

Philatelic Bulletin

Volume 15 Number 1 September 1977



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Editorial

The specialist, it is said, is one who knows more and more about less and less, and while there may be a grain of truth in the idea it is not a view to which we subscribe. We have always tried to produce a Bulletin which while not aimed solely at specialists tries to meet the needs of a wide range of collectors. We leaven the more basic features with the occasional 'in depth' study of a particular branch. We are, however, conscious

that some esoteric collectors seek to study in greater detail and it is to those who have an interest in modern stamps that we recommend the British Decimal Stamp Study Circle. We have recently had the opportunity of perusing their journal 'Guidec' and have been impressed with the depth and originality of the research published. The specialist is well catered for and anyone who requires detailed information on the very many facets of modern stamps which the Bulletin cannot provide will, we are sure, find membership worthwhile. Full details may be obtained from A C Craigen, 28 Highclere Drive, HEMEL HEMPSTEAD, Herts HP3 8BY. A stamped addressed envelope should be enclosed.

1977 Christmas Stamps

This years Christmas stamps will be based on the traditional carol, 'The Twelve Days of Christmas'. The issue will consist of 5 set-tenant 7p stamps and 1 at the 9p value. All will be printed in the horizontal format.

British Stamps in Gibbons' Gallery

A twelve frame display of Major General Sir Leonard Atkinson's award winning GB stamps will be on show at Stanley Gibbons' Romano House Gallery, 399 Strand, London WC2, between 1-30 September. The gallery is open to the public on weekdays.

On show will be 1d blacks and 2d blues from 1840 including a used block of 10 from plate 5 and a mint block from plate 11. The 1d red of 1841 is represented, among others, by mint blocks and large marginal pieces together with a frame of Maltese Cross cancellations.

In addition to these gems are three frames of embossed issues 1847-1854 which show the use of these stamps in multiples on covers to various parts of the world.

The material formed part of a display which won a gold medal at Belgica 72 and Stockholmia 74.

Gems from the RM Phillips Collection

XLIX Treasury Competition Essays



Envelopes by an Unknown Competitor

In the late summer of 1839, Rowland Hill, newly installed at the Treasury, was deluged by over 2,500 suggestions and designs relating to the prepayment of letters, sent in by 'artists, men of science and the public in general' from all over Britain and even from the Continent.

These proposals were submitted in response to the public competition announced by the Treasury on 23 August 1839. The Reginald M Phillips Collection in the National Postal Museum contains a magnificent selection of these Treasury competition essays, second only to that in the collection of HM the Queen.

All the submissions received, on arrival, a reference number in a distinctive form as follows 'T No 1000/39'. Unfortunately, no record now exists of the authors of many of the more interesting essays.

Among the unknown competitors is the originator of a set of hand-drawn letter sheets collectively identified as 'T No 20912'. Illustrated above is letter sheet No 4 described as a 'general County Envelope', and ornamented on the left with a purple croix patté. The RM Phillips Collection also includes letter sheets numbers 8 and 9 both bearing the device of a thistle on the left and described as 'District Scotland' and 'general Scotland' respectively.

Only eight letter sheets survive out of the eleven or more designs submitted as T No 20912. Since the Post Office Collection has the two Ireland envelopes (Nos 6 and 7) visitors to the National Postal Museum can see no fewer than five out of the surviving eight in this most attractive set of 1839 Treasury Essays.

A G RIGO DE RIGHI

Stamps for Pleasure

8. Printing Flaws and Varieties

It is difficult to imagine a connoisseur of Ming porcelain rejoicing in the discovery of a cracked vase, or a collector of books finding pleasure in misprinted or misbound works. The average stamp collector is probably unique — like a dog with two tails — in attaching importance and, optimistically, a significant value to the discovery of a printing error or flaw on a stamp. Having dealt with collectors' queries for many years (and at the risk of being shot down in flames by printers, chemists and others involved in stamp production), I want to discuss some of the more common varieties which may be found on stamps, how they are caused and how one can identify them.

We no longer have engraved stamps, but there have been some excellent issues in the past, notably the KGV 'Seahorses' of 1913-18 and the QE 'Castles' of 1955-58 and 1959-68. Both series were printed in turn by different firms and the 'classic' variety of recess or line-engraved stamps — the 're-entry' — may be found on them, appearing as a doubling of part of the design. Briefly, the design image on the 'master die' is impressed on the 'transfer roller' and again transferred, by the procedure known as 'rocking in', as often as eventually required to form a sheet of stamps, to the surface of the printing plate or cylinder. A 're-entry' occurs when a faint or faulty impression on the plate is not completely erased before a second rocking in, and duplication occurs.

Modern British stamps are printed by the photogravure process (the printers call it 'gravure'), and first it must be said that printing standards are high. The prevalence of minor printing flaws — the 'flyspecks' of philately — is the merest fraction of the output of the printers who are called upon to produce millions of stamps day by day, by a process which requires the most complicated and exacting procedures even before the presses begin to run.

Photogravure is a form of recess printing — the original artwork is photographed and transferred in various stages to the printing cylinder on which the multiple design images are etched. Proof sheets are taken and any flaws are made

good by hand-engraving on the cylinder. These 'retouches' may be seen on the printed stamps as a cluster of tiny coloured dots filling a small white patch — usually the most interesting of varieties as they are constant on the identical stamp in the same location in every sheet printed from that particular cylinder. Some flaws are corrected after a printing run and it is then possible to find the 'before and after' versions.

Missing colours (which means that part of the design is missing as well) on the multicoloured special issues are few and far between — hence their value to collectors is considerably enhanced. The classic example is the missing Queen's head on the 3d. National Productivity Year stamp of 1962, currently valued at several hundred pounds. It happens, I believe, when a press is gradually slowed to a stop for maintenance or at the end of a shift.

I mentioned the common 'doctor-blade' flaws and colour shifts in my March article on 'Ink, Gum and Phosphor'. It sometimes happens that what appears to be a missing colour in part of the design is in fact a shift which has caused the 'missing' portion to be absorbed by another section of the design. I recently saw a 3d Forth Road Bridge stamp of 1964 on which, due to a variation in registration of the violet colour, the ship's funnel, lower left, had become submerged in the black superstructure of the bridge and was virtually invisible.

The apparent doubling of the gold embossed head of the Queen on contemporary commemorative issues is another example of faulty registration. Originally the small gold heads could be removed with a hard eraser, and the embossed heads are now superimposed on identical flat-printed heads to foil the villains! The doctor (or 'conductor') blade is a fixed steel blade mounted on a heavy base which moves from side to side across the path of the revolving printing cylinder as it skims off the surplus ink. The transverse motion alleviates wear and tear and facilitates the removal of debris — it also accounts for the slight deviation from the vertical of the characteristic hairline flaws.

Further to my March article, I would like to

correct a few gremlin-inspired inaccuracies which appeared therein — dextrin (or dextrine) is an adhesive, not a whitening agent; phosphor-banding and -coating were completely new developments, similar only in modus operandi to the original graphite lines; and of course the 'all-over' phosphor 'special' stamps mentioned were phosphor-gravure printed, not on phosphor-coated paper. Lastly, for 'fractionating' read 'fracturing'. My thanks to Aubrey Walker for putting me right on these matters.

With so many stamps being printed and used, both in sheet and booklet form, the current 'Machin' definitives are a prolific source of flaws for the variety collector. Most common are the fortuitous coloured dots and dashes, the white patches where ink has been stripped off (which we nonchalantly call 'dry prints'), and the oddities such as broken figures and letters, 'extra pearls' or 'missing pearls' in the Queen's earring and necklace, ad infinitum, all of which, if constant and recurring on the same stamp in every sheet, are of interest to the collector.

Fine, thin lines and letters, especially script lettering, do not reproduce well by photo-gravure, and the resulting faint impressions are best ignored. One's passion for extraneous spots and blobs can be appeased by a study of the Scottish lion and the Welsh dragon on the Regional issues: extra toes on these beasts are not uncommon!

Phosphor bands, too, tend to be fickle. Varieties such as misplaced, doubled or missing bands are commonly found, while the ultimate in perforation varieties — the imperforate stamp — could bring you a small fortune. Happy hunting!

JAMES WATSON

New Stanley Gibbons Catalogue

Stanley Gibbons Publication Ltd announce new editions of three of their postage stamp catalogues.

The eightieth edition of the **BRITISH COMMONWEALTH** and the third edition of **EUROPE 2** catalogues appeared in August, and

the forty-third edition of **STAMPS OF THE WORLD**, the only one-volume catalogue of its kind, will be published towards the end of September.

The Great Britain Decimal Stamp Book Study Circle

The sixth AGM of The Great Britain Decimal Stamp Book Study Circle will be held on Saturday 8 October 1977 at the Albright and Wilson Club, Langley, Oldbury, Nr Birmingham. The meeting will commence at 11 am and non-members are cordially invited to attend.

For further information, including a detailed route map, please contact Mr J F A Spiteri, 18 Henlow Close, Tipton, West Midlands DY4 8BE.

Stampex 1978 28 February – 4 March

We are taking this opportunity of reminding readers who propose to enter for the Post Office Trophy at 'Stampex 78' that entry forms are now obtainable, upon request, from Stampex Ltd., 27 John Adam Street, LONDON WC2N 6HZ.

For those who are contemplating exhibiting their collections for the first time, we plan to include in the October Bulletin an article specially written by Dr Jean Alexander, herself a winner of the trophy in 1970.

Lit-Phil

'Lit-Phil' is a philatelic society specialising in the thematic study of famous writers and their works. Founded over three years ago, the society now has a membership of sixty which extends to countries outside the United Kingdom. For further details please write to: Mr Robert A Dunbar, 7 Lester Terrace, Magherafelt, Co Derry, Northern Ireland.

British Stamps as seen Through the Eyes of a German Philatelist

It's a nice and informative game, to study the relationship between a country and the occasions, frequency, quantity and design of the postage stamps it issues. They, the stamps, reflect how a country likes to be presented. There is no doubt as to their effect on philatelists abroad who like to look for the detail in these small coloured stickers on their letters; sometimes terribly disfigured by a black postmark.

As far as British postage stamps are concerned, I think that there is a perfect blending of the search for beauty by the designer and the desire for operational efficiency by the Post Office. It is said of old photographs that, 'as often in the history of art, the works of the very beginning are the most perfect ones'. One can refer this to the design of the first British stamps without hesitation.

For many years the annual production of British commemorative postage stamps, compared with other countries, has been limited and generally this has pleased the average collector. Nevertheless collectors still discover distinguishing marks between one stamp and another printed from the same plate.

They discovered also differences in plate numbers and corner letters of the very early stamps, in the watermarks, and in recent years the phosphor experiments. All these distinctions the German collector finds interesting and enlivening.

There is no doubt that the continuing high quality of printing, which marks a long tradition, is appreciated by most collectors. The design of both definitive and commemorative stamps is always excellent, tasteful and constant in style. I am of the opinion that the latest definitive set is a jewel in design and colour. A good example of a sense of style can be seen in the redesigned £1 stamp issued in 1972. Many collectors may well have thought it just another opportunity to sell more stamps, but I agree with the design.

The frequency with which commemorative stamps are issued in Britain follows a proven rule, which is convenient to counter officials and the customers. Other countries have different

stamp policies with more frequent issues, but I think that the British policy is one which is generally acceptable to most philatelists.

All postal administrations prefer to depict subjects on their stamps which reflect the national heritage of the country, including its history, social and cultural activities, its contributions to the arts, science and literature. British postage stamps fulfil these requirements admirably and is why we in Germany are eager to collect them.

An interesting feature of your stamps is the absence of the name of your country. Traditionally the profile of the monarch is sufficient to identify a British stamp, and has been since 1840 when you were responsible for issuing the World's first adhesive postage stamps.

Only Great Britain issues 'regional' or 'country' definitive stamps. This I understand to be a recognition of the national characteristics of the three sister countries in the United Kingdom.

Cancelling to order, or the cancelling of mint stamps not postally used is a common enough practice in many other countries, but not in Britain. I understand that British collectors on the whole prefer their covers to have passed through the operational system.

Phosphor experiments on British stamps has resulted in the application of a lower wavelength than in other countries, which means for worldwide philatelists the necessity of obtaining a special UV-lamp for study purposes.

Finally I would like to say that it is not difficult for me to be impressed by the sense of occasion brought about by the issue of a set of commemorative stamps of your country. An interesting and useful supplement to the stamps is the presentation pack, full of background information and a method of keeping the contents in good condition. I wonder, however, how many of these packs are sold, and how closely the occasions are studied by British philatelists.

Editor's Note

HORST ZEISIG
Dual frequency UV lamps suitable for the study of all stamps are readily available in Britain.

The First Airmails to and from London and Glasgow October 1919

In September 1919 the railwaymen came out on strike throughout the United Kingdom, with the result that long distance transport came to a halt. Some aeroplane companies immediately started carrying passengers and goods, and then, on September 29th, it was announced that:

'The Postmaster General has given notice that by arrangement with the Air Ministry services by aeroplane for the conveyance of letters only will be set up on and from September 30th, between London and the following towns: Birmingham, Bristol, Newcastle, Manchester and Glasgow.

Letters that are intended for these services should be prepaid at the ordinary inland rate of postage, and, in addition, a special fee of 2/- per ounce for each letter should be prepaid in stamps at the time of posting. Such letters should be handed in over the counter at the offices shown below not later than the times stated. They will be sent out by the next ordinary delivery after arrival at the post office of destination. TIMES OF POSTING: GPO (King Edward Building) not later than 9 p.m.; West Central District Office (High Holborn) not later than 8 p.m.; Western District Office (Wimpole Street) not later than 8 p.m. The present service is experimental and the arrangements will be subject to modification in the light of experience. If the service is found to meet public needs, it is hoped to extend it to other towns.'

The London-Glasgow and Glasgow-London services were the most popular routes with a total of 544 postal items being flown northwards and 824 items flown southwards between Wednesday 1st October and Monday 6th October. It is thought that there was a maximum of nine flights in all, northwards on the 1st, 3rd, 4th(?), 5th and 6th October and southwards on the 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th October.

The first flight from London (Hounslow) to Glasgow (Renfrew) was carried out using a Blackburn Kangaroo, piloted by Mr. R. W. Kenworthy, "One of Blackburn's best pilots." The plane with its two 250 HP Rolls Falcon

engines was probably in the livery of the North Sea Aerial Navigation Co., a Blackburn subsidiary set up the previous April. Mr. Kenworthy left Hounslow at 8 a.m. on the 1st, but did not reach Glasgow until 24 hours later. Stops were made at Hendon (fog), Doncaster (to refuel), Newcastle (bad weather) and Edinburgh—Turnhouse (overnight stop). The mail consisted mainly of business letters for Glasgow, Edinburgh and the North.

Mr. Kenworthy stopped overnight in Glasgow and then piloted the first southbound flight using the same plane on the 3rd. Leaving Renfrew at 7.30 a.m., Hounslow was reached in five hours after a non-stop flight following the main East Coast railway line. Passengers were carried as well as the mail which included correspondence from Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Dundee in addition to that from Glasgow. From that day on a plane left Renfrew at 7.30 every morning. The service was well regarded in Glasgow, the *Glasgow Herald* for October 7th, commenting: 'Yesterday saw the conclusion of the aerial mail service which accomplished such excellent work between Glasgow and London last week.'

No doubt a number of different planes were used on this service. Stroud mentions the use of the Aircraft and Travel Co's DH 10, G-EAJO on flights to Renfrew and a letter from London to Dundee has been seen inscribed 'By Handley Page Post.'

Richard Beith.

Reprinted from 'Air Mail News' by kind permission of the Editor.

The City of Chester and District Philatelic Society

The City of Chester and District PS will hold a Stamp Fair at the Chester Town Hall on Saturday 8 October 1977. The programme will include a competition, displays of postal history and thematic exhibits by senior and junior society members. The Post Office and a number of philatelic dealers will be in attendance.

British Wildlife
Commemorative Issue 5 October 1977



This issue of 5 se-tenant stamps featuring some of the creatures included in the wildlife family of Britain, comes at a time when interest in nature conservation is increasing. It is important that this interest in the countryside and its fauna is encouraged so that the future of our wildlife is assured.

Printing Details

Designer: Patrick Oxenham
 Printer: Harrison & Sons Ltd
 Process: Photogravure
 Format: Vertical
 Size: 30×41 mm
 Perforation: 14×15

Paper: Coated unwatermarked
 Gum: PVA Dextrin
 Sheet No: 100
 Values and colours: 5 9p se-tenant: yellow, carmine, new blue, reddish-brown, grey-black, gold.

Postcards

Postcard reproductions of each of the five Wildlife postage stamps, will be available during the early part of October from the Philatelic Bureau, all philatelic counters, and selected main post offices, price 7p each.



The King's Stamps 1910 – 35 – Part 7

The Choice of Colours

From the very beginning of the new reign there had been a breakaway in the fields of design and printing from the ideas and practices of the past twenty-five years; the same was to be true of the choice of colours for the new Georgian set of 14 low values from $\frac{1}{2}d$ to 1/-.

The colours of the stamps current at the time of King Edward's death were essentially those of the so-called 'Jubilee' (1887) issue of Queen Victoria. However, after 1901 there were a few changes in certain values; the One Penny became red and the $\frac{2}{3}d$ blue to conform with Universal Postal Union (UPU) regulations and the 4d and 6d were in single colours, which made them cheaper to print. A single colour 2d was also due to come out just at the time of the King's death. It became famous as the unissued 2d Tyrian plum but its sudden revocation owed as much to its inherently unstable colour as to the untimely death of the King.

During the summer of 1910 the Post Office had put a proposal to four Dominions — Australia, Canada, New Zealand and South Africa — that the stamps of the new reign should conform to a uniform imperial colour scheme, but as the answers were non-committal it was decided that the United Kingdom should proceed independently.

However strong the desire for a complete change of colours, as well as designs, from the previous issue, in practice the choice of colours was in the main governed by a variety of operational (rather than aesthetic) requirements which were spelled out in a GPO minute dated 1 November 1910.

The first point made in this minute concerned the imperative obligation imposed by Universal Postal Union regulations, to use green, red and blue for the foreign printed matter ($\frac{1}{2}d$) foreign postcard (1d) and foreign letter ($\frac{2}{3}d$) rates respectively. The $\frac{1}{2}d$ and 1d stamps were also required for the vital domestic postcard and letter rates. This also meant that colours closely resembling these three had to be avoided for most other values.

A further important obligation (about which the Treasury were adamant) was to use a highly

fugitive ink, in practice a shade of purple, for the sixpenny value which was principally used for revenue purposes.

There were also a number of minor considerations to be borne in mind, such as the need to avoid using, if possible, grey and brown for values used on letters (1d-2d) or parcels (4d-7d) respectively since pale blue and grey paper was predominantly used in making envelopes and brown used for wrapping paper. There was also the cost factor — bi-coloured stamps or those printed on coloured paper were normally more expensive than values printed in one colour on white paper.

As important as these positive obligations was the general need to avoid at all costs, in a single stamp series, several colours which were so alike that under poor lighting conditions they would be readily mistaken one for the other. The ghost of the 1882-84 'Unified' issue still haunted the Post Office!

The minute of 1 November 1910 also made the very important point that design and colour were directly related, in that the true visual impact of any particular colour could only be judged effectively in relation to the design it was to be used for. Later complaints that the colour of certain stamps, eg the 1912 orange Twopenny, was not bright or strong enough was sometimes due to the lack of areas of solid colour in the design.

There were to be 14 values in the new $\frac{1}{2}d$ to 1/- definitive series. To separate these effectively it was to prove necessary to use both colour and design consciously; therefore no effective overall colour scheme could be worked out until all the designs — and their use for particular values had been agreed.

This work of selection started at the beginning of November 1910, by which time frame designs by Mackennal and Eve had been selected and mostly allocated to specific values in the complete set, and a common head die (based on the Downey photograph) had been engraved. The GPO then asked the Inland Revenue (Somerset House) on 3 November to make a range of preliminary colour essays using the approved art-

work of the two Eve designs.

These essays, delivered on 14 December, were made from half-tone blocks supplied by Messrs Hentschel,* (see *Philatelic Bulletin* Vol 14, No 8, April 1977, p10).

The half-tone essays of 14 December — which used only the (prototype) 'wreath' and 'pillar' designs by George Eve in 3d and 7d values — included in their extensive range of colours all those currently in use for the single-colour Edward VII values, as well as the brown colour proposed for the unissued 1910 1½d, and the 'bright purple' used for the abortive 2d Tyrian plum.

In fact little use seems to have been made of these early colour essays because on 28 December the GPO asked the Inland Revenue to furnish 'further advance proofs' for each design 'now that approved designs for all the stamps have been sent to you'. These colour essays, now printed from Hentschel zinc blocks, were supplied on February 14 (½d-3d values), 17 (6d-

9d) and 18 (10d and 1/-), 1911.

The first formal, albeit provisional, scheme of colours for the whole range of values from ½d to 1/- was suggested on 18 February by Sir Matthew Nathan, Secretary to the Board of Inland Revenue. It included, for the first time since 1876, an Eightpenny value.

**In previous articles the suppliers of the December 1910 half-tone blocks, and of the 1911-12 zinc line blocks, were named as 'Messrs Heutschel and Co'. In April 1977 Mr Leslie Brown of Birchington-on-Sea wrote to us to say that he had worked for Carl Hentschel, who ran a large Process Engravers business in the City of London both before and after World War I. Mr Brown said that Hentschel claimed to have invented the half-tone block and the zinc line block. In view of Mr Brown's evidence we shall, from here onwards, attribute the half-tone and zincograph colour essays of 1910-12 to (Carl) Hentschel.*

A G RIGO DE RIGHI and ALAIN DE CADENET

British Special Stamps

34. Salvation Army Centenary

Sentiment, with perhaps just a touch of nostalgia, ensured a welcome for the two commemorative stamps issued by the Post Office on 9 August 1965 to honour the centenary of the least militant of all armies — the admirable and ubiquitous Salvation Army. Attractively coloured and designed, the 3d and 1s 6d stamps depicted the popular image of the Salvationists — the brass band on the street corner on a Sunday afternoon, and the pseudo-military yet distinctive uniforms of male and female personnel.

The 3d stamp was M C Farrar Bell's first design since his 1s 6d Coronation stamp of 1953, and is commendable in his bold conception of bandsmen and, left background, the inclusion of the famous 'Blood and Fire' banner. For the 1s 6d, the artist, Geoffrey Trenaman, a newcomer to stamp design, sketched three salvation-

ists in stylised form, grouped around the partly unfurled banner. The stamp has the same bright colours as the 3d, with yellow, red and cerise in prominence.

Michael Farrar Bell, FRSA, who also designed the 'Wilding' 2½d, 3d and 4d (later the 4½d) definitives of 1952-54 and several Commonwealth issues, was educated at Harrow, and studied drawing at the Edinburgh College of Art. About 1932 he joined his father's firm of Clayton and Bell, stained glass designers and manufacturers, becoming the fourth generation in the ancient craft. He became a master glass painter, and after camouflage work with the Royal Engineers during World War II, he became involved with stamps through his long-standing friendship with Brian Coulton of Harrison and Sons.

Geoffrey Trenaman studied at Brighton



College of Art, and then worked in publishing and advertising, and was experienced in graphic design, both as lecturer and freelance practitioner. His design replaced Farrar Bell's essay for the 1s 6d stamp, which was used for the 3d. The two designs, more or less uniform in format, with the Queen's 'Wilding' portrait on the right, were criticised at the time of issue on the grounds that the style of lettering used for the commemorative inscriptions were at variance — block capitals (3d) versus capitals and lower-case letters (1s 6d).

The Salvation Army, an international religious organisation, was founded in 1865 when William Booth (1829-1912), a Methodist minister, started a mission in Whitechapel, London's East End, which gradually expanded to the extent that, in 1878, the movement was reorganised on semi-military lines, named the Salvation Army, and staffed by officers given military ranks and uniforms.

As part of its worldwide social welfare work, the Salvation Army tends the sick and needy, and controls homes of rest, hostels, workshops, farms, schools, hospitals and other institutions. General Booth was succeeded by his son, William Bramwell Booth, in 1912. At the present time there are more than a thousand corps (churches) and upwards of two thousand officers engaged in evangelistic and social work in Britain alone.

The stamps were photogravure-printed by Harrison & Sons in sheets of 120 (6×20) on

ordinary and phosphor-banded paper, watermark 'multiple crowns'. There is a flaw in the Queen's diadem on the 3d value, both ordinary and phosphor, constant on row 16, stamp 6, in the sheet, and an 'extra pearl' in the Queen's necklace on the 1s 6d, also constant, on row 17, stamp 1.

Quantities issued (phosphor in brackets) were: 3d 54,312,000 (4,261,200); 1s 6d 5,244,120 (652,320). No presentation packs were issued.

Victorian Business Stationery

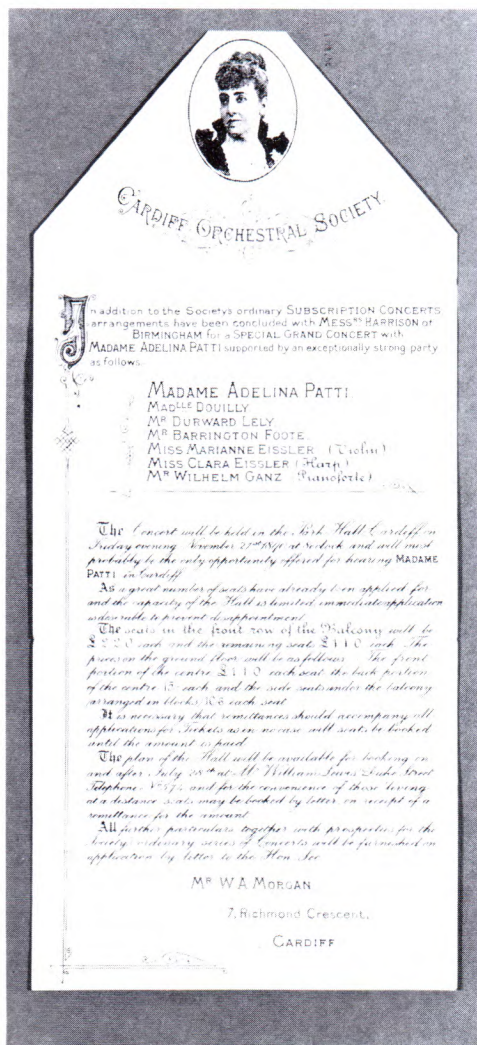


In June we reproduced a fine example of Victorian business stationery, and as a result we have since received a further example from Mr A E Bissenden of Southend, Essex, to whom we are indebted.

This time the stationery advertises a special concert to be held in Cardiff on Friday 21

November 1890. The star attraction was the great soprano Madame Adelina Patti who was the idol of Victorian concert going public.

An interesting feature is that the flap of the cover bears the signature of the singer while the front displays a halfpenny QV Vermillion stamp cancelled with a 'square round' handstamp.



Forces Covers

A special commemorative cover bearing a 9p Silver Jubilee stamp is being issued on 1 October 1977 to mark the Golden Jubilee of the RASC/RCT association. The covers which will be cancelled with a special handstamp BFPS 1595 will be available from Colonel R F Discombe OBE, Controller RASC/RCT Association, Clayton Barracks, Aldershot, Hants GU11 2BX on and after 1 October 1977 at 30p each plus postage.

RAF Cover AD27 commemorates the Edam-busters, a team from the 1007 RAFA (Amsterdam) Squadron. The covers were flown on 26 June at Shoreham Air Day and are issued with a special commemorative handstamp (BFPS 1562). They are now available from The Philatelic Officer Corporal B Osborne, RAF Odiham, Basingstoke, Hants RG25 1QU, at 40p plus 7p postage.

RAF Cover AD28 commemorates the Norwegian Air Force aerobatic team, The Flying Jokers. The covers were flown by the team in their F5s at the International Air Tattoo at Greenham Common on 25/26 June. They are issued with a special commemorative handstamp (BFPS 1561) and are now available from The Philatelic Officer Flt. Lt. P Franklin, RAF Wattisham, Ipswich, Suffolk IP7 7RJ, at 35p plus 7p postage.

RAF Cover AD29 commemorates the Portuguese Air Force aerobatic team, Asas de Portugal (Wings of Portugal). The covers were flown at the International Air Tattoo, Greenham Common on 25/26 June in the team's Cessna T-37 twin jet trainers. The covers are issued with a special commemorative handstamp (BFPS 1561) and are available from The Philatelic Officer Flt. Lt. G M Ashley, RAF Personnel Management Centre, RAF Innsworth, Gloucester GL3 1HW, at 35p plus 7p postage.

All the proceeds from these covers will be devoted to the Battle of Britain Museum Appeal Fund.

RAF Cover AD 32 commemorates the Red Devils, the Parachute Regiment's Freefall Team. The covers, flown in a BN2a Islander and dropped from 7,000 feet in a freefall with the Red Devils, are issued with a special Woodford Air Show cancellation BFPS 1586.

They are now available from Mr J Eastlake, 26 Blotchington Hill, Seaford, Sussex BN25 2AL, price 35p plus 7p postage.

Plymouth Navy Days 1977

A special commemorative cover, designed with an illustration of the aircraft carrier HMS Ark Royal, was issued on 27 August to mark the occasion of Plymouth Navy Days 1977.

The cover bearing a 10p postage stamp, is cancelled with a special handstamp depicting an anchor and includes the BFPS number 1580 and the date.

The cost of the cover is 45p and is obtainable from:

The Philatelic Officer

HMS Drake

HM Naval Base

Devonport

PLYMOUTH PL2 2BG

Cheques and postal orders should be made payable to 'The Treasurer, Plymouth Navy Days'. All proceeds from sales will be donated to naval charities. There are still a limited number of Plymouth Navy Days 1976 covers available at 40p each.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Sir

Two of your correspondents in the July 'Bulletin' refer to the Charity Stamp issued in January 1975 and commented on the disappointing public response. In my opinion the chief reason for this was the stark and uninteresting design, which resembled the car sticker symbol for disabled drivers, and would not appeal to younger collectors who form a large percentage of the philatelic fraternity. Possibly also with the sharp rise in postal rates, the sur-

charge might have had a marginal effect on sales, but this would not be a major factor.

I am reminded of the beautiful 'Health' stamps issued by New Zealand and the fine 'Hurricane Relief' stamps issued by Cook Islands in 1968 which were overprinted on the definitive stamps. These have an instant appeal to collectors, and the extra charitable contribution is forgotten when appreciating the artistic value of the stamps.

Charity stamps should provide an inexpensive method of raising funds, and perhaps if more attractive designs were used, the venture would be more successful. After all it was an innovation for Great Britain to issue such stamps, and perhaps if it were an annual event, coupled say with the Christmas issue, it would gain in popularity. Why not revive one of the 'Paintings' series with an appropriate overprint (9p + 1p)?

Finally a plea for some alternative format for the 'Remember to use the Post Code' now appearing on inland mail and for some time past. The heavy block lettering often ruins a commemorative stamp. Why not use the normal round cancel on the stamp and place the slogan alongside where it can do no harm? The situation is not improved when it is realised that the code letters at present serve no useful purposes in speeding delivery of mail.

Yours faithfully

NEWQUAY, Cornwall

R S TREMBATH

Dear Sir

Having just read your July issue I feel I must make the effort and write to you. It is ironic that in this issue you have I D Crane rightly justifying the present shape of our stamps, but going on to say 'The current reasons for the four denominations are well known and frequently publicised. This is the current thinking and should be accepted' — and then you have the excellent letter from Adam Gordon of Ipswich regretting yet again the absence of second class mail stamps in commemorative issues.

Mr Gordon's letter is absolutely right and I intended to say exactly the same thing after you published your explanation following Mr

Smith's letter in the October 1976 issue. It is sad but true that very few of the letters one receives these days carries a commemorative stamp — many of them would if there was a low denomination value. Stamps should be for sticking on envelopes sent through the post and not quite so orientated to the needs of the philatelic trade.

I can understand that facers may find life easier if all commemorative stamps mean first class mail, but surely if the predominant colour of the commemoratives corresponded with the colours of the definitives this problem would be overcome.

It must be obvious from the frequent letters you get on this subject that many of your readers would like to see these lower value stamps issued. Statements like 'This is the current thinking and should be accepted' only serve to make people like me write letters to the editor. It may well be the current thinking but that is no reason at all why Mr Crane can dictate to us that it must be accepted.

Yours faithfully

Great Shelford, CAMBRIDGE R D LOCKE

Special Handstamps

Unless otherwise stated, items for reposting should bear ½p 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'.

6 September 1977 (P/R)

Showpex 77 6 Sept 1977 London W1.

Special posting box at 4th Floor, Napoleon Suite, Café Royal, 72 Regent Street, London W1R 6EL.

8-10 September 1977 (P/R)

Waddow Hall Training Centre 50 Years the Girl Guides Association Clitheroe Lancs. Special posting box at Waddow Hall.

13 September 1977 (C)

13 Sept 1977 Centenary of Manchester

Town Hall. Special posting box at the Town Hall, Albert Square, Manchester M60 2LA.

19 September 1977 (S/C)

21 Edinburgh Sept 19 1977. Special posting box at the Assembly Halls and Music Rooms, George Street, Edinburgh EH2 2LR.

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'.

25 July 1977-UFN

Guildford is a Mechanised Letter Office Please Use Postcodes. To be used at Guildford. 1st and 2nd class.

1 August 1977-UFN

Manchester is a Mechanised Letter Office Please Use Postcodes. To be used at Manchester. 1st and 2nd class.

5 September-29 October 1977 (P)

Mansfield Festival 7th-30th October 1977. To be used at Mansfield. 1st and 2nd class.

5-10 September 1977

Boys Brigade Council 9-11 September 1977 Manchester 77. To be used at Manchester Head Office. 1st class.

Repeat Campaigns

3 July-17 September 1977

Oldham North Central Ring Shaw 44411. To be reused at Oldham. 1st and 2nd class.

1 September 1977-31 August 1978

Sun Sea Scenery Haul Hwyl Heli Aberystwyth Brochure from Tourism PS DPT. To be reused at Aberystwyth. 1st class.

P denotes Pictorial

R denotes Rectangular

C denotes Circular

S/C denotes Semi Circular

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The annual subscription to the Philatelic Bulletin for 12 issues a year is £1.25 including postage by surface mail to anywhere in the world, or air mail to anywhere in Europe. For airmail to countries outside Europe the subscription is £2.15.

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