

Philatelic Bulletin

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There appears at first sight little in common between Postage Prepaid Impressions and certain official postcards. In some cases, however, they are licenced or authorised by officials in Postal Headquarters and to show this fact they are annotated with the abbreviation "PHQ". We would like to make this point clear to remove any confusion which exists in collectors' minds between the noble pile which, among many others, houses our editorial office and a well known printing house.

BPE at its new home has come and gone. Most visitors to whom we spoke were full of praise for the layout and increased space which enabled a more leisurely inspection of the exhibits and judging by the size of the queues who patiently waited at many of the stands – our own included – business was brisk. We entered the Bulletin in the Literature Class and were awarded a Silver-Bronze medal.

British Birds Wall Chart

A philatelic wallchart, illustrating the four British Birds stamps to be issued on 16 January, will be on sale shortly.

Measuring 841mm x 594mm (33" x 23") the wallchart also carries illustrations, in greater detail of the four birds – Kingfisher, Dipper, Moorhen, Yellow Wagtail – together with a descriptive text.

The wallchart will be available from the Philatelic Bureau, Edinburgh at £1.75 (postage and handling charge included) and at all philatelic counters at £1.50. Bulk orders of 50 or more can be made, from the Bureau only at £1.50 each (postage and handling charge included).



British Birds

The Dipper

Of all the passerine birds, the dipper is the only true inhabitant of water, showing close ties to specific habitats of swift flowing rivers and streams with stony beds and rocks, and shore line shrubbery. Nesting usually occurs right beside fast-flowing deep water, in holes in walls, below bridges, on tree trunks or even on rocks, using moist moss and other plant materials. Characteristic nests may be found behind waterfalls and can only be reached by the adults flying through the down-rushing water.

The dipper feeds mainly on water insects and their larvae, and on sand hoppers which it is able to catch in flight. But, generally, it feeds while walking, swimming and diving in the water. The very thick plumage is waterproofed with a secretion from the preen gland. In addition, there are no webs on the feet, the dipper using his strong legs and toes, in swimming and diving, to push off and to walk on the bed of the stream. It is also able to hunt under water, moving quickly by rowing skillfully with its short wings and legs drawn up, and may dive for up to thirty seconds.

The dipper has been nicknamed the 'water chatterer' because of its alternately soft and loud twittering of trills and sequences of whistles and screeches which make it sound much like the splashing and rushing of a mountain stream.

This lively bird is fascinating and exciting to observe in its habitat and, as such, is a popular creature with naturalists.

The Yellow Wagtail

The yellow wagtail is one of ten species of true wagtail and, in common with other wagtails, is a lively, generally attractive inhabitant of grass and wetlands. It is also to be found on river shores or in rocky areas and the yellow wagtail generally tends to avoid areas far from water.

This small to medium-sized bird is, in fact, rarely completely yellow, its outermost feathers nearly always having a white or pale edge. The plumage is soft and the body is generally held horizontally. Wagtails move by walking rather than hopping. The tarsus and toes are long and the claw of the rear toe is often prolonged.

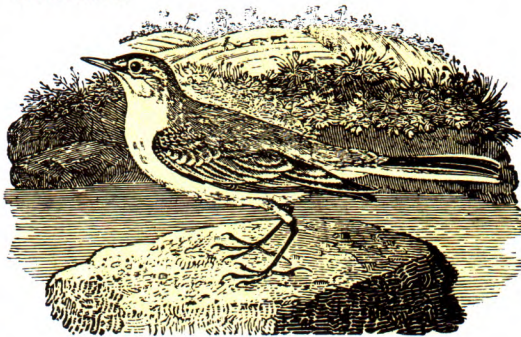
The yellow wagtail feeds mainly on insects, spiders, small mollusca and crustacea but also on soft seeds and other plant materials. The food is usually taken from the ground, but, more rarely, while walking on water plants, from trees, or sometimes after a chase on the wing or while fluttering.

Those from the more northerly latitudes are migrants and may be found in congregations, often with several subspecies together, on the shores of rivers and lakes. They return to their breeding areas in March, the males arriving about three weeks before the females in order to establish their own territory.

The cup-shaped nest of the yellow wagtail may be found on the ground, a little above it or in shallow cavities.

The song of the yellow wagtail is usually a sequence of mono – or disyllabic calls which are often sharp and hissing, although melodious in a few species.

Distribution of the wagtail is now worldwide and fossils dating back thirty million years have been found.



The Kingfisher

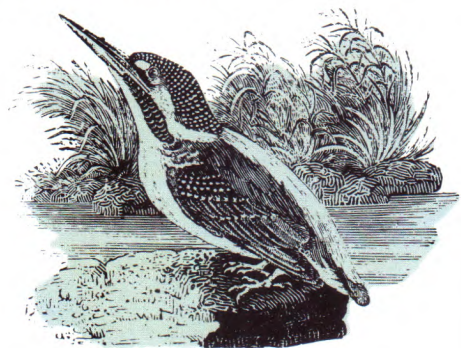
This strikingly coloured bird with its generally iridescent green or blue plumage, has attracted human attention and stimulated the imagination for a long time. According to old myths, it was originally an inconspicuous grey bird which left Noah's ark in such a hurry that its lower parts were burnt brown by the sun and its upper parts took on the steel blue colour of the sky.

Kingfishers are characterised by a compact, often very strong body, a short neck, and a large head with a long, pointed beak. Using their narrow beaks, they dig nests out of slopes or banks. Their legs are short, and the feet are small and weak, but the front three toes are fused for more than one-third of their length, thus enlarging the sole of the foot which is used to scoop out soil loosened with the beak in nest building, by pushing it backwards.

Kingfishers are poor walkers; they merely jump from stump to stump or they move in stiff hops.

They feed mainly on fish and water insects, sticklebacks forming thirty per cent of their diet. Plunging into the water after fish is a matter of practice and the more adept birds manage a success rate of approximately one fish to every ten plunges. The prey is then beaten to death on a branch and swallowed head first.

This unsociable bird, which expels even other kingfishers from its individual territory, is particularly susceptible to cold weather, and hard winters, such as that of 1962/63 in Europe, may account for up to 95% of their lives.



The Moorhen

The moorhen is a member of the Rail family whose origin has been traced back eighty million years to the Upper Cretaceous period.

It is a secretive, partially nocturnal bird which inhabits areas of dense vegetation close to water tending to keep well-hidden at all times. However, it is extremely vocal and, consequently, easy to detect. Especially in the mating season, vocalisa-

tion, in fact, is essential to the moorhen which lives so secretly.

The moorhen exists on both an animal and a vegetable diet; seeds, fruits, roots, etc. from the water, or worms, snails, insects and larvae from the land. It swims regularly, despite the absence of webbing on its toes, and is a poor flyer.

The moorhen's body is laterally compressed and feels soft and supple; this is due to the particularly soft plumage and the lateral flexibility of the spinal vertebrae.

A conspicuous characteristic of the moorhen is a red, yellow or white plate on its forehead which becomes more pronounced in the mating season.

Although moorhens have a high reproduction rate, they are relatively few in number and this may be seen as a consequence of their large number of natural enemies together with the fact that it is fully five weeks after they are born before they are able to fly. Also, they lose the power of flight for several weeks during the moult season when they lose all their wing feathers at the same time. Their greatest enemy is the 'moor hawk' but they also fall prey to smaller birds of prey, cats, and especially rats.

DAVID SLAUGHTER



British Special Stamps

60. First Flight of 'Concorde', 1969

The Concorde project was the supreme example of harmonious and successful collaboration between two great countries, Britain and France – an amalgamation of technical knowledge, experiment and expediency which survived enormous escalating expenditure, and design and environmental problems to bring about the achievement of supersonic travel. Today, more than ten years after the maiden flights by the British and French prototypes, Concorde is in regular service over most of the world while new routes and destinations are constantly being explored.

The Anglo-French Concorde liaison began in November 1962 with the signing of an agreement between the two Governments to join forces in the construction of a supersonic transport aircraft ('SST'). The two principal firms involved, the British Aircraft Corporation and Sud-Aviation, jointly planned a delta-wing ('paper-dart') machine with four Rolls-Royce 'Olympus' engines, carrying a minimum 132 passengers at Mach 2.2 (the relation of air speed to the velocity of sound) – a top speed of about 1,450 miles per hour – at 60,000 feet.

The French prototype, Concorde 001, made her successful maiden flight on Sunday, 2nd March 1969, with André Turcat at the controls, while the British Concorde, 002, made its first flight, piloted by Brian Trubshaw, chief test pilot of BAC, five weeks later on April 9th. The French had a Concorde stamp on sale at Toulouse on 'the day' – 2nd March – but the British Post Office was unlucky. Having 'stock-piled' their three Concorde stamps for twelve months or so they announced (when the first flight was imminent)

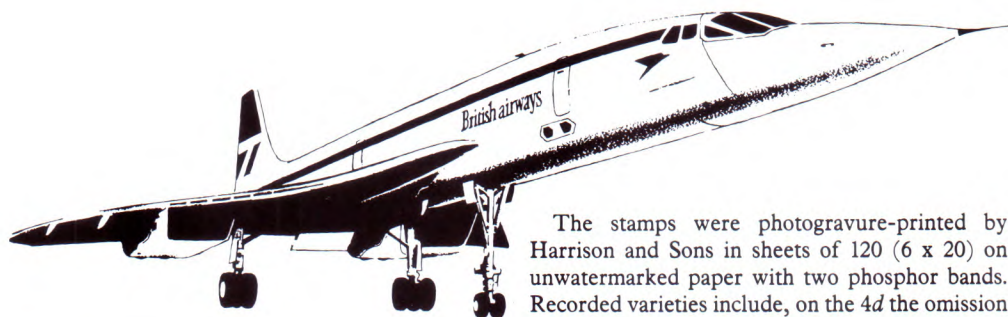


that the stamps would be released on the day 'following the first flight'. In the event, as it occurred on a Sunday, some collectors and some post offices were taken unawares and missed the official first day of issue, 3rd March.

The 4d stamp, showing Concorde high above England and France, was designed by Michael and Sylvia Goaman: the 9d and 1s 6d designs, based mainly on scale and elevation drawings, by David Gentleman. The Goamans opted to show Concorde in flight – not an easy task when, at the time they were preparing sketch-book roughs and studying BAC photographs, the Anglo-French 'silver pencil' had never flown. They succeeded in portraying the aircraft in its most elegant and graceful perspective, in soaring flight over Europe. It was the best of their five submitted designs which included views of Concorde in level flight, emphasising the delta wing, and two sketches giving prominence to the aircraft's rather ugly, box-like engine nacelles.

David Gentleman decided to show Concorde in more abstract, formal terms and worked from a BAC model, numerous photographs, diagrams and scale drawings. Employing his favourite 'cut-out' technique with coloured paper, he created scores of miniature, stamp-size roughs from which emerged two striking designs – one (9d) showing a side view of the aircraft (including the 'droop snoot' or nose) superimposed on the elevation drawing, with the British and French flags prominently displayed, the other (1s 6d) depicting Concorde's nose superimposed on its distinctive tail.





The stamps were photogravure-printed by Harrison and Sons in sheets of 120 (6 x 20) on unwatermarked paper with two phosphor bands. Recorded varieties include, on the 4d the omission of the yellow-orange line which runs the length of the Concorde's fuselage, also, on other stamps, a short break in the line, and an 'oil slick' in the Atlantic Ocean which appears as a dark patch. The omission of the silver-grey colour on the Queen's head (1s 6d) gives it a light blue appearance – a comparatively rare flaw. All values are known with 'phosphor omitted'.

Quantities sold were: 4d 91, 551,720, 9d 9,488, 520; and 1s 6d 9,874,560; English presentation packs, 100,608; German packs, 2,827.

JAMES WATSON

1980 Melville Junior Stamp Competition

The closing date for the receipt of entries for the 1980 Melville Junior Stamp Competition is Saturday, 29 March 1980, and would-be entrants should now send for rules and an entry form to be able to prepare their entries for what will be one of the most exciting junior national exhibitions for a long time. As 1980 will be a very special year for British philately, it has been decided that the winning Melville entries will be on display in the junior section of London 1980 at Earls Court, and the awards will also be presented during the exhibition. The Management Committee of London 1980 are presenting a trophy which will be kept by the winner, and the British Post Office have also indicated that they would like to present a special prize in this special year for the Melville Competition.

As in previous years, the entries will be divided into four groups, as follows:—

- A. For those aged 18 years and under 21 years.
- B. For those aged 16 years and under 18 years.
- C. For those aged 13 years and under 16 years.
- D. For those aged under 13 years.

Ages to be reckoned as on 1 January 1980.

A Cup, to be retained for one year, will be awarded to the best entry in each class, as well as silver, bronze/silver and bronze medals to all entrants who achieve an appropriate standard. In addition, the Cartwright Medal will be awarded to the entry in Class C or D which shows the most promise, the National Westminster Bank Prize to the most promising entry in Class A, and the Hélène Leverton Award will be given to the most promising entry in Class B.

Interested junior collectors should write (enclosing a medium-sized stamped addressed envelope) for rules and entry forms to Mrs F Rapkin, Eaglewood, Oxhey Lane, Hatch End, Middlesex HA5 4AL, who can also put intending entrants in touch with their nearest philatelic societies. Completed entry forms and exhibits should be sent or given to the Secretary of a Society, Federation or Association affiliated to the British Philatelic Federation, so that they can be sent to Mrs. Rapkin to arrive no later than Saturday, 29 March 1980.

Private Commemorative Cards



Reproduced by kind permission of Mr E Proud.
Private post-cards were allowed as from 1894 in Great Britain provided they were court-size. They were not widely used for the first few years and

examples of the commemorative cards printed for the Diamond Jubilee are seldom met with.

As far as is known no example of first day of use of private card exists.

Collecting the Victorians

2. The Penny Reds, 1841–1879



Britain's famous Penny Blacks had a comparatively short life – that perhaps is one reason why they are becoming extremely scarce in fine condition and why, by the time you read this, a fine used 'Black' with good margins may fetch well over a hundred pounds. The Penny Red, actually in varying shades of red-brown, was introduced on February 10 1841 (printed from the original 1d black plates), and issued later that month printed from new plates. The reason for the change of colour was that some black stamps could quite easily be cleaned after use, the obliterations or postmarks removed and the stamps used again. This fraudulent practice was made more difficult by the introduction of 'red' stamps and black (instead of red) cancellations.

The Penny Reds are perhaps the most popular with collectors, and certainly the most common, of all Victorian stamps. They were in use, in various forms, for almost 40 years – accordingly a collection can be made of them, simple or specialised to taste, at moderate cost. In fact the scope of your collection can be linked to one or other of the three relevant Gibbons Catalogues – *Collect British Stamps*, a simple checklist listing the basic stamps, including the 1d red plate-numbers; the annual *British Commonwealth Catalogue*, which contains a more detailed listing with numerous varieties, shades, postmarks etc.; and, for the advanced collector, the *GB Specialised Catalogue, Vol 1–Queen Victoria*, which contains a vast amount of detailed information about dies, 'alphabets', plates and varieties.

Steering a middle course between the extremes of simplicity and the highly specialised, we can segregate the 1d reds into three convenient groups which, for ease of reference, I have designated A, B and C. Using the *British Commonwealth Catalogue* as a guide, we see that there are numerous permutations (under B especially) of dies, perforations and watermarks, but there is no cause for alarm or despondency! Identifying the stamps is all part of the fun of collecting.

A (1841 on). The first 1d reds were imperforate and, like the 'blacks', had letters in the lower corners (only) and bore the Small Crown watermark. Perforation came much later, following the

experiments and trials by Henry Archer and the Government. As mentioned earlier, the red stamps were first printed from the 'black' plates but, as distinguishing them requires a knowledge of the original plates and their idiosyncrasies, I would group all the imperf. 1d reds together, including all the different shades you can find. These plates were manufactured from the original 'black' die of 1840 – Die I. The paper was normally 'blued' (having a bluish tinge) due to the presence of prussiate of potash in the printing ink of the paper.

B (1854–1857). The first perforated 'Reds'. Again on more or less blued paper and, at first, with the Small Crown watermark, printed from Die I plates. Perforation alternated between perf 16 and perf 14 while, in 1855, a strengthened and retouched Die II was brought into use: the differences are indicated in the B.C. catalogue. Stamps bearing the Large Crown watermark appeared in May 1855; paper no longer 'blued' in November 1856.

I append a summary of the 1854–1857 1d reds:

Perforated. Blued Paper.

Small Crown wmk. Perf 16 Dies I and II

Perf 14 Dies I and II

Large Crown wmk. Perf 16 Die II

Perf 14 Die II

Perforated. Paper not blued.

Large Crown wmk. Perf 16 Die II

Perf 14 Die II

C (1858–1897). Letters in all four corners. Large Crown watermark. Die II. Perf 14. Still easy to obtain and popular because of the different plate-numbers – 71 to 225 (152 in all) – which appear in the side frames of the stamps. Plate 77 is of the greatest rarity (the original plate was found defective and rejected after a few stamps had been printed from it), and plate 225 is another scarce one.

Interesting postmarks – on the stamps, on 'piece' and on those delightful small envelopes of the period – and some of the listed varieties will greatly enhance your 'Penny Reds' collection. Issues of the Twopence Blue stamps developed on similar lines and could form a separate study. The 1d Venetian red in a new design appeared in 1880 – but that's another story!

JAMES WATSON

1981 Special Stamp Programme

The subjects chosen for the special stamp issues in 1981 are:

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award – to mark the 25th anniversary of the Award.

Fishing – to mark the centenary of the Royal National Mission to Deep Sea Fishermen and also Fishermen's Year.

National Trust – to mark the 50th anniversary of the National Trust for Scotland.

Folklore – the theme chosen by the Conference of European Postal and Telecommunications administrations for the Europa series 1981.

Butterflies – continuing the GB Fauna series.

United Nations International Year for Disabled Persons.

Christmas.

There were about 200 possible subjects clamouring for a place in our 1981 programme. Many were suggested by members of the public, national organisations, public bodies and a variety of societies and associations. Others were listed by the Post Office itself; some of course came from several of these sources. In addition to the criteria that have been established for issuing our special stamps, such as to mark important events and anniversaries and to reflect aspects of Britain's contribution to world affairs, other factors influence the choice of subject. They include the degree of public interest it is likely to arouse and its suitability for translation into a well designed set of stamps with the widest popular appeal at home and abroad. Our aim is to achieve a varied and balanced programme but the number and frequency of issues is limited by production, distribution and sales resources.

The programme is chosen by the Post Office Management Board to whom a programme is recommended by the Managing Director of Posts who is advised by his Marketing Department. The 1981 programme has a varied and wide

ranging appeal. Except for royal occasions, anniversaries of 25 years are not usually marked by a special issue but because the Duke of Edinburgh's Award has a particular appeal to young people in this country and overseas, the Post Office Board decided to make an exception in this case, especially as the anniversary coincided with the 60th birthday of the Duke of Edinburgh. Thematic collectors will be encouraged to see an issue on butterflies, a popular subject that lends itself well to colourful and attractive design. Europa collectors will be able to add another GB Europa set to their collection. Those who feel that we may have neglected some of the more important aspects of British life will be gratified to see a set devoted to the Fishing industry (this is not a set for anglers!), and those north of the Border can claim to have inspired the set on the National Trust which offers scope for representing other Trust interests. Stamps to mark this country's participation in the United Nations International Year for Disabled Persons will no doubt find their counterpart in many other countries' issues and will create one more omnibus collection. Christmas stamps claim a place in every year's programme.

Book Reviews

The 1980 Stoneham Catalogue of British Stamps

Price £3.95p

Stoneham Publications Ltd., Stoneham Park, EASTLEIGH, Hants SO5 3HT.

This is the fourth edition of a catalogue which has acquired quite a reputation among collectors and is said to be the only one listing GB, Channel Islands and I o M. issues in a single volume.

Its pricing covers Mounted or Unmounted Mint and Fine Used. Older issues are also listed under the category 'Average Used', an indication that the publishers have gone into the matter with a good deal of care.

It contains an extremely useful 21 page prologue

including an essay on 'fakes and repairs' which is worth a good long study. Readers will find its clear uncluttered photaset typeface renders even the smallest print quite readable.

Nicely bound, well laid out and as full of information as the proverbial egg is full of meat, this catalogue is well worth a place on anyones library shelves.

Reproductions from Famous Collections 'The Art of J. A. C. Harrison'

Price £2.00 (inc. post)

The British Library, Philatelic Collections, Great Russell Street, LONDON WC1 3DG.

The British Library announces publication of a series of six portfolios containing enlarged reproductions from its philatelic collection.

The item sent for review is No. 2 which

illustrates J. A. C. Harrison's designs for the 2d, 2½d, and 6d stamps of Jamaica 1933-1952.

The folio contains six enlarged reprints, approximately 10" x 8" first showing the original art-work and then including it within the framing of the final design.

Each folio sells for £2.00 and seems a sound purchase for those wishing to illustrate their Jamaica series with some style but who are unwilling to submit their specimens to the hazards of home colour photography.

As a matter of interest I made colour enlargements of similarly engraved stamps. The results were noticeably less satisfactory and markedly more expensive than those included in the folio.

Further items now in preparation include designs for Royal Portraits, Maltese Statue designs, N. Borneo issues and Chilean historical scenes.

International Stamp Exhibition London 1980

From 6-14 May, 1980 at Earls Court, London, the British Post Office will be taking part in the International Stamp Exhibition. A full philatelic service will be provided with National Postal Museum items on sale, Giro facilities and Bureau de Change.

Many of the finest stamp collections in the world will be on show including exhibits from the collection of Her Majesty the Queen and the National Postal Museum.

Special postmark cancellations will be available most days and over 200 international stamp dealers will be participating along with representatives from some 40 postal administrations.

We look forward to seeing you there.

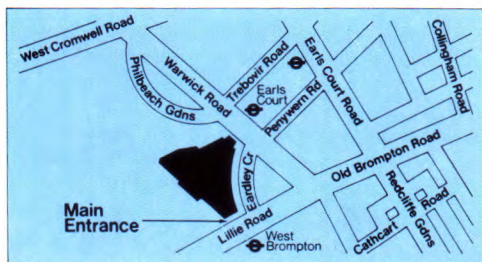
Tuesday 6 May, 1.00pm - 8.00pm

Wednesday 7 - Tuesday 13 May, 10.00am - 8.00pm

Sunday 11 May, 11.00am - 6.00pm

Wednesday 14 May, 10.00am - 6.00pm

The Earls Court Exhibition Centre is near Earls Court and West Brompton tube stations. Buses: 30, 31, 74.



The two 1854 re-engraved One Penny Dies

By 1854 it had become clear that owing to the wear of the original One Penny Master die (which had been in constant use since 1840) the new printing plates being made from it (indirectly via rollers) were wearing out much more rapidly than before.

Perkins Bacon therefore wrote to the Commissioners of Inland Revenue on 5 September 1854 advising them of the position and stating that 'it is desirable to prepare a new (die) in which the lines may be cut deeper than they are now, which will produce a stronger impression and enable us to print more labels from a plate before it is worn out'. The proposal to have a new die engraved was agreed by the Inland Revenue on 13 September.

Twelve days later (on 25 September) two proofs of the new die were forwarded to the Inland Revenue. It was not a wholly new die, but an impression taken from the 1840 master and then retouched and the lines deepened. A proof (believed to be unique) from this new die is in the R M Phillips collection (*fig. 1*).

This die was rejected by the Inland Revenue as 'being so very unlike the stamps now in use'.



fig. 1



fig. 2

Perkins Bacon and Co. therefore tried again, giving the work to William Humphrys, a well known engraver who had worked on bank notes. The re-engraved die (*fig. 2*) which he produced by 3 November proved quite satisfactory and was used for the remainder of the Perkins Bacon era, ie up to 1897. Humphrys also engraved the head of Washington for United States stamps.

A G RIGO DE RIGHI

Commemorative Covers

75th Anniversary

Cadet Force, Christ's College, Finchley

To commemorate the 75th Anniversary of Christ's College Cadet Force, a limited edition of 2000 philatelic covers, bearing a 10p Metropolitan Police stamp and cancelled with a special handstamp BFP5 1904 at Inglis Barracks, London, are available.

The cover depicts a cadet in present day dress and a member of the original school rifle club, against a drawing of the school building erected in 1861.

200 of the covers have been signed by two former cadets, Sir James Paterson Ross, BT KGVO and Brigadier Brian Kennett, CBE.

Prices are 60p for the unsigned version and £2.00 for the signed version.

Orders should be sent to CRA (covers), 17 Bawtry Road, Whetstone, London N20 0SR with a 7" x 5" stamped addressed envelope for reply.

Remittances should be made payable to Centarian Regimental Association.

1980 Birds F.D.C.

The Norfolk Naturalist Trust are producing a First Day Cover to commemorate the centenary of the Wild Birds Protection Act 1880.

The cover will depict, in full colour, one of the very attractive Harrison paintings and will have a pictorial handstamp. The price of the cover with full set of stamps will cost £1.50 plus 10p p&p. Orders are now being taken by their philatelic agents, Markton Stamps Ltd., Hickling, Norwich, Norfolk NR12 0YN. There will be a limited number of signed covers by David Attenborough and J C Harrison the artist, and details of these will be sent on request (sae please).

Proceeds from this cover will go to help the work of the Norfolk Naturalist Trust in the conservation of our Wildlife.

The Story of Croydon Airport

The experimental flights to open up the route to South Africa from Croydon started a new era. The first flight left on the 9 December 1931 and arrived in S. Africa twelve days later without incident. The first return flight did not leave Capetown until the 27 January in the 'City of Basra' (Imperial Airways named most of their aircraft after cities). She was damaged when leaving Salisbury Rhodesia and the relief plane was forced down in Northern Rhodesia in a heavy rainstorm but despite all this the mail arrived back in Croydon in eleven days. On both the outward and inward flights orange and blue decorated covers showing the springbok were used. Postage was 1/- either way. *The Times* considered the event to be worthy of a half page spread showing the plane leaving Rand airport; one of the decorated covers, and the plane unloading its mail at Croydon.

Later in the year mail for the Falkland Islands was also sent on this route via Capetown at the same 1/- rate. In April 1932 the first flight to Cyprus was also established from Croydon – the postage being 3½d.

During the following year a regular service was established to Calcutta, Rangoon and Singapore jointly by Imperial Airways and Indian Trans-Continental Airways. Three similar types of decorated covers were used in yellow on red. Two of them showed the map of India with the route. Some covers were backstamped 'Karachi-Calcutta First Airmail' and on the return 'Calcutta-Karachi First Airmail', others had an Imperial Airways advertising sticker on the back. Postage was 8d outwards and 8½ annas inwards. Most of the inward items carried slogans advertising their telephone such as 'U R wanted on the Telephone' and 'The Telephone makes life easier.'

1933 also brought a spate of attempts by inland airlines trying to capture the airmail trade. The first of these to operate from Croydon was International Airlines Ltd. with the Western Air Express flying to Plymouth. A 3d additional fee was charged using a plainly printed 3d yellow label but the scheme had little success and was given up after a few weeks. Covers are nevertheless not too scarce but many are wrongly dated. In November of the same year Provincial



Airways took over with their Westcountry Air Service flying to Southampton and Plymouth. They again used a 3d label for their charge printed by Clark Doble & Co of Plymouth in orange and blue in sheets of four. Different shades are known and some have flaws. Proof sheets are available but with so many on the market one is inclined to doubt if they are all genuine. The PMG however forbade then to carry mail after a few days and they also folded up. The third attempt was of a different style by the Railway Air Services Ltd which was a consortium of the four main railway lines and Imperial Airways. As railway companies they were allowed to carry mail as railway letters. A charge of 3d was charged, the 3d being applied by a cachet but very few covers exist which show the 3d charge. Their service from Croydon was to Birmingham, Manchester, Belfast to Glasgow returning to Manchester via Douglas, IoM. At Birmingham however there was a connection with the RAS service from Plymouth, Teignmouth and Cardiff and also from the flight from Cowes via Bristol. Partly due to having had the experience of the 1933 attempt by the GWR at Plymouth they were able to make a success of this new venture which continued until the outbreak of war in 1939. It is something of a coincidence that the issue of the



By the First Air Mail from Capetown to London - per Imperial Airways.

King George photogravure series occurred on the same day as the start of the RAS which can give first day covers of both double value.

After the experimental flights of 1931 and 1932, December 1934 Croydon saw the opening of regular flights by Imperial Airways and Qantas Empire Airways between England and Australia. Special covers were printed showing a combined logo of Imperial Airways and the Kangaroo. This mail is also significant in that whilst most of the mail is postmarked 'London FS/Air Mail' there were some eight items which were stamped with 24 and 25mm handstamps marked 'Croydon Aerodrome/Croydon Sy' using a silver die. After using the dies they were presented to VIP's.

1935 saw a considerable build up of foreign lines flying to Croydon one being Swissair with their DC'2s. On their run they issued attractive post-cards stamped with the call sign of the aircraft and showing Swiss scenes on the reverse. They also issued large photographs of their other planes. At this time most of the Scandinavian air mail was going via Berlin, and on April 1 the direct run to Zurich was established. This year also saw the Sabena flights to the Belgian Congo via Brussels, Marseille, and Oran. Most of these covers are backstamped Paris with the slogan 'Gagnez du Temps/Repondez par Avion.' This mail also has a new type of Croydon handstamp ie a 26mm double ring 'Croydon Aerodrome BO Croydon/Surrey.' The postage here was 1s 3d. In all the 1930 to 1938 photographs the small blue air mail Post Office van often appears but some of the 1935 photos show an unusual two seater all metal body van similar to the modern CV2 boldly painted

Royal Air Mail Service and generally shown loading mail into Horatius, of the Imperial Airways.

January 1936 brings another interesting item to light with the use of a new handstamp a 27mm double ring 'Croydon, Surrey/Air Mails' used on mail to France. 'British Airmails' state that two stamps were issued, one to the airport and one to Croydon GPO but in all the many air mail covers I have sorted I have only ever seen one copy. The last item of note in this period was a valiant attempt by North Eastern Airways to capture the internal air mail trade. They flew from Perth to Croydon via Leeds and Doncaster but again the service was shortlived and closed with the advent of war. Covers are not scarce but some are suspect in that many stated to be first day covers are not. The next twelve months with the Air France and Lufthansa trade all of which built up to the sad day in 1939 when the airport was closed to civil planes for the preparation for war.

Looking back over the story from Sopwith Pups to Condors; from the King, Lindberg to Amy Johnson, we can only say – what a story what an airport-!

EWART SANDERS

Collectors Stamps of Great Britain

Price 90p

Published by Rotographic Publications
37 St. Efridge Road, TORQUAY, Devon TQ2 5SG.

This little book is exactly what it claims to be, a pocket sized guide to prices of QEII stamps. It lists and prices a very full range of £s.d. and Decimal items including miniature sheets.

Average prices are compiled from dealers lists, catalogues and magazines. As far as can be judged they are remarkably accurate.

Nicely laid out and with 500 illustrations the 'Pocket Reference & Price Guide' is just the sort of thing you need with you when shopping around.

At six inches by four it fits neatly into your jacket pocket, and at 90p it is certain to save its price many times over. In short, a very good buy.

Big Air Mail Initial Stamp and Glue





National Trust for Scotland

Many were suggested by members of the public, national organisations, public bodies and a variety of societies and associations. Others were listed by the Post Office itself; some of course came from several sources. In addition to the criteria that have been established for issuing our special stamps, such as to mark important events and anniversaries and to reflect aspects of Britain's contribution to world affairs, other factors influence the choice of subject. They include the degree of public interest it is likely to arouse and its suitability for translation into a well designed set of stamps with the widest popular appeal at home and abroad. Our aim is to achieve a varied and balanced programme but the number and frequency of issues is limited by production, distribution and sales resources.

The programme is chosen by the Post Office Management Board to whom a programme is recommended by the Managing Director of Posts who is advised by his Marketing Department. The 1981 programme has a varied and wide ranging appeal. Except for royal occasions, anniversaries of 25 years are not usually marked by a special issue but because the Duke of Edinburgh's Award has a particular appeal to young people in this country and overseas, the Post Office Board decided to make an exception in this case, especially as the anniversary coincides with the 60th birthday of the Duke of Edinburgh. Thematic collectors will be encouraged to see an issue on Butterflies, a popular subject that lends itself well to colourful and attractive design. 'Europa' collectors will be able to add another GB 'Europa' set to their collection. Those who feel that we may have neglected some of the more important aspects of British life will be gratified to see a set devoted to the Fishing industry (this is not a set for anglers!), and those north of the Border can claim to have inspired the set on the National Trust which offers scope for representing other Trust interests. Stamps to mark this country's participation in the United Nations International Year for Disabled Persons will no doubt find their counterpart in many other countries' issues and will create one more omnibus collection. Christmas stamps claim a place in every year's programme.

Letter to the Editor

Dear Sir,

In your issue for August last you appealed to readers to write 'Letters to the Editor' and after some reflection I have come to think that my own philatelic experiences may be of some interest to you.

I have been collecting stamps since 1898 and am still at it! I am a very unorthodox collector as I am not interested in watermarks, perforations, or first day covers, and I do not understand the meaning of phosphor. What is there left? A great pleasure in turning through my Albums and always finding something interesting such as improvements in stamp design, and changes in countries and currencies. They never grow stale and I am fortunate in that I have a number of relations and friends in countries abroad who frequently send me additions for my collection. I have Canada complete since the mid 1930's and all the British commemoratives except one and that is the £1. Postal Congress 1928 which is unobtainable.

I have another link with stamps as I was the Patent Agent who acted in patenting the Postal Franking Machine whose history I wrote for the Newcomen Society and delivered it as a Lecture at the Science Museum.

One last grumble:— I do not like some of our special stamps as generally the designers try to cram too much into a small space but I do like the simple Queen's head of our present definitive issue.

Lastly, I have read every issue from No. 1 of the Philatelic Bulletin and will continue as I find it very helpful.

Yours faithfully,

A R J RAMSEY

Woking, Surrey

Forthcoming Events

Croydon Philatelic Society

The annual stamp fair of the Croydon Philatelic Society will be held at St. Mary's Church, Wellesley Road, Croydon, Surrey, on Saturday, 19 January 1980. Among the attractions will be a Post Office Philatelic sales stand.

Special Handstamps

Unless otherwise stated, items for reposting should bear 1p 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'. The outer cover must bear normal postage and only those items bearing a Postmark on or before the date of the Special Handstamp will be eligible for the cancellation.

16 January 1980 (P/Oval)

The Leicestershire & Rutland Ornithological Society celebrates its 40th Year 16 January 1980 Leicester. Special posting box at Museum and Art Gallery, New Walk, Leicester LE1 6TD.

18/19 January 1980 (P/Rosette)

Bradford Championship Show Rabbits Cavies Mice 18/19 Jan 1980 Doncaster. Special posting box at The Grandstand (Foyer), Doncaster Racecourse, Doncaster DN2 6BB.

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'.

Until - 21 December 1979 (P)

Central Milton Keynes Xmas Shopping As It Should Be. To be used at Bletchley, Wolverton, Buckingham and Newport Pagnell. 1st and 2nd Class.

Until - 4 November 1980

Barnardo's Cares About Children Barnardo's PO Box 1 Ilford IG6 1QG. To be used at the following offices:- Edinburgh 2nd Class. Belfast 1st and 2nd Class. Cardiff 1st and 2nd Class. Ilford 1st and 2nd Class. Hounslow 1st and 2nd Class.

Until 8 November 1980

Edgware 1st Class.

Until 8 November 1980

Harrow 1st Class. UFN

Be Properly Addressed Postcode It. To be used at various offices in the SW, NE, Midlands and NW Postal areas. Full details appear in the Postmark Bulletin.

Repeat Campaign

Until - 31 October 1980 (P)

Scarborough, Whitby, Filey Yorkshires Holiday Playground Write Director of Tourism Scarborough. To be reused at Scarborough, York. 1st and 2nd Class.

P denotes Pictorial.



Philatelic Bulletin

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Assistant Editor Frank Brench

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