

Philatelic Bulletin

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Editorial

Our regular readers will know that wherever possible we try to provide the background behind new stamp issues. We are always pleasantly surprised by the ready help given to us by the many organisations involved with our special stamps. Our Christmas stamps which we featured last month have as their theme carols and carol singing. This month we are delighted to print the first of a two part article which traces something of the history of the carol. We will save the second part until December, by which time carols will be more widely heard.

London 1980

Her Majesty The Queen has been graciously pleased to grant her Patronage to LONDON 1980, the International Stamp Exhibition to be held at Earls Court, London, from 6 to 14 May 1980.

First Day of Issue Postmarking

From 22 November 1978 first day of issue cancellations will be available at Kilmarnock.

Forthcoming Events

Rutland Philatelic Society

A new philatelic society has been formed which plans to hold regular monthly meetings at the Design Centre, Station Road, Oakham.

Full information may be obtained from the Secretary, John Pert Esq, 5 Stocks Hill, Manton, Oakham, Leicestershire LE15 8SY.

Middlesex Federation

The Middlesex Philatelic Federation is to hold its 24th Juniors' Day on Saturday 11 November 1978 in the Main Hall at the Chalfont Centre for Epilepsy, Chalfont St Peter, Bucks. This annual event centres around the two main competitions — The Middlesex Trophy Competition, which is open to all collectors in the Federation area (not confined to Middlesex, by the way) aged between 17 and under 21 at the end of 1978, and the Middlesex Juniors' Competition for the Curtis Elkan Cup, open to all junior collectors in the area up to their 17th birthday. Awards will be made in three age groups.

John Laurie, of 'Dad's Army', will open the show at 2.30 (doors open 2 pm), and all attending have the cheerful prospect of several hours of enjoyment ahead of them.

Enquiries and entries should be addressed to B R Thurlow, 7 Cannon Road, Watford, Herts WD1 8BB — telephone Watford 43243.

Special Definitive Issues for the Isle of Man 1958 and 1964

The 1958 Issue: Formation of advisory committee for the Isle of Man

As in the case of the Channel Islands, following HM The Queen's approval in July 1956 of the issue of a special definitive stamp for the Isle of Man for the basic letter rate an *ad hoc* advisory committee for the Isle of Man was formed.

Represented on the new committee were the Manx Museum and local Art and other bodies, and at its first meeting, in January 1957, the committee agreed that the border of the new stamp should feature, in a shield, the Arms of the Kingdom of Man ('The Three Legs') and the interlaced pattern known as the 'Ring Chain', specially characteristic of the early Manx Crosses. It was also agreed that the word 'Postage' should be included in the final design (but not necessarily in the preliminary sketches); but that the word 'Revenue' should not, as the stamp would not be used for Inland Revenue purposes on the Island. The committee also recommended the names of a number of Isle of Man artists who might be invited to submit designs, and invitations to these were sent out in mid-March.

Shortlisting of designs

By the close of the competition, on 18 April, 17 designs had been received and on 27 May the committee selected three of the designs for bringing to completion. These were two designs by John H Nicholson (figs 1-2) and a design by Margaret E Lockwood (as in fig 3), in this order of preference but with some suggested modifications.

For John H Nicholson's designs, these included a repositioning of the shield containing the Arms of Man, changes to the chain border design and the inclusion of the word 'Postage'; and, for Margaret E Lockwood's design, the omission of the Norse ship which, at that stage, was a feature of the chain border along the top.

On 4 December, the committee studied the completed versions of the three shortlisted designs and selected, as its first choice, John H Nicholson's design shown in fig 4 and his other design, shown in fig 5, as reserve choice; but with further improvements to the interlaced



Fig 1



Fig 2



Fig 3



Fig 4

chain design and toning; and for the preferred design (fig 4) the positioning of the word 'Postage' along the bottom edge.

Fresh designs embodying these modifications were examined by the committee on 13 January 1958, at which it confirmed its earlier first and reserve choices; but with several further improvements to the interlacing pattern and toning.

The final selection

The essays subsequently produced (figs 6 and 7) were examined by the committee at its final meeting on 8 May, at which it again confirmed its selection of these two designs for its first and reserve choices, respectively; but with an improvement in the graduation of tone beneath The Queen's portrait (a change which could be made at the printing stage).

The committee's final selection was submitted to The Queen on 20 May and confirmation of Her Majesty's approval was sent from Buckingham Palace on 21 May.

And so this new definitive stamp for the Isle of Man for the basic 3d letter rate was issued on 18 August.

The portrait used in this stamp was by Dorothy Wilding.



Fig 5



Fig 6



Fig 7

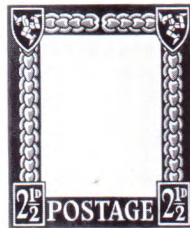


Fig 8



Fig 9



Fig 10



Fig 11



Fig 12

Featured in its design were the Legs of Man, armoured and spurred, on a shield — the Arms of the ancient Kingdom of Man. The Legs were in the form in which they appear on the Manx Sword of State, the thirteenth-century weapon which is borne before the Lieutenant Governor at the annual open-air Tynwald Assembly. The Celtic ring chain pattern forming the border design was taken from decorative carvings on Manx runic Crosses, a characteristic pattern dating from the Norse period in the Island's history.

The designer of the stamp, John H Nicholson, was an elected member of the British Water Colour Society, a Fellow of the Institute of British Decorators and Interior Designers and a Member of the Royal Institute of Painters in Water Colours. He had designed and executed the shield bearing the Coats of Arms of the Island and its four towns, a fixture in the Royal Yacht 'Britannia'; and had also executed three illuminated addresses on parchment presented to King George V and to Queen Elizabeth II. At the time of designing the stamp he was on the staff of the Douglas Art School, teaching interior decorating and lettering.

The 1964 Issue

Towards the close of 1963 it was agreed that an additional definitive stamp should be issued for the Isle of Man in the denomination 2½d and for use on picture postcards. Later, it was agreed that similar stamps should be issued for the Bailiwicks of Guernsey and Jersey.

As in the case of the Channel Islands, since the island authorities were anxious for the new stamp to be issued by June 1964, when the tourist season began, it was agreed that designs shortlisted in 1957-58 by the earlier *ad hoc* advisory committee should be considered, as an alternative to the usual competition, which would take more time, and essays of these were submitted for The Queen's approval.

And so, after local discussion, the design by John H Nicholson (a developed version of that shown in fig 5, the reserve choice of 1958) and a design by Margaret E Lockwood (fig 8, a developed version of her shortlisted design of 1957) were selected as first and reserve choices, respectively.

The essays produced (figs 9 and 10) were submitted to The Queen on 6 May and confirmation of Her Majesty's approval was sent from

Buckingham Palace on 7 May.

The new stamp, the second to be designed by the Isle of Man artist John H Nicholson and featuring the Legs of Man and the Celtic ring chain pattern characteristic of Manx runic Crosses, was issued on 8 June.

The portrait used in the stamp was that by Dorothy Wilding.

JEAN FARRUGIA



Fig 13



Fig 14

Illustrations

- Fig 1 The preliminary version of John H Nicholson's adopted design for the 3d value
- Fig 2 The preliminary version of John H Nicholson's shortlisted design for the 3d value
- Fig 3 Margaret E Lockwood's shortlisted design for the 3d value; this was considered again in 1964 as the reserve choice for the 2½d value
- Fig 4 An early version of John H Nicholson's adopted design for the 3d value
- Fig 5 John H Nicholson's shortlisted design for the 3d value; this was considered again in 1964 and adopted for the 2½d value
- Fig 6 Essay of adopted design for the 3d value
- Fig 7 Essay of reserve choice for the 3d value
- Fig 8 Margaret E Lockwood's reserve design of 1964 for the 2½d value
- Figs 9-10 Essays of adopted and reserve designs of 1964 for the 2½d value
- Fig 11 An unaccepted design of 1957 by Ada Humphreys
- Fig 12 An unaccepted design of 1957 by Margaret E Lockwood
- Figs 13-14 The issued stamps

Christmas Pictorial Airletter



This year's Christmas airletter to be issued on 22 November 1978 was designed by Graham Percy, and printed by McCorquodale Printers Ltd. Price 12p, of which 10½p is for postage. It depicts three typical snow scenes while the stamp area illustrates a house in a wintery setting. The airletter carries two phosphor bars.

The Christmas Carol—Part 1

During those few frantic weeks leading up to Christmas it seems quite possible nowadays to be surrounded by the joyful sounds of carol singing for every waking moment of the day.

The old custom of house-to-house singing is undoubtedly on the wane. The more fortunate may still be surprised by the harmonious sounds of a local Church or charity group outside their window, but for most, the presence of the carollers is heralded by a peal on the doorbell followed by the squeaky, off-key piping of a few halting lines of 'O Little Town of Bethlehem' which swiftly turn to a patter of disappearing feet once the appropriate reward has been produced. Sad as the decline of this delightful activity may be, the carol itself does not seem in danger of disappearing.

Apart from the now almost universal practice of carol services in Churches and schools which still retain the essential quality of a communal, joyous celebration of the spirit of Christmas, the carol today relies on more modern methods for its dispersal.

On the radio in the car, television at home, loudspeakers in the streets, piped music in shops and lifts, advertisements on hoardings, records at Christmas parties, the words and music of the old carols have been harnessed to the commercial machine of Christmas until it seems that the carol is in danger of suffering the most dramatic shift yet in its already eventful five-hundred year history; a shift from its original role as an expression of joy by the people to an impersonal tune sung at them by unknown voices and enjoyed passively, like so much music today.

Yet, amongst all the modern bustle of Christmas week, the first new notes of one of the favourite carols seem to have that ability to transport the singer or listener back to the nostalgic heart of the traditional Christmas with its crystal-clear, innocent world of the Nativity, sparkling snow, joy and goodwill towards all men.

What is the source of this lost world contained in the carols? Where did the words and music spring from and what is the history of what could almost be described as the country's only

unanimous national indulgence in folk-song for one or two weeks in every year?

Many of what we loosely term Christmas carols today are strictly speaking Christmas hymns or songs composed during the last century, but the true carol emerged as a distinct lyric form at the beginning of the 15th century. The actual word 'carol' has its source in dancing (cf. Old French *caroler*, to dance, Latin *choraula*, Flute player, Greek *choros*, round dance, and in its basic form the carol is believed to have begun as a song, not necessarily sacred in theme, accompanying a simple, communal circling dance with a leader singing the main stanzas and the dancers dancing along to the refrain or burden (see the small picture of the Shepherd's Nativity in the illustration from a 15th century manuscript in the Bodleian Library, MS Douce 93, f. 28 r).

It is difficult to find an authentic carol with its tune dating from before 1400, and the first great flowering of the carol tradition coincides with the production of the great cycles of the medieval mystery plays. Like the plays, the first carols we know of were the result of a deliberate policy by the Church to make it possible for ordinary people to participate in religious celebrations in a manner at once appealing and easily understood. They were an attempt to convert the basic urges for song and dance of the pre-Christian festivals to a religiously respectable and socially controllable form on the basis of the old maxim of 'Why should the devil have all the good tunes?'

Painstaking research has revealed the texts of approximately five hundred carols from this first medieval period of composition. They are mostly associated with Christmas, though some are concerned with the other great festivals of the Church year, and of all the religious carols it can be said, in the words of one recent scholar:

'The English Religious Carol, as preserved in manuscripts of the pre-Reformation period, far from being the spontaneous product of popular joy at the Christmas season, which sentimentalizing writers would like to make of it, is rather one weapon of the Church in

her long struggle with the survivals of paganism and with the fondness of her people for unedifying entertainment.'

(R L Greene, *The Early English Carol*, 1935)

The earliest carols in the repertoire fall into distinct types: narrative ballads (*The Cherry Tree Carol*); lullabies (*the Coventry Carol*); numbering songs (*The Joys of Mary*); conversions of pagan Nature rites (*The Holly and the Ivy*); question and answer songs (*The Seven Virgins*); Festive wassails (*The Boar's Head Carol*) and macaronics, where lines of common speech alternate with the formal Latin of the Church (*In Dulce Jubilo*). The basic, most common form was either a ballad or a one line iambic tercet with a short burden serving as the opening lines and as a refrain to each stanza.

With so many of these traditional medieval carols now known to us from scholarly manuscript research or from the collecting efforts of the early folk song enthusiasts, it seems astonishing that such a vital and popular musical genre should have virtually disappeared to the general public for several centuries, to re-emerge only in the latter years of the 19th century.

The reasons which caused this decline in such a flourishing activity, bringing a virtual halt to the composition of new carols and forcing the old ones underground, are many and varied and still the subject of investigation by musicologists and social historians.

The sixteenth century saw the first attempts to collect together the old carols in printed form, the earliest of these being the *Christmasse Carolles* of Wynkyn de Worde of 1521 of which only one leaf survives containing a version of the Boar's Head Wassail carol. The composition of new carols flourished still in the sixteenth century but more as a sophisticated musical form by professional musicians for an aristocratic audience, too complicated by far to be transmitted by common folk. The carol composers, many of them famous poets and musicians were now composing for the court rather than the countryside, and although as a body these carols are of great interest to the historians of early English music, hardly any of them have survived off the written

page to the present day. Yet this period is chiefly of interest for the passage of carol singing from active participation in a religious festival to pure entertainment before passive listeners, as witnessed by the following entry in the 1527 journal of William More, Prior of Worcester, who gave a Christmas feast each year:

'Item for syngyng of carolls on cristmas day
and to mynstrells

2s 6d 16d

Item to mystrells and syngers of carralls

12d/4d'

(R L Greene, *op cit* p xl)

An obvious external date for the disappearance of popular carol singing is the year 1647 when the Puritan Parliament, with its hatred for relics of superstition and paganism, abolished the public observance and celebration of Christmas. If we consider a period in which a speech in the House of Lords on Christmas Day 1644 could refer to Christmas in the following terms:

'and truly, I think the superstition and profaneness of this day are so rooted in it, that there is no way to reform it, but by dealing with it as Hezekiah did with the brazen serpent. This year God, by his providence, has buried it in a fast and I hope it will never rise again.'

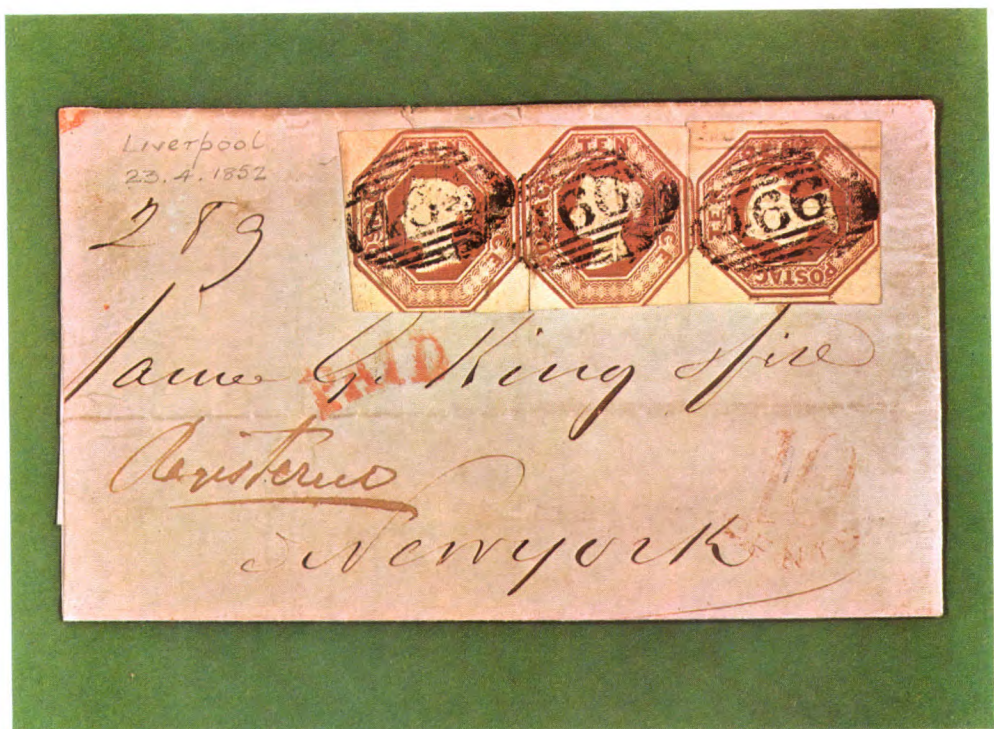
(Edmund Calamy, Rector of St Mary, Aldermanbury, *cit*, E Routtley, *The English Carol*, 1958, p 121.)

it is hardly surprising that it should have been hostile to the jolly tones of the traditional carol, yet even before this watershed the popular carol had lost its creative impulse as early as the Reformation, perhaps because of its essential connection with the vanished liturgy of the medieval Church.

The period up to the Restoration produced a few new Puritan carol collections but these were very lugubrious and didactic and it seemed that the spirit that had inspired the old, joyous, simple carols was forever dead.

(To be continued)

Multiple Usage of the Tenpence Embossed



This month's 'gem' is worthy of attention for two reasons. Firstly, it is most unusual to find three Tenpenny embossed stamps on a single cover; this value was introduced on 6 November 1848 to cover the cost of a letter weighing less than a half ounce to a number of British Colonies and to France, treble-rate letters being very much the exception. The three Tenpenny stamps (a pair and a single) on this cover are all fine examples, though cut a little close in places.

Secondly, the interest of the cover lies in the fact that the Tenpenny stamps have been used to pay rates for which the One Shilling embossed was actually issued in 1847. These were the 1/- per ½ oz letter rate to the United States and the (1/-) registration fee. The latter was reduced in March 1848 to 6d per letter. On this cover the three Tenpenny stamps together pay (in April 1852) a double-weight letter ($2 \times 1/-$) to the USA plus 6d registration fee. A G RIGO DE RIGHI

Christmas Stamp Book

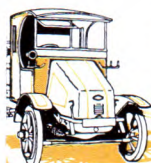
Following our announcement in the October Philatelic Bulletin of the issue of a Christmas stamp book on 15 November 1978, the make up of this book is as follows:— a pane consisting of a

row of ten — 9p definitive stamps printed above a row of ten — 7p definitive stamps. The 9p stamps have two phosphor bars, while the 7p stamps have a single bar.

New Stamp Book Covers



10p
Royal Mail
Stamps
Two at 1/2p
Five at 1/10
One at 7p



50p
Royal Mail
Stamps
Two at 1p
Three at 7p
Three at 9p



70p
Royal Mail
Stamps
Ten at 7p



90p
Royal Mail
Stamps
Ten at 9p

Our illustrations show the four new stamp books, values 10p, 50p, 70p, 90p issued on 25 October 1978

Lanarkshire Philatelic Society

The annual exhibition of the Lanarkshire Philatelic Society will be held in the Motherwell Public Library, and not in the Town Hall, as reported in the October Bulletin.

Posting Boxes



No. 4: This 'giant' pillar box is one of three that were ordered in 1855 for the Birmingham District and was manufactured by Smith & Hawkes of the Eagle Foundry, Broad Street, Birmingham. The body is cast in the form of a fluted column and has the vertical posting aperture popular at that time. In addition it has an elongated domed roof upon which there is an enormous crown on a tasselled cushion, giving an overall height of about **eight feet**! Later versions of the fluted box were without the dome and crown giving them a normal height. The only survivor of these 'giant' boxes, believed to be on loan from the Post Office, stands in a private garden in Hertfordshire.

Stamps for Pleasure

18. Ships and Shipping

The subject of 'Ships' is one of the most popular themes in modern-style, pictorial stamp collecting — cruising through the stamp catalogue on the good ship *Philately* one can find numerous examples on the British stamps so far issued, notably the set of 'British Ships' designed by David Gentleman and issued in 1969. These will undoubtedly take pride of place in most 'Ship' collections. Gibbons' catalogue numbers are quoted for easy reference.

The six stamps (778/83) illustrated the development of British ships from the time of Elizabeth I to the present day. The Elizabethan galleon (9d) was both a merchantman and a warship as few vessels would set sail in those days without some kind of armament. Its average tonnage ranged between 500 and 900 tons, and its length from 100 to 200 feet; in design, far superior to the Spanish types. The East India-men (9d) were operated by the East India Company and plied between Britain, India and the Far East in the late-18th and early-19th centuries: they were fast, comfortable vessels of 1,000 tons and upwards.

The famous clipper, *Cutty Sark* (9d), now in peaceful retirement at Greenwich, was launched at Dumbarton on the Clyde in 1869, and was named from Burns' poem 'Tam o' Shanter' ('cutty sark' or 'short petticoat'). Most famous of the China tea-clippers, she is 224 feet long with a gross tonnage of 963, and she was finally 'laid to rest' in 1957.

The *Great Britain* (1s) was the first iron-built, screw-driven, ocean-going ship. Designed by Isambard Brunel, she was built at Bristol, 1840-43, and launched by Prince Albert. After a series of misadventures she ended up as a storage hulk at Sparrow Cove in the Falkland Islands. The iron monster — she was 300 feet long and had a gross tonnage of 2,735 — was finally towed back to her birthplace, Bristol, in 1970. RMS *Mauretania* (1s), 760 feet long, 31,938 tons, was built by Swan, Hunter for Cunard and entered service in 1907, crossing the Atlantic in record time in the same year. After 27 years she was broken up at Rosyth in 1934.

Cunard's pride and joy, RMS *Queen Elizabeth*

2, length 963 feet, gross tonnage 65,862, was built by Upper Clyde Shipbuilders (formerly John Brown) and launched by Her Majesty The Queen in September 1967. She cost almost £30 million and her average speed of 28.5 knots is often exceeded on Transatlantic crossings.

Nelson's *Victory*, seen on the 2s 6d definitive of 1951, led 28 men-o'-war into battle at Trafalgar on 21 October 1805 against the combined French and Spanish fleets. He attacked and destroyed the French flagship, *Bucentaure*, then closed with the *Redoubtable* — Nelson was shot and fatally wounded. The *Victory* remained in service until 1811, when she became the flagship of the Commander-in-Chief, Portsmouth. She is still there (509).

Another famous old ship is the *Mayflower* in which, in 1620, the Pilgrim Fathers sailed to America. The 1s 6d stamp of the 'Anniversaries' set of 1970 (822) shows the Pilgrims waiting to board the *Mayflower* at Plymouth. After many delays, and the eventual abandonment of her sister ship, the tiny *Speedwell*, the *Mayflower* set out on 6 September on her Atlantic adventure and arrived at Plymouth, Massachusetts, on 11 December 1620.

Another 'Anniversaries' stamp, the 1s 9d of 1968 (770), showed Captain Cook's *Endeavour*, a converted Whitby collier, in which he set sail on the first of his three great voyages, from Deptford on 30 July 1768, having been commissioned to observe the transit of the planet Venus. He returned in July 1771 after visiting Tahiti, New Zealand and Australia.

'Ships in Art' merit a page in the album — David Gentleman's 6d stamp for the 900th anniversary of the Battle of Hastings (711) in 1966 showed a typical vessel, taken from the celebrated Bayeux Tapestry, of the Norman invasion fleet. The J M W Turner commemoratives of 1975 included the 4½p 'Peace — Burial at Sea' (971), a tribute to his old friend and rival, (Sir) David Wilkie, who died at sea on his way home from the Near East in 1841; and the 5½p 'Snowstorm — Steamer off a Harbour's Mouth' — Turner was reputedly lashed to the mast to record the scene around him (972).

Britain's enormous import and export trade is represented by the EFTA freighter on the 'Free Trade' 9d issue of 1967 (715), while mail ships are symbolised by the picture of the P & O packet steamer, *Peninsular*, on the 3½p stamp (954) of the Universal Postal Union centenary series of 1974, suitably endorsed with a Southampton packet letter cancellation of 1896.

Lifeboats and lifeboatmen were featured on the three stamps (639/41) issued in 1963 for the Edinburgh Lifeboat Conference, while a 7½p stamp for the 150th anniversary of HM Coastguard, administered by the Department of Trade, appeared in April 1972. The stamp (902) showed a 19th-century coastguard and a ship in distress.

Sailing as a pastime is illustrated by the four stamps (980/3) issued in 1975 — the colourful

craft ranged from sailing dinghies and racing keel boats to cruising yachts and multihulls. And of course no 'Ships and Shipping' collection would be complete without the stamp commemorating the late Sir Francis Chichester's world voyage (751), depicting his superb *Gipsy Moth IV*. This famous craft is also preserved at Greenwich.

Other famous sailors are depicted on GB stamps, notably King George V, the 'Sailor King', who entered the Royal Navy in 1877 and became a commander in 1890, but gave up his active career at sea on becoming heir-apparent to the throne. The polar explorers Ross, Frobisher, Hudson and Scott, all commanded their own vessels of discovery (897/900), and those Elizabethan adventurers, Drake and Raleigh, could perhaps be linked with the Elizabethan galleon mentioned earlier (925/6).

JAMES WATSON

British Special Stamps

48. Christmas, 1966

The traditional season of festivities and goodwill was considerably enhanced when the Post Office issued two charming stamps — Britain's first adhesive Christmas stamps — on 1 December 1966. Preparations for their issue had been going on for many months: pupils at schools throughout the country were invited to take part in a novel design competition for the Christmas stamps, and almost 5,000 entries were received. The winning designs were selected by a panel of eight professional stamp designers and, surprisingly, Father Christmas was not a selected subject although he appeared as a 'runner-up' on the official first day covers.

The competition was limited to the under-16s, but in the event two six-year-old schoolchildren were awarded prizes of £20 each, presented to them by the then Postmaster-General, the Right Honourable Edward Short, MP, for their successful designs. Tasveer Shemza, from St John's Church of England Primary School, Stafford,

contributed a rather jaunty King of the Orient for the 3d 'Christmas card' stamp, while James Berry, from Bromley Road Infants School, Beckenham, Kent, settled for a rotund snowman (in a trilby hat) for the 1s 6d stamp. Harrison's studio artists put the finishing touches to the stamps which were suitably festive and brightly coloured.

Ann Belshaw, aged 9, from Leigh, Lancashire, was awarded £10 for her drawing of Father Christmas on top of a chimney, which was adapted for the souvenir covers.

Again, following the precedent of the Battle of Hastings issue, the Queen's head was die-stamped in gold foil, and Miss Shemza and Master Berry had their names recorded for posterity along with the printers' imprint at the foot of the stamps. It was the first time that children's work had been used on British stamps, and the reproduced designs were the complete, unaided work of the children.



The stamps were photogravure-printed by Harrison and Sons in sheets of 80 (8 × 10) on ordinary and phosphor-banded paper, watermark

multiple crowns. Varieties included the green colour omitted (ordinary) and a missing 'T' (Miss Shemza's initial in the imprint — ordinary and phosphor) on the 3d, and the pink (hat) omitted on the ordinary 1s 6d. Inverted watermarks were also found on both types of the 1s 6d. Both values were issued with the gold head omitted, but again as these could be removed by chemical means, they are not listed in the catalogues. There were numerous other minor constant flaws.

Quantities sold (phosphor in brackets) were: 3d 153,318,160 (20,774,000); 1s 6d 8,756,960 (2,109,280); presentation packs, 33,672.

JAMES WATSON

Penny for your Thoughts

The permission for British soldiers to send their letters from a theatre of war at the special rate of a penny, was granted by Act of Parliament in 1795. The Consolidation Act of 1837 laid down, inter alia, '... that soldiers and NCO in the East Indies ...' were entitled to this privileged rate.

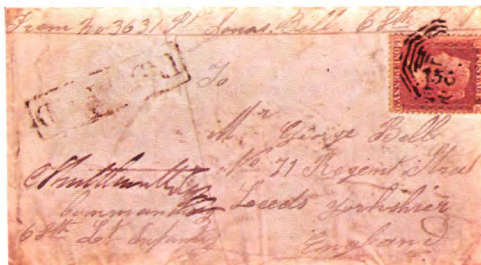
In 1854 the Bengal Postal Circle was formed and in the following year each Post Office within the circle was allotted a code number. A hand-stamp for obliterating adhesive postage stamps was issued to each office with its own number, surmounted by the Roman letter 'B', for Bengal, the whole was enclosed in a series of concentric octagons. 156 was the number for Rangoon which then was in Bengal. These cancellations are usually only found on Indian stamps.

The illustrations are of an envelope written by

No 3631 Private Jonas Bell of the 68th Light Infantry, part of the occupation force of the Province of Pegu after the Second Burmese War.

It shows the soldiers' rate paid by the British penny red ('stars') stamp cancelled with B/156 of Rangoon. On reverse is the stamp of 'Rangoon Ship Letter Paid' 1859, probably 2nd December. The framed 'India paid' indicates that the letter has been pre-paid in full to the UK. One other such envelope is known without the Rangoon Ship Letter Stamp on reverse.

This is one of several interesting and exceptional covers to have originated from Burma in the collection of Gerald Davis which will be on display during the month of November in Gibbons Gallery at Romane House in the Strand.



The Proud Collection

5. Advertising Envelopes

Unlike the USA advertising envelopes were not widely used in Great Britain. Illustrated is a rather charming example used in 1861 addressed to Broadway and which has an additional interest in that it has a two-line 'Missent to Worcester' mark.



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Book Reviews

English Provincial Posts

By Brian Austen, 192 pp hardbound, £4.95. Published by Phillimore & Co Ltd, Shopwyke Hall, Chichester, West Sussex PO20 6AA.

This book is the result of the author's post graduate studies at Kent University. It combines readability with scholarship in a most engaging way. It also presents the reader with an extensive bibliography and an impressive appendix of cross-referenced source material.

Brian Austen has drawn on a vast mass of official documents from PO records to House of Commons Sessional Papers and other sources from John Evelyn to Stitt-Dibden. Many of his quotes and anecdotes have an authentic flavour of a way of departmental life still recognisable to old post office hands.

The title 'English Provincial Posts' may at first sight appear a little misleading. The book concerns itself largely with early postal arrangements of Kent and East Sussex but, had it

been so narrowly entitled, potential readers might have overlooked the wider application of its contents to the postal scene as a whole.

Anyone who has been wondering what to give the family postal historian for Christmas will find this book solves their problem.

Stanley Gibbons British Commonwealth Stamp Catalogue, 1979 Edition

When a basic catalogue of British Commonwealth stamps achieves an 81st edition it is safe to assume its authority is beyond dispute. As for scope, where else will you find listings from 5p to £275,000?

With its familiar red banded covers enclosing 1,060 closely printed and generously illustrated pages this widely revised edition maintains the tradition which has made 'SG' one of the most meaningful symbols in philately. At £7.50 it is a remarkable production in these inflationary times.

The task of updating must be a mammoth one. This volume has been extensively overhauled in a number of sections notably Canada, Gambia, Malta, Tobago and the Leeward Islands. Many other improvements and additions have been made throughout including a detailed listing of the numerous 1977 Silver Jubilee issues.

Probably most people opening a new Gibbons for the first time turn at once to the pricings of GB classic stamps. These have again escalated, the cheapest fine mint 'Penny Black' now being listed at £850. A singleton from plates 1(a) to 11 inclusive will set you back £14,000.

Evidently today's philatelists need strong hearts and long purses — not to mention indulgent bank managers! Certainly if they intend to continue expanding their collections it behoves them to do so with the aid of a thoroughly reputable and authoritative catalogue. Collectors of British Commonwealth stamps need look no further.

Collector's Guide to GB First Day Covers

B B Philatelic Publications Ltd, PO Box 12, Evesham, Worcs.

From the publishers £1.05 post paid or from most booksellers at 90p.

The 7th edition of this catalogue lists and prices GB covers (including the Isle of Man and Channel Islands) from the Uniform 4d Post of 1839 to the Cycling Centenary stamp issue of 2 August 1978.

Air letters, covers bearing Regional stamps and others with booklet-pane or coil stamps are included, as are presentation packs, Post Office illustrated cards and a variety of commemorative and 'special' items.

Its broad coverage coupled with clear layout and first class illustrations make this book a very fair buy at 90 pence.

Forces Covers

RAF Cover HA28 unfortunately marks the closure of RAF Luqa, Malta, but commemorates the career of Group Captain G Burges who won the DFC flying Gladiators and Hurricanes dur-

ing the early phases of the Siege of Malta. It shows his Gladiator in action over the Island and is cancelled with the special handstamp (BFPS 1625) for the closure of Luqa. As it will be flown on a special flight and will not be available until well after Luqa has been closed, it can only be obtained from the PRO Royal Air Force Museum, Aerodrome Road, Hendon NW9 5LL, at 45p plus 7p postage, on or about 15 December 1978.

RAF Cover HA32. Captain Leefe Robinson VC was the first to shoot down a German airship over England. He died in the weeks after the Armistice in November 1918 when released from a German prisoner of war camp. The cover shows him destroying SL11 over Cuffley and is cancelled appropriately by special handstamp BFPS 1622, 60th Anniversary of the Armistice. It will be flown on a special flight and will be available from Corporal R Bellamy, RAF Rudloe Manor, Hawthorn, Wilts, after 1 December at 40p plus 7p postage.

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

Royal Navy Covers

To commemorate the 60th Anniversary of the surrender of the German Fleet on 21 November 1918, a special cover will be available on 21 November 1978 bearing a 9p Historic Buildings Stamp. It will depict the German ships flanked by the British Grand Fleet, and the crest of HMS *Queen Elizabeth*. The cost is 45p. In addition, the cover is offered with an 11p Historic Buildings Stamp and signed by Vice Admiral B C B Brooke CB, CBE, DL, and Rear Admiral F E C Clemitson CB, both of whom were serving in the Grand Fleet at the time. The price is £1.72. Alternatively, the cover with a 10½p Historic Buildings Stamp affixed, and signed by Rear Admiral Clemitson only, will cost 92p. All covers will be cancelled with a BFPS 1627 handstamp incorporating the crest of HMS *Lion* in its design. Orders accompanied by a SAA 7" × 5" envelope should be sent to the Royal Naval Philatelic Officer, Royal Naval Air Station, Yeovilton,

Somerset BA22 8HL. Cheques and postal orders to be made payable to the Fleet Air Arm Museum.

A special cover marking the 250th Anniversary of the birth of Captain James Cook RN, became available from 27 October 1978. It depicts a portrait of Captain Cook, an illustration of HMS *Endeavour* — his ship — and its crest.

The cover bearing an 11p Coronation stamp, and cancelled by a BFPS handstamp no 1728, with the words '250 Anniversary of Captain Cook's birth 27 October 1978' is signed by Rear Admiral D W Haslam OBE, Hydrographer of the Navy; and Commander R A G Nesbitt RN, the last Captain of HMS *Cook*. Price £1.72 each.

Alternatively, as above but with a 10½p Coronation stamp and signed by Commander Nesbitt only, the cost is 92p each. Unsigned covers with a 9p Coronation stamp affixed are 45p each.

Orders must be accompanied by a stamped and addressed 7" × 5" envelope, cheques and postal orders should be made payable to the Fleet Air Arm Museum and sent to the Royal Naval Philatelic Officer, Royal Naval Air Station, Yeovilton, Somerset BA22 8HL.

The Royal Highland Fusiliers

An illustrated cover, commemorating the Regiment's tercentenary, is currently available. It illustrates three figures from different periods of the Regiment's history, surmounted by the Colours, including the Assaye Colours; the filler card gives a brief history.

The following cover services are on offer:

1. With the 10½p Holyrood Palace stamp affixed, cancelled with a special handstamp BFPS 2174 dated 23 September 1978, and signed by the Colonel of the Regiment, Major General C W Dunbar CBE, and the Commanding Officer, Lt Col J D Drummond, price £1.00 each (limited number available).
2. As above, but unsigned, price 50p each.

UK and BFPO orders should be accompanied with a 7" × 5" stamped and addressed envelope. Other overseas orders should include a 7" × 5" addressed envelope and an international postage coupon for the appropriate postage rate.

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'.

1-10 February 1979

2 January-28 February 1979

1-31 May 1979

1-31 July 1979

1-30 September 1979

1-30 November 1979 (P)

We'd Like Your Company in Wakefield.

To be used at Wakefield. 1st and 2nd class.

24-26 April 1979 (C)

International Inner Wheel Brighton

Convention 24-26 April 1979. Special posting box at the Brighton Centre, Brighton.

Repeat Campaigns

In use until 30 November 1978

For Your Conferences Bridlington Borough of North Wolds with Hospitality Plus Contact The Spa Tel 78255. To be reused at York. 2nd class.

1-23 December 1978

A Happy Christmas From Bridlington See You Next Summer. To be reused at York. 2nd class.

In use until 19 September 1979

Make It In Livingston. To be reused at Livingston. 1st and 2nd class.

In use until 31 August 1979 (P)

Sun Sea Scenery Aberystwyth. To be reused at Aberystwyth. 1st class.

In use until 2 December 1978 (P)

The Fermoy Centre The Best In Music, Drama, Films and Art. To be reused at Kings Lynn. 2nd class.

7 November-4 December 1978

Enjoy a Sauna and Relax at St Margarets Baths. To be reused at Leicester. 1st and 2nd class.

1 March-19 June 1979

For Health And Safety Learn To Swim.

To be reused at Leicester. 1st and 2nd class.

C denotes Circular P denotes Pictorial

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