

Philatelic Bulletin

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Introduction

Royal Weddings feature predominantly this month. We have been able to persuade Collis Clements and Edward Hughes to describe how they designed the recent stamps for the Wedding of Princess Anne to Captain Mark Phillips and our popular feature on the High Value stamps is concerned with the famous Silver Wedding £1 stamp of 1948.

Stampex this year is between February 25th and March 2nd. We hope that there will be plenty of entries for our own trophy

and that the winner and all other entrants will feel encouraged by it in their attempts to improve the standard of modern GB Collections.

Tony de Righi, the Curator of the National Postal Museum has been so occupied with exhibition work in recent weeks that he has been unable to complete his feature on the first Post Office Stamp Book. We are all sorry about this but look forward to next month when the story will be finalised.

New Country Definitive Stamps

On 23 January 1974, three new sets of definitive stamps are to be issued for Scotland, Wales and N. Ireland, to bring the stamps in line with the recent tariff changes.

There will be four stamps in the 3p; 3½p; 5½p and 8p values. The last three will have two phosphor bars. The 3p; however will have one phosphor bar only, not two as hitherto. Otherwise the basic design remains unchanged.

The phosphor banding is related to the needs of automatic letter facing machines, which separate first from second class mail on the basis of the phosphor banding appearing on the stamps. The stamps remain the same size as the previous regional issue.

Printing Details

<i>Printer</i>	Harrison & Sons Ltd
<i>Perforation</i>	15" × 14"
<i>Number to sheet</i>	200
<i>Paper</i>	Coated unwatermarked phosphor
<i>Format</i>	Vertical
<i>Process</i>	Photogravure
<i>Date of Issue</i>	23 January 1974
<i>Designer</i>	Jeffery Matthews
<i>Colours</i>	3p Ultramarine 3½p Olive Green 5½p Dark Purple 8p Bright Vermillion

Royal Air Force Flown Covers

A flown cover will be issued in the current Squadron Series to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee of No. 6 Squadron. It shows the Bristol Scout flown by Major Hawker VC, DSO and the Phantom now used by the Squadron. It will be flown on a flight from RAF Coningsby after cancellation by a special BFPS commemorative handstamp (1423) on 31 January. It should be obtainable on or about 22 February 1974 from the Philatelic Officer, No. 6 Squadron, RAF Coningsby, Lincs at 25p plus 3p postage. All proceeds from this cover will be donated to the RAF Museum Appeal Fund.

Commemorative Cover- Women's Royal Army Corps

Women have served our armies in the field for some hundreds of years dating back to Boadicea in AD 61 but the first time women were accepted as an integral part of the Regular Army was on 1 February 1949 when (along with the Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing Corps) the Women's Royal Army Corps was authorised.

In order to mark the 25th Anniversary of the formation of the Corps a special commemorative cover will be issued in the British Military Uniforms Series. There will be an insert card giving brief notes on the history of the Women's Royal Army Corps.

Of particular interest to philatelists will be the specially designed postmark bearing the British Forces Postal Services number 1432. The postage stamp which will be used will be the 3½p definitive issue.

A limited number of covers will be signed by Dame Mary Tyrwhitt, DBE, TD, who, as Senior Controller (M J C Tyrwhitt, was the first Director), Women's Royal Army Corps, and also by the current Director, Brigadier E J Nolan, Hon ADC.

Covers will be available at:

- a. 55p (signed) postage incl.
- b. 30p (unsigned) postage incl.

from the Philatelic Officer, WRAC Centre, Queen Elizabeth Park, Guildford, Surrey GU2 6QH. Cheques/Postal Orders should be crossed and made payable to Corps Headquarters WRAC. Applicants from overseas should add 7½p for postage by surface mail or the 2 oz rate for air mail.

Proceeds from the sale of these covers will be donated to Corps Funds.

New Post Bus

The North West has got its second post bus and this takes to the road on 1 March 1974, running in the Duddon Valley from Broughton Lancashire to Seathwaite.

On sale on the bus will be a postcard giving a brief description of a post bus service. Each full colour card will have a special cachet indicating it was posted on the bus. They will be available by application to the Head Postmaster, Lancaster at a price of 5p, (a stamped addressed envelope should be enclosed with any order, measuring not less than 4½" × 6").

On the opening day of the service there will be a special hand stamp to commemorate the event and a fully serviced postcard will be available from the Head Postmaster, Lancaster LA1 1AA, at a price of 12p. A special posting box will be provided at Broughton SPSO.

Normal re-posting facilities will also be available.

New 35p Stamp Book

This book, released on 12 December 1973, contains 2 panes of five 3½p stamps, as market research has found that the inclusion of the ½p stamp is unnecessary. The book covers are blue and feature a new series of illustrations of British Coins designed by Peter Gould, FSIA. The first in the series shows a penny struck at Canterbury for Cuthred King of Kent 798-807.

The British High Value Stamps of the 20th Century

5. Royal Silver Wedding £1, 1948

Prince Albert, who later became King George VI, served as a midshipman in the Royal Navy during World War I and was present at the Battle of Jutland in 1916. He was created Duke of York in 1920, and he married Elizabeth Angela Marguerite (Lady Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon), the youngest daughter of Sir Claude Bowes-Lyon, 14th Earl of Strathmore and Kinghorne, at Westminster Abbey on 26 April 1923. The Royal couple visited Canada and the United States in 1939, and South Africa, accompanied by their two daughters, the Princess Elizabeth (our present Queen) and the Princess Margaret Rose, in 1947.

The importance attached by the British Post Office to the occasion of the Royal Silver Wedding in April 1948 was reflected, not so much in the issue of special stamps, but in the decision to make one of them a £1 denomination (the other being a lowly 2½d). There had been a precedent for such a step with the PUC £1 of 1929, but nevertheless many collectors, the philatelic press and leading philatelic organisations were incensed by what was considered to be a form of 'outrageous extortion and blackmail'.

Matters were not improved when the stamps were overprinted for use in the British Post Offices abroad and the Crown Agents issued high-value Silver Wedding stamps for each of 47 Crown Colonies! It was only when the British stamps actually appeared – on 26 April – that the controversy began to die down.

The new designs, based on photographs of the King and Queen by Dorothy Wilding, were seen to be very attractive indeed, and all the pre-issue prejudices were forgotten in the rush to acquire the minuscule souvenirs of a happy Royal event.

The 2½d stamp, in long horizontal format, was designed by George T. Knipe, artist and designer with Harrison & Sons Ltd (who printed the stamps), while the design of the handsome £1 stamp, in large upright format, was the creation of Miss Joan Hassall, ARE,



daughter of John Hassall, the poster artist whose works are in current vogue as collectors' items. Miss Hassall, the first woman to design a British stamp, placed the Royal profiles within a 'picture frame', incorporating the crown, face value and dates '1923-1948' inconspicuously within its borders.

The designs also created a notable precedent in the omission of the words 'Postage and Revenue' or 'Postage', a superfluous appendage dropped altogether early in the reign of Queen Elizabeth II. The two stamps were printed in pleasing shades of ultramarine and blue respectively, but it was the appearance of the £1 stamp which won universal admiration.

An editorial in *Gibbons Stamp Monthly* of June 1948 was eloquent in its praise: 'Whatever we may think about the necessity for the £1 Silver Wedding stamp, there can be no two opinions as to its attractiveness. At last we have a photogravure stamp with a design perfectly suited to the process employed, and it must rank among the finest of photogravure productions'.

The designers obviously had a better idea of what was required for this particular process than any of their predecessors, and were no doubt 'briefed' by the printers,

Harrison & Sons, the acknowledged pioneers of photogravure-printed stamps in this country. Their first experiments matured after their initial success with a photogravure series for Egypt in 1923-24, and the definitives for the Gold Coast in 1928. In 1934, they were awarded the contract for printing the low-value British stamps which began to appear in August and September of that year. Photogravure-printing as an economic and worthwhile proposition was firmly established with the splendid issue of four definitive stamps for King Edward VIII in 1936.

The quantity sold of the Silver Wedding £1 amounted to almost 420,000. Initially

the stamps were overbought and for some years, as large surpluses came on the market, they could be purchased at face value or under. They were even bought up for use as postage, but eventually the demand for them caught up with the available dealers' stocks, and the £1 stamp is now catalogued by Gibbons at £6, unused or used.

Comparison with the equally attractive commemorative stamps issued for the Silver Wedding of the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh shows that design techniques have not changed very much in the course of 25 years. And it was tactful of the Post Office not to burden us with another £1 stamp!

JAMES WATSON

The Wedgwood Medallion of The Queen in the National Postal Museum

The first major exhibition of Wedgwood Portrait Medallions to be mounted for a hundred years opened recently at the National Portrait Gallery in London. Those familiar with the National Postal Museum will have seen the 16" high blue and white portrait medallion of the Queen which Arnold Machin modelled from his Postage head of Queen Elizabeth II, and which is so obviously Wedgwood. What is less well known is the fact that this modern medallion portrait is one of the largest ever made by this internationally famous firm of potters. The 17" high Black Basalt medallion portrait of Peter the Great, Czar of all Russia, produced by the firm's founder Josiah Wedgwood himself, is the only example in the exhibition of a work of comparable size. Almost all the 18th Century medallions produced by the firm, and the 1788 Catalogue listed no less than 857 of them, were about five inches high.

The perfection of Jasper Ware, in which almost all these medallion portraits, not forgetting that in the National Postal Museum, were made, was one of Josiah Wedgwood's

great triumphs which won him fame as a potter of European stature, a Fellowship of the Royal Society and a private fortune. To perfect this stoneware which had many of the qualities of porcelain, Josiah made more than 10,000 experiments, all of which he recorded in his note books. The mixture of clay and other ingredients used behaved inconsistently. Even using materials ground together in a single dish and then fired in the kiln under identical conditions was not enough – some items came out white and others in an erratic range of colours. Josiah wrote: "If I had more time, more hands and more heads I could do something . . . I am almost crazy." A few days after he uttered this *cri-de-coeur*, his breakthrough came. He had discovered how to produce with 'absolute certainty' the results he sought.

The medallion portraits made by the firm today, as well as the marvellous series made in the 18th Century in the familiar Blue and White Wedgwood Jasper didn't just happen. In the beginning there was human skill and diligence.

F. MARCUS ARMAN

Designing The Royal Wedding Stamps

by *Collis Clements and Edward Hughes*

The Court Circular issued from Buckingham Palace on Tuesday 29 May 1973 said – “It is with the greatest of pleasure that the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh announce the betrothal of their beloved daughter The Princess Anne to Lieutenant Mark Phillips”.

This announcement set in motion one of the speediest stamp design and production exercises in the history of the British Post Office, for it is usual for the Post Office to commission the design of stamps at least twelve months before the date of issue. However the close proximity of the engagement announcement and the date of the Wedding made this a very different operation.

We think that the best way of explaining the exercise will be to take you day by day, through the weeks which followed the engagement announcement.

Because time was so short the Post Office commissioned four designers to submit preliminary designs. One was briefed to work on designs based on heraldic and monogrammatic forms, another to work on formal miniature portraits, we were asked to explore photography as a possible medium and the fourth designer was given an open brief.

The exercise began on 16 June, the day on which the Queen gave approval for a special issue of two stamps to celebrate the wedding. Two days later the designers were briefed with instructions to submit first rough sketches just six days later – rather a different proposition from the six months or so one normally gets to consider all the problems involved.

Our first step was to gather together from the various press agencies, as many photographs of the couple as we could lay our hands on. In fact there proved to be very few of Mark Phillips and in nearly all those available, he was shown either in military uniform or in riding dress.

It was on these photographs that we based our first sketches, trying every permutation of profiles, three quarter face, and full face

and varying degrees of close-up. We also experimented with colour, both to satisfy the functional need to distinguish between the stamps in sorting and to set the appropriate mood and dignity for the occasion.

We also studied previous stamps bearing portraits of members of the Royal Family, and we came to the conclusion that this occasion called for a break from the usual rather formal, traditional treatment that has been used in the past. We felt that we should try to portray the youthful, romantic nature of the event and express something of the couple's personalities and attractiveness. Highly sensitive, romantic photography in the modern idiom seemed most appropriate and this was the approach we settled for.

The small size that one has to work within on stamps imposes severe restrictions. The problems of showing two portraits, the Queen's head, the price of the stamp and an event title, all within a rectangle measuring $1\frac{1}{2}'' \times 1''$, are obvious.

For these reasons we rejected, at an early stage, the possibility of using full length portraits or the inclusion of horses and settled for close-ups of the faces.

The occasion obviously called for a photographer of note and as Lord Snowden, Norman Parkinson and Lord Lichfield had all previously taken very good photographs of the Princess, these were short listed and recommended.

On 22 June our preliminary roughs were ready and delivered to the Postal Headquarters.

Because of the unusually tight production schedule, the preliminary designs from all four designers were submitted to the Palace, with a Post Office recommendation in favour of our photographic treatment. On 28 June the Post Office received approval from the Palace to develop the two recommended designs and with a request from Princess Anne that the photographs taken by Lord Lichfield for her 23rd birthday should be considered.

Because of the difficulty of arranging a photographic session with the Princess and Captain Phillips together it seemed that we would have to use one of the existing shots of the Princess and have new photographs taken of Captain Phillips.

The Post Office therefore commissioned Lord Lichfield to take these photographs in Germany on 22 July, based on our preliminary designs.

However, two days before this was to take place, the Post Office learned from the Palace that the couple were to be at Windsor that week-end and Lord Lichfield was given permission to photograph them there.

On the Sunday evening of the 22nd, therefore, in the grounds of the castle, he shot three or four rolls of film. This of course was far from the best way of achieving good photographs – one would normally spend several hours in a studio under ideal lighting conditions, without distractions, but for-

tunately the weather was kind and the shots were adequate.

The next day we received contact prints, made a small selection of possible alternatives and ordered prints to work on. The artwork for the lettering and Queen's head was put in hand to fit the photograph.

On 27 July the final artwork was delivered to the Postal Headquarters, approved and taken to Harrisons the security printers at High Wycombe for the next major part of the exercise.

Harrisons had, in fact, just 17 weeks to proof, and print the 60 million 3½p stamps and the 10 million 20p stamps that were ordered.

Within one week they had proofs ready in 16 different colours and from these two pairs of colours were chosen and submitted to the Palace, with a recommendation for the violet and brown ones which were approved. The stamps then went to press, just eight weeks after the project was put in hand.

A Card for Remembrance

Every High Street shopping centre today has its shop selling cards for all occasions. Wedding, anniversary, birthday, retirement, get-well-soon, and welcome new baby cards are the staple diet of the trade. Such items sell well all the year round. They are supplemented by a plethora of Christmas cards and to a lesser extent by seasonable issues commemorating Easter, New Year and minority group festivals like the Jewish New Year and for 25 January Dwywnen's Day in Wales. Then there are special cards for St. Valentine's Day, Mothering Sunday, Fathers' Day and so on. The inventiveness of the designers, printers, and publishers is matched only by the appetite of the card-buyers, who, if they are honest, will admit that they grasp the chance to be let off the task of composing a note suitable to the occasion. We are all a little lazier than we like to admit and it is so much easier to adopt a few well chosen words on a card than it is to

think up a sequence of words which really conveys our feelings. The latest 'In Deepest Sympathy' card can be used to free us completely from the throes of composition.

The mourning cards sent out by the close relatives of the deceased are of course rather different. Nevertheless, Victorian examples were rather splendid pieces of typography as well as tributes to the qualities of the deceased. They are hard to find but inexpensive. It is a little odd that the greetings cards which give us an excuse not to write letters were unknown until we were actively in the course of becoming a literate nation and as we have become increasingly accustomed to using daily what used to be known as the Three R's so our reluctance to employ these basic skills for social purposes seems to have declined. The telephone and the greetings card are a powerful anti-letter-writing combination.

What a field for collecting and for

'Finding Out About', are the early formal essays in communication between friends. Old greetings cards have an irresistible charm for collectors – especially those who like rooting through old cards on antique-market stalls, where nice examples can be obtained literally for a few pence. For really splendid early 19th Century Valentines, of course one pays much more heavily, for Valentines have been collectable for a long time and some of the more elaborate specimens are very properly regarded as important examples of folk art.

St. Valentine, said by some to have been an early Christian martyr, became the patron saint of lovers by accident. The date of his alleged martyrdom coincided with a pagan festival in which Roman youths drew lots for the local maidens. The practice of sending elaborate lace paper Valentines began early in the 19th Century. In 1826 over 20,000 were posted in London and by 1870 the extra

loads on postmen on 14 February had grown to over a million items. The printed 'bought' Valentine cards were often further embellished by the sender, who would surround the sentimental verses with scraps of velvet, lace, shells, dried flowers, seaweed, spun glass or any other attachable decorative material which came to hand. The printers often produced the lace work on these cards by embossing the required pattern on the paper and then rubbing away the raised back with sandpaper. By the middle of the century three or even four layers of lacework – separated by paper hinges – were commonly used for a single card and brightly coloured chromolithographed scraps were added to make the message of love come over loud and clear. They were sometimes boxed to prevent them being squashed flat.

The earliest commemorative card I have ever been able to trace is the all-occasion



Combines the Christmas Card with the Postcard 1911



One of a series of Christmas Cards by R.A.'s produced 1881.
 E. J. Poynter R.A. Printers Raphael Tuck & Sons.

'Anniversarie' card of 1829 which provided blank spaces for the names of the addressee and the sender, as well as for 'Christmas', 'New Year', 'Birth' or other words suitable to the occasion. The twelve letters of 'Anniversarie' are cleverly interlaced with tiny scenes and figures representing the twelve months of the year, and incorporate between the final 'e' and the sign of the cross, scenes of the Nativity and the Adoration of the Magi. This is a very rare engraving by John Thompson, one of the most outstanding engravers of the early 19th Century, after a design by William Harvey who had been apprenticed to Thomas Bewick, the famous Newcastle on Tyne engraver who revived interest in wood engraving in this country. In spite of its early date, 11 years before the postal reforms which were to make Rowland Hill famous, it would be stretching things somewhat to pretend that this was the lineal ancestor of Christmas cards since it was plainly designed to be adapted to any anniversary. The card, however, was a great find. It turned up recently pasted on to a single page of a scrap book together with six other engravings. It cost just one pound for the page! Which goes to show that not only does it pay to shop around, but that one must also know what to look for and that means doing one's homework – reading up one's specialities by making full use of public libraries.

Christmas cards as such were introduced in 1843 shortly after Rowland Hill's penny post commenced in 1840. They owe their origin to the initiative of Henry Cole, Hill's assistant, working with artist – later Royal Academician – J. C. Horsley, and issued by Henry Cole's firm, 'Felix Summerly'. An original of this card would fetch perhaps £25 or so at auction today. Many late 19th Century Christmas cards were the work of well known artists, designers and printers: those by Walter Crane, Kate Greenaway and Marcus Ward have great charm and a decorative quality which is as fresh today as it was when

they were printed almost a hundred years ago.

The first postcards were issued by the Post Office in 1870: the tax stamp for newspapers was last used in that year and both newspapers and postcards were subject to a postal charge of $\frac{1}{2}d$ instead of the earlier $1d$. The introduction of the halfpenny postcard was part of the 1870 package deal of Post Office reforms. A thin card, rather smaller than the accepted standard postcard size of today, was introduced and this created a storm among stationers. The trade was shocked as no charge was made for the card but only for the stamp! These were not, however, picture postcards but plain correspondence cards intended for notes only: it was not until 1894 that official permission was given for private postcards to be used with an adhesive stamp, and it was the opening of this floodgate that led to the introduction of halfpenny picture postcards. Early examples of pictorial or comic cards are fairly plentiful and many fascinating collections of them have been made over recent years. Nevertheless, there are plenty of attractive cards left, most of which can be bought for 10p or less. You pay your money and take your pick. They will never be made again and a discretely gathered collection made now at very modest cost can be full of interesting surprises and will certainly appreciate in value. Not that you will make a fortune from postcard collecting. I refuse, however, to part with my Wembley Exhibition cards of 1924 which are now quite scarce.

All these greeting and postcards offer a great deal of scope for enquiry. One enjoys them more and has a far more discriminating eye for a worthwhile acquisition in proportion to one's knowledge of the printing processes employed, the artists who designed them, and their historical evolution over the years.

Collecting is not just accumulating objects as a squirrel hoards nuts – the real rewards lie in collecting facts and things in meaningful relationships.

F. MARCUS ARMAN

Special Handstamps

Unless otherwise stated items for reposting bearing at least 3½p in postage should be sent to the Head Postmaster of the town in which the special box is located, or the relevant district Postmaster in London, marking the outer cover "Special Handstamp".

7 January 1974 P/R

Leicester Magic Circle Golden Jubilee 7 January 74 Leicester. Special posting box at the Grand Hotel Granby Street Leicester.

Postmark Slogans

Unless otherwise stated items for reposting should be forwarded to the Head Postmaster of the town where the Slogan is to be used with the outer cover marked "Postmark Slogan".

5 February–5 March 1974

The Samaritans Distress Despair Phone or Visit in Confidence. To be used at Tonbridge.

26 November 1973 – 19 January 1974

Hugh Lloyd as Buttons this Christmas at Lewisham Concert Hall Catford SE6 4TU 01-690 3431. To be used at Catford London.

1 December – 31 May 1974 (P)

Hunstanton the Ideal Family Seaside Resort. To be reused at Hunstanton.

1 December 1973 – 30 November 1974 (P)

Great Yarmouth and Gorleston-on-Sea Fine for Family Holidays. To be reused at Great Yarmouth.

1 December 1973 – 31 May 1974

Its Bright Its Right A Holiday at Sunny Porthcawl. To be reused at Bridgend Glam.

12 November 1973 – 6 January 1974

BBC Radio Carlisle The Sound of Cumbria Starts 24 November 1973. 95.6 VHF 206 and 39.7 MW. To be used at Carlisle.

26 November 1973 – 24 January 1974 (P)

Dick Whittington Ashcroft Croydon 01-688 9291. To be used at Croydon.

3 December 1973 – 12 January 1974

Pickwick at The Civic Hall Guildford January 9–12. To be used at Guildford Surrey.

3 December 1973 – 28 February 1974 (P)

Brian Rix in Robinson Crusoe New Theatre Cardiff December 22. To be used at Cardiff.

21 January – 17 February 1974

Age Concern – Havering. Havering OPWA HOPWA House Inskip Drive Hornchurch Essex RM11 3UR 25th Anniversary. To be used at Romford.

Repeat Campaigns

1 December 1973 – 30 November 1974

The Pantiles Royal Tunbridge Wells. To be used at Tunbridge Wells.

1 December 1973 – 30 November 1974

Visit The World of Wildlife Pencsycynor Bird Gardens Cilfrew Neath Glam Wales Open Every Day 10 am until Dusk. To be reused at Swansea and Neath.

Please note that the dates for the slogan **Landscape in Britain 1750–1850** will now be as follows:-

31 December – 3 February 1974 at SWDO 2 dies

19 November – 3 February 1974 at SW3

'P' denotes Pictorial

'R' denotes Rectangular

Correction

The three colour reprints shown as figures 8, 9 and 10 in the article on p6 of the November 1973 'Bulletin' were, in fact proofs from a new die made in 1858 and not as stated.

Preliminary Designs Commonwealth Parliamentary Stamps

by Theo. Cockerell.



Old Letter Box



This old eight-sided letterbox, probably made about 1853, is still in use within the grounds of the Royal Naval Hospital, Plymouth. It is similar in style to the very first mainland boxes but without the Royal Cipher and words 'POST OFFICE'.

The box is only about 4 feet high and has the vertical posting aperture popular in the early days of pillar boxes.

Book Review

The Stanley Gibbons "Elizabethan" Catalogue

The 1974 edition of the "Elizabethan" has expanded by 75 pages and contains an extensive revision of prices, maintaining the trend already set in those 1974 catalogues which have already appeared.

In the Great Britain section a number of new varieties appear in the listings of the decimal definitives and regionals. For example the 2½p definitive (SG 846E) with the thick blunted small '2' is included as V266 and the Welsh regional 3p (W14E) with "extra hind claw" becomes V268. The listings also include for the first time the stamps which have appeared with gum arabic.

The price changes reflect the present strength of the market for modern British stamps. However, considering the publicity which always follows the announcement of new "missing colours", it was surprising to find from a sample check that prices for this material show little movement.

The Elizabethan Catalogue of Modern Commonwealth Stamps is published by Stanley Gibbons Publications Ltd, 391 Strand, London WC2R OLX, price £2.25.

1973 Collectors' Pack

The 1973 Pack is now on sale. It costs £1.80 and is available from the Philatelic Bureau and all Offices which normally sell packs. It contains all the special stamp issues of 1973.

GB Decimal Book Study Circle

Members and non-members are cordially invited to a meeting and seminar on 26 January 1974 at the Victory Services Club 63-79 Seymour Street, LONDON, W.1. between 2 pm - 6 pm.

Stamp Paper

Paper is so often taken for granted, that before studying Stamp Papers in particular it is as well to remind readers of the basic manufacturing technique.

By description, paper is a mass of interwoven cellulose or vegetable fibres carefully blended and processed in a variety of ways to produce different special properties.

The fibres are selected from wood, Esparto grass, cotton or linen and are separated or beaten in water, intermixed and formed on to a very fine wire to strain away the water and leave the fibres to form the sheet after drying.

The paper is made on machines as narrow as 50" up to 350" wide and from speeds as low as 15 feet per minute up to 3,000 feet per minute.

As will be appreciated from later comments, the physical requirements for specialised stamp production is very demanding indeed and in order to embrace the very special features the paper is usually produced on very specialised sophisticated paper making machines. The final construction embraces numerous features in the base paper, the coating ingredients and the adhesive to finally tailor-make the paper to the conditions of the country and the print process.

As some collectors look for faults in printing, we deal first with the printing surface of the paper and the characteristics that are required to compliment the method of printing.

In the early days a plain (Uncoated) paper was used and since very often the surface or texture was not particularly smooth, the surface was either plate glazed or damped and great pressures exerted in order to force the ink into the surface.

As paper manufacturing techniques developed, paper manufacturers improved upon the method of production and experimented with different fibre ingredients in order to produce the various features demanded by some of the processes.

For example, as the smoothness or texture

of the paper was improved, the general print quality improved to such an extent that postage stamp papers today are amongst the most sophisticated papers in the world.

The postage stamp has become the overseas ambassador for the issuing country and by intent each multi-coloured postage stamp is a miniature work of art.

Stamps therefore fall into two categories:

- 1 Broadly being described as functional. For example single colour definitive stamps.
- 2 The multi-colour commemorative type stamp which is particularly demanding of the paper.

The paper manufacturer in selecting the best possible combination of various fibres ideally aims for a base paper that is extremely stable. It should not stretch due to moisture in the air, as a result of picking up moisture during the printing process, or under the tension of some of the printing machines. At the same time it should perforate cleanly making a nice clean round hole and still eventually expect the stamps to tear fairly easily when separated from the main sheet.

Of course it is not possible to produce such a paper since it is made from natural fibres, not man made fibres and therefore the paper-maker must seek the ideal combination that will give the minimum amount of stretch.

Having established this prime requirement, it is then often required to introduce a watermark or special types of coloured fibres or security features in order to discourage forgeries.

As already mentioned, the Commemorative postage stamps are regarded as being the country's ambassador and the aim is to produce almost a photographic miniature by printing; over the recent years one can trace a steady change from Uncoated papers on to Coated papers which give such a vastly improved print surface.

There are of course two main print processes used on coated papers, the litho-

graphic process and the gravure process, each of which makes special demands upon the coating formulation of the surface. Whilst many manufacturers attempt to produce a universal coating for both processes in the final analysis it is impossible to meet the exacting demands in the far extremes for each requirement.

All are familiar with the phosphor bands that are applied to the postage stamps to facilitate automatic sorting but there is another technique where the phosphor is not applied by the printing process but formulated within the coating mix by the paper maker, one of the early examples being on Australian postage stamps.

The question of the adhesive is another fascinating subject. For years Pure Gum Arabic was used as the traditional adhesive, being the most hygienic adhesive available for years, although there are now newer and more sophisticated synthetic adhesive blends.

An interesting aspect of Gummed Arabic paper is that its natural state of equilibrium is in fact reached under slightly higher humidity conditions than usual in this country and therefore it is not regarded as being particularly stable. If one then takes this aspect a stage further, it may be very stable under higher humidity conditions but they cause the adhesive to become tacky and unless the stamps are interleaved they will adhere to each other and be ruined.

It is hardly surprising therefore that Polyvinyl Alcohol synthetic adhesives have largely replaced Gum Arabic. They have the advantage of being far more stable over a wider range of conditions, they do not become as tacky as Pure Gum Arabic under high humidity conditions and therefore do not need to be interleaved. When moistened, however, the adhesive takes a little longer to jelly and this is why in the early days, quite unjustly, people complained that the stamps did not stick so well.

A lot of this was the psychological effect because the PVA adhesives have a duller

appearance with a thinner film of adhesive and the natural reaction of so many people quite unknowingly is to over-moisten and very often remove the adhesive long before it has had a chance to stick the stamp to the envelope.

Another type of adhesive which is steadily establishing itself is the dry gum or particle gum as it is sometimes known. This is completely dull white in appearance and in fact looks like ordinary ungummed paper until moistened, when it will then gloss up like a conventional adhesive.

Finally in 1964 Sierra Leone issued the world's first self adhesive postage stamp which was designed in an irregular shape ie that of the country of Sierra Leone with the shape punched out instead of the traditional perforating technique.

J K CLARKE

Samuel Jones/Wiggins Teape Ltd.

New 30p Stamp Book

This new book, featuring 'Save the Children' on the front cover, will now be designated 'Spring 1974' and not 'Autumn 1973' as notified in the November 'Bulletin'.

Letters to the Editor

Sir,

What stamp will be sought after in one hundred years time?

Judging by the scribbings of the football pundits the England Winners 4d World Cup 1966 issue will not only be much sought after, but will be a unique occurrence as far as special issues are concerned.

Yours faithfully

F A GREENSWORD

London N17

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