

Philatelic Bulletin

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Last Journey of the Stour Valley Post Bus

Saturday 18 April marks the final day of service for the Stour Valley postbus which has travelled between Colchester and East Bergholt, serving villages along the route, since 1 September 1975.

A special pictorial handstamp has been produced, which will be used to cancel items received for reposting. In addition, serviced copies of the postbus picture postcard, which was originally issued on 30 June, 1980, will be available on application to the Head Postmaster, Head Post Office, Philatelic Centre, 29/39 Head Street, COLCHESTER CO1 1AA, price 34p. The price includes the cost of the postcard, postage, handstamp and service charge. Payment may be made by postal order, cheque or direct Giro transfer (Giro Account number 317 0217) to the above address.

The serviced postcards and all items received at Colchester Head Post Office by 16 April for reposting will travel in the postbus on its last journey.

Editorial

To commemorate the forthcoming marriage between HRH The Prince of Wales and Lady Diana Spencer, The Post Office is pleased to announce that two special stamps, values 14p and 25p, will be issued. In addition, a first day cover, presentation pack, and postcard reproduction of the stamps will also be available. Full details, including the date of issue will appear in next month's Philatelic Bulletin.

Super Stampex 81 has drawn to a close. First reports show that attendances and interest were high, the Post Office stand was particularly busy. All of which indicates that despite the economic situation the stamp collector follows his hobby as avidly as ever. However, a big disappointment was that for the second year in succession the Post Office Trophy was not awarded by the Stampex judges. We shall of course publish their reasons and explanations for this when they are made known.

Finally, we offer our congratulations to the Stamp Bug Club which celebrated its first anniversary during March with the announcement of its 50,000th member.

National Postal Museum 'Ten Years of Decimal Machins'

A new exhibition will be staged in the National Postal Museum, King Edward Building, King Edward Street, LONDON EC1A 1LP, from 6 May-2 October, 1981, entitled, 'Ten Years of Decimal Machins'. The exhibition will highlight the famous bas relief portrait of The Queen by Mr Arnold Machin OBE, and the changes in colours and values over the years.

Proofs and essays will be featured as well as material supplied by some of the printing houses responsible for production. A phosphor viewer will be installed to enable visitors to detect the various phosphor elements included in modern stamp printing.

A new postcard depicting the Machin portrait, will be on sale for the duration of the exhibition only to visitors to the museum, price 11p.

Collecting Machin Definitives Part 6

Postal Stationery

This final article in the series on the Machin definitives is concerned with postal stationery, which includes postcards, envelopes, wrappers, labels and airletters prestamped with the Machin head and appropriate value. Most of these items have been produced for sale in post offices, but a significant range of private Stamped to Order stationery was manufactured up to the latter part of 1973.



Post Office material consists of postcards, lettercards, envelopes, and airletters, or aerogrammes as they may be called outside Great Britain. Printing changes, postal rate increases, experimental issues, and the growth of postal mechanisation have brought about a sufficient variety to satisfy collectors looking for a related area of interest, but distinct from postage stamps. The Machin head first appeared on postcards, reply-paid postcards, and lettercards in September 1968. Phosphor lines were added to the lettercards in 1969 and to the postcards in 1970. This range has diminished and from January 1981 consists only of the first class and second class lettercards which are gravure printed on the Chambon press. Envelopes with embossed stamps were issued in October 1969 with a new octagonal stamp designed by Stuart Rose incorporating the Machin portrait. This design was subsequently adopted for the postcards and lettercards.

In June 1974, embossed stamps on the envelopes gave way to an 'aniline' letterpress process using a

rubber stereo and a spirit ink quite different to the oil based letterpress inks. The stamp lost something in the changeover as the embossed design was generally considered of excellent quality, and superior to that printed by letterpress. However, a Post Office statement at that time, which also related to registered envelopes, said the change from embossed stamps to surface printed stamps was in line with the policy of changing from an expensive and slow production process to a more economic and faster process. This enabled the Post Office to make these items available much sooner than would have been possible with the previous embossed process.



To me, three developments stand out among the changes of value and stamp colours in the twelve years since 1968. On 8 October 1973 the 3p blue was uprated to 3½p by a double ring device printed in blue "POSTAGE PAID EXTRA" with ½p in the centre. This contrasts with the commonly used method of uprating by the application of postage stamps alongside the printed stamps, and was probably necessitated by either large stocks of the 3p envelope or the lack of a 3½p stamp design.

In February 1979, the National Postal Museum in London, issued an envelope to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the Museum. It was pre-stamped with a surface printed 9p Machin stamp. Finally, the increasing significance of postal mechanisation led to the addition of a postcode reminder to the address panel on the back of the envelopes from July 1979.

Oddities include the use of different papers for some of the envelopes. I have 3p blue stamped versions with two phosphor bands on very different envelopes, one a pale blue lined paper

and the other a grey unlined paper.

Although the 7p brown stamp with two phosphor bands was printed in the normal size for stationery envelopes, being larger than that for postcards and lettercards, the 7p brown stamp with one phosphor band issued on 13 June 1977 was unusually small. This second type was of a similar size to that used for postcards and lettercards. This may have been a mistake as the size was increased again when new values appeared subsequently. The range of registered envelopes adopted a Machin head stamp in April 1970. The octagonal design is similar to that designed by Stuart Rose for the other stationery items, but has the words "POSTAGE AND REGISTRATION" instead of "POSTAGE POSTAGE". At first the stamps were embossed but in July 1974 they were changed to the "aniline" process described earlier.

In addition to the inland series of registered envelopes there is a Forces Overseas Registered envelope with the stamps printed in orange red. This envelope is available in the "G2" size only. When posted to civilian addresses a handstamped cachet may be applied — BRITISH FIELD POST — to show that it is at a reduced rate.

As the overseas registration fee was not increased until 1 July 1971 an overseas registered envelope, with a 15p magenta stamp, went on sale until 30 June 1971. From November 1972 to March 1975 an experimental system was introduced for registered envelopes posted and delivered in Scotland, in which it was no longer necessary for staff at the delivery office to write out a receipt. Special registered envelopes were introduced without the scrim lining of the normal envelopes, the Duplex manila having a blue interior. The medium-sized 'H', and the larger 'K' envelopes had the flap to the right, whereas the small 'G' envelope had the flap to the left. This latter was discontinued in September 1975 when the flap reverted to the right side.

In May 1974, because of their success in Scotland the Post Office decided that blue lined Duplex manila should replace scrim lined manila envelopes as stocks were used up.

Of the many variants to be found I have selected two examples for illustration here. Firstly, at the time of changeover from sterling to decimal stamps in 1971, surplus stocks of 'K' sized envelopes bearing a 3/5d embossed stamp were uprated with a 6p cachet. There can't be too many examples of envelopes with two different types of currency officially applied at the same time. Secondly, a Forces Overseas Envelope posted in the UK at



EXTRA
6P
PAID

Field Post Office 777 in the 1978 Festival of Brighton Philatelic Show. Finally a registered envelope was posted at the London Chief Office Philatelic Counter on 9 July 1979. This was the first day of issue of envelopes with a line for the post code added to the address panel at the back. No first day cancellation was provided but as a special concession the use of the Rowland Hill handstamp was authorised.



A new style of airletter was issued on 1 July 1968. This has an impressed 9d stamp in white, and light and dark shades of blue, designed by David Gentleman, including the profile of the Queen by Arnold Machin along with representations of two VC10 aircraft in flight. Examples with the word 'Specimen' overprinted by hand were given advance distribution to the Press on 24 June 1968.

In 1972 the size 2 airletter was introduced with the stamp consisting of the unframed Machin head of the Queen with the value '6 1/2p' at bottom left.

Several regional definitive airletters have also

Forthcoming Events

been issued of which the first in the Welsh and English languages was issued in August 1973, and the first in Gaelic and English in May 1974.

The stamp on the first size of the airletter was changed to the unframed Machin head in June 1978.

All non-pictorial air letters are gravure printed on specially designed Chambon machines, while pictorial air letters are printed by off-set litho. Both are produced by McCorquodale Printers Ltd.

Up to October 1973 private stationery could be impressed with postage stamps, providing the order was big enough. Two different stamps were used for the purpose.



The De La Rue Stamp Collection on view at
The National Postal Museum, London E.C.1
3rd October 1973 to March 1974

A notable example comes from 1973 when an envelope was put on sale at the National Postal Museum in conjunction with a display of the De La Rue stamp collection. This envelope, which incidentally comes in two sizes from different printings, was stamped to order with the 3p blue and 1/2p turquoise embossed Machin stamps. To bring matters up-to-date, the most recent range of stationery was issued on 26 January 1981 in line with newly increased postage rates. It consists of 11 1/2p second class and 14p first class lettercards; 11 1/2p sizes 1 and 2 second class, 14p sizes 1 and 2 first class envelopes; "G", "H" and "K" registered envelopes; and the large airletter at 20p, with a statement that the small airletter is to be withdrawn. All of these stationery items were printed by McCorquodale.

D W STADDON

Goodmayes Philatelic Society

The Goodmayes Philatelic Society will hold a Stamp Fair on Saturday 11 April 1981 in the Methodist Church Hall, Percy Road, Goodmayes, ILFORD, Essex IG3 8UA from 10 am until 5 pm. Admission is free.

Colchester and District Philatelic Society

The Colchester and District Philatelic Society will celebrate its Golden Jubilee on Saturday 11 April 1981 at the Holmwood House School, Chilts Hill, COLCHESTER CO3 5ST with a Stamp Festival. A number of dealers will be present and The Post Office will provide a special sales counter. The National Postal Museum will display some of its 'gems'. Included in the itinerary is a film show and a display of Victorian stamp boxes and letter balances.

Basildon Philatelic Society

On Saturday 25 April 1981 the Basildon Philatelic Society will hold its annual exhibition this year to be called, 'Stamp Day '81'. It will be held in St. Martin's Church Hall, Town Centre, BASILDON, Essex, from 10 am until 5 pm. Displays will include the winners of the annual competition, the prizes for which will be presented by the Head Postmaster of Basildon, Mr P Bazeley. Admission is free.

Telford Philatelic Society

The Telford Philatelic Society is holding its third stamp fair on 25 April, 1981, at the Belmont Hall, New Street, WELLINGTON, Shropshire, TF1 1NE from 10 am-4 pm. Admission is 20p for adults and 10p for children. A number of dealers will be present, and The Post Office will provide a display and sales counter. A car park is adjacent to the hall.

Philatelic Bulletins

We have heard that the following back numbers of the Philatelic Bulletin are available for sale: June 1968 - July 1977. For further details please write to, Mrs D A Ranson, Flat 1, 4 Ethelred Road, Westgate-on-Sea, THANET, Kent CT8 8SJ enclosing a stamped addressed envelope for reply.

75. British Anniversaries, 1971

Among the many hundreds of suggestions and requests for special stamps which the Post Office receives each year, there are very few indeed which can be adopted, and the ultimate choice is inevitably a matter of careful thought and of weighing 'pros and cons'. Following the literary anniversaries in July, three widely differing events were selected for commemoration on 25 August 1971 – the 50th anniversary of the (Royal) British Legion; the 1900th anniversary of the City of York; and the centenary of the Rugby Football Union. The stamps were designed by Fritz Wegner, the Viennese-born freelance artist and designer whose earlier work included the 1969 Christmas stamps and three of the 1970 general anniversaries' issues. He studied at the St. Martin's School of Art in London and became a visiting lecturer in graphic design there; his work has included illustrations for books and magazines, and he is a regular contributor to British stamp design, his most recent being the 'Folklore' issue in February of this year and the Christmas stamps of 1979 which depicted the traditional Christmas story.

Besides a pleasing uniformity in his designs – commemorative panel on the left and a broad band on the right containing the Queen's head, the face value and an appropriate emblem – Mr Wegner depicted 'people' as his central subjects. The 3p British Legion stamp showed a soldier, sailor and airman protectively flanking a member of Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service (now Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing

Corps), all wearing uniforms of the post-war era, circa 1921, when the Legion was founded, and with the Legion's poppy emblem included in the design. A Roman centurion on horseback, with the ancient multangular tower fortification at York in the background, was the subject of the 7½p stamp, while the 9p Rugby Football Union issue was represented by players in 'period' sporting gear – three of them in hot pursuit of the one with the round ball, another prostrate on the ground – based on the famous W B Wollen painting of more than a century ago. The York stamp included the city's coat-of-arms (inset), and the 'Rugger' stamp was adorned by another flower – the symbolic red rose of the English international team.

The British Legion, an organisation of ex-servicemen (now the Royal British Legion), was founded in 1921 by Field-Marshal Douglas Haig, first Earl of Bemersyde (1861-1928), who was Commander-in-Chief of the British Expeditionary Forces in France and Flanders during World War I. The Legion was established for the care and welfare of disabled and unemployed ex-soldiers, and it was incorporated by Royal Charter in 1925. Earl Haig remained its President until his death and his name is associated with the sale of poppies – made by disabled ex-servicemen – on Remembrance Day.

The ancient city of York, located at the confluence of the Foss with the Ouse, was known among the Romans as Eboracum – it was the centre



New Illustrated Stamp Books

of Roman power in the north of Britain and many relics of that epoch still remain. It is the seat of an archbishop and its cathedral, known as the Minster, is one of the grandest in England – it was built on the site of a church erected as early as the 7th century, and was finished as it now exists in 1470. There are other buildings of great antiquity, and the Guildhall dates from the 15th century.

Rugby Union, the English association of Rugby football clubs, founded in 1871, was based on the game played at Rugby School. The division into two separate games – Rugby Union and Rugby League – came in 1895, when there was a dispute on the question of legalising payment for time lost from work by the players, all amateurs. The 'breakaway' clubs, a score of them, mostly Yorkshire teams, formed a new independent governing body, first called the Northern Union, but now known as the Rugby League. The Rugby Football Union's headquarters are at Twickenham, Middlesex.

The stamps were photogravure-printed by Harrison and Sons in sheets of 100 (10 x 10) on unwatermarked paper with two phosphor bands. Varieties include certain colours omitted on all values, notably the red-orange of the nurse's cloak and the deep blue of the sailor's uniform (which appeared grey) on the 3p, and a large white spot under the 'U' of 'UNION' on the 9p. Quantities sold were: 3p 55,211,706; 7½p 7,026,973; 9p 5,705,637; and presentation packs, 94,059.

JAMES WATSON

No. 1 of the third series of stamp books with illustrated covers to be issued on 6 May 1981 will be available from the Philatelic Bureau, philatelic counters, and other offices, as current stocks become exhausted.

Details of the make-up of each book is as follows:

- 50p book: 3 x 11½p; 1 x 14p; 1 x 1p; 1 x ½p. All have two phosphor bars except the 11½p which has a single bar. The illustration is of Mugdock Castle, Argyll.
- £1.15 10 x 11½p – single central phosphor bar. The illustration depicts the Natural History Museum, London.
- £1.40 10 x 14p – phosphor coated paper. Costume 1800-1815 is illustrated.

No. 1 of a new series of stamp books entitled 'Postal History' will be available on 6 May 1981 from the Philatelic Bureau, philatelic counters and other offices price £1.30. It will depict the 'penny black' stamp of 1840.

The make-up is as follows:-

- 6 x 14p – with two phosphor bars.
4 x 11½p – with a single phosphor bar.

New Philatelic Sales Counter

A new philatelic sales counter will be opened at the Rede House Branch Office, 63 Corporation Road, MIDDLESBROUGH, Cleveland TS1 1LY on 27 April, 1981.

A special pictorial handstamp, which includes the words, 'Post Office Philatelic Counter opened 27 April 1981 Cleveland', will be used to cancel all mail posted in a special posting box sited in the Rede House Branch Office on that one day only. For customers requiring the handstamp who are unable to call at the office, normal reposting facilities will apply. Cover should be sent to:- The Head Postmaster, Head Post Office, 2 Cannon Park Way, MIDDLESBROUGH, Cleveland TS1 1AA. Hours of business at the new office are:- Monday to Friday 9.45 am-12.30 pm and 1.30 pm-4.45 pm. Saturday 9.45 am-12.30 pm.



Butterflies Stamps Issue

13 May 1981



The alternative
'Butterflies' handstamp -
London SW.

Continuing the ever popular wildlife series of postage stamps, The Post Office will issue on 13 May 1981 four special stamps featuring butterflies. The 'Peacock' and 'Small Tortoiseshell' are still common within our shores, but the 'Large Blue' is now feared extinct in the British Isles, while the 'Chequered Skipper' may still be seen in western Scotland. The stamps values and subjects are:- 14p Small Tortoiseshell; 18p Large Blue; 22p Peacock; 25p Chequered Skipper.

Printer: Harrison & Sons (High Wycombe) Ltd
Process: Photogravure
Paper: Coated, unwatermarked
Phosphor: Pre-treated
Adhesive: PVA Dextrin
Format: Vertical
Size: 30mm x 41mm
Perforations: 14 x 15
Sheet size: 100

First Day Cover Services

The following services for first day covers will be provided. Two special pictorial handstamps will be available: 'Philatelic Bureau, Edinburgh', and, 'London SW'.

SERVICE 'A'

This consists of the official first day cover, addressed to the correct postal address of the destination required and bearing all four stamps. The cover will be cancelled; 'Philatelic Bureau, Edinburgh', or, 'London SW', as requested, and despatched.

SERVICE 'B'

Customers own pre-addressed covers bearing the correct postal address, will be given the stamps, cancelled as requested, and despatched.

Application forms, available from the Philatelic Bureau, and at all Head Post Offices should be returned not later than 4 May 1981.

The following charges will apply:

	Inland	Overseas
Service 'A'	£1.16	£1.01
Deposit account customers	£1.11	96½p
Service 'B'	£1.03	89½p

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

Presentation Pack

Presentation pack, price 96p, containing all four stamps, will be available from 13 May 1981.

Postcards

Postcard reproductions of each of the four stamps will be available approximately two weeks before the issue date, price 11p each.

Printing Details

Designer: Gordon Benningfield

Values and Colours

- 14p greenish-yellow, rose red, black, bright blue, emerald, grey-olive, gold.
- 18p greenish-yellow, bright mauve, bright blue, bright green, black, deep yellow-green, gold.
- 22p greenish-yellow, rose red, deep green, bright blue, black, grey-olive, gold.
- 25p greenish-yellow, rose red, violet blue, emerald, black, grey-olive, gold.



Butterflies

BRITISH POST OFFICE MINT STAMPS



POST OFFICE FIRST DAY COVER

Mrs J Robinson
200 Manorbier Road
ILKESTON
Derbyshire
DE7 4AB

5. E for Early

To define 'early' as a postcard theme it is necessary to reflect briefly on the origins and history of postcards, reminding ourselves that the earliest cards were – and are still – classified as postal stationery, identified as such by the imprinted stamp on the address side of the card (regarded by picture-postcard collectors as the 'back'). Austria introduced the postcard on 1 October 1869, while the first official British postcards were issued a year later, on 1 October 1870. Gradually other countries adopted the idea and official postcards, basically without pictures (although enterprising hotels and manufacturers adorned their cards with small line drawings advertising their products and services), continued to be issued in various forms until the end of the century and beyond. These early 'officials' are generally of more interest to the postal historian and to the collector of postal stationery than to the average postcard collector.

Continental publishers, stationers and hotel-owners produced the first picture postcards in the 1880s, mainly to satisfy the growing demand from visitors who wanted souvenirs of their travels which could be posted back to their families at home. As the tourist trade expanded in the 1890s, so also the postal traffic in multicoloured 'Gruss

aus' ('Greetings from') picture postcards increased enormously, amounting to a deluge of cards descending on Britain. In 1894 the Post Office was forced to relinquish its monopoly on postcard production and, yielding to public demand, permitted the use of private postcards with adhesive stamps and pictures on the reverse. The new picture cards were 'court' size, conforming to the existing official correspondence cards and slightly smaller than what was to become – in 1899 – the 'standard' size of $5\frac{1}{2} \times 3\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

Court cards are the 'classics' among picture postcards and form, with the foreign 'gruss aus' cards, a substantial part of the classification – 'Early Postcards'. My illustration shows a sepia multi-view court card published in 1897 for Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee – it shows a likeness of the Queen with the dates '1837-1897' and appropriate inscriptions, also three of Her Majesty's regular residences – Windsor Castle, Balmoral Castle and Osborne House on the Isle of Wight. The pictorial style followed that of the multi-view, vignetted 'gruss aus' cards which, at that time had been freely adapted by some of the British publishers, including Blum & Degen, Francis Frith, George Stewart and Valentine &



Sons. Other court cards depicted small pictures (bordered or vignettied) to allow space for the message, or 'full out' illustrations, permitting very little space for a greeting, and most commonly showed views of London's famous buildings and of other town and country resorts.

Contemporary with the court card was the 'intermediate size' card, longer and narrower (about 5 x 3¼ inches) and invariably printed in black or deep blue on pale blue card. Again these were almost entirely typographical or 'view' cards and the earliest standard size cards – 1899 to about 1902 – were also sometimes printed on the pale blue stock. But by 1900 the multicoloured British picture postcards were being printed and published by the million, and the end of Victoria's reign – she died at Osborne on 22 January 1901 – can be regarded also as the end of the era of the early postcard. Values range from £1 to £50 for early cards, depending on subject and scarcity – in recent times a 'Life-boat Saturday' Balloon Post card of 1903 fetched £400 at auction, while a world record price for a postcard was the £1,050 paid for a 1902 Coronation Souvenir postcard, posted at Beckenham and dropped by balloon near Canterbury.

MALCOLM JAMES

Stratford-upon-Avon Pictorial Handstamp

The William Shakespeare seasonal pictorial handstamp will be used at Stratford-upon-Avon from 23 April-September, 1981. The handstamp shows a typical period cottage and includes the words, 'William Shakespeare Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire.

A special posting box will be sited at the post office in Bridge Street, Stratford-upon-Avon, WARWICKSHIRE CV37 6AA. All items posted in this box or sent to the Head Postmaster under the reposting facility, will receive the special postmark, provided they bear the appropriate value of postage stamps plus 2p handstamping charge. The items will then be returned by normal post.

Stamp Bug Club – 50,000th Member

In the week of its first anniversary, during March, the Stamp Bug Club announced its 50,000th member; George Lindsey, aged 15, of Harlow, Essex.

George, together with the very first Stamp Bug

Club member, Wayne Hodges aged 10, of Bristol, were guests of honour at the National Postal Museum for a day. On their arrival they were greeted by Alain de Cadenet, the racing car driver and well known philatelist, who presented them with a Post Office First Day Cover Album complete with all FDC and Presentation Packs from the 1980 programme.

Later, during a tour of the Museum they met the Curator, Mr Raife Wellsted, who, after showing them some of the philatelic treasures housed in his office presented the boys with a signed First Day Cover. After lunch, the day was completed with a tour of the sorting office and the underground Post Office Railway at the London Chief Office.

Association of Scottish Philatelic Societies

The Annual Congress of the Association of Scottish Philatelic Societies will take place in the University of Stirling, on Saturday 11 April 1981.

The host this year is the Caledonian Philatelic Society which celebrates its 75th anniversary.

1981 also commemorates the centenary of the formation of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders. This event is featured on a souvenir cover showing the Battle Standards and Insignia of the 91st and 93rd Regiments of Foot which amalgamated in 1881 to form the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders.

During Congress the army free-fall parachute display team of the Scottish Infantry Regiments, the Golden Lions, will demonstrate its prowess. A limited number of covers and airletters will be carried.

The year of formation of the host society, 1906, also marks the appearance of the so-called 'St Andrew's Cross' on a 2/- King Edward VII booklet of stamps. This event will be commemorated with a souvenir sheet consisting of the booklet pane (5 x ½ d green) containing the cross.

Costs of the souvenirs are:	<i>each</i>
Covers only	30p
Serviced with 14p stamp	50p
Ditto and sent under separate cover	65p
Parachuted cover (500 only)	75p
Ditto and sent under separate cover	90p
Parachuted Army pictorial airletter (200 only)	60p
Ditto and sent under separate cover	75p
Souvenir sheet	50p

Orders accompanied by remittances should be sent to: Mr Buchanan, 2 Broomley Drive, Giffnock, GLASGOW G46 6PD.

The First Embossed Stamps

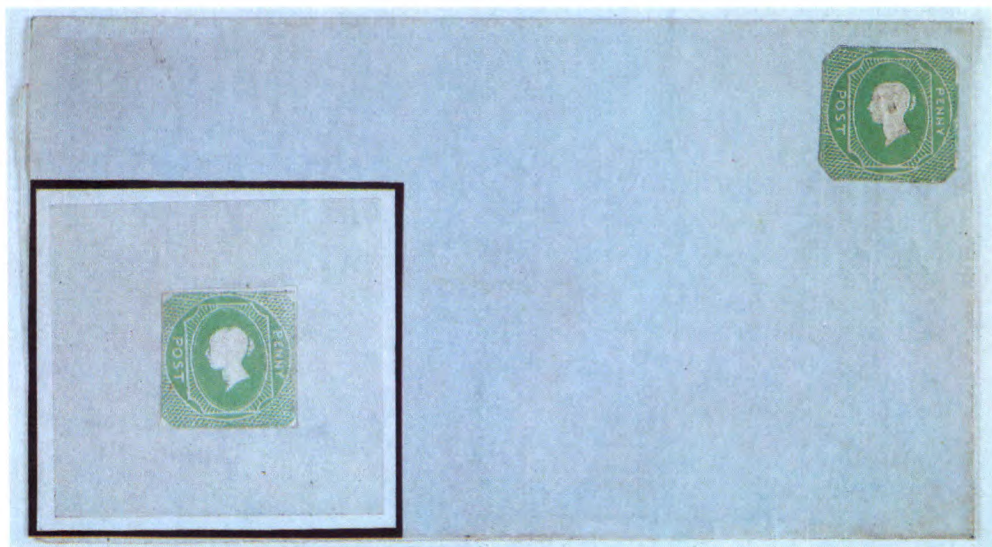
The 'gem' from the Reginald M Phillips collection this month illustrates an embossed essay for the 1839 Treasury Competition thought to be by Robert W. Sievier. A noted engraver and sculptor of the time, Siever produced several essays for the Treasury Competition.

Amongst other designs, those illustrated were produced in green, bearing the Queen's head with "PENNY" in the right-hand panel and "POST" in the left. Siever used the idea of an engine-turned surround in other essays including some with combinations of more than one colour.

It is interesting to note that although the Penny Black was the first postage stamp proper to be issued, the Post Office did go back to the idea of

using embossed stamps. After the failure of the Mulready envelopes and letter sheets, envelopes with embossed stamps were introduced as replacements in 1841. Subsequently, embossed stamps proper were also issued by the Post Office on 11 September 1847 and are much sought after by collectors of Great Britain. Both these developments owe a debt to Siever, and Rowland Hill's attempts "to diffuse a taste for fine art" which failed with the Mulreadys found success in the straightforward "cameo" art of the embossed issues.

The Siever essays can be found in volume I/19 of the Reginald M Phillips collection on display in the National Postal Museum.



Letter to the Editor

British - American Postal Cover Society

38 Pear Tree Avenue

Ditton

Kent ME20 6EB

Sir,

I am attempting to promote interest in the British - American Postal Cover Service which aims to

promote the collecting and study of contemporary postal covers (tomorrow's postal history) from Britain and the U.S., and to bring together in correspondence persons from both countries who have a common interest in this aim.

I would be grateful if you could publish this letter so that anyone interested may contact me.

Yours faithfully

R. F. MELLOR

Development of Special Stamp Programme

There is never any shortage of ideas for special stamps – quite the opposite. Each year the Stamps Section at Postal Headquarters receives numerous requests and suggestions for subjects to be included in the annual special stamp programmes. These originate from members of the public, Members of Parliament, Government Departments, and organisations and institutions of various kinds. Most of the suggestions relate to events or anniversaries in a particular year; those not related to a specific year are recorded, on a 'perennial' list which is reviewed each time a stamp programme is being drawn up.

In addition, to ensure that the list of subjects for consideration is as comprehensive as possible, and that no important subject is omitted, the Post Office carries out its own research.

It is always a difficult problem to select from the numerous worthwhile and attractive subjects the few which can be included in a year's issues. The number is necessarily limited by production and distribution resources and also by the financial resources of the collector. The Post Office considers that an annual programme of about seven sets, each usually comprising four stamps, is about the right number.

The criteria for issuing special stamps are:-

1. To celebrate events of national and international importance.
2. To commemorate important anniversaries.
3. To reflect the British contribution to world affairs including the arts and science.
4. To extend public patronage to the arts by encouraging the development of minuscule art.

Within these criteria, the aim is to produce a balanced, varied and interesting selection of subjects that will be suitable for translation into good stamp design and be popular both with philatelists and members of the public in this country and abroad. Some subjects are universally popular – animals, flowers, transport – and these always find a place in thematic collections. Programme planning has to start well in advance

and the Post Office produces skeleton programmes of likely subjects, so far as they can be foreseen, about five years ahead. The detailed planning of each year's programme begins at least 18 months in advance to allow sufficient time for deadlines to be met at various stages in the production schedule for the designing, printing and nationwide distribution of the stamps.

The final decision on the choice of subjects is made by the Post Office Board, who consider the complete list of possible subjects together with a short list of subjects recommended for inclusion after taking full account of their popular appeal, their marketing possibilities and the Stamp Advisory Committee's views on their design potential. The Stamp Advisory Committee, whose chairman is the Director of Postal Marketing, is appointed by the Post Office for a term of 3 years. In addition to the Post Office Design Adviser and the Head of Counter and Stamp Marketing Division, this 15 strong committee includes other experts in design as well as philatelists and representatives of public opinion.

Once the programme is decided, the Post Office Design Adviser commissions and briefs the designers; usually two or more are commissioned for the same subject. They are normally given fairly wide scope for interpreting the subject but they must bear in mind the functional requirements of a stamp and must therefore avoid using colours that could impair the efficacy of the phosphor markings necessary to activate the mechanical equipment for sorting mail. The Stamp Advisory Committee considers initial artwork by the various designers and recommends which designs should be developed as a stamp issue. The finished artwork is passed to the printers to produce stamp size full colour proofs (known as essays). The essays are shown to the Committee who recommend any necessary amendments, and give their approval to the final essays to be submitted to the Queen for her approval.

Once the essays are approved then the printer starts printing – but that is another story to be featured in a future Philatelic Bulletin.

Commemorative Covers

Donington Park Racing Association Club

To commemorate the 50th anniversary of the first race meeting held at Donington Park circuit, a special philatelic cover is currently available price £1.50. The cover depicts 1931 and 1981 racing motor cycles, while the insert card gives a 'potted history' of Donington. A 14p 'International Year of Disabled People' stamp is affixed, cancelled with a pictorial handstamp dated 25 March 1981. Orders with remittances made payable to:- 'DPRAC Philatelics', should be sent to:- Mr G F Meadows, 86 Lodge Road, Long Eaton, NOTTINGHAM NG10 1AQ. Proceeds from sales will enable the DPRAC to continue to support the circuit and competitors.

Betley Court

Professor Godfrey Brown of Betley Court, Betley, has produced a special cover to be available from 2 May 1981, commemorating the famous 'Betley Window'. The window is an important source of inspiration to Morris Dancers and Folklorists, and is now on view in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

The cover will bear an 18p 'Folklore' stamp cancelled with a pictorial handstamp dated 2 May 1981. Designed by Phil Knapper the Staffordshire artist, it features the Morris men of the Window in traditional dance.

Fully serviced covers, price 80p each, are obtainable from:- Betley Court Gallery (Betley Window Cover), Betley Court, Betley, CREWE CW3 9BH. Orders together with remittances made payable to 'Betley Window Account' should be accompanied by a 9" x 5" stamped and addressed envelope. A limited number of covers signed by the artist and Professor Brown will be available, price £1.75 each. Proceeds from the sales will be donated to the Betley Court Restoration Fund.

Oaklands School, Salford

A special cover is currently available, produced by Oaklands School for the Physically Handicapped, Salford, whose 18th birthday occurs this year. The cover bearing a single 22p 'International Year of Disabled People' stamp is priced at £1.25.

Alternatively the cover with all four 'IYDP' stamps affixed is available at £2.50; these prices

include return postage and packing. Oaklands School was one of the first purpose-built state day schools for the severely physically handicapped to be built in the North-West.

Orders with remittance should be sent to:- The Headmaster, Oaklands School, Oaklands Road, SALFORD, Lancs M7 0QQ.

Menphys Centre, Leicester

Menphys — Leicester's own charity, produced a special cover to coincide with the issue of the 'International Year of Disabled People' stamps on 25 March, 1981, and features a small girl holding a teddy bear, against a background of a wheelchair.

Each cover bears a full set of stamps, cancelled with an appropriate pictorial handstamp: the cost is £2.50. Orders with remittances should be sent to:- Mr A G Bradbury, 35 Northdene Road, LEICESTER LE2 6FJ.

Butterfly Conservation Society

The Butterfly Conservation Society will produce a commemorative cover on 13 May to coincide with the issue of the four 'Butterflies' stamps. The cover will feature a specially commissioned painting by Sir Peter Scott, and bear all four stamps cancelled with a pictorial handstamp: the cost is £2. In addition the cover can be supplied as above and signed by Sir Peter Scott or the designer of the stamps, Gordon Benningfield, for a cost of £5. Proceeds will be donated to The Wildfowl Trust and The Butterfly Conservation Society. Orders with remittances should be sent to Benham (A Buckingham) Ltd., 22-28 High Street, HYTHE, Kent CT21 5AT.

Leicester Museums Butterflies Exhibition

To coincide with the 'Butterflies' stamps issue of 13 May 1981 the Leicester Museums Service will hold an exhibition of British butterflies in the New Walk Museum, LEICESTER LE1 6TD. A special philatelic cover will be available from the same day, bearing all four stamps, suitably cancelled with a pictorial handstamp. The covers will be posted at the exhibition, and the cost is £2.50 each.

Orders with remittances should be sent to:- A G Bradbury, 35 Northdene Road, LEICESTER LE2 6FJ.

National Stamp Day

The Stamp Collecting Promotion Council, which has done so much to create National Stamp Day, is to sponsor a special cover on 6 May. The cover will have a 14p stamp which will be cancelled by a pictorial handstamp incorporating a NSD logo.

The special posting box for the covers will be

at the National Postal Museum, London EC1 where a 'National Stamp Day' display will be sited.

Serviced covers which may be ordered from the Stamp Collecting Promotion Council (NSD Cover Dept), 27 John Adam St, London WC2N 6HZ, cost 60p each.

Forces Cover

Army Veterinary Department

To mark the Centenary of the Formation of the Army Veterinary Department a commemorative cover became available from 1 April 1981, depicting the Regimental Badges of the Royal Army Veterinary Corps, Army Veterinary Corps, and Army Veterinary Department. Bearing a 14p stamp, cancelled with a special BFPS handstamp, the cost of the cover is £1.

A limited number of covers will be signed by the Director of Army Veterinary and Remount Services, Brigadier H. W. Bishop MRCVS QHVS at £2 each.

In addition a further limited number of covers signed by the Colonel Commandant of the RAVC, General Sir Peter Lang KCB MBE MC, and Brigadier Bishop at a cost of £3 each.

Orders with remittances made payable to PRI RAVC accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope size 8" x 5" should be sent to: The Philatelic Officer, RAVC Training Centre, Welby Lane Camp, MELTON MOWBRAY, Leicestershire, LE13 0SL.

Forthcoming Event

Middlesex Philatelic Federation

The 31st Middlesex Philatelic Federation Annual Convention and Stamp Fair will be hosted by the Amersham and District PS to be held at the Amersham Community Centre, Chiltern Avenue, AMERSHAM HP6 5AH on 16 May 1981 — open from 11 am to 5 pm. Admission by Souvenir Programme 20p.

Mr Raife Wellsted, Curator of the National Postal Museum will be the Guest of Honour, and it is planned that Postal Museum related souvenirs, autographed by Mr Wellsted, will be on sale during the Convention.

The Post Office is providing a Philatelic Sales Counter and at least a dozen dealers will be in attendance. On display will be winning entries from member Societies of the Middlesex Federation covering general stamp issues, postal history, and thematic.

New Postcard in South West Postal Region Series

Number 12 in the popular SWPR series of postcards will be issued on 28 April, 1981. Entitled 'South Devon Royal Mail Services by Ferry', the postcard will bear a complementary handstamp to mark the first day of sale.

It will feature two attractive colour photographs; a Royal Mail van being carried on the Lower Ferry at Dartmouth, the quickest way of transporting mail to and from Dartmouth and Torquay, and, a smaller ferry used to carry the mail to and from Salcombe and East Portlemouth.

The card will cost 11p from all philatelic counters in the South West Postal Region.

For collectors requiring cards with the special first day of sale handstamp, the charge will be 37p each including postage, service and handstamping. Orders should be sent to: The Philatelic Duty, The Head Post Office, TORQUAY, TQ1 1AA to arrive by 28 April, 1981.

It should be noted that orders by post for mint cards must include an additional 15p for handling and postage for 1-20 cards, 25p for 21-100 cards, 50p up to 250 cards and £1 for more than 250 cards.

Remittance should preferably be sent by postal order or direct Giro transfer to account number 208 9017.

This card is not available from the Philatelic Bureau, Edinburgh.

Philatelic Bulletin

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