

# Philatelic Bulletin

Volume 7 Number 3 November 1969



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## Introduction

This month a wide range of subjects is covered – the most important being the forthcoming Christmas stamp issue. Our choice of Christmas stamps over the past few years has pleased some and displeased others but we are sure that this year's will be well received for their colours and design.

Details are also given of another new feature, the £1 stamp book which departs from the traditional size and format and includes recipes for the cooks among our readers.

For those who are seeking the ideal present at Christmas we recommend the gift pack of stamps and for those whose interest is in stationery we give particulars of this year's Christmas Air Letter.

Sir Rowland Hill, to whom all philatelists owe a debt, is featured in Mr Marcus Arman's inimitable monthly National Postal Museum notes which do much to add to the sum of knowledge of the early days of postage stamps.

## Presentation Packs and First-Day Covers

Because of the ever increasing demand for packs and official first-day covers we are making them available from all Head Post Offices from the Christmas issue of 26 November 1969.

Until now these items have been on sale only at offices where philatelic posting boxes are provided.

There will, however, be no general extension of first-day cover posting facilities and collectors who require first-day hand cancellation will continue to have to post their covers at one of 160 offices where boxes are available.

### Stamp Programme 1970

There is to be a change in the stamp programme for next year announced on p. 11 of the September *Bulletin*.

The British architecture series to be issued on 11 February will now consist of 4 single stamps and not 6. The denominations will be 5d, 9d, 1s and 1s 6d.

Full details will be given later.

### NATIONAL POSTAL MUSEUM Wednesday Lunch Hour Lectures and Film Shows 1 pm

12 November  
*Film* 30 Million Letters

19 November  
*Lecture* The Genius and Tribulation of  
Rowland Hill

26 November  
*Film* The Story of Postal Transport

3 December  
*Lecture* David Gentleman's Stamp  
Designs

# The Post Office at Philympia 1970

Plans are now being prepared to make the 'Penny Black', and some of the many historic items connected with its design and production, the central theme of the PO Philympia Stand. Before the opening of the National Postal Museum by Her Majesty the Queen this year many treasures associated with the world's first adhesive postage stamp had been seen by only a few philatelists. It is hoped that philatelists from all over the world will be visiting Philympia to see the origin of the hundreds of millions of stamps produced every year.

The Post Office stand will be situated in a large area on the second floor at Philympia and, besides the historic exhibits, a full collection of the current definitives and special issue stamps will be on view and on sale. As has already been announced, the Post Office will be issuing a special issue Philympia stamp to mark the choice of Britain as the host nation for the 1970 Philympia. The stand will be fully staffed to give international philatelists a First-Day Cover service for the 1970 Philympia stamps. Collectors will also be seeking the Philympia cancellation available throughout the period of the Exhibition. Extensive counter services are being speedily incorporated in the PO stand area to meet the large demand for current British stamps. Philatelic experts will be in continuous attendance to answer any questions.

Although, regrettably, heavy letter-sorting equipment cannot be shown in action at Philympia, ways are being explored of showing visitors extensive mechanization developments in Britain. Britain leads as much in planning for the future, as she did in the production of the first 'Penny Black'.

To enable both home and overseas visitors to see modern postal mechanization in action, arrangements are being made for tours of the Western District Office in the heart of London – one of the key sorting offices linked by the now-famous Post Office Underground railway. Visitors will also be able to visit the National Postal Museum. Philatelic treasures which cannot be released for security reasons will be

on view. A series of illustrated lectures will be given by the Museum Curator, Marcus Arman, already well known to international philatelists.

It is hoped that the Post Office will be able to make a conspicuous and dramatic contribution to the success of the 1970 Philympia Exhibition, a memorable if rare event in the British and international philatelic calendar.

## Post Office First-Day Covers

We have had some correspondence recently about the variations in sizes and the design of our first-day covers.

*First size.* This, of course, is dictated primarily by the number and size of the stamps in the issue, and some of this year's stamps have, as you know been 'maxis'. Even so we must admit that, for reasons beyond our control at the time, one or two of the covers were larger than we originally planned. Although the subjects of our annual stamp programme are decided and published well in advance, the design and size of the stamps themselves does not emerge until much later. This makes standardization of FDC sizes rather a difficult matter. Readers may be glad to know, however, that from the British Rural Architecture Issue we hope to restrict our covers for commemorative issues to a standard size of  $7\frac{1}{2}'' \times 4\frac{1}{4}''$  where the issue comprises 3, 4 or 5 stamps.

And now – design. We gather that some recent covers, and particularly the PO Technology cover, have not been as popular with some collectors, as have our earlier issues. It is true that our blank covers may appear less exciting than some of the commercial varieties, but they are designed, by a graphic designer, to support rather than compete with the stamps that they carry and judgment should be made on the total effect when the cover is complete with stamps and cancelling marks.

We shall be glad to have our readers' views on the FDC's which have appealed to them.

## New £1 Stamp Book

A new experimental £1 stamp book entitled 'Stamps for Cooks' will be put on sale on 1 December 1969 at offices in London and the South-East in an area bounded roughly by a line drawn from Portsmouth through Oxford

and Bedford to the Wash.

In addition to £1 of stamps contained in a completely new style book measuring 6" × 2.85", the cover and 4 double-sided interleaves will carry recipes and full colour illustrations.



The book will have 4 panes of 15 stamps, 5 across and 3 down, all of which will be from the current definitive series. The first pane will contain all 5d stamps and the second and third all 4d. These will be single centre bar phosphor 4d and double bar 5d. The fourth pane will be se-tenant and consists of three rows of 5 stamps; the first (from left to right) a single right-hand-edged phosphor 4d followed by a double-edged phosphor 1d, 5d, 1d and single left-hand-edged 4d. All of the stamps will be printed on coated, unwatermarked paper and the stamp panes will be attached to a stub on which will be printed further recipes.

The books will also be obtainable from the philatelic sales counters or, by post, from the Philatelic Bureau.

## Special Handstamps

'Jerusalem-Skellingthorpe-Lincoln' will be used at Lincoln on 26 November. It is circular. A posting box will be available at Skellingthorpe.

'Chelmsford and District Philatelic Society Golden Jubilee - Chelmsford Essex' will be used at Chelmsford on 8 November. It is rectangular and shows the coat of arms of the Borough of Chelmsford as a motif. A posting box will be available at the King Edward VI Grammar School where the exhibition is being held.

'50 First United Kingdom International Air Mail - Par Avion - By Air Mail - Hounslow Middlesex' will be used at Hounslow on 11 November. It is circular with the air mail symbol as a motif. A posting box will be available at Hounslow Post Office. Reposting facilities for fully-paid items will be available from Head/District Postmasters, except where otherwise stated. Outer covers should be clearly endorsed **SPECIAL HANDSTAMPS**.



This year's Christmas Air Letter like the Christmas stamps was designed by Fritz Wegner, MSIA.

The stamp printed on the Air Letter shows Joseph and Mary on their way to Bethlehem, and adjacent to it are two phosphor bands printed on the address panel.

The outside panels show Nativity scenes in a variety of colours.

The form is the same size as the permanent air letter and is on sale now price 10d each.

## Christmas 1969 Stamps



As a distinct change from last year's Christmas designs this year's stamps show biblical subjects and we are sure that they will be considered among the finest stamps we have ever issued. The 3 stamps, 4d, 5d and 1s 6d to be issued on 26 November 1969 were designed by Fritz Wegner who is visiting lecturer in Graphic Design at the St Martin's School of Art.

The 4d stamp shows an angel, the 5d stamp depicts three shepherds with a sheep, while three kings bearing their gifts are shown on the 1s 6d.

Presentation packs price 3s 3d each will be on sale at ALL Head Offices.

### Printing details

*Printer* : Harrison & Sons

*Paper* : Coated, unwatermarked, Phosphor lined

*Machines* : 4d Reel fed rotary

5d Sheet fed

1s 6d Sheet fed

*Size* : 1.6" × .95" (landscape)

*Perforation* : 15 × 14

*No. to sheet* : 4d-72

5d and 1s 6d-120

*Colours* : 4d Pink, green, pale blue, purple, orange, brown, red and gold

5d Green, yellow, mauve, red, pale blue, brown, dark red, gold

1s 6d Dark blue, orange, red, light blue, yellow, green, black, gold

## Collectors Pack 1969

This is the Collectors Pack which is now on sale at 26s each. It contains the 1968 Christmas issue, British Ships, Concorde, Notable Anniversaries, British Architecture, Prince of Wales Investiture and the Gandhi stamps and can confidently be recommended as the perfect present for nieces, nephews and all aspiring collectors.

The packs are available from offices which have philatelic posting boxes or by post from the Bureau.



## National Postal Museum Notes

### The Genius and Tribulations of Rowland Hill

Rowland Hill's name will ever be remembered in connection with the Postal reforms of 1840 and the introduction of the world's first adhesive postage stamps and pre-paid postal stationery. The reforms he inaugurated in Britain were, in a few years, to revolutionize the postal services of every country in the world and to lead to the world-wide postal service of today. Hill's achievement was such that it is pertinent to enquire 'what manner of man was this?'

From his boyhood he was dogged by ill-health which interrupted even the modest schooling he had in his father's school where he became a teacher at the early age of eleven.

No formal academic training came his way. Like many another eminent Victorian, Rowland Hill was a self-made man who made his mark by sheer grit and diligence. He never allowed his many and various interests to degenerate into dilettantism: he was no smatterer, toying with one thing after another in an amateur way. A singular creative and imaginative purposefulness informed his every action.

Before Rowland Hill turned his attention to the subject of Post Office reform he had an established reputation as a schoolmaster and had done much to humanize the educational methods of his day: he was actively associated with the promotion of literacy generally and connected with 'The Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge Among the Working Classes'.

By 1834 we find him engaged, with others, in proposing the total abolition of the stamp duty on newspapers, inventing a rotary printing machine and making proposals for the education of pauper children that they might become self-reliant. In the following year he was appointed Secretary to the South Australian Colonization Office. All human and technical problems were grist to his mill!

It was while engaged as Secretary to the South Australian Commission that Hill wrote his famous pamphlet 'Post Office Reform – Its Importance and Practicability'. Being an 'outsider' with no access to Post Office officials or

documents other than Parliamentary Reports on the work of the Department, he was a pure amateur on Post Office matters. It is therefore astounding that the case for the reform of the Post Office which he published in 1837 was so manifestly sound that even the antagonistic officials at St Martin's-le-Grand were unable to refute the arguments advanced. Despite immense opposition his imaginative scheme reached the statute book in August 1839. The reform of the posts having been decided upon by Parliament the scheme had next to be made operational – and to be put into practice by entrenched Post Office and Treasury officials many of whom, if not actively against the reforms, had little faith in the ideas the scheme incorporated. It was in this difficult context, a sticky wicket if ever there was one, that Rowland Hill, then aged forty-three, was appointed by Francis Baring, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, as Postal Adviser to the Treasury – for an initial period of two years. It was made plain to him at the outset that whereas he would have access to the Post Office and every facility of enquiry his channel of communication would be to the Treasury, from which any directions to the Post Office would be issued. He was obliged to use the official machinery of communication.

On taking up his appointment Hill found that, ten days earlier, the Treasury had issued a general invitation to artists, designers and the public at large to submit their ideas as to how best the prepayment of postings could be achieved. Neither in his Journal nor in his own account of the History of Penny Postage is there any suggestion that Hill had been consulted about this competition. Plainly he regarded it as a great nuisance and as a major contributory factor to the delay which subsequently occurred in issuing stamps.

Shelving the stamp question for the time being, there being nothing he could do until the outcome of the competition was known, Rowland Hill applied himself to other administrative considerations: in particular the accommodation situation at St Martin's-le-Grand



*The statue of Rowland Hill outside King Edward Building, which houses the National Postal Museum.*

disturbed him. 'The office is decidedly too small for the present work. In passing to and fro the men are in each other's way especially when carrying or rather dragging the bags . . . the rooms though very lofty are badly ventilated: the temperature 72 degrees – some times, they told us, as high as 90 degrees,' so he wrote in his Journal. Rowland Hill's suggestions were to raise the existing ceiling, insert another floor with machinery like that at the cotton mills for moving letters from floor to floor. In fact, in 1839, he suggested the mechanization of sorting offices, an enterprise on which the Post

Office of today is making huge capital investments.

The idea of providing District Post Offices in London so as to expedite the mail and relieve the congestion at GPO exercised Hill greatly. He paid a short visit to France to see what the French Post Office were doing and returned to his home at 7 am on October 16 and was in his office by 11 am that morning. The Chancellor still being not convinced about the need for District Offices this matter was held over for reconsideration in the light of experience. Hill then proposed that spare accommodation at the Bull & Mouth Inn might be used to supplement that at GPO. There was so much opposition to this idea at the Post Office that he concluded 'in a matter in which their personal convenience is so much concerned the policy of co-ercing them is certainly very doubtful'.

Not being satisfied that the Post Office organization could stand the expected flood of letters when the penny post was introduced Hill drew up an interim scheme designed to test the resources of the GPO. This he presented to the Chancellor in the form of a letter dated 2 November 1839. The original holograph draft of this letter is one of the priceless items in the Reginald M. Phillips' collection in the National Postal Museum.

The essence of this interim scheme was the introduction of a fourpenny general post, the abandonment of the tariff based on the distance a letter was carried and the pre-payment of letters, by cash, in accordance with their weight. The existing local penny posts in London and some provincial towns remained undisturbed. This scheme, approved by Francis Baring, came into force on 5 December 1839. Despite Rowland Hill's misgivings this pilot scheme worked satisfactorily and the way was cleared for the introduction generally of the penny post on 10 January 1840. Neither the stamps nor the prepaid postal stationery were ready. It was still necessary to prepay the postage in cash to Post Office clerks stationed at wicket windows in Post Offices. The clerk endorsed the letters 'paid' or 'pp'. This clumsy

device continued until the stamps and stamped stationery were put on sale on 6 May 1840.

The first important mention of stamps in Rowland Hill's Journal is dated 25 January 1840. 'Send specimens as perfect as they could be obtained of the proposed stamps with a letter to Col. Maberley.' Maberley was Secretary to the Post Office. The following Monday Hill records 'Recd from Col. Maberley a very impertinent note in reply to mine of the 25th purposely delayed noticing it until tomorrow lest I should say too much.' On the 30 January however 'Received an apologetic letter from Col. Maberley'. There are several entries 'Unwell' in the Journal about this time. One hopes that the Holiday at all public offices on 10 February in celebration of the Queen's marriage provided a welcome break in Rowland Hill's labours. By 24 February it was reported to Hill that Col. Maberley speaks of the plan as having totally failed and Hill opined that the Government were making a great mistake in continuing him at the head of a Department after his hostility to the measure. There was certainly no love lost between the Secretary of the Post Office and the upstart postal adviser to the Treasury!

The next day the paper for the Mulready covers was discussed at the Excise Office. John Dickinson, the paper maker, wanted to carry some of the silk threads right across Mulready's design. Hill describes him as 'a most impracticable fellow - he seems to think that all the arrangements are to be remodelled expressly to suit his convenience for making the paper'. Hill was 'unwell' that day and perhaps a little testy! By 19 March Dickinson's silk thread paper was still said to be 'very imperfect'.

From now on there was much to-ing and fro-ing between Rowland Hill, Perkins, who was printing the adhesive stamps, Clowes, the Mulready postal stationery printer, and the Stamp Office at Somerset House where Charles Pressley and Edwin Hill (Rowland's brother) were engaged in the enterprise. On 14 April Hill went to Clowes and Perkins and satisfied

himself that printing could begin that day and it would be safe to fix a day for the introduction of the stamps. Even then there was trouble over the cutting of the covers; 'anxiety and vexation at the stupid opposition of the Stamp Office, who evidently wish to do as little as possible and who are thwarting Edwin and myself in many ways, kept me awake the greater part of the night.' Although the cutting was a slow business the covers were produced - suitably trimmed - and following a good deal of pressurizing.

Even before the penny black stamps were issued there was further trouble - 'wrote to Maberley to call his attention to the power of creosote to wash out the post office stamp and enclosed a specimen of red ink by Perkins & Co. which is free from this objection.' This was the beginning of the cancellation and colour trials which led to the penny black becoming a penny Red in February 1841.

Despite all the alarms and last-minute hold-ups which often necessitated Rowland Hill working at his desk from 7 am to midnight, the stamps and stamped stationery were placed on sale on 6 May 1840. Rowland Hill's reforms, in their entirety, were implemented.

Until September 1842 Rowland Hill continued his work at the Treasury labouring, despite the difficulties which beset him, to make the still reluctant officials at Post Office work the system as he envisaged it should be operated.

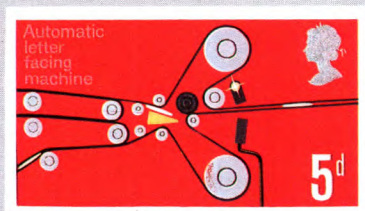
With scant regard for his heroic achievement the new Government, led by Sir Robert Peel, summarily terminated Hill's engagement on 14 September. It was not until 1846 that he was appointed 'Secretary to the Postmaster General'. Col. Maberley retained his position as Secretary to the Post Office until 1854 when Rowland Hill, then aged 58, succeeded him. He retired ten years later and on his death in 1879 was buried in Westminster Abbey.

An account of Rowland Hill's life between 1842 and 1879 will be the subject of a future article.

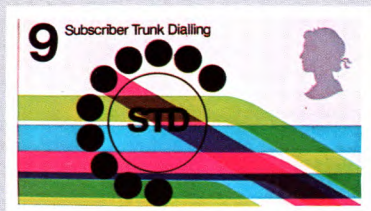
F. MARCUS ARMAN

# Unaccepted Stamp Designs

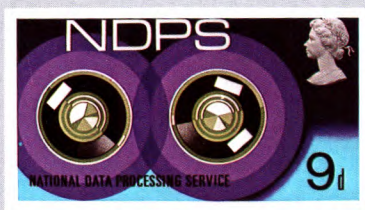
These are a selection from those submitted for the  
Post Office Technology issue of 1 October 1969.



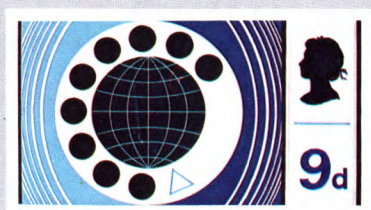
J. Kinneir



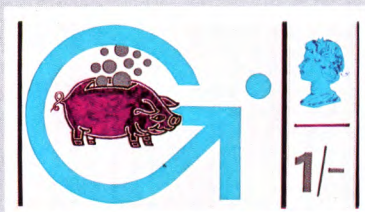
P. Sharland



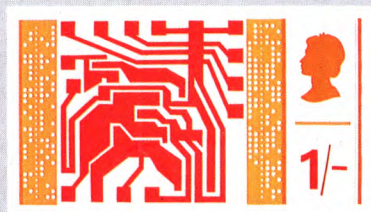
Grafton Arts Ltd



J. Griffiths



J. Griffiths



J. Griffiths

# The Flying Scotsman in America

The 'Scotsman' is off to a flying start. We have now reached New York's Penn Central Station and opened up for viewing in the world's most cosmopolitan city.

The welcome we were given in Boston and in Hartford and the other stopping places between these two legs of our journey has been outstanding and we have been pleasantly surprised that so many visitors to the train are already familiar with our packs or have accounts with our Bureau in Edinburgh. The curiosity about British stamps generally is helping us create an interest in 'British Gift Packs' (presentation packs) and we are successfully achieving our main objective of helping distribution of the packs through Lilac Hedges of Litchfield Inc Connecticut.

Our exhibit has stood up well to both the sea crossing and in slightly bumpy journeys over the tracks in the USA. Nobby Clark, the driver (engineer over here) brought over from England with other members of the crew found the railway bed over which we travelled from Boston not as good as in England.

Apart from some isolated insignificant political placarding nothing has interfered with the success of this Flying Scotsman venture which has so far enjoyed superb weather.

(Specially reported by our man on the train)



## Opening of Further Philatelic Sales Counters

Collectors in the Bournemouth and Southampton areas will be pleased to know that sales counters selling the full range of philatelic items are now open at these offices.

## Post Office Philatelic Displays

We are displaying a selection of Great Britain stamps, etc., at the Dorchester and Weymouth Stamp Club's Exhibition at the Congregational Church Hall, South Street, Dorchester, on 15 November 1969.

## Sale of Out-of-Date First-Day Envelopes

We have a limited number of blank First-Day Covers which we are offering for sale at £4 per 1,000 (minimum order) from the Bureau only.

The envelopes are printed on good quality paper and are the following sizes:

|                             |             |
|-----------------------------|-------------|
| High Value definitive       | 8.5" × 4.2" |
| British Ships               | 9.2" × 4.7" |
| British Cathedrals          | 9.4" × 4.5" |
| Prince of Wales Investiture | 8.5" × 4.3" |
| Gandhi                      | 6" × 4"     |

## 50th Anniversary Flight England-Australia

On 12 November 1918 Vickers Vimy G/EAOU flown by Captain Ross Smith, navigated by his brother Lieutenant Keith Smith and accompanied by two mechanics, Sergeants Bennett and Shiers, left Hounslow for Port Darwin, Australia, where they arrived 10 December 1918 to win the Australian Government's prize of £10,000 for the first flight from UK to Australia.

To commemorate this event a special RAF Museum cover depicting the aircraft, stamped with the current First Flight UK to Australia stamp and cancelled with a special British Forces Postal Service handstamp, will be flown from UK to Australia in a RAF Comet 4 aircraft leaving 12 November 1969. This cover, with flown cover cachets, will be available towards the end of November from:

Sqn-Ldr N. C. Day,  
Philatelic Officer,  
RAF Lyneham,  
Wilts.

at a price of 5s 6d.



Pre-addressed pre-stamped envelopes received at the reposting address before 12 November 1969 will also be cancelled with the special handstamp at no cost.

All proceeds from the sale of these covers will be devoted to the Royal Air Force Museum Appeal Fund.

## Postmark Slogans

'Racing at Ayr The Ideal Holiday' will be re-used transposed at Ayr from 29 December-23 August 1970.

'Fly Direct from Manchester Gateway to the World at the Heart of Britain' has been used transposed at Manchester from 1 September until further notice.

'New Industry thrives in Sunderland' is being used transposed at Sunderland from 1 August-31 March 1970.

'The International Caravan and Camping Exhibition Earls Court 12-22 November 1969' will be used transposed where possible at Eastern District Office, Paddington District Office, South Western District Office, Northern District Office, East Central District Office, Mount Pleasant and North Western District Office from 5 October-22 November.

'Save as you Earn National Savings' will be used transposed where possible at Aberdeen, Ayr, Dundee, Edinburgh South District Office, Fort William, Glasgow South District Office, Hamilton and Paisley from 13 October-26 December.

'Remember to use the Postcode' will be used transposed where possible at Harrow and Wembley from 22 September, Bournemouth and Poole from 10 October, Hull from 3 November, Plymouth and District from 17 November. These offices will run the slogan from the dates stated and until further notice.

### *Amendment:*

'Parchwch Ein Cefn Gwlad Please respect our Countryside' will be used transposed at Bangor, Caernarvon, Swansea, Flint and Wrexham from 1 October-26 November and not at Shrewsbury as previously stated.

'The Centre for the Cotswolds send to Town Hall for Guide Cheltenham' will be re-used transposed at Cheltenham from 13 January-12 March 1970.

'Send for the New Buxton Guide Department BG Pavilion Gardens' will be re-used transposed at Buxton from 27 December-31 March 1970.

'Buxton Centre for Business HQ's and Light Industrial Development' will be re-used transposed at Buxton from 1-25 December 1969.

'Come to Captivating Colwyn Bay' will be re-used transposed at Colwyn Bay from 27 December-24 April 1970.

'21 Life Blood and Service Coventry District Blood Donors Ass'n 1949-1970' will be used transposed at Coventry from 1 March-30 April 1970.

'Ashcroft Croydon 01 688-9291 Sleeping Beauty. Opens December 26' will be used transposed at Croydon from 1 December 1969 and until further notice.

'Park and Shop in Harlow in Comfort' will be re-used transposed in Harlow from 1-31 December 1969.

'Jodrell Bank Open Daily 2 pm Easter-October' will be re-used transposed at Manchester from 23 March-30 September 1970.

'Northern School of Music 1920-1970 Golden Jubilee' will be used transposed at Manchester from 4 May-31 July 1970.

'Robin Hood. Nottingham Festival 11-26 July 1970' will be used transposed at Nottingham from 1 January-30 June 1970.

'Christmas Shopping Illuminations Shrewsbury December and January' will be re-used transposed at Shrewsbury from 1-28 December.

'Skegness is So Bracing. On Lincolnshire's Dry Coast, Free Guide Room PS Town Hall' will be used transposed at Skegness from 15 December-30 June 1970.

'Tywsog Cymru Penblwydd 21 Ain Prince of Wales Birthday' will be used transposed at Cardiff and Caernarvon for one day 14 November.

'The International Building Exhibition London Olympia November 13-25' will be used transposed where possible from 3-23 November at Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds, Bristol, Eastern District Office, East Central District Office, Northern District Office, North Western District Office, Paddington District

Office, South Eastern District Office, South Western District Office, West Central District Office, Mount Pleasant and Battersea District Office.

'Holiday at Dunoon' is being re-used transposed at Dunoon from 1 October-30 September 1970.

'Sheffield Antique Fair Cutless Hall November 26-29 1969' will be used transposed at Sheffield from 10-24 November.

'Truro Cornwall's Shopping Centre' is being re-used at Truro from 15 September-14 August 1970.

## New Embossed Envelopes

For the first time in 15 years a new embossed stamp appears on Post Office stationery.

The first to carry the new design is 'A' 5d envelope which carries the Machin head of the Queen enclosed in an eight-sided design.

The envelopes are on sale at the Bureau and the philatelic sales counters and will be available at other offices when stocks of the present envelope run out.

The new stamp is in the tradition set by William Wyon whose medallion portrait of Queen Victoria was the basis for the design of the first embossed postal stationery of 1841 and the octagonal embossed stamp of 1847.

## Letters to the Editor

*Dear Sir,*

I have read with interest the many 'Letters to the Editor' regarding the retention or removal of the Queen's head from our postage stamps.

I feel bound to point out, however, that the challenge presented by the inclusion of the portrait, whether photographic or symbolic, will not deter any designer worth his salt from producing an attractive, well-designed postage stamp.

Yours faithfully,

A. S. LARKINS

*Mapledurwell, Hants.*

Dear Sir,

I write firstly as a member of that ill-defined body the 'general public', and secondly as an admittedly amateur philatelist.

I am surprised by the number of your correspondents who say of the 1967/8 definitive issue that it is 'the best design since the Penny Black'. While I have no particular quarrel with the Arnold Machin design, and I would be sorry to see it disappear altogether, one can have too much of a good thing, and for every definitive stamp including the high-value stamps to be of the same design does indeed seem to be too much.

While I appreciate that stamps are produced for philatelists, and that the new definitive set with its dull uniformity makes it a philatelist's dream, the general public does occasionally use stamps on letters, and most people would like to see an alternative to the standard design. This is particularly true in England, which is the only region of the UK that does not have its own design at least for 4d and 5d stamps. It cannot be argued that commemorative stamps provide this alternative, because these too are produced for philatelists, and the magic of first-day covers being what it is, it is usually difficult if not impossible to buy commemoratives after midday on the day of issue. Very rarely is a non-philatelist sold a commemorative stamp at a post office.

I therefore make the following suggestions to remedy the situation:

1. Commemorative stamps should be maintained on sale for at least two months, not two hours.

2. An alternative to the basic definitives should be permanently available, at least for the most-used denominations. Since there are now quite frequent issues of 'commemorative' stamps which are not linked with particular anniversaries (e.g. Cathedrals, Paintings, etc.), these could be kept on sale until replaced by a similar pictorial or thematic issue. In this way, the general public could be provided with what is essentially a pictorial definitive issue, the design of which would be changed every six

months or so.

3. With regard to the 2s 6d, 5s, 10s, and £1 stamps, the Arnold Machin design is not particularly suited either to recess printed stamps or to stamps of this size, and the pictorials which they replaced, and which were far more attractive, might as well be re-introduced.

Great Britain prints the finest stamps in the world. It seems a pity that such stamps as the 1s 9d depicting Constable's painting 'The Hay Wain' should have only been on sale for a short time. In my opinion, this stamp is the best that this country has ever produced (and therefore that the world has ever produced), and should be re-issued and kept permanently on sale, and as a stamp used on airmail will advertise British artists and British printing all over the world. Incidentally, this stamp illustrates very well the fact that to use the sovereign's head on British stamps is much more effective than using a country title.

Thank you especially for the historical articles in the P.B.

Yours faithfully,

HOWARD EMMENS

Hastings, Sussex

Dear Sir,

I cannot agree with Mr Webb-Morris when he states in the July 1969 *Bulletin* that 'aero-planes, railway engines and other engineering devices' have no claim to beauty.

By definition a thing is beautiful if it 'delights the eye or ear', so obviously beauty is a personal choice. Many people consider a sailing ship, a traction engine or a vintage car to be a thing of beauty. Who is Mr Webb-Morris to say 'of course they are not'?

Yours faithfully,

C. J. PEACOCK

Worplesdon, Guildford

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