

Philatelic Bulletin

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Introduction

Some of our letters this month allay the fear of a previous correspondent who suggested that there was insufficient comment in our columns about the quality of British stamp

design. Taste is peculiar to each individual and what one may like others may find unattractive. We shall seldom please everyone whatever method we use to arrive at our choice but there is no doubt that our advisers are expert, dedicated and sincere folk who bring their experience to bear on this most thorny of subjects.

The main article deals with some of the markings found on sheet margins and will be especially useful to our younger readers who might be unaware of the significance of the various symbols.

Decimal day is almost upon us and a new series of stamps will be introduced on 15 February. It is not often that a new collection of British stamps can be started but here is an ideal opportunity to begin afresh with the first full set of British decimal values.

Ships on Stamps

A New Exhibition at the National Postal Museum

Starting in the first week in February 1971, the Museum will have on display a special thematic exhibition tracing the world-wide development of ships from ancient times to the present day, as depicted on postage stamps.

The stamps used to illustrate such themes as traditional paddle and sailing craft, ocean-going sailing ships, vessels of war, and ships used by explorers will be drawn from the Museum's immense 'Berne' collection, which has examples of practically every stamp issued throughout the world since the 1870's. The display will be on show till the end of April.

The National Postal Museum (100 yds from St. Paul's Underground station) is open from 10 a.m. to 4.30 Mondays to Fridays and from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturdays. There is no charge for admission. Special arrangements can be made for school and society visits. Tel.: 01-432 3851.

The New Decimal Stamp Books

The present range of five £sd stamp books will, after D-Day, be replaced by four decimal books. These four books will provide a wide range of stamps and have been planned to meet the varying needs of our customers.

All the new stamp books will have illustrated covers and a brief description of the illustrations will be printed on the inside front cover. To add extra interest the cover designs on different issues of each value of book will comprise a set, and each design will be numbered. For the 25p, 30p and 50p books there will be eight designs in a set and for the 10p book six.

In all three of the counter selling books we have retained the present basic six stamps per pane make-up. This is mainly because 5 or 10 stamp panes would produce books of an odd shape; not suitable for wallets with special pockets for books of the present size. This has meant that in order to provide books with an appropriate mixture of stamps and at a suitable price we have had in some cases to include only four or five stamps to a pane. The vacant spaces have been filled with stamp sized se-tenant advertisements all of which are printed next to the stitching. Except for two panes in the 30p book the advertisements have meant that no two sheets will be exactly the same.

10p book – this book replaces the present 2s od book and will be sold only from machines and normal philatelic outlets. It contains a mixture of stamps made-up so as to provide for maximum flexibility in use.

The series of six illustrations for the 10p book have been designed by Ronald Maddox and show British Post Boxes. The background colour of the cover is old gold. The make-up of the two panes is shown below.

25p book – this book replaces the present 4s 6d and 6s od books. It has been designed so that while it can provide exclusively for the second class service some first class postings can be made if needed. The make-up of the panes is:

5 × 2½p + 1 advertisement
4 × 2½p + 2 advertisements
5 × ½p + 1 advertisement

The series of eight front cover designs feature prints of Veteran Transport from wood etchings by David Gentlemen. The cover colour is mauve.

30p book – this book replaces the present 5s od book and as such provides entirely for the first class post. There are two panes in the book – each of five 3p stamps together with one advertisement. The advertisement is the same on both panes.

The cover designs show British Birds and are drawn by Harry Titcombe. Harry designed the bird covers for the present 6s od books. The background cover colour is cerise.

50p book – this book replaces the present 10s od book and provides for both first and second class postings. The pane make-up is:

6 × 3p
4 × 3p, 2 × 2½p (in one pane)
5 × 2½p + 1 advertisement
5 × ½p + 1 advertisement

The theme of the set of eight cover designs is British Wild Flowers and the drawings are by Rosalie Southall. The cover colour is apple green.

Make-up of the two panes in 10p book.

STITCHING		STITCHING	
.....			
2p	2p	1p	1p
$\frac{1}{2}p$	$\frac{1}{2}p$	$1\frac{1}{2}p$	$1\frac{1}{2}p$

National Army Museum Series - Military Covers

Two further covers in this series will be issued on the 28th February 1971. Group 1. No. 3 Famous Regiments..

This cover commemorates the 1st Birthday of the Amalgamation of the Worcestershire Regiment and the Sherwood Foresters (Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Regiment). The special pictorial handstamp BFPS 1223 depicts the new Regimental Badge.
Group 2. No. 6 Historical Uniforms.

This cover will show the uniforms worn by the Worcestershire Regiment and the Sherwood Foresters at the dates of their formation in 1694 and 1741. The postage stamp will be cancelled with the special pictorial handstamp BFPS 1224 which depicts Worcester Cathedral.

Each cover costs 5s and may be ordered from:

The Philatelic Officer

National Army Museum Appeal
H.M. Tower of London
London EC3N 4AB

The 33 Years of Malaysian and Singaporean Service In the British Army

On 22 February 1971 the 33rd and final anniversary of Malaysian and Singaporean service as uniformed British Army Personnel will be celebrated with the issue of a special souvenir cover.

The cover depicts a Malay soldier in ceremonial dress framed with the 15 badges of the regiments and corps with whom the LEP (Locally Enlisted Personnel) have served during the past 33 years. It will be stamped with a new 2p stamp and cancelled with the Pictorial British Forces Postal Service handstamp No. 1149.

The serviced covers will cost 5s each and all proceeds will go to the British Army LEP (Malaysia/Singapore) Benevolent Fund.

Orders with remittances should be sent to:
The Philatelic Officer

32 Regiment RCT
c/o GPO SINGAPORE

Items for reposting should be clearly marked "Special Handstamp No. 1149", on the outer cover and forwarded to:

The Philatelic Officer

302 PCCU RE

c/o GPO SINGAPORE

RAF Museum Covers

A further cover in the Series will be issued on 28 February to mark the closing of RAF Northcoates, which has been an active station since 1916. On the cover will be illustrated the Bristol Beaufighter of No. 236 Squadron (piloted by Flt. Lt. Gatward), which dropped the Tricolour over the Arc de Triomphe in 1942.

All covers will be franked with the 5d Alcock & Brown stamp, and cancelled with the special British Forces Postal Service 1162 handstamp which will be used on Northcoates' last day as an RAF Station. The covers will then be flown by RAF Canberra to RAF Bruggen, Germany on a special commemorative flight, during which the Arc de Triomphe will again be overflown. Covers will be back stamped at Bruggen and returned to RAF Binbrook, where appropriate cachets will be applied.

Covers will cost 5s each and orders with remittance should be sent to:

Philatelic Officer

RAF Binbrook

Grimsby Lincs.

Packets of Low Value Decimal Definitive Stamps

In order to reduce philatelic pressure at counters on D-Day, special sealed packets containing the complete range of low value decimal stamps will be put on sale on Monday 15 February 1971 at the Philatelic Bureau, philatelic sales counters, decimal positions at all Head Offices and other offices with philatelic posting boxes.

The sale price of a packet will be 10s (50p) and each will contain the following 14 stamps: one at $\frac{1}{2}p$, 1p, $1\frac{1}{2}p$, 3p, $3\frac{1}{2}p$, 4p, 5p, 6p, $7\frac{1}{2}p$, 9p and two at 2p and $2\frac{1}{2}p$.

National Postal Museum Notes

Preparing the "Castles"



Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3



Fig. 4



Fig. 5



Fig. 6



Fig. 7



Fig. 8



Fig. 9



Fig. 10

A self-contained section of the Museum's Court of Honour exhibit at Philypia was the frame which showed stages in the design and printing of the 'Castle' high values of 1955-6.

Since this frame excited interest at the exhibition, I thought that readers of the Bulletin might like to have a permanent record of its main features.



Fig. 11

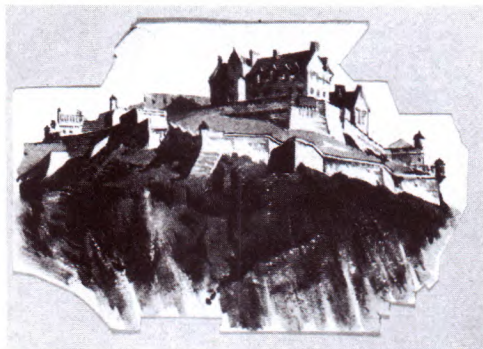


Fig. 12

Early in 1955 selected artists were invited to submit designs for a set of high value postage stamps bearing the head of the new monarch. The briefing to the artists stipulated that as well as using a Dorothy Wilding portrait of the Queen, the design should have as the central feature views of four named famous castles representative of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

A number of designs were submitted and from these, lithographed essays in colour were prepared. The designs submitted by Joan Hassall (one) and Mary Adshead (five) were for the 2s 6d value. Three essays were made of each of these six designs, in apple green and in two alternative bi-colour versions of green and brown (figs. 1 and 6). Designs were also submitted by R. S. Bird (two for the 5s value, a picture of Carnarvon Castle, see figs. 2 and 3); by Reynolds Stone (two, see fig. 4) and by

Sir Muirhead Bone (one for the 10s value incorporating a picture of Edinburgh Castle, fig. 5); three lithographed essays, both monochrome and bi-coloured, were made of each of these. Six essays were made in brown, black and a combination of these colours and green, of a single design for the £1 value showing Windsor Castle by Mr. Fryer of Waterlows (fig. 7).

The successful artist was Lynton Lamb, one of whose four designs for a 5s value was accepted for that value; the frame of this design was selected for use on the other three values. Essays of these designs were made in red and grey black (fig. 8 shows one of the three rejected designs). Lynton Lamb then made sketches for the central part of the design and the other values (two of these are illustrated as figs. 11 and 12) which were accepted.

At this stage the official thinking seems to have inclined towards the production of the 'Castle' high values as bi-colour stamps, and in fact three of Lynton Lamb's accepted final designs (the 2s 6d, 5s and 10s values) were lithographed in various combinations of black and brown, red or deep blue. As can be seen from two of these (figs. 9 and 10) the result was most attractive but it was eventually decided that single colours only should be used. The Museum collection contains colour essays of the 2s 6d value in brown, blue and black, and for the 5s value in scarlet. There are also colour essays of the 10s value in a very deep shade of ultramarine and of the £1 in intense black.

Separate essays were also made of the Queen's portrait (in an oval vignette) in colours approximating to the issued stamps. The last stage was to prepare final recess-printed proofs (imperforate like all the preceding essays) in the exact selected colours; these were approved by the Queen and by the Post Office in August 1955. The popular 'Castle' high values were then ready for printing by Waterlow and Sons; and for issue in September 1955.

A G RIGO DE RIGHI

A Marginal Tale

Readers often ask us the purpose of the various markings which can be found on the sheet margins of our stamps. In the main, these markings are for the use of the printers, to help them produce the millions of stamps required in Great Britain every day.

Collectors find greatest interest in the so-called cylinder numbers on photogravure and lithography printed stamps, and the plate numbers on the recess stamps. On commemorative stamps, these cylinder numbers take the form of a combination of numbers and letters. The letters are used to indicate the colours used: thus a five colour stamp will show the letter sequence A, B, C, D and E. Preceding each letter is a number, which refers to the particular cylinder used to print that individual colour. Thus a '3A' printed in red, would show that the third cylinder prepared for the red printing was the one actually used. The first two cylinders prepared were obviously unsuitable for use.

When over a million sheets of a stamp is being printed, it might occur that more than one cylinder will be needed to complete the printing of a single colour. Thus on any one issue, the same letter may be prefixed by different numbers, i.e. '3A' on some sheets, and '4A' on others.

This will also apply to definitive stamps printed in more than one colour. For single colour definitives, there is obviously no need for the letter indication. When these photogravure and lithography issues are being printed, it is usual for two sheets to be printed at a single revolution of the cylinder. To distinguish between these two sheets – which are separated before issue to the Post Office – the printers include a full stop after the cylinder number on one of the two sheets.

The position of the cylinder numbers can vary on the sheet, but they are easily recognisable. On one occasion, namely the issue to honour the Maiden Flight of Concorde, the sequence of cylinder numbers was included four times in the sheet margins.

The plate numbers on recess stamps take

the form of a single number, or a number followed by a letter. Thus, possible plate numbers which may be found are '2', '2A', '2B' and '2C', these all applying to a single stamp. To date, all the recess stamps for the British Post Office have been printed in a single colour. Thus only a number is required to indicate which 'plate' is being used for the particular colour. In our example, the second plate prepared is the one being used. However, once again the printers often produce more than one Post Office sheet on each turn of the printing plate. To distinguish these sheets, the first is given no letter, while the second sheet is given the letter 'A', and so on. Thus in our example, the particular stamp concerned was printed four sheets at a single revolution of the plate.

The new high values in decimal currency are printed one sheet at a time, and thus the plate number takes the form of a number, without any following letter.

Starting with the General Anniversaries series of 1970, Harrison and Sons Limited introduced numbers for the cylinders used to apply the phosphor bands. These phosphor cylinder numbers can be detected by viewing the stamps in the same way as when the phosphor itself is detected. These numbers take the form of the letter 'P', followed by a number, the number having the obvious significance.

Collectors also pay attention to the colour check spots – traffic lights – found on the photogravure and lithography stamps printed in more than one colour. Their appearance of a row of coloured spots, one for each colour used to print the stamps, enables the checkers to spot colours missing or misplaced. When the Queen's silhouette is embossed on a stamp, the check spots are frequently accompanied by a colourless embossed spot. The position of these spots can vary on the sheets.

An innovation of the Notable Anniversaries series of 1969 was to include the 'total sheet value' up to four times along the margins of the sheets. While this marking first only

Philatelic Accessories on show at Bureau



Some idea of the range of philatelic items available from the Bureau may be gauged from the very attractive display recently put on in the Bureau's own Exhibition Gallery to augment the 1970 Christmas stamps.

On show were Robson Lowe's 'British Postage Stamps of the 19th Century', two National Postal Museum booklets, the Bulletin and its binder, the Postal

appeared on commemorative sheets, its use is being extended to the definitive issues, including those recess printed.

To enable counter clerks at post offices readily divide sheets of stamps into sizes which will fit their stock books, arrows are printed mid-way along the margins on many sheets of stamps.

While many sheets of stamps are printed on paper already cut into the required size, in certain cases the paper passes through the printing press in a continuous reel, and only later is cut into individual sheets. Such reel printed sheets often show a serial number printed in black in the margin, in one or two positions.

Reel fed sheets also show autron markings,

these being solid bars of colour – one for each colour used – normally found in the lower margin of the sheets. They provide an electronic check for colour registration.

Serving a similar purpose to the autron markings are the colour register crosses. These consist of a number of crosses, one for each colour, overlapping. The arm of the cross parallel to the sheet margin is much longer than the second arm. On stamps printed in many colours, it is often necessary to use two printing presses, or to print in two operations. In such cases two sets of colour register crosses will appear.

Stamps printed sheet fed often show register crosses, being small crosses for each colour, but this time adjacent to each other,



History Map, both the Mayflower and Dickens wall charts and the Netto Album and Catalogue.

Prices of the various items are given on the order form enclosed with each copy of the Bulletin.

not overlapping. They provide a guide for trimming the sheets, and a visual check on missing colours.

Colour indications, of the form 'G1 RED' aid the printers when preparing the press, but these are often trimmed from the sheets before reaching the Post Office.

To aid with perforation, guide holes are punched in one or both side margins. A printed square is used to indicate where the hole is to be punched, and frequently parts of the printed square remain visible. Also, if there is likely to be a choice of perforating machines available for the printer, additional squares may be printed, although not all will be required, and will remain unpunched.

A solid bar of colour frequently appeared

below the bottom row of stamps on photogravure sheets. This bar of colour, known to collectors as the Jubilee line, served as a colour pick up line, but its use has gradually become less with recent issues.

Finally, a number enclosed in a circle will sometimes be found in the margin. This has been applied with a rubber handstamp by one of the many checkers whose task it is to examine and count the sheets of stamps.

Naturally any one sheet of stamps will not show all these markings, while their individual appearance and position may vary for different issues. To recognise the markings, and know something of their purpose adds much to the enjoyment of stamp collecting.

Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Stamp Collecting

In his new Encyclopaedia, Otto Hornung describes and analyses many aspects of collecting and gives a wealth of practical advice on how to form and maintain a collection.

The Encyclopaedia is a comprehensive guide and covers subjects from the Birth of the Postal Services to Rules for International Stamp Exhibitions. Arranged in seven main sections, it is packed with information and illustrations which combine to make a very readable work of reference.

Mr. Hornung has carried out a vast amount of painstaking research into his subject and draws on his considerable experience to produce some authoritative comments. An especially fine section sets out how to choose a collection and includes thematic collecting in its many forms.

Particulars of philatelic literature, accessories, printing, cancellations, perforation, aerophilately and many others whet the appetite to delve deeper into the Encyclopaedia's 300 pages. Lavishly illustrated with 900 pages in black and white and 150 in full colour, the Encyclopaedia is published by the Hamlyn Publishing Group Ltd., Feltham, Middlesex, price £2 2s (£2.10).

'The Post' by Alan James

Mr. James has produced a very fine book tracing the development of the complex machinery of the Post from the early posts before 1600 to the present day. The book contains historical references that highlight the problems faced by reformers, like Rowland Hill, in developing the postal system of Britain.

We see the way that single individuals have introduced profitable postal innovations which were eventually taken over by the government to be incorporated into the General Post Office established in 1660. The author traces the innovations of the top men in the Post Office and the effects of outside reformers on the postal system.

The development of the Post from a rich man's service to a service within the pocket of every man is well illustrated in black and white.

This book, although written for a secondary school series, is a must for good background knowledge of the history of the Post.

'The Post' by Alan James, is published by B. T. Batsford Ltd., 4 Fitzhardinge Street, London W1H 0AH, price £1.

The Greenock and Ardishaig Packet

Souvenirs of Old Clyde Favourites

Do you happen to have an old picture post card album that has survived the years? It was a most popular article at one time, but began to go out of fashion during the second half of the first decade of the present century.

Over the years since then, picture post card albums have been discarded from the vast majority of homes.

A number, however, may still remain buried in lumber rooms or in odd corners. If you should have one lying around, it may be worth while to bring it to light in the hope that it may contain a souvenir of one of the old Clyde favourites. An item of this nature is desirable as in certain instances may be worth upwards from several shillings to a pound or two according to different factors.

A post office was established aboard the 'Columba', perhaps one of the greatest favourites of the old Clyde steamers, on 1st July, 1879, and was known as the 'Greenock and Ardishaig Packet'.

Greenock post office provided the staff of two sorting clerks, telegraphist and postman, who wore semi-naval uniform to harmonise with their nautical surroundings. The officer-in-charge was dressed in a blue frock coat with two rows of brass buttons, a crown on both lapels, and a cap after the style of an old railway guard, finished with deep gold braid. In addition to facilities for mailing correspondence on board this floating post office, postage stamps and postal orders were on sale,

and telegrams were also received.

Other Clyde steamers, including 'Iona', 'Grenadier', 'Chevalier' and 'Fusilier' are known to have operated in this service. One steamer only was in service on any one day, and calls were made at Greenock, Gourrock, Dunoon, Innellan, Rothesay, Colintrave, Tighnabruaich, Tarbert, and Ardrishaig. The outward trip was made in the morning from Greenock and the steamer returned from Ardrishaig in the afternoon. During the journey mail was sorted on board the steamer, collected and despatched at the piers of call.

Countless numbers of picture postcards, especially during holiday seasons, were posted in the steamer post offices for destinations far and wide throughout the country, as well as to addresses beyond the shores of Britain.

The popularity of the service may be judged from the fact that according to official records of 1890, 17,000 letters, etc., were dealt with in a week; a figure that may well have progressively increased to a considerable extent with the passage of years.

All correspondence mailed on board was duly postmarked. The types of postmarks used varied considerably ranging from those inscribed with service name 'Greenock and Ardrishaig Packet' with and without inclusion of steamer alone. The postal markings are popular with collectors and certain of the scarcer varieties are in great demand.

This fascinating postal service was terminated on the grounds of economy during the first world war, on 14 April 1917.

J. H. TIERNEY

UK-Style Postcodes for Canada

The Hon. Jean-Pierre Côté, Minister responsible for the Canadian Post Office, said recently that Canada is to adopt postcodes based on Britain's alpha-numeric system.

With four senior Canadian postal colleagues, Mr. Côté has completed a 4-day examination of the British Post Office by visiting the highly-mechanised Head Post

Office at Croydon. Canada is considering the type of equipment to be installed during the mechanisation of their Ottawa office, and British manufacturers are tendering for the Canadian installation.

The Canadian Post Office decided to adopt a United Kingdom-style postcode system after intensive studies of postal coding systems throughout the world – by their own experts and by outside consultants.

This visit is the latest in a series between Canadian and British postal experts exchanging ideas on their common interests – and is highlighted by the possibility of Canada following the example of Britain and the USA by making the Post Office a public corporation.

In 1969 Mr. David Stewart, of the Post Office's Planning and Mechanisation Department, visited Canada for two weeks as an adviser to the Canadian Government on postcoding and mechanisation.

Although Canada differs from the United Kingdom in size and density of population, it faces the same problem that the heaviest expenditure of the postal service is on manpower. The British Post Office is recognised world-wide as a leader in postal mechanisation, which helps ease the manpower problem and improve service.

Special Stamps for the Rugby Football Union Centenary and the 1900th Anniversary of the Founding of the City of York

In addition to the special stamp to mark the 50th Anniversary of the British Legion next year the Post Office will also issue on the same date, special stamps to commemorate the Rugby Football Centenary and the 1900th anniversary of the founding of the City of York.

These three stamps will comprise a General Anniversaries series to be issued in August next.

Revised Handling Charges 1971 Stamp Programme

Because of increased postal charges, which come into effect for inland items on 15 February 1971 and for overseas items on 1 July 1971, we have had to revise the Bureau's handling charges as follows:

Orders under £2	<i>From</i> 15/2/71	<i>From</i> 1/7/71
To UK addresses	4p	4p
Commonwealth addresses (surface)	3p	4p
Other addresses (surface)	5p	6p
Members of H.M. Forces abroad (surface)	3p	4p

Airmail

If orders are required to be sent to overseas addresses by airmail the following charges will be payable in place of those above.

To all addresses except Forces:

Zone A (Middle East):

6p for the first $\frac{1}{2}$ oz.

5p for each additional $\frac{1}{2}$ oz.

Zone B (Canada, U.S.A. and South Africa):

8 $\frac{1}{2}$ p for the first $\frac{1}{2}$ oz.

7 $\frac{1}{2}$ p for each additional $\frac{1}{2}$ oz.

Zone C (Australia, New Zealand and Japan):

10p for the first $\frac{1}{2}$ oz.

9p for each additional $\frac{1}{2}$ oz.

H.M. Forces abroad

Europe: All items are sent by air at the

Surface rates

Other addresses: 4p

These charges apply from 15 February; there will be no change on 1 July 1971.

Orders of £2 and over

All orders of £2 and over are sent by registered post. The following fees are payable in addition to those quoted above.

From 15 February 1971

To UK addresses 20p

All other addresses including Forces . . . 15p

From 1 July 1971

To all addresses (U.K., overseas, including Forces) 20p

Full details of the 1971 special stamp programme are as follows:—

16 June 'Ulster 71' paintings

3p : 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ p : 9p

28 July **Literary anniversaries**

150th Anniversary of the death of John Keats, 3p; bicentenary of the death of Thomas Grey, 5p; bicentenary of the birth of Sir Walter Scott, 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ p.

25 August **General Anniversaries**

50th Anniversary of the British Legion, 3p; 1900th Anniversary of the Founding of the City of York, 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ p; Centenary of the Rugby Football Union, 9p.

22 September **British Architecture Series**

Modern University buildings 3p, 5p, 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ p, 9p.

October **Christmas Stamps**

The actual issue date will be announced later. 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ p, 3p, 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ p.

Special Handstamps

'International Police Association 21st Anniversary British Section Southampton' will be used at Southampton from 19–23 April 1971.

'NEPA 21st Convention 17 April 1971 Hexham Northumberland' will be used at Hexham.

'Methodist Church Centenary 1871–1971 13 March 1971 Market Harborough Leics' will be used at Leicester.

'Market Harborough Methodist Church Centenary – 13 March 1971' will be in use at Leicester on Saturday 13 March 1971. A special posting box will be provided in Market Harborough Methodist Church on that day.

The design of the stamp is rectangular and includes as a motif the old Market Harborough Grammar School.

'The Worcestershire and Sherwood Foresters Regimental Birthday Exhibition Worcester 28 February 1971. British Forces 1224 Postal Service'. Items for reposting should be sent to Capt. A. W. Tarbett, RE, Room 505, First Avenue House, High Holborn, London WC1V 6HE.

'Birthday Exhibition, The Worcestershire and Sherwood Foresters Nottingham 28 February 1971 British Forces 1223 Postal Service.' Items for reposting should be sent to Capt. A. W. Tarbett, RE, Room 505, First Avenue House, High Holborn, London WC1V 6HE.

Postmark Slogans

Visit Shakespeare's Town will continue in use at Stratford-on-Avon from 1 January to 31 December 1971.

The Ulster 71 Festival will be used at 28 Offices including Armagh, Ballymena, Belfast, Coleraine, Londonderry and Omagh, for the period 8-20 February, 1-13 March, 12-24 April, 10-21 May, 7-12 June and 21-26, 5-12 July and 9-21 August 1971.

Holiday St Ives Cornwall will be used at Solihull from 21 December 1970 to 29 May 1971.

Come over the Sea to Skye will be used at Portree Isle of Skye from 28 December 1970-27 June 1971.

Decimal Currency in the Post Office Take a Leaflet will be used at 1166 Offices including London WCDO, Colchester, Birmingham, Leeds, Manchester, Brighton, Bristol, Edinburgh, Belfast and Cardiff from 1-28 February 1971.

Nurse in Historic Bury St Edmunds has been used from 24 December 1970 and not 7 December as previously announced.

Dudley Zoo, Brierley Hill, Coseby, Dudley, Sedgley for Shopping and Free Car Parks will continue in use at Dudley until 21 July 1971.

Durham Charities Rag Week 1971

27 February-6 March will be used at Durham from 14 February to 6 March 1971.

Select Bexhill on Sea. Quiet Clean Good Music Theatre Free Colour Folders or PO is for Town Guide to Publicity Department BPO Bexhill on Sea Sussex will be re-used until 30 April 1971.

You can play Bowls all the year round at Bexhill will be re-used from 1-31 May 1971.

Bexhill on Sea Regatta Sailing and Rowing will be re-used from 1 June to 31 July 1971.

Bexhill on Sea Ideal for children will be re-used from 1-31 August 1971.

Bexhill on Sea Desirable Residential Resort will be re-used from 1-30 September 1971.

Bexhill on Sea for Autumn Holidays will be re-used from 1-31 October 1971.

Miles of Curving Golden Sand Whitley Bay Northumberland will continue in use at Whitley Bay until 3 January 1972.

Amendment to Wolverhampton is on your way postmark slogan to read 16 November-13 July not 31 July 1971.

Nottingham Festival 10-20 July 1971 will be used at Nottingham from 14 January to 30 June 1971.

Cirencester Capital of the Cotswolds will now be used at Gloucester from 25 January to 8 February 1971.

Tenby send for guide 10p (2/-) room 7 Guildhall will be used at Tenby from 3 February until further notice.

South of England Show Ardingly (Sussex) June 10-11-12 will be used at Haywards Heath from 1 May to 9 June 1971.

Consett Co Durham Industrial Sites with all Services available will continue in use at Consett from 1 February 1971 to 31 January 1972.

Hull-Gateway to Europe will continue to be used at Hull until 12 September 1971.

Hull THE City on Humber, Humber Bridge building starts 1972 will be used at Hull from 15 February to 12 September 1971.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Sir,

I would like to take up the challenge issued by my namesake (no relationship) in his letter, published in the November issue, and comment on the quality of current British stamp design.

Firstly, I do not subscribe to the suggestion that most philatelists are not influenced by the design of the stamps they collect. On the contrary, and for many reasons, I believe that the quality of stamp design and the printing processes used are most important to philately. Whether or not a philatelist is conscious of it, design and quality of production do influence his choice of countries when he advances to the stage of specialisation. I have been a keen philatelist for over 50 years and for the same period have earned a reasonable comfortable living as a graphic designer in the printing industry. Consequently, in appreciating minuscular design and its reproduction, I probably get more pleasure than most out of our hobby.

In my opinion, 'good' British stamps are the exception rather than the rule, and I point to the high quality design and reproduction to be seen in the modern stamps of West Germany. Here, all the available printing processes – intaglio (recess printing to the philatelist); photogravure; letterpress (surface printing); lithography and die-stamping (embossing) – are used in their right place to maximum advantage, usually with beautiful results. Here in Britain we appear to have a one-track mind which knows only photogravure, which is quite unsuitable for so many of the designs chosen. Hence the disasters which often occur. Obviously there is no technical cohesion between our design selectors, the designers, the artists, the production technicians and the printers. Do the selectors understand the advantages of the various printing processes available? Do the designers design for a specific process? Are the printers ever consulted on the best process for the chosen design? Are the artists expertly briefed in the techniques required? I very much doubt it!

Compare the various Churchill memorial stamps of 1965. Britain used broad open-line characterless drawings, which might have stood a chance with letterpress, and then printed them by photogravure (developed to

deal with the delicate tones of the original photograph) over mucky solid backgrounds. Disaster was inevitable. The USA, on the other hand, relied solely on the beauty of the engraver's art and printed their 5c by intaglio in simple black, retaining all the Churchillian characteristics captured by Karsh's photograph – a beautiful result and a great tribute to a great man.

The designs selected for the Cathedrals series were primarily bad, being concocted from architectural elevations with shadows added to simulate perspective and then botched up with incongruous colour washes in an abortive attempt to add variety. Seven machinings in all and the result was a fiasco because the photogravure broke up the fine lines whilst trying to save the shadows. Have our stamp producers never heard of litho for handling this problem. Compare them with the fairly numerous simple, but rather beautiful, W. German stamps depicting architectural subjects.

And the latest GB effort – The Philypia set! A grand idea for basic design but 'murdered' instead of being properly executed. Why, in heaven's name, were the original printing processes not used? – for reproducing the stamps. And please don't tell me that it was uneconomic to do so. I know better. West Germany can do it repeatedly for low value stamps, even mixing processes on the same stamp and getting wonderful results in fine register.

Britain can print just as well as Germany – we've got the designers, engravers and artists too – but apparently the British Post Office doesn't know about it. Will you please tell them?

Unlike my namesake, I am *not* a Gentleman fan, but

Yours truly

H. G. YOUNG

**From the Director of
Design, Postal Services**

It doesn't necessarily follow from Mr. Young's obvious dislike of our stamps that they are

badly designed; they are just not to his taste.

It could be argued that we would be less prone to criticism if we kept to traditional patterns of design and production, instead of trying to produce stamps of our own time. It so happens that we live in the 1970s.

The Churchill issue, which Mr. Young quotes, is typical. Both the American stamps and our own were derived from the same source, Karsh's photograph of the great man. The difference between the two stamps is entirely one of design intent and the way in which two designers envisaged the final result.

David Gentleman's design was not conceived as an engraved stamp, but that doesn't necessarily diminish its value as a piece of extremely good contemporary design. Admittedly the stamp could have been printed equally well by litho, letterpress or gravure without damaging the initial design concept.

For Philympia, the only way by which we could have used the original processes for printing this issue would have been by engraving new plates and dies, which would have produced 'copies' rather than 'reproductions' of the originals. For obvious reasons we chose to 'reproduce' the original stamps as faithfully as modern printing techniques allow, by photogravure. The result was an outstanding example of long-run stamp production.

We take great pains to ensure the closest co-operation between ourselves, our designers and our printers, all of whom are fully aware of the problems of stamp production. The advice and guidance we receive from the Stamp Advisory Committee is highly professional in the many disciplines which contribute to the production of stamps.

If at times we fail to attain the high standards we set ourselves, within the very tight limits imposed by a sizeable stamp programme, it is not for the reasons that Mr. Young alleges.

STUART ROSE

is a member of the Stamp Advisory Committee. He is the main point of design contact between stamp designers, the printers, and the Committee and is responsible for the direction of designs submitted to the Committee.

He is himself a graphics designer.

Dear Sir,

Relative to the subject of the design of postage stamps I would point out that the use of religious motifs for stamps which should be usable by all citizens and despatchable to all of their friends both here and abroad is inept, to say the least. Nor is it sensible to make them distasteful to millions in other countries.

A large portion of the public are non-Christians and are as much entitled as the remainder to participate in the festival of goodwill and family reunion and to send greetings to their relatives and friends. The position is even worse when, as happened last year, the only stamps available were those of the special issue. Postage stamps are a part of the national services and should provide that service in equal measure to all citizens.

So much for the basis of design but even had the basis for the Christmas issues been acceptable last year and this the execution is open to question. I am surprised that last year the Christians did not protest at the near-blasphemy of the wise men bringing presents to the Queen. This year it requires a powerful lens to make out some of the detail and even then it is so difficult that Sally Stiff herself mistakes for his crown the lid of the jar proffered by the central figure.

Yours sincerely

W. W. J. TROLLOPE (LRIBA)

Surbiton, Surrey

Dear Sir,

I wonder if First Day Cover Collectors reading this can suggest a way to press or What? FDCs that have been crumpled in delivery, without damage to the cover itself and the stamps.

L. H. VIDLER

Bexleyheath, Kent

Editor's note: Stuart Rose, a Past President of the Society of Industrial Artists and Designers,

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