Scottish Spastics Silver Jubilee Year 1971** 27 February-31 December 1971.

* **South of England Show Ardingly (Sussex)** June 10, 11, 12 1 March-9 June 1971.

* **Hull the City of Humberside. Humber Bridge Building Starts 1972** 15 February-12 September 1971.

* **Tenby send for Guide 10p. Room 7 Guildhall** 8 February until further notice.

* **1921-1971 fifty years of Building Research Building Research Station** as soon as possible - 31 December 1971.

* **Modern Wigan has no Peer** 2 March 1971-31 May 1971.

* **Plymouth west country Holiday Centre** 1 March-30 June 1971.

Chessington Zoo, Surrey Open every day of the year commenced on 29 March at 10 offices including London D.O.S.

BBC Radio Derby 965 VHF 29 April will be used to cancel items posted at Derby from 18 April to 15 May 1971.

Scotland's Own Decimal Stamps on Sale 7 July 1971 will be used to cancel items posted from 1 June at 22 offices in Scotland including Fraserborough, Montrose, Galashiels, Motherwell and Perth.

Internal Waterways Assn. National Rally of Boats August 13th, 14th, 15th, 16th 1971, Becketts Park will be used to cancel items posted in Northampton from 20 June to 14 August 1971.

Save St. Paul's will be used to cancel items posted in 10 London offices including Western Central District Office from 1-28 May 1971.

Brighton Festival 5-16 May 5-16 May 5-16 May will be used to cancel items posted in Brighton from 26 April to 16 May 1971.

700th Anniversary Caerphilly Castle Castell Caerffili 1271-1971 will be used to cancel items posted at Caerphilly from 3 May-12 September 1971 and at Cardiff from 3-30 May 1971.

Wharfedale Music Festival Ilkley May 17-22 1971 will be used to cancel items posted in Ilkley from as soon as possible until 21 May 1971.

Harrogate Festival of Arts and Sciences August 1-14 1971 will be used to cancel items posted in Harrogate from 10 May-13 August 1971.

East of England Show July 20, 21, 22 Peterborough will be used to cancel items

* The commencement of these campaigns was delayed by the recent industrial action.

at 24 offices including Peterborough, Grantham, Wisbech and Ely from 14 June-17 July 1971.

Wales Decimal Stamps on Sale from 5 May-STAMPIAU DEGOL CYMRU AR WERTH 05 MAI YMLEAN will not now be used from 1 April-4 May as previously an-

nounced. An amended slogan reading **Wales Decimal Stamps on Sale from 7 July - STAMPIAU DEGOL CYMRU AR WERTH 07 GORFFENNAF** will be used from 1 June-6 July 1971 at Cardiff, Llanelli, Pontypridd, Newport, Swansea, Wrexham and Bangor.

Stampex 1971



A view of the Post Office stand



Seen at Stampex (left to right)

Mr. Geoffrey Vieler, Managing Director, Posts and Giro

The Rt Hon Christopher Chataway MP, Minister of Posts and Telecommunications

Mr. George Downes CB, Director of Operations and Overseas.

Letters to the Editor

Sir,

I should like to offer my comments on the way in which the Post Office strike affected First Day Covers of the Decimal Stamps. I am grieved as a collector of British Stamps and Covers that this strike has led to the Post Office arranging to give Decimal Covers a backdated postmark.

Surely this is not only a slur on British Philately but goes directly against your policies laid out in an article on cancelling to Order (*Bulletin* Feb. 1968). The backdating of First Day Covers to one when postal services were not operating is ludicrous since, and I quote from your article; "the majority of collectors want a postmark that is evidence of the item being passed through the post in the normal way."

You also state that clerks would be "liable to disciplinary action" for this, apart from the fact that your "object is to maintain the genuineness of the philatelic services provided."

To proceed with your intended mass backdating is not only wrong but also will produce large numbers of fake covers, I should like to hear other collectors comments on this.

The problem could easily have been solved if you had withheld the new Decimal Stamps from all your offices, including sub offices, until after the strike. At the resumption of normal working you could have had a new First Day it would not have been D-Day but all covers posted would have been genuine.

(It appeared anyway pointless for sub offices to have the stamps as they have hardly been used – no post, no demand for postal orders etc.)

I would also like to comment on how inconsistent was the managerial policy towards the inevitable question of First Day Covers at sub post offices on February 15. Many offices showed a PO Circular instructing them not to postmark these unofficial covers and not to hold until after the strike for delivery. Whereas at many other sub offices, and indeed

at one London office shown on a TV report that night, there were long queues for these unofficial but genuine envelopes.

Please can we have a clearly defined policy to deal with all contingencies and an official apology for the fact that so many covers bearing Decimal Stamps and backdated 15th February, will be so far from the genuine items I am sure most collectors demand.

Yours faithfully,

P. D. HERBAGE

Hinxworth, Baldock, Herts.

The $\frac{1}{2}p$ to $9p$ decimal stamps were put on sale at Sub Post Offices on 15 February – these offices were not affected by the strike – and at a small number of main Post Offices where enough staff had remained on duty to enable them to open. The majority of stamp collectors would, however, have been unable to get First Day Covers to complete their collections and would have been greatly disappointed. They would have found themselves competing for the few covers that were postmarked at the offices that were open. We were satisfied that arrangements for the marking of envelopes bearing any of these stamps with the statement "First Day of Issue 15 Feb 1971," and posted on the earliest occasion possible after work had been resumed, would help them, and the proposal met with the approval of the Philatelic trade.

Since it is the normal practice in the Philatelic trade to record variations of this kind in their catalogues it seemed to us that there would be nothing improper in this course of action. But so there could be no doubt, covers posted under this arrangement, in addition to the First Day of Issue postmark, were stamped with an explanatory "Posting delayed by the Post Office strike 1971."

These arrangements were introduced to meet the very special circumstances caused by the postal strike. We would not use them in dissimilar circumstances.

The arrangements were widely publicised and readers may care to be reminded of the

following notice which appeared in the press.

"Decimal Covers – Continuity assured."

To help philatelists to maintain continuity in their collections of covers the Post Office has made special arrangements for franking collectors' envelopes with the new decimal stamps that went on sale on 15 February.

For the benefit of those that were unable to find a post office open on that day philatelic posting boxes are being set up this week in all the usual "philatelic offices."

Covers posted in these boxes on Friday (March 12) and Saturday (March 13) and bearing stamps to the value of 3p and above will be handstamped "15 Feb 1971 First Day of Issue" and with the name of the town in which they are handstamped.

Since 15 February was the day of issue only for the $\frac{1}{2}$ p-9p range of stamps, the handstamps will not be used on covers carrying any other stamps whether decimal or £sd. Covers bearing these other stamps will be given a current postmark by stamp cancelling machine or routine office handstamp.

These arrangements which have been made with the general endorsement of the philatelic trade will enable collectors to keep up their collections at low cost – without having to compete for the limited number of covers which despite the postal strike were postmarked in a few places where local postal services were operating on 15 February.

(Editor)

And what of the converse? Are people here displeased to receive a letter from overseas with a stamp portraying, for example, the Buddha? Can anyone really be so thin-skinned as that?

As is implicit in its name, Christmas is one of the great Festivals of Christendom. I think it a little over the odds that Mr. Trollope and others of like mind should not only use this occasion for their own more limited purposes (which, as a personal matter, they are of course perfectly entitled to do) but also, while accepting as in Mr. Trollope's new sub-title of "the festival of goodwill and family reunion" its special associations with the family and the spirit of goodwill, seek in effect to suppress the reasons why those associations exist. They may not accept those reasons as well-founded, but that is quite another point.

It is a little ironic that in 1969 Mr. Trollope was unable to obtain any stamps other than the Christmas issue. My trouble with Christmas issues is that supplies to the sub-post office where I buy my stamps are so inadequate that they are sold out almost before they arrive and for the last two years I have been unable to obtain them.

Mr. Trollope is himself surprised that Christians did not protest that one of the 1969 designs was "near-blasphemy." The answer may be that it was obviously not so intended and they do try to be of goodwill.

Yours faithfully,

W. F. PROUDFOOT

Fawkham, Longfield, Kent.

Dear Sir,

It was surprising to read in Mr. Trollope's letter in your February issue that religious motifs are inept to mark Christmas (!) and that these, including presumably the reproductions of the beautiful little mediaeval paintings in last year's issue, are "distasteful to millions in other countries." If that is true, and I do not believe it is, any of those millions who may visit this country should certainly be warned off the National Gallery.

Articles and illustrations appearing in the *Bulletin* are the copyright of the Post Office. Requests to reproduce this material should be addressed to the Editor, Philatelic Bulletin, OCD/CSD, Postal Headquarters, St. Martin's-le-Grand, London EC1A 1HQ.

The annual subscription to the *Philatelic Bulletin* for 12 issues a year is 50p including postage by surface mail to anywhere in the world, or air mail to anywhere in Europe. For air mail to countries outside Europe the subscription is £1.40.

Subscriptions should be sent to the British Post Office Philatelic Bureau, 2-4 Waterloo Place, EDINBURGH EH1 1AB.

Printed in Great Britain by Moore & Matthes Ltd.
for the Post Office, St. Martin's-le-Grand, LONDON EC1A 1HQ.