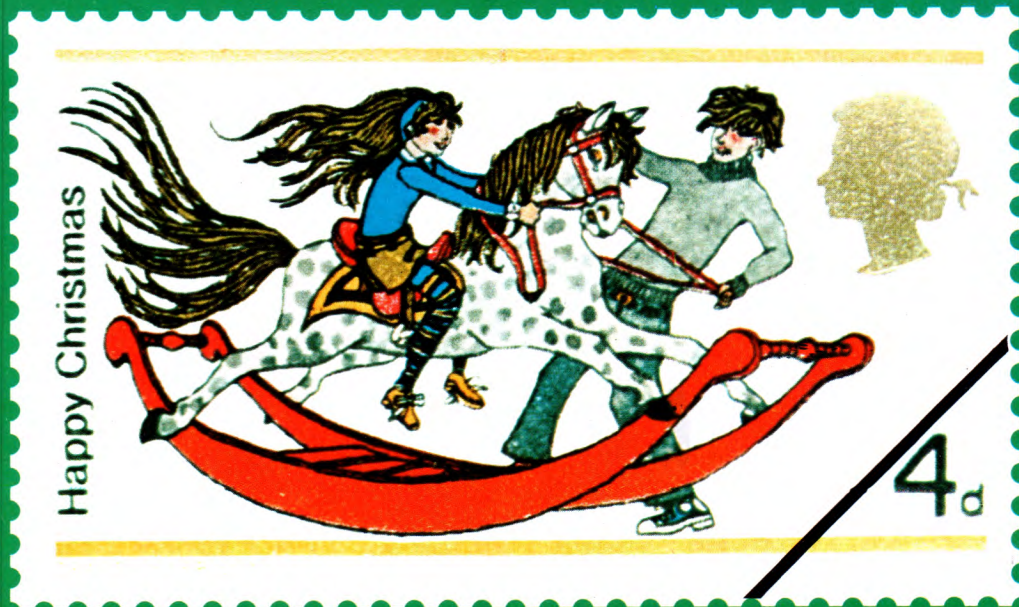


Philatelic Bulletin



Volume 6: Number 2 October 1968



Contents

INTRODUCTION	2
THE BRITISH PHILATELIC EXHIBITION 1968	3
THE LONELIEST PILLAR BOX	4
BULLETIN RENEWALS	4
CHRISTMAS AIR LETTERS	4
CHRISTMAS STAMPS	5
POSTMARK SLOGANS	6
SPECIAL HANDSTAMPS	7
THE BRITISH POSTAGE STAMP	
A REVIEW BY K. F. CHAPMAN	8
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR	14
SPECIAL 'GIFT' AND 'COLLECTORS' PACKS	15
BRITISH SHIPS	15
BUREAU NOTES	15
BUREAU TOPICS	15

Introduction

Most of this month's *Bulletin* is devoted to the background and a review of Robson Lowe's book *The British Postage Stamp of the Nineteenth Century* which is to be published by the National Postal Museum on 16 October 1968.

The book has been published for two reasons. Firstly to provide a comprehensive record of the collection formed by Reginald M. Phillips of Brighton and presented to the nation when he founded the National Postal Museum. Secondly, to provide a guide to the visitor as well as those collectors who are unable to visit the Museum.

We have asked Mr Kenneth Chapman to review the book and his excellent findings are given. Many of our readers will know that Mr Chapman has been editor of Britain's 55-year-old philatelic weekly, *Stamp Collecting*, for 17 years. For 20 years he has been Philatelic correspondent of *The Times*.

One of the very few professionals qualified to be a Fellow of the Royal Philatelic Society, London, he had the distinction of being Chairman of the Council of the British Philatelic Association and of the Executive of

Philatelic Congress of Great Britain concurrently for three years (1963-65) and is a long-standing member of the Council of the Philatelic Traders' Society.

His forty years of service to philately in general was recognized this year by the award of the Philatelic Congress Medal.

Mr Chapman is also one of the two philatelists invited to join the P.M.G.'s constituted Stamp Advisory Committee appointed by Mr Edward Short.

Mr Robson Lowe the author of the book is well known as a professional philatelist. He had edited *The Philatelist* for over 30 years and has written, compiled or edited *The Encyclopaedia of Empire Postage Stamps*, *The Hand-struck Postage Stamps of the Empire*, *The Postage Stamps of Great Britain* and *Sperati and his craft* an account of the master forger.

Mr Lowe has carried out research into Post Office records since 1926 and is interested in many aspects of postal history, philately and humanity.

In addition to his many other interests Robson Lowe is Philatelic advisor to the National Postal Museum.

The book is beautifully produced and has 280 pages. It is lavishly illustrated with 245 colour reproductions and 570 in black and white and we have no hesitation in recommending it to all who are interested in the history of British stamps.

It may be obtained price 75s post free from the Philatelic Bureau (an order form is enclosed with this *Bulletin*) from the Philatelic Counters at Glasgow, London, Liverpool and Blackpool or from booksellers.

The book will also be on sale at the British Philatelic Exhibition at Seymour Hall, London W1, where autographed copies may be obtained.

Details of this year's Christmas stamps are given and we are sure that the colour reproductions will whet our readers' appetites for them. We feel that their charm and simplicity will make them one of the most popular series we have ever issued.

The British Philatelic Exhibition 1968

Seymour Hall, Marble Arch, London W1

Wednesday 16 October to Saturday 19 October

When the fourth British Philatelic Exhibition opens on 16 October over 388 frames containing some 6208 pages from many well-known collectors will be on view. This all-competitive national stamp exhibition has attracted a record entry and the visitor will be able to enjoy not only a show of interesting and rare stamps but also rare letters and cancellations as well as modern study collections, aero-philately and thematics. A special section has been devoted to 'Youth' collections. There will also be a competitive class for Philatelic Literature.

For those who wish to add to their collection thirty well-known dealers have stands during the exhibition and material will be on sale to please all types of collectors from the beginning to the advanced specialist.

The Crown Agents will show a full range of the issues of the countries they represent.

The opening of the Exhibition coincides with the publication day of the National Postal Museums new book *The British Postage Stamp* written by Robson Lowe. It is the story of the famous R. M. Phillips Collection.

Visitors to the exhibition will be able to purchase this new book at 75s and copies signed by the author will be available.

The G.P.O. are staging a special exhibit and the Philatelic Bureau will have staff available to answer queries.

There will be a special Exhibition Post Office offering the full range of British stamps and to commemorate this exhibition four attractive one-day hand-stamps have been designed by Ernest Hugen they will be used to cancel mail posted at the exhibition Post Office. A souvenir envelope has also been designed showing the Outline of the British Isles printed in four different colours. They will be on sale at the exhibition at 6d each.

The Exhibition will be open on 16 October from 11 am to 7 pm on 17 and 18 October from 11 am to 8 pm and on 19 October from 10 am to 6 pm. Admission will be 2s 6d for adults and 1s for children.

Shown here are the four special hand-stamps to be used at Seymour Hall from 16 to 19 October 1968.

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THE BRITISH
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THE BRITISH
PHILATELIC
EXHIBITION
SEYMOUR
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The Loneliest Pillar Box

Deep in the heart of Dartmoor stands what must be one of the loneliest and most novel pillar boxes in England. In a natural basin which sweeps down from the distant horizon is to be found the box at Cranmere Pool, 1825 feet above sea level.



Stepping stones point the way to a cairn of stones in the middle of the pool, and here stands the iron and stone box. In 1854, James Perrot, a Dartmoor guide, built a small cairn and left a bottle in which visitors were invited to leave their cards. Later, a visitors' book was put there, and eventually the pillar box illustrated was built. Now, every year many people make the long trek to Cranmere, where they sign the book, stamp their maps with the special stamp shown, and leave letters for

future visitors to collect and post at the nearest post office, or their home town – the box has never had an official collection.

The pool is not easy to find, but it is marked on the official Ordnance Survey maps. Intending visitors should be prepared for a lengthy walk and wet feet! It should be noted, incidentally, that Cranmere lies within an army firing range, and a check should be made to ensure that the range is not in use.

We should like to thank Mr A. J. Passmore of Exeter for his assistance and valuable information, and would be pleased to hear of any other interesting or unusual post boxes which readers may have come across.

Bulletin Renewals

Nearly 20,000 *Bulletin* subscriptions fall due for renewal in the next few weeks and only the full co-operation of our readers makes it possible for us to undertake this massive task without a hitch.

If your subscription is now due, please help us by renewing promptly and by checking your address particulars – especially if you live in an area where postal coding is in operation.

Much as we hate to disappoint our subscribers we cannot always provide back numbers once they have fallen into arrears. Don't take a chance – renew now!

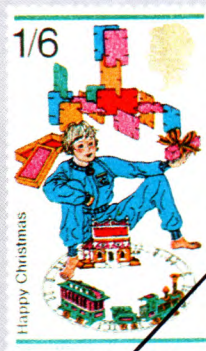
Christmas Air Letters

We are, once again, issuing Christmas Pictorial Airletter forms for sending Christmas greetings overseas. This year there will be two designs to be known for identification purposes as Angel and Airship. The Angel airletter was designed by Peter Gauld while the Airship air letter was designed by Geoffrey Trenaman. The forms will be on sale from 1 November 1968 and should be ordered, price 10d each, plus the normal handling charge, quoting Angel or Airship.

Due to pressure of space we are unable to reproduce them in this issue but will do so in the November *Bulletin*.



Christmas Stamps



This year's Christmas stamps which are to be issued on 25 November show three scenes of children playing with toys.

The 4d stamp depicts a young boy and girl playing with a rocking horse; the 9d shows a girl with dolls and a dolls house while the 1s 6d has a boy with a train set and a constructional toy. The three stamps were designed by Rosalind Dease who worked with David Gentleman on previous stamp designs such as the Churchill and Battle of Britain series.

Each stamp bears, in addition to the toy design, the Queen's head and the words 'Happy Christmas' and shows the name of the designer and printer.

Presentation packs will be available price 3s 7d each.

Printing details

Printer : Harrison and Sons

Paper : Coated unwatermarked phosphor lined

Process : Photogravure

Machines : Sheet fed rotary

Size : 4d 1.6" x .095" horizontal

9d 1.6" x .095" vertical

1s 6d 1.6" x .095" vertical

Perforation : 15 x 14

No. to sheet : 120

Colours : 4d Black, brown, blue, orange, red, gold

9d Yellow, cerise, orange, black, brown, olive green, green-blue, gold

1s 6d Green, cerise, orange, blue, black, gold

First Day Cover Services

In addition to the first day cover services offered by the Bureau we are again arranging for covers to be serviced at Bethlehem, Llandeilo, Carmar, if required.

The charges for the full service (A) under which the Post Office provides the envelope, addresses it, affixes the stamps and cancels with the desired handstamp is 5s 7d while customers own pre-addressed covers will be serviced for 3s 7d each.

Application forms are enclosed and customers are reminded that applications for the Bethlehem cancellation must be sent to the Head Postmaster (Philatelic Service) Llanelli, Carmar. Applications for the Bureau postmark only and combined applications for covers with the Bethlehem postmark and covers with the Bureau postmark must be sent to the Philatelic Bureau.

The usual philatelic posting boxes will be available for the use of those collectors who like to prepare and post their own covers.

Postmark Slogans

'Aberystwyth for Sun Sea Scenery Haul Mor Golygfa' will be used at Aberystwyth in the transposed position from 4 October until further notice.

'Dundee for Development Tay Road Bridge' will be withdrawn on 23 September and re-introduced at Dundee on 1 November until 19 January 1969.

'Have You taken Out Your Licence for Radio/TV' will be used at Dundee from 1-30 November and not 1-30 October as previously stated. The dates of use at the other offices remain the same.

'See Harlow's Christmas Lights' will be re-used at Harlow from 1-31 December.

'Newmarket Races' will be used at Newmarket in the transposed position from 5-18 October.

'Southend-on-Sea Illuminations 12 Aug-15 Oct' will be in re-use at Southend-on-Sea until 20 October.

'Southend-on-Sea Modern Centre for Business and Industry' will be re-used at Southend-on-Sea from 21 October until 30 June 1969.

'Wallasey Arts Festival 6 Oct-9 Nov' will be used at Wallasey from 26 October until 9 November and not at Liverpool as previously stated.

'Buxton Centre for Business HQ's and Light Industrial Development' will be used in the transposed position at Buxton from 1-26 December.

'Smithfield Market Centenary 1868-1968' will be used in the standard position at London ECDO from 14 October until 4 November.

'The Pantiles Royal Tunbridge Wells' will be re-used at Tunbridge Wells from 26 August until 25 August 1969.

'Hull - Capital of Humberside' will be re-used at Hull from 12 July until 11 July 1969 and not 'Hull - Gateway to Europe' as stated in the August *Bulletin*.

'Save at Work with Your National Savings Group' will be re-used this year at the following offices: Nottingham, Rotherham, Hitchin and Letchworth and High Wycombe from 23 September until 19 October, Nuneaton, Blackburn, Burnley, Chelmsford and Wigan from 7 October until 2 November, Maidstone and Kingston-on-Thames from 21 October until 16 November, Lincoln, from 28 October until 9 November, Dewsbury and Wakefield from 4-30 November.

'Send for the New Buxton Guide Dept. BG Pavilion Gardens' will be used at Buxton in the transposed position from 27 December until 31 March 1969.

'Come to Captivating Colwyn Bay' will be re-used at Colwyn Bay from 27 December until 22 April 1969.

'Ilkley The Family Town' will be used at Ilkley in the transposed position from 7 October until further notice.

'Ipswich Arts Theatre 1947-1968' will be used at Ipswich in the transposed position from 30 September until 27 October.

'Lively Lovely Llandudno' will be re-used at Llandudno from 27 December until 8 January 1969.

'Skegness is so Bracing - Lincolnshire's Holiday Playground Guide 1/- Room P.S. Town Hall' will be discontinued from use at Skegness on 11 August 1969.

'Lewisham Concert Hall S.E.6 Christmas 1968 Aladdin Telephone 01 690 3431' will be used Catford SDO in the transposed position from 2-28 December.

'Fly direct from Manchester Gateway to the World at the heart of Britain' will be withdrawn from use at Manchester Newton Street on 1 January 1969 until further notice.

'Have you Taken Out Your Licence for Radio/TV' will not now be used at Leeds from 1-30 October, as previously stated.

'Leukaemia Research Fund Great Ormond Street London W.C.1 Fights Leukaemia' will be used in the standard and transposed position at Southampton, Norwich, Blackpool, Aberdeen from 1 October until 30 November, Derby from 1 November until 7 December, Bradford from 31 October until 10 November and as soon as possible after 8 September until 30 September, and finally Swansea from as soon as possible after 8 September until 28 October.

'Racing at Ayr. The Ideal Holiday' will be in continued use at Ayr from 24 August until 3 January 1969, and again from 31 March until 23 August 1969.

'Touring Centre Camborne Redruth' will be used at Redruth in the transposed position from 7 October until further notice.

'International Caravan and Camping Exhibition Earls Court 6-16 November' will be used in the standard position from 28 September until 16 November at EDO, PADD DO, SWDO, NDO, SEDO, Mt Pleasant, and NWDO.

Special Handstamps

'St. Barnabas Parish Church Centenary 1868-1968 Bradwell Sheffield' will be used at Sheffield on 22 October 1968. This handstamp, which is circular in design, has no motif.

'St. Leonard's Church Seven Hundredth Anniversary 1268-1968 Wortley Sheffield' will be used from 3 November to 10 November 1968 at Sheffield. The circular design has a motif showing an outling sketch on the church.

'Middlesex Philatelic Federation 14 Juniors Stamp Day - Watford Herts' will be used on 2 November 1968 at Watford. This handstamp, which has no motif, is a square design.

'Moorgrange C.S. Boys School 50th Anniversary RAF. Leeds 16' will be used at Leeds on 19 October 1968. The circular design has a central motif of the school badge.

'P.A.F.A. Documentary Exhibition Birmingham 5' will be used on 23 and 24 November 1968 at Birmingham on the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the foundation of the Polish Air Force. The circular design has a central motif of the Polish Air Force Association Emblem.

'Palestine Police - South Midlands Branch Faringdon Berks' will be used on 30 November at Swindon. The motif - 'The Dome of the Rock' is on the left of the rectangular handstamp.

'Lest We Forget London SW1' will be used on 11 November 1968 at South Western District Office. The motif - a Flanders Poppy - is in the centre of the circular design.

'Kent Federation of Philatelic Societies Autumn Rally Bromley and Beckenham' will be used on 12 October 1968 at Bromley, Kent. A circular design, no motif.

All items for reposting should be sent, under cover, to the Head Postmasters concerned.

Four special handstamps will be used at the British Philatelic Exhibition to be held at Seymour Hall, London, W1 from 16 October to 19 October 1968. They are all rectangular in design and have the words 'The British Philatelic Exhibition, Seymour Hall, London, W1' on the right of the handstamp but the motifs differ according to the theme of the day.

The theme for 16 October is British Day and the motif on the handstamp to be used on this day is a map of the United Kingdom.

The 17 October handstamp, for Postal History day, is designed to look like an envelope with a seal B.P.E. in the centre.

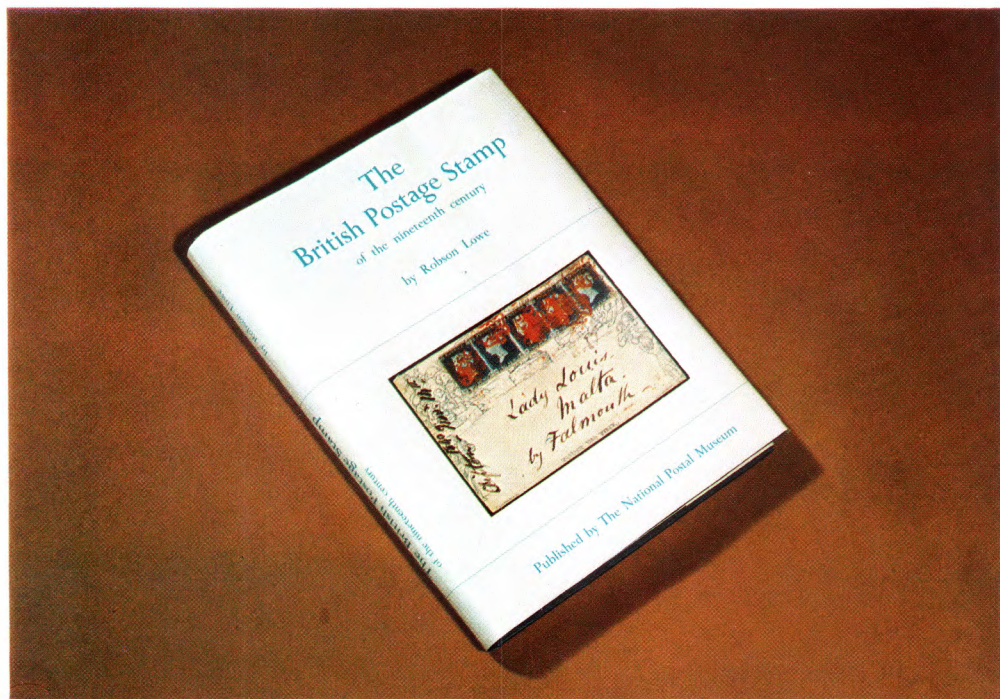
The China Day handstamp for use on 18 October has a central motif of a Chinese scene while on 19 October a floral motif is used for Thematic Day.

A special posting box will be provided at the Exhibition but items for reposting for these four handstamps should be sent under cover, with a clear indication of the handstamp cancellation required, to the District Postmaster, Western District Office, Wimpole Street, W1.

The British Postage Stamp by Robson Lowe

Published by the National Postal Museum. 75s.

A Review by Kenneth F. Chapman



Another book on British stamps, and yet it is really different from any of its many predecessors. That is because the subject is unique, namely, the Reginald M. Phillips collection of 19th-century British stamps, the foundation and cornerstone of the National Postal Museum which, this autumn, re-opens in a very different guise from the small display space with which it was inaugurated.

I was one of the few fortunate guests present at his Brighton home, when Mr Phillips formally handed over his £275,000 collection to the care of the Postmaster-General (then Mr Anthony Wedgwood Benn) and added a cheque for £50,000 to endow the Museum. I was there, too, when Mr Phillips witnessed the formal opening of the Museum by Mr Edward Short at the Chief London Office of the G.P.O. in September 1966 and the first tiny portion of his collection – that section dealing with the

birth of the postage stamp – filled the 30 frames available.

It was there that philatelists began to appreciate the munificence of the gift and the magnificence of the Phillips' collection. Its full significance as an unparalleled record of social and philatelic history beginning with documentary evidence of the pleading and planning for a Uniform Penny Post is brought out in Robson Lowe's account. There could have been no better choice of author. Few philatelists alive today are so conversant with the full gamut of British philately of the 19th century as Mr Lowe and there can be no other philatelist with his ability to describe the stamps of the Victorian era in such a sympathetic vein that these pieces of paper come alive to the reader.

It is typical of the author that he planned the book in such a way that most of the chapters



have been written in such a way that they can be read aloud to serve as commentaries on film strips which are being produced for loan to lecture groups and philatelic societies who, however distant they may be from London, can thus enjoy full colour viewing of substantial portions of the collection.

Mr Lowe's style is, therefore, anecdotal. His technical descriptions of each issue cannot fail to satisfy the specialist, his stories will intrigue the general collector and the layman.

Inevitably, Rowland Hill features prominently in the early stages of the story. He was the greatest of all the world's postal reformers but, as Mr Lowe emphasizes, he was no dreamer of dreams. On the contrary, he was a practical man. He exposed abuses of the postal system of the day and demonstrated that the revenues of the Post Office were falling, while costs were rising. The cost of the actual

carriage of the mails was negligible – a letter from London to Edinburgh cost just $\frac{1}{4}d$ – but administrative overheads were appallingly high, largely due to the time all postal servants spent on profitless labour. Then battle was joined. Lord Lichfield, the Postmaster-General, and Col. William Maberly, the Secretary, supported by the Duke of Wellington, who led Parliament and the aristocracy, both groups fearing the loss of franking privileges, launched a fierce offensive. The professions, industry, commerce and the British public backed Rowland Hill. The pressure was too much for officialdom and the reform went through. Here, indeed, was social history in the making and the story, step by step from the postal history standpoint, is graphically told in this opening chapter.

Apart from in the Royal Collection, there cannot exist a more comprehensive representa-

tion of the next stage, the Treasury Competition of 1839, outside the Phillips Collection. The examples of many of the 2,600 essays submitted, including some of those from James Chalmers, whose descendants are still fighting for his recognition as the real pioneer promoter of an adhesive-stamp uniform penny post, provide Mr Lowe with material for the next chapter and he grasps the opportunity to tell an absorbing story of the genesis of the Penny Black. Incidentally only 49 of the 2,600 suggestions advocated adhesive stamps. Stamped wrappers and/or letter sheets, and other non-adhesive devices, accounted for the vast majority of bright ideas.

The point is made that, as early as 1837, Rowland Hill suggested 'a bit of paper just large enough to bear the stamp and covered at the back with a glutinous wash which the user might, by applying a little moisture, attach to the back of the letter'. This suggestion was made with a view to the stamp replacing the almost universal wax seal which secured the folded letters of the period: envelopes were virtually unknown in 1837.

The credit for the final choice belongs to no one individual. Benjamin Cheverton urged an engraved portrait for security; a pen and ink sketch by William Wyon showed the Queen's profile; and Charles Whiting, the professional security printer of Beaufort House in the Strand, incorporated corner letters in one of his many suggestions. It was from these ideas that the first stamps evolved.

Next came the cutting of the die; the laying-down of the plate and the actual printing. Mr Lowe takes his readers through the stages in a way which instructs the novice but does not bore the informed philatelist and always, of course, he draws on the collection to support the story. And from that story emerges the little-known background to that rare non-starter, the Penny Black lettered 'V.R.' and intended for official use. The G.P.O. were left with such large stocks of the unloved Mulready wrappers and envelopes that these were sent to tax offices, and similar departments with

considerable outgoing mail, with instructions that they should be used up: and so, the V.R. stamp was not needed. The Mulreadys were, of course, Britain's first stamped postal stationery and their early rejection by the public led to the introduction of the embossed, stamped envelope early in 1841. Rowland Hills' disappointment over the Mulready – he had specially commissioned William Mulready, R.A., in December 1839 to design the stationery – was acute. When the Penny Black and Mulready were issued on 1 May 1840 he wrote to a friend that 'we are doing our best to diffuse a taste for fine art'. By 12 May, with the Mulready an object of public derision, Hill's diary (an invaluable source book with which Robson Lowe is especially familiar) recorded that 'the conduct of the public shows that while our attempt to diffuse a taste for fine art may have been improved, such diffusion was very much wanted'.

The Penny Black is still regarded as fine art at its best. The Mulready has never recovered, except to philatelists with whom it remains a firm favourite. 'The conduct of the public' was such that caricatures of the Mulready were circulating well before the end of May, but the real thing had the last laugh for Mulreadys remained valid for postage for just over 60 years. Remainders were officially destroyed in 1862 but demonetization did not take place until 1 June 1901.

Mr Phillips did not set out to assemble a collection of stamps. His aim was to present a history of the postage stamp from its inception and in no section does he do this better than in the volumes devoted to postal stationery. The proof stages of the Mulready are fully represented even to the inclusion of final proofs of John Thompson's engraving of the design. Once again, Mr Lowe is at his sparkling best as he takes the reader through the intricacies of the subject in such a way as to make even the most casual philatelist warm to the Lowe enthusiasm for the subject.

Although normally sold as singles, the Mulreadys were printed in sheets which it was

intended to sell just as stamps were sold in multiples. Few multiples exist and one of the finest is illustrated, a block of four wrappers used to wrap a parcel of legal documents posted from London to Walsall, Staffs.

Since the cancellation played an important part in the use of the stamps it is natural that Mr Phillips covered very thoroughly the history of the first cancellation, the philatelic Maltese Cross, and the many experiments carried out to lessen the risk of its removal and the re-use of the stamp. Post Office pre-occupation with the subject was almost obsessive but, at least, it resulted in the production of rare philatelic items like the Rainbow Trials, and other experimental material very germane to the purpose of the collection and faithfully recorded, with some exceptionally fine illustrations, in the book. What is even more remarkable is the way in which specific items referred to by Rowland Hill in his diary have come together again after a century of philatelic travels and are in this collection to support the diary entries, one by one.

As to the cancellation itself, books have been written on this one facet of British philately to explain the variations in design and colour. It is all here, and in such profusion that Mr Lowe is constrained to comment that it is rare for any one collection to offer such a complete study; yet another good reason for being thankful that the collection will never be dispersed.

The issued stamps are equally well represented. In consonance with his avowed intent, Mr Phillips gathered together a remarkable collection of Penny Blacks from all the eleven plates, including some of the imprimaturs and some remarkable 'matched' blocks from plates used for both the black and red printings. Always a great admirer of engraved stamps this is material with which Mr Lowe is very much at home and his obvious pleasure at having the opportunity of describing these frequently-unique gems is contagious. Indeed, one cannot help remarking on the frequency with which descriptions throughout the book are footnoted with 'unique', or 'only two known: the

other example is in the Royal Collection.'

A new era followed with first Penny Reds and the white-line Two Pence Blue. Who but Robson Lowe would have headed the appropriate chapter, 'The Children of the Penny Black'? This is typical of the informal approach of the author to the very informal, but informative, book.

The story it reveals, again supported by documents and stamps, is one of experiment, disappointment and final success. How successful that success was became evident, as Mr Lowe points out, from a study of the imprimaturs in the collection. They range widely within the general philatelic term 'Penny Red' but appear to have varied little over the century or more since they were printed – a tribute indeed to the quality of the original production.

Understandably, the descriptive matter relating to the collection is more condensed in this section, reference being made only to outstanding pieces. The great number of printing plates involved would have made a catalogue of the contents tedious to the average reader and one of no great value to the specialist collectors of these issues. As it is, the story flows smoothly and readably for all as the transfer from Die I to Die II takes place.

The chapter on the 'Letters in All Corners' series opens with an account of the proofs, of which no examples made before issue are known for the 1d and 2d. The Three Halfpence is another matter for the Phillips collection contains some remarkable pieces of the 1860 essays and proofs of the proposed 1½d mauve-pink which got as far as being printed in sheets of 240 but which was never issued. There is, for example, the OP-PC error in the mauve-pink which, oddly, was not corrected during either this printing or the subsequent rose-red printing issued in 1870. In fact, the error was not chronicled by philatelists until 1894. When it occurred in 1860, through the use of an 'O' punch instead of a 'C' when adding the check letter, it was only the second time in Perkins Bacon's stamp printing career that such an error had occurred. (The other

was the 'B – blank' on plate 77 of the imperf. Penny Red some twenty years earlier.) An abortive $\frac{1}{4}$ d stamp for which Perkins Bacon submitted essays in 1874 suggests a belated official attempt to emulate the various Circular Delivery Companies who, some 14 years earlier, had demonstrated the practicality of a $\frac{1}{4}$ d local post but whose services were promptly suppressed under the Post Office's monopoly powers.

The Penny Red Plate Numbers are straightforward but the collection does contain some exceptional blocks and some attention is given to the less usual cancellations found on them. The chapter closes the account of the line-engraved issues on a startlingly familiar note for, on 6 May 1878 – that is, exactly 38 years after the issue of the Penny Black – the Board of Inland Revenue wrote to the printers, Perkins Bacon and Co., expressing their concern that 'obliteration marks can be taken out of Postage stamps'. De La Rue's were pressing the claims of their surface-printed, fugitive ink productions and Perkins Bacon lost the day.

It is a matter of convenience that Mr Lowe has dealt first with the line-engraved issues, followed with the Embossed Adhesives and concluded his account with the De La Rue Surface Printed stamps. That's how the standard catalogues arrange matters, but it jars a little in that the history behind the issues becomes disjointed. The first Embossed Adhesives appeared in 1847 – long before the demise of the Line Engraved stamps in the early 1870's – and, in turn, the Surface Printed came on the scene with De La Rue's 4d in 1853. In both cases it was the extension of the pre-paid post to overseas that called for denominations other than the 1d and 2d stamps. Perkins Bacon were producing to their capacity day after day. The Embossed Adhesives were, virtually, provisional issues for their production was cumbersome and slow, almost a do-it-yourself job in the sense that each stamp was laboriously embossed by hand-press from a single die.

The method of arrangement adopted for

this book results in some slightly irritating duplication of text, for 'Chapter VII. The Embossed Stamps' goes back to the Treasury Competition and the early envelopes before getting down to the business of the Embossed Adhesives themselves which form a strong section of the collection, well described and illustrated.

The chapter on the first surface-printed stamps (non-philatelists may prefer the term 'typographed' or, even, 'letterpress printed') rightly opens with an account of the way in which the printers, Thomas De La Rue and Co., were involved and the close relations between Rowland Hill and Warren De La Rue.

A little-known point concerning the control marks on the sheets of paper used for stamp printing between 1860 and 1880 is brought to light and demonstrates the amazingly comprehensive nature of the Phillips collection. For instance, there is one proof impression of this Crown Control mark annotated and initialled by Ormond Hill (Rowland's nephew and largely responsible for supervising stamp production). Die proofs are, indeed, a major feature of the whole collection. Many of them are officially annotated and Mr Lowe observes, with good reason, 'Many are unique and the museum is fortunate in possessing so many items which provide information on the stages of production of the postage stamps'. That was Mr Phillips' intention in building up the collection. How well he succeeded is clearly demonstrated in the account of the surface-printed sections of the collection.

Thus, there is a proof of the Joubert head engraved for fiscal stamps which De La Rue were producing before the first postage stamp contract (that for the 4d carmine of 1855) came their way. Needless to say, the Phillips proof is signed, 'J. F. Joubert'.

While basically a descriptive catalogue of the collection, this book is more in that it is liberally spiced with the observations of the author, observations based on long experience with and a genuine love for early British

stamps. Thus, when listing the imprimaturs of the first 4d, 6d, and 1s surface-printed stamps, Robson Lowe adds that he 'doubts if there were any stamps of Great Britain printed by De La Rue and Co. which ever equalled the artistic excellence of these three values in the imprimatur form', and he backs his judgment by including them in the colour plates which preface the book.

The term 'descriptive catalogue' used above is, perhaps, a little misleading. Not every stamp in the collection is recorded. Nor need it be. Little is gained by a mere list of stamps, many of which are represented in hundreds of other collections. The emphasis, again and again, is on the unusual (often unique) pieces which are the cornerstones of philatelic history: artists' original drawings, die proofs, 'Specimens', colour trials, rare covers demonstrating exact postal rates for different services, Postmaster's Notices giving official dates of release, and similar adjuncts to a 'straight' collection are the 'stuff' of which true philately is made. There is plenty of it here and Mr Lowe makes the most of it.

The *rara avis* of the surface-printed era are the 'abnormals'. Mint they are great rarities; used they are exceptionally great rarities; on cover they are virtually unknown but Phillips had some and Mr Lowe does not hesitate to emphasize them in his text.

The biggest upheaval in the Victorian issues was the disappearance of the line-engraved low values and the granting of the 'consolidated contract' to De La Rue in 1879 in the face of competition from six other firms who specialized in security printing. The resulting plethora of essays is strongly represented in the collection and they are faithfully described and illustrated. The 'Unified' series quickly followed in 1881, many ideas being submitted by De La Rue before the series finally emerged to provide the most 'fugitive' stamps Britain ever issued. An interesting attempt to introduce a full series on coloured paper proved abortive. This unfamiliar chapter of British philately provides one of the most attractive of the

coloured plates. From there the story moves to the 'Jubilee' issue of 1887 which evolved from suggestions made in 1884. These were known as the Large Figure Scheme in which ornamental figures of value dominated the multi-coloured design, the Royal Portrait being medallioned within the loops of the 15, and 9, or otherwise incorporated in the other values.

Other experiments followed, all with a view to producing distinctive designs for each value and the remarkable assembly of essays for the period is fully illustrated. Of the so-called Jubilee Issue itself, essays, colour trials and proofs abound. The completeness of the study, and therefore of this record, is indicated by inclusion of some unusual 'repp' paper varieties.

The projected, but abortive, Reply Paid Stamp of 1894 provides an interesting page and the opportunity for a typical, laconic observation, 'the only result of this proposal was the invention of the reply-paid letter coupon'.

The book concludes with a chapter on 'Stamps for Special Services' – the Newspaper Stamps, the Telegraph Service (private company stamps and government issues including 'Military Telegraphs'), the Postal Fiscals and such other 'Cinderellas' as the Railway Letter Post issues (with special reference to the private circular which was embellished with a lithographed 'stamp' for the 'Bengal and North Western Railway' as a sample for style) and the little-known Railway Parcel Post Stamps.

Throughout the book, apposite illustrations are placed conveniently to the relevant text. Care has obviously been taken to see that they provide visual evidence of some of the most interesting contents and they are particularly valuable in the section dealing with the experimental stages of many issues.

A novel feature about the 32 colour plates is their grouping at the front of the book. They compel the reader to 'read on' and they are remarkably good reproductions, as the plates

Letters to the Editor

dealing with the shades of the Penny Reds clearly demonstrate. The production of plates, illustrations and text is a credit to the printers, Woods of Perth (Printers) Ltd; a wise choice in view of their long experience of philatelic printing for half a century.

In keeping with the intended reference value of the work, every item specifically mentioned is followed by a reference to the volume and page on which it can be studied in the collection itself.

It is with regret that the reviewer – and, in due course, the reader – comes to page 263 with its reference to the Edwardian essays based on the 1887 Jubilee issue and the two words, ‘THE END’.

Two carefully prepared indices are of real reference value. One is arranged alphabetically: the second is a sensibly arranged index to each stamp mentioned in the text. This latter is arranged chronologically. The volume is bound in strong post-office red buckram, the covers being protected by an attractively illustrated dust jacket.

Mr Lowe winds up with a sentence referring to this record ‘of the most historic collection formed by a private individual of the adhesive postage stamps of the United Kingdom issued during the reign of Queen Victoria’.

What more can one add? Simply that Mr Lowe’s adroit approach to the monumental task of describing the collection, his pin-pointing of the principal items of interest among the many thousands in the collection, his personal observations born of long experience in handling the stamps and the historical documents he describes, all contribute to the making of a book that is not just a catalogue but a work of reference that must surely be a source of pride to Reginald Phillips who, by it, is established as the greatest benefactor British philately has ever known. Also, it can but add to Robson Lowe’s existing laurels as student of British stamps and a philatelic writer of great distinction.

Dear Sir,

In the August *Bulletin* which always affords me so much pleasure to read, I note, on p. 12, a paragraph under the title ‘The first high value stamps’, which states:

‘the record is *thought to have* been held by a firm who had to put 77 1s value stamps on a packet’.

I cannot beat this record, *if it can be verified*, either in face value, or in the number of stamps, but I could show you a parcel covering, bearing a block of 72 × 1d red stamps, which has been bi-sected, to give space for the address. This registered packet was posted from IX-WORTH in Suffolk in 1848 and nearly each stamp carries the ‘101’ numeral obliteration of that village.

It is not an attractive item, in appearance, with so many heavy postmarks, but it may well be a record, in size, for a block of line engraved used on its original cover, which has survived 120 years.

Yours truly,

SYDNEY RAINE

Moseley, Birmingham.

Dear Sir,

It was with keen interest I read the Postmaster General’s statement that during January 1969 a pictorial issue will be available on British Ships.

Looking through my modest collection of British Stamps, it was not really surprising to find this issue is long overdue. What great scope and encouragement the ‘design team’ have in front of them, maybe with a gentle reminder of our seafaring past.

Ships on Stamps what would be more fitting for this issue, but on the same lines as Tristan da Cunha 1965, with a set of this standard I would welcome more than the average four values.

Yours faithfully,

RONALD R. WIXON

Bristol 2

British Ships

Dear Sir,

Your reader, A. D. Frith (*Philatelic Bulletin* No 12, August 1968), complains that the 'Most Interesting Designs' are on the higher values of stamps, but this is a matter of personal opinion.

The 4d Landscapes, the 4 × 4d British Wild Flowers, were picturesque nature studies, the 4d World Cup and 6 × 4d Battle of Britain were arresting impact pictures while the 4d Master Lambton of the first series British Paintings and the Queen Elizabeth I, 4d of the second series were artistic and colourful.

Philatelists normally collect all values of a series, so do many of the general public from remarks overheard at a P.O. counter.

Please no more strips like the 'Battle of Hastings', apart from postmen having to thread 1 foot long envelopes through letter boxes these covers could only be displayed in a 1st day cover album by folding, and mint strips were only mounted in normal albums diagonally.

Yours faithfully,

A. C. DEVERELL

Croxley Green, Herts.

Fine ships will be depicted on a new series of British stamps to be issued in January 1969. They are *Mauretania*, the *Queen Elizabeth 2*, the *Great Britain*, *Cutty Sark* and an Elizabethan galleon.

Details of designs and values will be announced later.

Bureau Notes

The enormous demand for the recent issue of new Regional stamps, which included orders for nearly a quarter of a million serviced first day covers, was so great that the Bureau could not keep pace with the work. Some delay occurred and we offer our apologies to those who were kept waiting for their orders.

We are glad to say that the position is returning to normal and trust that the service is again proving satisfactory.

Special 'Gift' and 'Collectors' Packs

Holders of Philatelic Bureau deposit accounts with standing orders for presentation packs will not be sent the new GIFT and COLLECTORS packs unless they make application.

They will already have received the stamps in presentation pack form and we do not want to inconvenience them by sending duplicates they may not require.

Deposit account holders who wish to receive the new packs should complete the application forms enclosed with their copies of this month's *Bulletin* and return them to the Bureau.

Bureau Topics

Because of the alterations in Regional stamps which were announced in the August *Bulletin* some of the changes mentioned on page 5 of the March *Bulletin* will not now take place. Those concerned are:

N. Ireland	3d
Jersey	3d
Jersey (blue)	4d
Guernsey	3d
Isle of Man	3d

A new 8d postage due label is shortly to be introduced on coated unwatermarked paper. The label will be the same scarlet colour of the 8d definitive stamp.

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