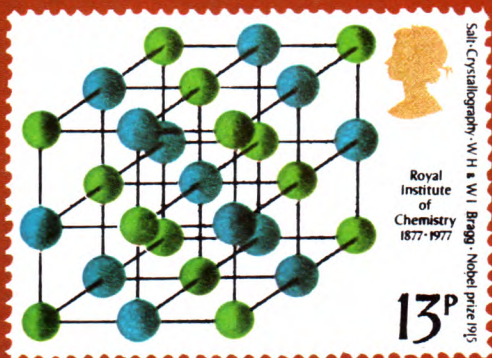


Philatelic Bulletin

Volume 14 Number 7 March 1977



Contents

- 2 Editorial
1977 Melville Competition
- 3 Gems from the R M Phillips Collection
XLV 1867 Tenpence Die—'Specimen'
New Design Adviser
- 4 Stamps for Pleasure
3. Ink, Gum and Phosphor
- 5 Postal Label Study Group
- 6 The King's Stamps 1910-35—Part 6
'Essays for Colour Only'
- 8 Silver Jubilee of the Queen's Accession
Commemorative Issue 11 May 1977
- 9 First Day Cover Services
Silver Jubilee Souvenir Covers
Silver Jubilee Souvenir Book
- 10 Some Aspects of the Machin Decimal
High Values
- 11 British Special Stamps
29. International Geographical Congress
1964
- 12 Forthcoming Philatelic Events
Forces Covers
- 13 Letters to the Editor
- 15 Special Handstamps
Postmark Slogans

Editorial

So much attention is focused by the philatelic world on such things as stamp design, the choice of subject, and the avarice of administrations who issue too many stamps, that it is easy to forget the research and effort that goes into other aspects of stamp production! One

of the more complex processes concerns the paper and phosphor used for modern stamps. Both the Post Office and its stamp printer—Harrison & Sons—have teams of chemists who constantly monitor the various chemicals, and who almost daily solve the most complicated problems. We have prevailed upon Aubrey Walker—one of our development chemists—to produce our main article next month. Readers may remember an earlier article on the same subject by Mr Walker in the September 1973 Bulletin.

The winner of the Post Office Stampex Trophy is Mr Ian Hine for his presentation of the marginal markings of QEII Wilding sheets. We offer our congratulations.

1977 Melville Competition

The 1977 Melville Junior Stamp Competition will again be held in conjunction with the Festival of Stamps, which is taking place this year at the Royal Festival Hall from 6th-8th May. For the first time ever, all the accepted entries will be on display and they will be judged in their frames on opening day.

There are four classes and the date at which the age should be reckoned is 1 January 1977. A. 18 years and under 21 years. B. 16 years and under 18 years. C. 13 years and under 16 years. D. Under 13 years.

Melville Medals will be awarded to the best entries in each class, together with a Cup (which is held for one year) for the best overall entry in each class.

All junior collectors in Great Britain and Ireland may enter, as long as their entries are submitted through a society, Association or Federation which is affiliated to the British Philatelic Federation. The closing date for the 1977 competition is Saturday 23 April. Interested juniors should write (enclosing a S.A.E.) for the rules and entry forms to Mrs F Rapkin, Eaglewood, Oxhey Lane, Hatch End, Middx HA5 4AL, who can also put intending competitors in touch with their nearest philatelic society.

Gems from the RM Phillips Collection

XLV 1867 Tenpence Die—'Specimen'

This month's 'Gem' has been chosen more for its interest than its rarity; the real rarity is, of course, its companion stamp the 'Abnormal' 10d die 2, of which only some 30 used copies have been recorded. The first surface printed Tenpence value was put in hand as a result of a request in September 1866 by the Postmaster General for a new supply of 10d embossed stamps to meet a demand for this value which since mid-1863 had been required for the 'via Marseilles' minimum letter rate to Australia and New Zealand. Since it was no longer practical to make a further printing of the embossed tenpenny stamp of 1848 (with-drawn 1855, reissued 1862) it was decided to issue an entirely new surface-printed tenpence stamp and a warrant dated 2.9.1866 was issued to Messrs De La Rue instructing them to prepare two printing plates for this value. Two dies (and corresponding plates) were prepared and 4,000 copies of the Die 1 stamp over-printed 'SPECIMEN' in san-serif capitals were sent to the GPO for use on circulars to Postmasters.

This month's Gem is a complete mint pane (20) of these Specimen stamps from the upper left hand corner of the sheet, on which stamp AA-AA shows that a smaller than usual punch for the figure 1 was used in this position.

A G RIGO DE RIGHI



New Design Adviser

We welcome this month Mr Peter Shrides to his new post as Design Adviser to the Post Office. He has taken over from Stuart Rose (himself no stranger to these pages) after working with him for 15 years and as his design co-ordinator since 1971.

Mr Peter Shrides, an associate member of the Society of Industrial Artists and Designers, joined the Post Office in 1940, but left shortly afterwards to serve with the Army. On re-joining the Post Office after the war, he trained at the Central School of Art as a graphic designer, and also did a good deal of freelance

work, covering a wide range of subjects.

In 1960 Mr Shrides became a designer in the Post Office studio, and designed the first presentation pack—for the Shakespeare issue in 1964. The layout of the pack has remained standard ever since.

Mr Shrides, had a spell in the Public Relations Department of the Post Office and was appointed deputy publicity manager for the Postal Business in 1968.

In his new capacity Mr Shrides will be closely involved in all stages of the design of stamps and allied philatelic material.

Stamps for Pleasure

3. Ink, Gum and Phosphor

This month we are concerned with what is applied to the front and the back (and the front again) of a postage stamp before it finally reaches us via the post office counter. In my last chat about paper, I mentioned that different grades and qualities were required for the different printing processes. Similarly, the printer has to select a suitable ink for a particular type of paper.

Inks which adapt well to hard or surfaced paper may be entirely unsuitable for the soft, porous paper on which many present-day stamps are printed. In the early days it was customary to submit paper samples to the ink-maker who then made or concocted a suitable 'mix', but today the large-scale manufacture of printing inks caters for every kind of printing surface, its absorbent qualities and texture, and in every imaginable shade of colour. For stamps it is important to maintain a uniformity of shade, which can be repeated in additional supplies, so a considerable responsibility rests with the inkmaker to standardise the various grades and strengths of his products.

The first GB stamps of 1840—Penny Black and Twopence Blue—were printed with non-fugitive or 'fast' inks which were not liable to fade or run, consequently, as described in my first article in this series, the early 'Maltese Cross' cancellations (which *were* composed of fugitive inks) could easily be removed and the stamps used again. Hence the introduction, in 1841, of the Penny Red, printed with ink made fugitive by the addition of prussiate of potash. A 'fugitive blue' was also introduced for the 2d stamps (with white lines added to the design to distinguish them), and the phenomenon of 'blued' or blue-tinted paper was attributable to the use of the prussiate of potash.

Modern printing inks are dried partially by penetration into the paper, and partially by chemical changes such as, with photogravure-printed stamps, the evaporation of the solvent which leaves the resin to bind the pigment to the paper. The printing cylinder is inked from

a special roller (partly immersed in the trough of ink) and, while revolving at high speed, has the surplus ink scraped off by a fixed steel blade—the 'doctor blade'—which extends to the width of the cylinder. Usually, a single revolution of the printing cylinder prints two entire panes of stamps, the paper being rapidly unreeled, fed to the press and reeled again 'on the web': one can imagine the necessity for quick-drying ink!

Prevalent on photogravure-printed stamps are 'doctor-blade' flaws, appearing as white or coloured lines, usually very narrow though sometimes a millimetre or so thick, running vertically down the stamp or horizontally across it (according to the direction of 'feed' into the press), caused by tiny particles of grit becoming momentarily wedged between the revolving printing cylinder and the ink-wiping blade. A flaw common to litho-printed stamps is seen as a white ring which occurs when a 'core' of dust builds up on the printing plate and prevents the ink from reaching the area adjoining its circumference. Both types of flaw are, by their nature, transient and do not have very great significance as varieties.

Colour shifts occur when one printing cylinder or plate, bearing part of the overall design in a certain colour, is out of alignment with the others, resulting in faulty registration on the stamps. Unless very marked, these also are not of very great interest though sometimes the effects are amusing, such as the misplacement of a person's eye on the stamp, or the change of words as, for example, 'Robert Burn' on the commemorative issue for Burns. 'Colours omitted' are usually due to the premature run-down of a particular cylinder as the press is being brought to a halt.

Postage stamps invariably come to a sticky end, by gum! It is interesting to recall that the adhesive used on the first stamps was made of potato starch, and that the sheet margins of the Penny Black were inscribed: 'In wetting the back be careful not to remove the Cement'. Because of the necessity of damping the paper

for the line-engraved printing process, the gum had to be applied after printing, and at first the adhesive was 'painted' on the printed sheets with a brush and hung up to dry. When they dried, the sheets curled up into 'rolls' and were difficult to flatten again.

These primitive methods were gradually improved, however, and, as early as 1849—possibly earlier—Perkins Bacon, the printers, were using gum arabic in the ratio of 3 lb to 5 lb of water. Eventually machines were evolved for coating stamp paper—in single sheets and, later, in reels—with adhesive, machines which incorporated an 'instant drying' process and included the fractionating or breaking-down of the stiff gum. Gum arabic, obtained principally from *Acacia arabica*, has long continued to be the staple ingredient of stamp adhesives, and the printers quickly overcame the yellow or amber toning of the gum found on the earlier issues, accomplished in more recent times with the aid of dextrine.

On British stamps, gum arabic was used up to and including the 'Wilding' definitives and on the commemorative issues to the Christmas stamps of 1967. Thereafter, Harrison, the printer, used an almost invisible gum—polyvinyl alcohol (PVA)—which is comparatively matt, while gum arabic has a shiny finish, though there are exceptions. Some of the early 'Machin' definitives are known with gum arabic as well as PVA gum, but the latter was used on all values of the first decimal issues in 1971, except for the multi-value coils. Following complaints that the first PVA stamps appeared not to be gummed at all, a pale cream colour was introduced into the gum to make it 'visible'.

In 1973, the printers added dextrine (or dextrin) to the PVA gum, i.e. PVAD, for easier operation with the new 'Jumelle' press and its rotary perforator. Again, because PVAD is virtually colourless, a pale green colour was introduced into the gum which is now in standard use. Happily (or otherwise!) there is no taste of alcohol in our current stamps, neither have the Post Office resorted to

flavoured gum (peppermint would be nice!).

Phosphor-banded and -coated stamps are the accepted 'norm' these days. They have been in existence (originally in the form of graphite lines printed on the back) for almost 20 years—since 1957 when the first automatic letter-facing machine ('ALF') was installed at Southampton. In 1959 the 'graphite' issues were augmented with 'phosphor' bands on the front, then, from 1960, the phosphor applications became a permanent feature of British definitive stamps and, from 1962, of commemoratives or special stamps also (in addition to the normal stamps).

From the simple facing of letters, the method of electronic 'scanning' was extended to enable the automatic segregation of first and second class mail, hence the single phosphor band introduced for the old 'printed matter rate' stamp, and which still applies to the sorting of letters in post offices having the necessary equipment. Modern developments, which could perhaps be the subject of a future article, have included the introduction of 'all-over' phosphor-coated paper, experimentally with the 'Machin' 4½p in 1974, and regularly with the photogravure-printed 'specials' from the 'British Explorers' issue of April 1973. The various methods of application and the different 'colours' of phosphor response under the u.v. lamp provide enormous scope for the student philatelist with a scientific bent!

The Post Office pioneered automatic letter facing and sorting, and it is a tribute to them that most countries in Europe, and Canada and the United States, have followed suit.

JAMES WATSON

Postal Label Study Group

Collectors of Registration labels, Air Mail labels and all other non-monetary postal labels may be interested to know of the formation of a Postal Label Study Group to cater for their interests. Enquiries to R L Woodward-Clarke, 19 Wrekin Road, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands B73 5SU.

The King's Stamps 1910-35—Part 6

'Essays for Colour Only'—The Different Types and Their Usage

Before we discuss the long process of choosing the colours for the Georgian low value series of 1911-12 and 1912-22, it is essential to describe the various types of essays which were produced for or used as colour trials.

Throughout the Victorian period colour selection was based on colour essays being made by striking proofs from the dies or plates of the selected designs in a range of colours (fig 1). Where line-engraved and surface-printed stamps are concerned, this is undoubtedly the ideal method as it enables the person or persons responsible for the final

of only two colours for no less than nine values from 1½d to 1s—led to conscious efforts to use colour (as well as design) to distinguish each of the low values definitives but did not prohibit the use of die proof colour trials. After all, the 1884 Stamp Committee finished its work by May 1885 (having agreed specific designs and recommended colours for each value up to 1/-) and fair copies of the selected designs had been prepared by De La Rue's artists by June 1885. By November 1885 the basic choice of colours was mostly completed (without the need for colour essays). This left



choice of colour or shade to get an exact idea of the appearance of the finished postage stamp. This means that the choice of colour has to be deferred until a very late stage in production although it did not matter much in a period when individual values tended to come out one at a time, nor when there was any great urgency in producing specific stamps, much, if any, thought given to balancing the colours of the various denominations against each other.

The awful example of the 1883-84 series—which caused chaos and confusion by the use

a full year for the engraving of the dies and their use in providing essays for consideration of any final colour changes (eg in the bi-colour stamps or those printed on tinted papers).

The pace was equally leisurely during the Edwardian period. Of the thirteen values of the full set (1902-12), eight were substantially in the same designs and colour as the 1887 'Jubilee' issue. Of the others, the four (½d, 1d, 2½d and 6d) issued during 1902 were, it is true, in new designs but the colour of the ½d was unchanged from the 1900 stamp, the 1d and 2½d were in the obligatory Universal

Postal Union colours of red and blue respectively and the 6d was still printed in fugitive purple, but not, as previously, on coloured paper. When the Post Office decided, for reasons of economy, to change the fourpenny to a single colour in 1908-09 they could do it at their leisure and the same was true when a colour had to be selected for the new seven-penny value. In both cases the finished die could be used for the colour essays.

Upon the accession of King George V in May 1910 an entirely new situation developed. Quite early in the new reign, the Postmaster General publicly committed himself to the issue of as many as possible of the new definitive stamps (with the portrait of the new King) by Coronation Day, 22 June 1911. An allocation of suitable colours for all the planned 14 values of the set, from $\frac{1}{2}d$ to 1/-, had therefore to be worked out as quickly as possible.

Since the King had decided that the stamps should be entirely new in design, to be created and prepared by artists (unconnected with the stamp printers) who had already made their marks as portrait or industrial designers. [see part 1 *Philatelic Bulletin* June 1976 (Vol 13 No 10)] the choice of colours could not be started until November 1910. By then, frame designs by Bertram Mackennal and George Eve, and a photographic portrait by W and D Downey had been selected.

A memorandum on the choice of colours was prepared within the Post Office on 2 November 1910. In this, Mr Bennett, the Inspector of Stamping at the Inland Revenue, is quoted as stating that: "the Mint will take a considerable time to prepare actual working dies of the approved designs" [actually the last working dies—for the 5d to 1/- values—were not completed until May-June 1913!]. If so desired, however, Bennett "could arrange with the Mint to obtain blocks and to print from them specimens of the new stamps in various colours. These 'advance proofs' would not be of such good appearance as the proper stamps, but they would doubtless serve for the

purpose of selecting colours".

Bennett's offer was immediately accepted and the Inland Revenue were asked, on 3 November, to furnish "as soon as possible 'advance proofs' of the stamps of the approved designs, printed in a number of colours".

Using their own resources, and those of the Royal Mint, Somerset House (the Stamping Dept of the Inland Revenue) supplied the Post Office with 5 different types of colour essays during the period December 1910-July 1913. These were, chronologically and mostly in ascending order of quality, (1) essays from half-tone blocks, (2) essays printed from zinc line blocks, (3) Motley (also called Printex) essays (a kind of primitive photo-gravure), (4) proofs in colour from the master or final value dies used to produce the actual stamps and, finally, (5) proofs from actual printing plates.

Which of these five methods (or a combination of them) were actually used to produce the colour essays required at any time during the two years and eight months period of the trials depended on two main factors. First, which of the three reproductive methods (1 to 3 above) was in current use; second, whether a master die (complete except for the value) or a final completed die for the required value was available. The start of work and progress on each die depended in turn on final approval of the monarch's effigy and the frame design and (because of the pressure of work on the very few competent engravers) on the degree of priority given to the issue of particular values.

Sometimes essays were ordered by the Post Office to provide them with a selection of colours for use in a colour scheme for a range of values. The final selected scheme could in these cases be made up of a combination of issued stamps (eg the $\frac{1}{2}d$ and 1d of 1911) completed and master die proofs (eg other 'Downie head' values from $1\frac{1}{2}d$ to 3d) and zinc block or Motley essays for the remaining values, the designs for which were still under discussion.

A G RIGO DE RIGHI and ALAIN DE CADENET

Silver Jubilee of the Queen's Accession

Commemorative Issue 11 May 1977



Stamp issues for Royal Silver Jubilees are comparatively infrequent. The Post Office has issued such a set only once before in 1935, to celebrate twenty five years of the reign of King George V. As with the 1935 issue, the design is built around a portrait of the Monarch and in this case with two decorative initials ER. Also incorporated in the design are the words Silver Jubilee and the dates 1952-1977.

Printing Details

Designer: Professor Richard Guyatt CBE
FSIA Hon ARCA

Printer: Harrison & Sons Ltd

Process: Photogravure

Format: Horizontal

Size: 41 mm and 30 mm

Perforation: 15 × 14

Sheet Size: 100

Phosphor: Overall

Paper: Coated Unwatermarked

Gum: PVA Dextrin

Values and Colours: 8½p Pale blue, grey, deep olive, black, silver. 10p Ochre, grey, royal blue, black, silver. 11p Rose pink, grey, deep magenta. 13p Olive yellow, grey, agate, black, silver.

The First Day Cover and presentation pack were designed by Jeffrey Matthews and will be shown, together with other Jubilee items, in the next two Bulletins.

Postcards

Postcard reproductions of each of the four Silver Jubilee postage stamps will be available during the early part of May from the Philatelic Bureau, and all philatelic counters, price 7p.

First Day Cover Services

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

Service A

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

Service B

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

Service C

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

Two pictorial handstamps will be available. The Bureau cancel will depict the figures '25' while the Windsor handstamp will illustrate the 'Crown of St Edward'.

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

Application forms, obtainable from the Philatelic Bureau, Edinburgh, and at all Head Post Offices, should be returned as early as possible, but not later than 2 May 1977.

Silver Jubilee Souvenir Covers

We mentioned in last month's Bulletin that, souvenir covers will be issued in the four countries to commemorate the Queen's Silver Jubilee tour. In conjunction with the covers, special pictorial handstamps will be used with designs associated with the place designated in them. Listed below are the offices where the handstamps will be applied together with the dates of application.

17 May Glasgow
19 May Dundee
20 May Aberdeen
23 May Edinburgh
28 May Windsor, Berks
20 June Manchester
21 June Liverpool (Merseyside)
22 June Bangor, Gwynedd
23 June Swansea
24 June Cardiff
30 June London, SW
11 July Ipswich, Suffolk
11 July Norwich
12 July Leeds
13 July York
14 July Cleveland
27 July Birmingham
28 July Derby
28 July Nottingham
5 August Plymouth, Devon
6 August Truro, Cornwall
8 August Bristol
10 August Belfast
11 August Londonderry

Full details of these covers will appear in the April edition of the Bulletin.

Silver Jubilee Souvenir Book

In the February Bulletin we stated that the cost of this book will be £1.10, this should have read £1.20.

Some Aspects of the Machin Decimal High Values

The question is very often asked—as to why when one enquires from what plates have been used to print such and such a stamp no one seems to know. Half the fun would vanish if all the information was available for the asking and to the printer the number of plates used is of little consequence. However the number of plates used soon becomes known by reference to the philatelic press and specialised societies but of course not all plates made are used, and stamps from those made and used are not all released by the Supplies Department.

Very rarely does a plate made and used, make its appearance when it should not have done but of that more anon.

The actual date a new plate becomes known is not very important—it will vary for each part of the country as supplies are sent from Hemel Hempstead. The following lists of plates/papers relate to the year the writer first found them and nothing else. Of course many factors contribute to the number of stamps from each plate, they probably vary quite considerably and need not all be generally available all over the country.

10p Phosphor Coated Paper

1970 Single pane plates 3–13 inclusive. Plates not issued 1 and 2

20p Post Office Supplied Paper

1970 Single pane plates 3–8 inclusive

1971 Single pane plates 9–16 inclusive, and 21–22

1971 Double pane plates 17/17A–20/20A inclusive

1971 Double pane plates 25/25A–30/30A inclusive

In all probability single pane plates were in the course of manufacture when the decision was made to proceed with the double pane plates so that the former were put to one side until the first of the doubles were made and in production. That is why there is the curious break in the numbering sequence. Single pane plates not issued 1, 2, 23 and 24.

20p Post Office Supplied Paper

1972 Double pane plates 31/31A–41/41A

inclusive, excluding 32/32A, 36/36A

1973 Double pane plates 42/42A–48/48A inclusive

20p Contractor Supplied Paper

1974 Double pane plates 49/49A–57/57A inclusive

1975 Double pane plates 58/58A–66/66A inclusive, excluding 59/59A, 60/60A

1976 Double pane plates 59/59A

Logically 59/59A was printed with the sequence 58 to 66 but remained at 'the bottom of the pile' while 58 was later re-run. To date 60/60A has not been seen.

50p Post Office Supplied Paper

1970 Single pane plates 4–9 inclusive. Plates not issued 1–3

1971 Single pane plates 10–11

1972 Single pane plates 12 and 13

50p Phosphor Coated Paper

1973 Single pane plates 14–21 inclusive

50p Contractor Supplied Paper

1974 Single pane plates 21–17 inclusive

1975 Single pane plates 16–12 inclusive

The writer has never been able to understand why there existed the necessity to use so many plates for the phosphorised paper printings and then to apparently re-use again them in a descending order with the contractor supplied paper. Possibly the latter was a 'make do and mend' approach whilst the double pane plates were being made.

Contractor Supplied Paper

1975 Double pane plates 22/22A–25/25A inclusive

1976 Double pane plates 26/26A–28/28A inclusive

In forming a collection of the various papers and single/double pane plates the plate number piece is all that is required, a well balanced display being achieved with a pair instead of the usual block of four. Even a pair is sometimes difficult to find though in one's experience the London sub-post offices in time usually have a greater variety of numbers than many of the Crown offices.

DOUGLAS EVANS

(To be continued)

29. International Geographical Congress, 1964

This, the twentieth Congress, was held in London from 20 to 28 July 1964. Except in wartime, it has been a regular event held every four years since the first meeting in 1871, and the Post Office deemed it important enough for a 'full-scale' issue of four commemorative stamps which appeared well before the 'gathering of the clans' on 1 July.

Happily, the designs were modern and attractive, probably ten years ahead of the times, and for that we have to thank young Dennis Bailey of Paris (he was 33 at the time) whose theme was 'The Changing Face of Britain', a series of environmental studies ranging from town housing to the nuclear landscape one associates with 'Dr Who'.



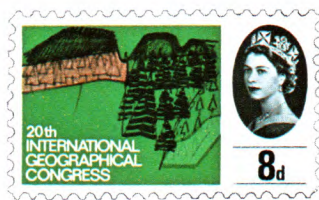
To represent 'Urban Development' (2½d), something which is as inevitable as snow in wintertime, the artist selected a typical 20th-century vista—the towering blocks of flats overlooking the 2,469 acres of Richmond Park, London, one of the most beautiful of the metropolitan parks. The foreground greenery is partly obscured by 'the black scar of industrial development', while the 'arrow' direction signs symbolise the encroachment of a motorway.

The subject of 'Industrial Activity' (4d) was the port of Belfast, Northern Ireland, in particular the shipbuilding yards with a ship, a

partly-completed hull and quayside cranes. The design emphasises the 'mini-poster' quality of all four stamps.

'Forestry' (8d) featured trees in regimented forests at Beddgelert, Snowdonia, North Wales, a bleak landscape with just a hint of young trees in the foreground, while 'Technological Development' (1s 6d) showed the great globe of the Dounreay nuclear reactor in Caithness, Scotland, with, in the foreground, a crofter's cottage and harvest sheaves.

Dennis Bailey, a freelance Francophile employed by the stamp printers, Harrison & Sons, trained at the Royal College of Art, whence he became an illustrator in advertising and publishing.



The stamps, each bearing the Wilding portrait of the Queen within an oval medallion on the right, were multicolour/photogravure-printed in sheets of 120 (6 × 20) on ordinary and phosphor-banded paper, watermark 'multiple crowns', by Harrison & Sons. They were printed in four or five colours, and the 4d is recorded with violet and/or red-brown omitted, the 8d with the green (meadow) omitted. Minor varieties include a short line under '2½d', 'scarred neck' (4d) and 'neck flaw' (1s 6d). The 4d, 8d and 1s 6d values are known with inverted watermarks.

Quantities sold (phosphor in brackets) were:

2½d 109,768,120 (3,377,520); 4d 15,241,680 (577,800); 8d 8,226,800 (465,720); and 1s 6d 10,154,040 (519,000). Just over 20,000 'presentation packs' were also sold. A pictorial postmark was used at the temporary post office at the Congress, which was attended by more than 2,000 geographers from 60 countries.

JAMES WATSON

Forthcoming Philatelic Events

Federation of S. Wales Philatelic Societies

The Annual Convention of the Federation of South Wales Philatelic Societies will be held at Bishop Gore School, Swansea on Saturday, 16 April. The Opening Ceremony at 2.30 pm will be performed by Mr G McMorran, Chairman Wales & the Marches Postal Board. There will be an Auction, Dealer's Stands and the Federation Competition.

Refreshments will be available and visitors will be most welcome. For further details, please contact the Hon Secretary:

Mr Neil Prior
20 Heol-y-Sheet
North Cornelly
BRIDGEND
Mid Glam
Tel 0656 740520.

Convention at Manchester Airport

The North-West of England Federation of Philatelic Societies is to hold its 16th Annual Convention at Manchester Airport's Brabazon Suite. The hosts are the South Manchester Philatelic Society and the event will take place on Saturday, 23 April, 1977. There will be a major exhibition from North-West Philatelists, several Federation Convention Trophies being at stake; additional features include an excellent auction, a first class luncheon, and the issue of a special flight cover. Light refreshments will also be available at the airport. Admission to the exhibition will be free.

Philatelic Weekend

Owing to the great success of the first Philatelic Week-end held last May, in the North East, another week-end has been arranged to take place from Friday 15 to Sunday 17 April 1977, at Beamish Hall Residential College, Beamish, Co Durham.

The programme will include Postal History, Airmails, Illustrated Philatelic Terms, a one-country display, and a Thematic Lecture and Exhibition.

Syllabus and application forms are available from: Dorothy M Martin, 46 Briardene Crescent, Kenton Park, Newcastle upon Tyne. NE3 4RY. (Please enclose stamped addressed envelope size 6" x 9").

Forces Covers

Royal Naval Air Service

A Commemorative cover in the Royal Naval Air Service series was issued on 12 February 1977 to commemorate the 35th Anniversary of Lieut Comdr Esmonde's action against Gneisenau & Scharnhorst in February 1942.

The covers are signed by Admiral Sir Derek Empson GBE KCB, Second Sea Lord 1972-73, and a WWII Swordfish pilot; and by Lt Comdr C M Kingsmill DSO VRD RNR Retd, who is a survivor of the action.

Prices are: plain cover 35p, single signature 82p, double signatures £1.62. Stamped addressed envelopes are required, and cheques etc should be made out to the FAA Museum.

A further Commemorative cover in the Royal Naval Air Service series will be issued on 28 March 1977 to commemorate the 35th Anniversary of the attack on St Nazaire during March 1942.

The covers will be signed by Captain R E D Ryder VC RN who was the naval officer in charge of the operation and who led the whole force in the Motor Gunboat no 314 and who organised the withdrawal. He was also awarded the VC for his gallant operation.

The second signature will be that of Mr Lovegrove, who took part in the action as a rating. Prices will be: double signatures £1.62, single signature 82p and plain covers 35p. Stamped addressed envelopes are required, and cheques etc should be made out to the Fleet Air Arm Museum.

Orders for these two covers should be sent to: Cmdr P F Cole DSC RN (Retd), RN Philatelic Officer, RNAS, Yeovilton, Somerset BA22 8HX.

Royal Air Force Covers

RAF cover (HA 13) commemorating the career of Flight Lieutenant A W Beauchamp-Procter VC DSO MC DFC who served with 84 Squadron during the First World War. It shows 84 Squadron in action on the Western Front in 1918 and was issued with a special commemorative handstamp (BFPS 1553—60th Anniversary of 84 Sqdn) and used on 16 February 1977. The cover was then flown by 84 Squadron and should be available from the Project Officer: Flt Lt G P Dainty RAF, 84 Squadron, RAF Akrotiri, BFPO 53 on or about 25 March 1977 at 35p plus postage 8½p.

All proceeds of this cover will be devoted to the Battle of Britain Museum Appeal Fund.

RAF cover (HA14) will commemorate the career of Air Vice-Marshal J Johnson CB DSO DFC. It will show him leading his Canadian Wing into action during 1943 and be issued with a special commemorative cancellation (BFPS 1557) which will mark the closure of RAF Stations Masirah and Salalah both of which Air Vice-Marshal Johnson had under his command when he was Air Officer Commanding Aden. The covers will be flown on the last flight from RAF Masirah on 31 March 1977 and should be available from the Project Officer: PRO RAF Museum, Aerodrome Road, Hendon, London NW9 5LL on or about 1 May 1977 at 35p plus postage 6½p.

All proceeds of this cover will be devoted to the Battle of Britain Museum Appeal Fund.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Sir,

Am I alone in the wilderness in my reaction to the respective design and issues of some commemoratives.

Whilst the qualification and authority of designers is not in question, or even the subject matter, I fail to understand the principle by which the overall size of the picture within the stamp is reduced.

The recent Xmas issue and anniversary issue of Sept last, in comparison to Centenary issue of June 76 or Cultural issue of Aug 76 being a fair example.

I refer to the forshortening of a picture size, leaving a wastage of blank area.

In my opinion the quality and attraction of commemoratives is on the decline.

As a collector of British 'Elizabethan', I remain disappointed.

Yours faithfully,

JOSEPH W H FISHER

EVESHAM

Worcs

Editors Note

We accept that from a design viewpoint Mr Fisher has highlighted a problem.

On occasions, especially when existing subjects like paintings, embroidery, Caxton or the Philypia stamps are used, it is not always easy to show the Queen's head and denomination superimposed on the 'design'. One solution is to put these in a separate panel.

Dear Sir,

In the January 'Philatelic Bulletin', Mr Peat asked how he can display air letters. I have yet to find an album sheet which will take them flat; what I do is use the excellent quality plain album leaves which the Bureau sells. I fold the air letter once, at 'first fold', hooking the top

portion over the back of the leaf. The remainder of the letter form is mounted on the face of leaf, by using two small 'Hawid' strips just above the flaps. Sufficient room is left at the foot of the album leaf for writing up. For full display, the top part of the air letter has only to be flipped upwards.

I regret that I cannot resist the opportunity to say how horrible the new high values appear to be. Is the Post Office really so hard up that it can't even be bothered to print a £5 stamp properly. The existing stamps are considered particularly beautiful, to which the method of printing is a considerable contribution.

The 1976 Christmas stamps are another example of an opportunity lost. They could have been really fine if the size had been slightly larger, without that deadly white panel at the side (the head and value could have been superimposed in metallic ink) and, in particular, if recess-printing had been used. They could then have matched the French art issues, instead of being blurry messes. Surely the Post Office's design panel must know that certain designs need certain types of printing.

Yours faithfully,

Gillingham
Kent

P J TYRRELL

Dear Editor,

Modern Illustrated British Air Letters

With reference to Mr Peat's letter (January Bulletin) regarding the display of illustrated Air Letters, I have found that these fit flat in the plastic pockets of a *foolscap* size slide-back display binder.

These binders are available at most commercial stationers and usually contain 24 polythene top opening pockets and by inserting a plain sheet of paper between each pair of Air Letters, 48 can be housed in one binder, and the issue details 'written up' on the plain paper as the Air Letters do not take up the full width of the pockets.

Yours sincerely,

Croydon
Surrey

MALCOLM J. MOCHRIE

Dear Sir,

Modern Illustrated British Air Letters

Perhaps I can be of some assistance in offering to Mr Peat a suggestion for mounting his air letter forms.

I keep my collection in a Cover Album, which has plastic envelopes sized 10" x 9". The air letter form is folded at the 'first fold' and inserted into the envelope over the top of the black paper insert. This then means that the front of the album leaf displays two-thirds of the form, and the remaining section is on the reverse, albeit upside down.

The lower part of the album leaf's reverse side can usefully be filled by mounting a second copy of the form bearing a first day of issue cancellation.

Yours faithfully,

Leigh on Sea
Essex

DAVID N THOMAS

Dear Sir,

With reference to Mr Peat's enquiry about mounting Air Letters. A stiff card album sheet not smaller than Gibbons 'Exeter' should be used. Open the letter fold the gummed flaps back. Display front and back. If the letter has a layout like the 1966 Xmas 'Bear Tree', put a slit in the Album sheet on the left hand side of Air Letter, thread the back page through the slit. Fix the item with four largish corners of transparent envelopes, two front and two back.

In the case of the 1968 'Santa Claus' the slit must be at the top and unfortunately the Airship has to be inserted. As the Air Letters are still reasonably priced, I buy a second copy with a special FDI postmark and mount it stamp side showing in the half (back) of sheet so that by lifting the print the balloon can be seen correctly in the sky.

Yours faithfully,

Ashford
Middlesex

FRED A BAKER

Special Handstamps

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

21 April 1977 (P/R)

'HM Silver Jubilee 1952-1977 Ringway Manchester to Ronaldsway Isle of Man 21 April 1977 Manchester'. Special posting box at Airport BO Terminal Buildings Manchester Airport Manchester M22 5NU.

23 April 1977 (P/R)

'Scottish Philatelic Congress 23 Apr 1977 Stirling'. Special posting box at Stirling University Pathfoot Building Pathfoot Stirling FK9 4LA.

Postmark Slogans

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

17 January 1977-until further notice

'Southampton is a Mechanised Office Please Use Postcodes'. To be used at Southampton first and second class.

17 January-31 March 1977

'Operation Gate Post—Help Emergency and Public Services—Put a Number on Your Gate'. To be used at Walsall. First and Second Class.

1 February-30 September 1977

'See Bath in Bloom Britain's Top Floral City'. To be used at Bath HPO. First Class.

1 February-31 March 1977

'Hastings—A Resort for All Seasons'. To be used at Hastings. First and Second Class.

7 March-15 October 1977

'Tatton Park Knutsford Mansion Gardens Country Park'. To be used at Altrincham. Second Class.

Repeat Campaigns

13 December 1976-3 April 1977

'Morecambe Gateway to the Lakes'. To be reused at Lancaster. Second Class.

29 December 1976-26 March 1977

'Oldham North Central Ring Shaw 44411'. To be reused at Oldham. First and Second Class.

3 January 1977-2 January 1978

'The British Deaf Association Cares About Lifelong Deafness'. To be reused at Carlisle. First and Second Class.

17 January-2 April 1977

'1977 Daily Mail Ideal Home Exhibition Olympia London March 8 to April 2'. To be reused at the following offices:

EDO (E17)

Paddington

SWDO

NDO

ECDO

Mount Pleasant

NWDO

6 February-26 March 1977 (P)

'Barmouth Mid Wales Guide 20p Information Centre Barmouth Wales'. To be reused at Barmouth Gwynedd. First Class.

Please Note: That the Postmark Slogan **'Phone Saves Time and Money'** which was to be used at Kilmarnock from 17-22 January 1977 has been cancelled and will now be in use from 4-9 April 1977.

Please Note: For the Postmark Slogan **'Don't Waste Water'** to be used at Redhill for the period 21 December 1976-9 April 1977 will not now be used.

P denotes Pictorial

R „ Rectangular

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