

# The Bulletin of the Civil Service Philatelic Society

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## Editor's Introduction

Welcome to the latest edition of the Bulletin and a belated Happy New Year to all members. This edition contains the write-ups of our meetings from June to December 2023, as a couple had to be held over last time.

The Zoom programme is complete until October 2024, see the back page of this Bulletin, but if any member would like to display in the future or knows of a speaker, then please let the Secretary know. As you will see May and September are for Members to display.

Items for the next Bulletin should be with the Editor by 1<sup>st</sup> June 2024 please.

Margaret

## GB Postal News

### Charles III Horizon label



A package your editor received containing a Christmas gift, dated 15<sup>th</sup> December, had a Charles III Horizon label applied. It would appear that Post Offices are using up stocks of the Queen Elizabeth II labels first and will only be using King Charles III printings when a new order is placed and so new stock received. It was certainly the wish of the King that bar coded Machin stamps were not be destroyed but used to exhaustion and then the post offices could receive King Charles III definitive stamps.

The image of King Charles III is the same as on the GB definitive stamps and is smaller on the label when compared to the Machin Head of the late Queen. Apart from that there appears to be no difference.

### **A possible issue for 2024**

Looking slightly into the future, perhaps Royal Mail will realise that 2024 is the 150th anniversary of the Universal Postal Union. For the purest, the original name was the General Postal Union set up largely as a result of the Paris Postal Conference held in 1863. Due largely to the efforts of Ernst Heinrich Wilhelm von Stephan, who was the Russian Postmaster General, a treaty was eventually drawn up and signed by representatives of six countries to form the basis of the Union. The treaty of Berne was established on the 9th October 1874, but later changed to be known as the Universal Postal Union. As far as Great Britain was concerned, a 6d stamp was issued on the 7th May 1963 marking the centenary of the Paris Conference and other countries did the same, and again on the 12th June 1974 marking the centenary of the UPU. It should be said that Britain issued a series marking the 75th anniversary of the UPU on the 10th October 1949. So, Britain has marked these anniversaries at regular intervals, so hopefully we will see an issue for the 150th anniversary. So watch this space! (Or see below. Ed.)

#### **John Davies**

The annual announcement of the new GB special stamps seems to have been cloaked in secrecy for the past few years and issued very late, but it came to hand just as the Bulletin was being finalised.

11<sup>th</sup> January Music Giants IX Spice Girls; 1<sup>st</sup> February Weather Forecasting;  
20<sup>th</sup> February Viking Britain; 12<sup>th</sup> March The Age of Dinosaurs;  
16<sup>th</sup> April 100 years of Commemorative Stamps; 16<sup>th</sup> May Peppa Pig; 6<sup>th</sup> June Dogs;  
20<sup>th</sup> June Red Arrows 60<sup>th</sup> Season; 25<sup>th</sup> July Dungeons and Dragons;  
13<sup>th</sup> August Tower of London; 3<sup>rd</sup> September Porridge; 26<sup>th</sup> September Spiders;  
17<sup>th</sup> October Music Giants X The Who; 5<sup>th</sup> November Christmas 2024;  
30<sup>th</sup> November Winston Churchill.

#### **Margaret Emerson**

### **Postal History and Postmarks**

There appear to have been no special postmarks in the run up to Christmas with recommended last posting dates as in recent years. The 'Happy Christmas the Post Office' snowman design has also been 'retired' as the machine that would have produced this kind of cancellation has been withdrawn from service.

### **Bar code within a postmark**

I am grateful to one of our members for sending me this image of an item of mail from France. The date is the 21<sup>st</sup> December 2023 but what purpose does the QR code in the cancellation play? If any members have an answer or other examples then please contact the Editor.



## What you missed at recent Zoom meetings.....

**5<sup>th</sup> June 2023 The Polish in exile during World War II** a Talk and Display by Jamie Smith  
The society is grateful to Jamie Smith for stepping in at very short notice to give this display as the booked speaker was unavailable.

The Polish Government was in exile in London and Polish troops served in the British navy, the Royal Air Force and on land. The display started by saying that the troops were involved in North Africa and Italy and then after D-Day, across Europe. Jamie started with a slide showing some of Poland's military leaders including Marshall Rydz-Smigly who was the Chief of Staff in 1939. General Wladyslaw Sikorski was the Polish commander who became Prime Minister of the government in London exile in 1943.

Jamie moved on to German occupation mail and Feldpost. There was an item from the Polish POW camp in Hungary Peshidegut Camp. There was a cover from a POW in Oflag VIIA, Bavaria which had a blind cancellation dated the 14th August 1944. Polish troops were in Libya and an honour envelope was shown from the 27th January 1943 sent to Tel Aviv and the serviceman's wife. Three letters could be enclosed in one cover and they were censored at the base.

There was a tented camp for Poles in Tehran run by the Red Cross and the Poles then travelled to Palestine, India and East Africa. The Polish liner SS Kosciuszko became a troop carrier and a postcard of the ship and a censored cover from India were shown. Refugees from Poland settled in Uganda and there was a refugee camp at Masinda. A cover was shown which had been sent to a relative in the Polish army based in Italy. An item from the Polish consulate in Ottawa was next sent to a Polish soldier in Perth, Scotland. Originally this item had been addressed to the Rubens Hotel in London which housed military Poles from France. It was a registered cover, arriving in Edinburgh in June 1940, then Lanark on 13<sup>th</sup> August and it received Polish cancellations in June 1945, so the item of mail must have been held somewhere. There was also a cover relating to troops based in Manchester prior to D-Day and this had a blind cancellation, which was often the case. During World War Two we were told there were 19,550 Polish airmen, 4000 sailors and 195,000 Polish members of the army serving in the West. There were 265 military Polish camps in Great Britain. An item was shown from Polish Camp 4 and an item from Canada going to the camp in Glasgow. An item from Gibraltar which was registered at 6d was a censored cover to Scotland with the Field Post Office marking dated the 23rd September 1942. It had a P-35 cachet meaning it had been redirected within Scotland. There was an O.H.M.S. 'Parcel "N" Bill Duty Envelope addressed to Polish Forces. and then a Glasgow to eastern Scotland registered cover, an item from Leeds to Scotland with the Polish FP 01 receiving mark, an item from Catterick Camp where the 4th Polish Brigade was stationed, and a Widnes Lancashire to Switzerland cover which had been

censored in Britain before it departed and again in Germany on transit via Portugal. This was dated the 18th April 1943.

Regarding the Polish Navy there was a registered Royal Navy censored souvenir cover from July 1942 sent to RAF Uxbridge and then RAF Stanmore. Seven stamps were issued by the Polish in exile for funds for the servicemen and they all had a military theme. From the Polish Navy postal agency there was a cover from the 5th May 1945 to HMS Foley, the training station in Plymouth and there was a cover from France 26th August 1945 to a Polish naval officer in Okehampton.

Next came an airmail cover from a Polish servicemen to Palestine and Natanya Rest Camp. There were also two covers one to Southern Rhodesia from Gaza and then another from Egypt using Indian stamps and given Polish cancellations, which was sent to Kenya. There was an item from Egypt to the Polish Embassy in Montreal which was endorsed 'Via Pan Am Clipper Service USA to Lisbon'. An Italian cover to Switzerland dated the 15th July 1945 followed sent to Naples and another from Naples to Glasgow. The Monte Cassino overprints dated the 18th May 1944 of the Polish in exile stamps were also shown. An O.A.S., onward air service, cover probably from a camp in Italy Polish PO 138, was sent to Rome. Another cover from Polish PO 138, probably also in Italy, and this was sent to Chicago and the Polish National Alliance. There was an item from troops in the Rhineland to Edinburgh from a Polish Regimental Sergeant Major.

There was a censored cover to troops in London where there was an undercover Post Office and this letter may have been in response to Poland's call to arms. It had a Box 260/110 London marking. There was a Polish refugee camp in Masindi Uganda and the refugees came from Russia through Iran, Iraq and India and then to east and southern Africa. There was a cover from Masindi camp to Mombasa. A Polish officer at Seighford Camp had written to the Polish camp in Masindi in 1948. From May that year was a reply from the recipient to her husband. There was then a 1946 cover from Tanganyika to Germany and a registered cover 1943 Tanganyika to Washington. There was another cover from Nairobi to the Uruguay Consulate and one from Cape Town in 1945. An undated censored cover to the World League of Poles Abroad from London to the Polish Consulate in Cape Town rounded off this section.

There were various organisations helping Poles abroad after the War and there were two items concerned with the Interim Treasury Committee. Poles were still in the Middle East in June 1947 an item to London from Polish FPO 101 was shown. The cover was used twice and was previously from the Polish College at Dunlaster House, Scotland to a General Sholiuorski at the Polish Military Families Office, Vandon House in London. The cover was re-used with an economy label to Edinburgh. Polish airmen were based at RAF Pembroke Dock and there was a cover to the dock from Poland in 1947. There was an incoming cover from Bydgoszcz dated 17th April 1946 to the Parachute Balloon Unit based at RAF Cardington. Then we saw a cover from a settler in Scotland to Poland dated the 17th January 1946, as not all Poles opted to return home after the War to Communist rule. There was an item from Doddington Park, Cheshire, a resettlement camp sent to FPO 101 in the Middle East. Adderley Hall in Shropshire was possibly a military school as the letter was sent to a cadet, but Jamie has been unable to find any more information about this location. The cover was dated the 13th December 1947. A Polish soldier who had returned home to Poland wrote to a settler in Scotland on the 17th May 1946 from Przemysl. By 1947 the new Poland was in existence and an envelope from Warsaw to an ex-Polish Polish soldier in Scotland was shown and a second from the 9th September 1947.

The 1951 British census shows that there were 162,339 Poles in the UK. The display rounded off with missing people enquiries sent via the Red Cross in Geneva or London and there was a cover from 1945 from Chorzow. There was also a cover probably from a Polish Jew looking for news of missing people sent from Klukowicze (Tokary Camp) in Poland to the Central Agency for POWs, care of the Red Cross in Geneva.

Margaret Emerson gave the vote of thanks for a very interesting and informative historical display. Members showed their appreciation by an onscreen round of applause.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> July 2023 Levant** a Talk and Display by Julian Bagwell

The Society was pleased to welcome back Julian Bagwell to give this display.

Julian started by stating that Levant means 'to lift' or 'to raise' and the area so called is in the eastern end of the Mediterranean and includes western Turkey, Gaza, Lebanon and parts of Greece. There was military aggression in the area and the Ottomans took Constantinople in 1453 and extended to the southern coast of the Mediterranean, They attempted to take Vienna twice. By the nineteenth century, the Ottoman Empire was 'the sick man of Europe' and was modernised by treaties. Post Offices in the Ottoman Empire included five run by Great Britain and 28 by France.

The first item was an 1822 Constantinople letter to London which had pin holes because it had been disinfected due to an outbreak of cholera. There was an 1849 London to Constantinople letter which went via the Austro-Hungarian system. The Crimea War was covered by a cover from the 13th June 1856 which travelled by Marseille for the 3d rate and had the so-called OXO cancellation, having travelled via the British Army post office. There were three penny stamps on the cover and British Army cancellations.

There was a smudged cancellation on an OHMS envelope with a manuscript 3 on the front which is often seen, but the letter had not been delivered and might have been cancelled in London. From 1856 a three stamp obliterator was shown a 48 or 49 killer. An item from the Crimea to London which travelled for part of its journey privately and then entered into the post, had a Dulwich cancellation and a Charing Cross cancellation on the reverse. From 1855 came a Crimea to Dublin cover via London with BAPO on the reverse, standing for British Army Post Office. A letter to the British Association probably concerning a meeting was shown. A heavy item at a 6d rate was next. We were told that no civilian mail was carried.

There was an item to Constantinople from Brentwood with two embossed stamps attached, and Turkish cancels on the reverse of the cover. In 1857 the first British Post Office opened for civilian mail and there were a number of merchants and traders. There was an Illustrated London News engraving of the army post office and an image of Galata post office. In 1873 Beirut post office opened and a card of the post office in the British Consulate was shown. Stamboul was a suburb of Istanbul. Salonika in 1901 was the last post office to be opened and a 1916 postcard was shown.

What about the cancellations? The British post office abroad in Constantinople had a 'killer' C with both large and small C versions. In 1880 these stopped but Julian has an item from 1881. There was also a 6d stamp on cover, rate per quarter ounce, and an insufficient prepaid item with 6d to pay and a London stamp. Smyrna had the F87 postmark and a cover was shown but we were told these are difficult. There was a 4½ d and 2½ d on Beirut items, with the G06 cancellation, shown both as a stamp and a cover, but these are not duplex cancellations. There was an inbound letter Yarmouth to Constantinople with the receiving mark. There was a cover via Marseille to a bank and being from 1860, this was before the UPU international rate. It was charged at 2/6, about £15 today, but 6 years later

this would be 2½ d. A 2d blue and a ½d 'Bantam' to make up the rate came next, being Constantinople to Blackburn. It had an 1879 cancellation and took 6 days to arrive by rail.

## Part 2

From 1875 came an Ottoman Empire early posting to the UPU but it was endorsed 'Invalid not to be allowed'. There were attempts to discount mail from the Ottoman Empire but this was not allowed by regulations. The rates were 5c for a newspaper, 10c for a postcard and 25c for letters but there was a tendency to round up or down. A ½ d was roughly 10 Paras. The Ottoman lira at this stage was unstable. Stamps were in local or their own currency. A rate of 2½ d at the British Post Office became 40 paras in the Turkish Post Office, only 2d, and not the correct rate of 50 paras. People could buy sheets of stamps in the local currency and sell at a London Post Office for a 20 per cent profit. A currency overprint was not allowed to send to Great Britain and then redeem.

A 2 ½ d conversion to 40 paras and 5d to 80 paras and the 2/6 rate were allowed as overprints. These are found on the 2½d, 5d and 10d 'Jubilee' issue. A 40 paras on 2 ½ d Jubilee was shown on cover. There are variants in the overprints with for example a small 0 in the 80 paras. The overprints were produced as a whole sheet but one overprint value was damaged and this is also seen on the Edward VII issue. There is also a wider 4 on the 10d value and a smaller four in the normal issue.

In 1893 a local overprint was produced and this can be found inverted. A Beyrout to the USA Massachusetts cover shown had a hooded circle cancellation and was the only post office to use one. The letter had travelled Beyrout to London to the USA. A cover Constantinople to Germany was a Bible House cover. A 40 paras letter from 1895 Constantinople to London was next to Harold Conne and Company, a stamp dealer, Money was sent but there was no mail so it was marked 'gone away'. Smyrna to London had an examiners mark.

A Beyrout to the USA letter was forwarded on arrival and received a good paid mark of New York. Stamboul Post Office opened in 1884 and a circular date stamp (cda) from 1892 was shown. There was an Orient Express label on the reverse, which was sent to collectors and a Doursown cachet on the reverse. A Salonika item from 1900 had a double ring, as most do, as just three single rings have been found. A 40 paras and a double ring was shown with limited addressing. The 1883 issues are dubious as Constantinople allegedly ran out of 40 Paras stamps and cancelled ½d stamps instead. The shortage lasted for five days and overprints with a damaged S are known but for different dates, as shown. The 25th February was the earliest. There was illegal moving of the canceler date and overprinting still so they may be forgeries or illegals. This practice had occurred at the weekend the postmaster was away and so he was probably not aware. However, we were told that the brother of the postmaster received some copies.

Postal stationary was shown prepaid with an official overprint, 2½d with a 40 Paras overprint and Stamboul and Constantinople examples were displayed. There was an unofficial overprint of 40 Paras with a different typeface, but this was allowed and was often applied upside down. An item to New Zealand was shown here. The first pre-printed postcard was in 1879 from the Austro-Hungarian Empire. It was 1870 when they were introduced in Great Britain and up to 1894 no stamps were allowed, as they were pre-printed. A card to Egypt used in 1895 was shown which was a late usage and it had been uprated by ½ d but this was not for international use. A 1¼ d card was shown Smyrna to Brighton dated 1875. Julian said he has three examples Constantinople to Sheffield,

Ipswich to Constantinople. Most of the post was Smyrna to Constantinople. In 1878 the international postcard rate was 1d, the letter rate being 2½d as per the 1875 UPU. The first design of the international rate in 1882 had two single ring killer C cancellations. A Beyrout G06 was shown on a 1d card to Stanley Gibbons, 8 Gower Street, London. Items had been sent but not paid for.

A new style Queen Victoria to Germany was shown with a single ring 1897 Smyrna cancellation. There was an item to Mr Whittard in Smyrna which received a hooded cancellation of 47 Cannon Street BO and a late cancel applied at 7pm. The Too Late FBOPO cancel was applied at the Foreign Branch of the Post Office. A Stamboul to Ottoman card had two ½ d stamps applied dated 1891. These stamps were on the card as it was not pre-printed. There may have been different rules for the Levant. A 1901 card with a 1d lilac sent to London was shown and at this time the use of postcards increased dramatically. These were 10 or 12 ½ Paras so using ordinary stamps. There were coloured cards with the Fruchtemann logo. A postcard from 1901 Constantinople to Yorkshire was next. There were some inbound pre-paid letters and Paul Gaudin items. He collected Smyrna terracotta figures. There was a registered Winch Brothers cover and they were foreign stamp importers. An 1894 cover to Constantinople from London had a 2½ d Jubilee stamp which showed that the agency was still independent. A newspaper wrapper with a ½d from Smyrna to Orleans, France was the penultimate item. A parcel tag with 40 Paras on 2 ½ d to a forwarding agent received an F85 cancellation rounded off the display. The vote of thanks was given on behalf of the Society by Margaret Emerson and members showed their appreciation with a round of applause.

#### **4<sup>th</sup> September 2023 AGM followed by Members' Displays AGM additional comments**

The AGM reports were published in the July 2023 Bulletin for all members attending or not to read and if necessary or desired to comment upon. These are additional comments made at the meeting with Proposers and Seconders as appropriate.

1. **Apologies** These were received from Warwick Morris, John Dennett, John Davies and Peter Coe.
2. **The minutes of the 2022 AGM** were proposed by Lindy Bosworth and seconded by Rodney Knight and agreed nem com.
3. **Presidents Report** In addition to the written report Bob van Goethem welcomed members to the meeting and stated that the society was now online and postal.
4. **Chief Exchange Branch Secretary's Report** In addition to the report published in the Bulletin Bob stated that the Exchange Branch (EB) continues to function but there has been a loss of members of the EB and also of bookmakers. There are currently 15 names on the list which includes some groups so a total of 20 members are seeing boxes. Three of these do not take foreign and two do not take Great Britain or Commonwealth. Bob's local society in Hertfordshire have supplied books to CSPA for circulation which have been new and are selling fairly well. This means there is no postage for the transmission of the books to and from the Society. Postage is very high and it may be necessary to



increase the commission in the future to cover the outward postage of each packet and the cost of returning books to vendors. This may affect sales.

Proposed by Brian Stonestreet and seconded by Martin Crofts.

5. **Membership and Recruitment Secretary's Report** in Ian's absence the report was as published in the Bulletin.  
Proposed by Steve Daniels and seconded by Martin Crofts.
6. **Secretary's Report** as in the Bulletin.  
Proposed by Martin Crofts and seconded by Brian Stonestreet.
7. **Treasurer's Report** as in the Bulletin.
8. **Exchange Branch Insurance Fund Report** As in the Bulletin.  
The Treasurer's Report and the Exchange Branch Insurance Fund Report were proposed by Margaret Emerson and seconded by Martin Crofts.
9. **Postal Auctioneers Report** Steve Daniels added to his report that there were 9 vendors and 18 bidders in the auction in 2022 and about 1/3 of the lots were sold, totaling £1300 and there was a profit to the Society £113. Steve pointed out it was the same 9 vendors again this year with just 13 bidders. Some 58 lots were sold out of a total of 324.  
Proposed by Edith Knight and seconded by Lindy Bosworth.
10. **Bulletin Editor's Report** As in the Bulletin.  
Proposed by Martin Crofts and seconded by Rodney Knight.
11. **Election of Officers and Council Members** The secretary had received no nominations and so it was proposed that the Officers and Council be elected en bloc. (Details at the end of the Bulletin.)  
Proposed by Brian Stonestreet and seconded by Martin Crofts and agreed nem com.
12. **Any Other Business** It was suggested that the Postal Auction list and the list of unsolds should be circulated to other clubs to increase the number of sales. This was agreed.

The meeting closed at 2002 and 11 members were present.

### **Member's Displays post AGM**

Mike Wilkinson displayed lighthouses on New Zealand stamps. New Zealand is a maritime country with 23 active lighthouses, 7 around North Island and 12 around the South. The earliest was Pencarrow Head, North Island which was completed in 1859. Most of the lighthouses were built in the 1870s and 1880s. All the lighthouses in New Zealand are now automatic and controlled from Wellington.

There are lots of lighthouses around the Cook Strait and Cape Reinga is the northernmost lighthouse. Centre Island is the tip of what is now South Island. The Government Life Insurance Department began in 1869 when gold was found in Ortego and it was a period of growth in commerce and shipping and reliable insurance was needed. The Government Life Insurance Department had special lighthouse stamps to simplify the accounting of the stamps used by the department.



In 1891 the first issue of life insurance stamps was made and they ceased in 1989. Between 1891 and 1905 they depicted a stylized lighthouse, with VR either side of the lighthouse image. There was one die of the lighthouse. Between 1905 and 1947 the stamps had no VR, it having been removed, but new plates were issued, There were some different colours and some reprints. The year 1947 brought the first pictorial set, issued on the 1st August, it took time to get people and materials to New Zealand. Two used envelopes were shown. In 1963 a 2 ½ d value was needed for the postal rate change and in 1967 came decimal currency, the conversion being one New Zealand dollar to 10 UK shillings. The stamps initially were surcharged and overprinted.

In 1969 a decimal set of 5 was issued with an additional two added on the 17th November 1976. By 1978 a 25 cent rate was needed and the 2 ½ cent was by now redundant so it was overprinted. However, the stock of this value was low and a new batch of the 2 ½ cent was printed but with 25c and lines to blank out the old value printed at the same time, rather than printing a new 25 cent value, so they are not overprinted in the normal sense. In 1981 a uniform rectangular Life Insurance Department stamp was issued, the same across all values but in different colours. The department itself was privatised on 19<sup>th</sup> August 1989 with the stamps being invalidated from the 1st December 1980. Castle Point lighthouse is Mike's favourite and he showed some of his own photographs. He commented that when he was in New Zealand on holiday in early 2023 and at Castle Point on 20th February 2023, it was not so good as cyclone Gabrielle was affecting the area.

Margaret Emerson displayed B is for... a display she had given online to Pretoria Philatelic Society recently. She started with the first stamps of Barbados, issued in 1852, depicting the name of Barbados and Britannia but no value. Later issues included the value as well. The 1d Blue issued between 1852-1855 was on blued paper and the ½d Yellow-green issued between 1855-58, were shown. Both examples had a 1 in a barred cancellation for the parish of St. Michael which has 4 bars above and 3 below the number. Barbados was divided into 11 parishes and numeral cancels for each were in use from 1863 until 1885. A map was shown with the number and names. The 6d value from the 1861-1870 issue was next, Margaret said probably it was rose red by the cancel, a number 3 with 3 bars at the top and 4 below. Parishes 2,3,4,10 and 11 had this design. A special cover issued for the 1979 Centenary of the death of Sir Rowland Hill was shown as this illustrated these so called 'bootheel' cancellations. St Michael parish is Number 1 and the most common as it contains the capital, Bridgetown. The number 1 was in use from 1863 and withdrawn in Bridgetown in 1878 and all use of the numeral cancels ceased in 1885. St Peter is Number 10 and this parish has the second biggest town Speightstown. Rough perf stamp examples were shown, the 1s Black of 1866 with a number 10 cancel and 1d Blue of 1871 with a number 1. In 1851 postage rates were set at one penny per half ounce. Newspapers published in Barbados were post-free; other printed matter was charged a halfpenny. Barbados was the first British Colony to have a halfpenny rate; even preceding the Great Britain 1870 issue. The packet rate for letters to Great Britain was six pence per half-ounce. The rate for letters to other islands in the West Indies was four pence plus one penny if not posted at a Post Office, plus another one penny if the letter was delivered and not collected at the Post Office of destination. Some more rough perf examples were shown from the 1870-1871 period ½ d Green, 1d Blue, 4d Dull rose-red, and an 1875-1880 1d Blue. The image of Britannia, another B, is a key design and this was illustrated by examples from

Mauritius, a no value Red-brown 1858-62 and a 6d Blue 1859-61 and also Trinidad by a 6d bright yellow-green 1860 and 1d Lake 1862-63.

B is also for Birds and Margaret showed the first four pictorial issues of the GB Post and Go Stamps. The first pictorial issue, was the Birds of Britain 1<sup>st</sup> series, Garden Birds, Issued 17<sup>th</sup> September 2010. These were shown both as machine issued stamps in vertical strips and in a presentation pack in horizontal format. The birds 2<sup>nd</sup> Series was more Garden Birds, issued 24<sup>th</sup> January 2011. Birds 3<sup>rd</sup> Series was birds near ponds, lakes, rivers and streams Issued on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2011. Birds 4<sup>th</sup> Series was of coastal birds, issued 16<sup>th</sup> September 2011 and these were shown as Collector's strips of 3.

The Society is grateful to Mike and Margaret for their displays.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> October 2023 The 1f 50 Pétain issue** a talk and display by Mike Bister

Mike told us that the focus of the talk and display would be World War II. In 1918 when WWI was ended, Pétain was an army Marshall in France. In the 1940s he was an advisor of the Ministry of War and then the Third Republic was dissolved. Pétain said 'Work for the family fatherland'. The first Pétain stamp was issued in February of 1942 and a postcard of the Vichy Hotel du Parc was shown where the cabinet was set up. Pétain was Prime Minister and had Room 124 as his own office. Mail in and out of the Ministry of Information 'Etat Francais' was next and mail to Pétain was registered at 1f 50 as an incentive to write. Mail was not taken into the post office as it could be seen by others and was placed under the door of the post office Troie a la boiye' or 'found in letterbox'.

An embassy cover to the Swiss Red Cross was shown and we were told there was an Italian embassy in Vichy. The item was censored by the French with a star perfin which was an insult. A photo from the 24<sup>th</sup> October 1940 was shown of Hitler and Pétain. Hitler and Pétain stamps were shown on a cover from the 7<sup>th</sup> September 1943, which was a forwarded letter within France with a censored AE mark of Germany. A copy of an RAF map which was dropped into the Occupied Zone was displayed. The Occupied Zone was the north, the Free Zone was in the south and went as far as Spain from September 1942. Northeast France was a military administration by Belgium covering Lille and Dunkirk. There was Germanisation in France; German had to be taught and was the first language until 1918 and Germanisation in first names and street names took place. An example of a letter to illustrate this was addressed to 7 Schildgasse which had been Rue du Bouchier in Alsace. A postcard of the Italian Occupiers was shown. This mail is interesting and an item to Milan was shown. It was censored in Italy and received an Occupation cachet in black. Until March 1943, no covers were allowed and just postal stationery with a limited number of words. An item of postal stationery Paris Flammarion sent within the Free Zone, ZL was displayed. The second example had an ambiguous address and was returned as the address given was in the Northern Zone. Boundaries occurred on the rivers.

The city of Moulins was split into two zones with a 10 kilometre margin either side, so a pass was needed even for this small distance. People were allowed but not mail. A postcard showing the sign and a card of the bridge were shown. A cover posted in Moulin on the 18<sup>th</sup> January 1942 a kilometre or so away, was returned to the sender. Civilian interzone mail was difficult. Some official correspondence was allowed. Moulin was important and a cover label was shown explaining it was Correspondence Economique. An insurance item to Nice in the Free Zone was also shown.

Mail to the colonies was next shown by a Red Cross contact cover via Vichy to Toulouse. There was also a radio station message in the form of a telegram from Equatorial Africa to which the Red Cross had replied. An item sent to the West Indies to Guadalupe, loyal to

Pétain, from Lyon was shown. It had a British censor mark but where was it applied asked Mick? It was stamped a year later on its return. Saigon was loyal to Vichy. In Indo-China restrictions were in place and the letter was returned but again postcards were allowed, which could be read. The 'Richelieu' battleship was shown on a postcard and in 1940 it had an onboard post office. It fled Brest for Dakar until January 1943. This card had received a hexagonal cancellation, 'Batiment de Ligne Richelieu' and addressed to Bristol via Lisbon. The Prison du Cherche in Midi was a military prison used by the Gestapo and a photo was shown. Correspondence paper was shown which would be sent to the next of kin with an official number to be used. The Prison of Fresnes Paris had bad conditions. A cover from 1943 was shown which was returned to the sender in 1944 as the person had been executed and a blue crayon cross was applied top left of the cover. Pithiviers Transit Camp was for Jews, taking the first male inmates in May 1941. The parents were sent to Auschwitz, the children to Auschwitz directly. This camp was closed in July 1943 and a letter from April 1943 to a wife in Paris was displayed.

POW support was discussed next. In 1940 there was 'D'assistance aux prisonniers de Guerre' and a cover was shown and a form for repatriation of a POW. A bank book showed 150 francs had been deposited in Nancy, 'Le Livret de Prissorier'. There were youth camps promoting sport, discipline and patriotism. Two stamps were given to write and a St Bounet Trocais Camp cover was displayed. There were forced labour camps where French men were deported and a cover to a French worker at a luxury car factory was shown here.

Double censorship covers are freely available. One shown was to Africa from Vichy France to Lisbon to Cape Town. This was redirected to the French Congo and marked by a Free French censor marking. A cover Lyon to Cairo dated 29th June 1943 was censored by the French and the Egyptians. There was censorship of slogan cancellations from 30<sup>th</sup> September 1940 with no slogans allowed unless for patriotic or postal issues. An obsolete canceller was shown where the blocks were filed out, for example a 1936 Paris Exhibition cancel was utilised in 1941 and 1942. There was a paper shortage and a patriotic slogan saying 'paper is scarce, save it' was applied and old paper was used for envelopes. For example, maps, sheets of parcel labels or using the letter to make the envelope.

The French fleet was scuttled on 27th November 1942 to prevent the vessels being captured by the Germans. An old patriotic slogan was used, 'Our empire wants a navy that is strong', The cancel was shown from 30th November 1942 so used three days after the sinking. Nantes air raids were mentioned with a cover. US bombers at Nantes killed over 1000 people and many left. An item marked PSA stood for 'left no forwarding address'. Thomas Cook and Son had undercover mail. A letter from 29th October 1942 was sent to PO Box 506 Lisbon and was flown to the Thomas Cook office in London, with a cachet applied and a Thomas Cook perfin on a 2½ d GVI stamp. There was a Lisbon to London to Surrey label. The Red Cross handled undercover mail and the Portuguese Red Cross was involved to send mail to the UK. A cover to de Gaulle at 4 Carlton Gardens was shown and this had a No.2 Free censor mark. There was a Faux de Nice propaganda stamp genuinely used on a cover and card from the Resistance. The first part of the Liberation of Corsica by Free French troops came in 1943, with liberation on 4th October. Pétain stamps were in use until December. An item dated 1st February 1944 was endorsed F.F.I. (Free French) and included a membership card. F.F.I. Mail was forwarded. There was a system of emergency mail delivery as the Allies had broken communications and petrol was short. There was office mail including bicycle express. Paris services were disrupted as the Allies advanced.

Liberation of Paris letters had DF and a cross, the mark of the Resistance. An item from 26th August 1944. the day after liberation was shown. General de Gaulle was in power and a cover to him was a concessionary registered item. Liberation overprints were shown but the correct procedures were not always followed. A letter from Mayor Montreuil Bellay had unofficial cachets. The stamps were overprinted in purple as specimens and blue on mail. A letter to Lyon had official overprints. Stamps RF are common on cover. The Paris overprint of the Cross of Lorraine were for souvenir covers only and commercial covers with overprinted stamps are very unusual.

The Italian POWs were rounded up and incoming and outgoing mail was shown. An 'Ozarks' US military division six cents for a half ounce armed forces rate item was next. A postcard dated 31st October 1944 had a Pétain stamp applied. The L'Orient pocket surrendered in May 1945 having been besieged by US troops. There was a limited postal service set up by the Germans, the 1f 50 stamp was used. The Nazaire pocket had a 2f letter rate so a new value was needed. Nantes made a 50 centime makeup value, produced locally. A photograph of the German officers about to surrender at St Nazaire was shown. This of course brought the demise of Pétain and to round off the display a 1943 cover sent by a German soldier from the island Pétain was sent to was shown.

Margaret Emerson gave the vote of thanks on behalf of the society for an interesting display and members applauded on screen as usual in appreciation.

#### **6<sup>th</sup> November 2023 Mail between GB and the Netherlands** a talk and display by Philip Longbottom

Philip began by saying his display would be about mail between the Netherlands and Great Britain to about 1900. (The key items have been recorded here as there was wealth of fascinating postal history displayed and I would probably have tied myself in knots with the spellings. Ed.). Philip started with items of Corsini mail between 1575 and 1591 sent to London. There was a half groat or two pence extra charge. 'Pay the messenger' or 'Payez le porteur' markings were seen and 'Per Questa' or 'Request payment'. At this time there was a weekly mail service. The mail would be sent in bundles and a bundle price can be found on the item from the top of the pile and they would all have been prepaid. There was an item from 1597 from Vlissingen to London and from July 1595, a letter giving prices for twill. Merchant Adventurers post from 1599 was shown and there was the habit of duplicating important letters in case one did not arrive. From 1666 there was a letter from Amsterdam to London charged at 8 pence which had a D/8 marking. A letter London to the Hague was charged at 1/8. In 1686 there was an agreement with Amsterdam where mail would travel from Harwich to Brielle and this was a twice weekly service, but there were sandbanks, tides and the weather to negotiate. The mail was prepaid to cross the water and then charged 10 Stuiver by the Dutch, with an extra 1 Stuiver in winter and another 1 Stuiver for night mail.

Items between Leeds and Rotterdam from 1685, Edinburgh to Rotterdam 1690 and Amsterdam to London from 1688 were shown. Then there was an item from Leiden to Edinburgh from 1695 charged 8d. From 1695 a letter Amsterdam to the Bank of England was shown charged 3 s 4d, as it weighed 1 ¼ ounces. There were then various items from 1707, 1708 and 1710 and we were told that in 1711 the tariff was revised from Calais or Ostend. Letters from 1712 Rotterdam to Leith, 1722 Dordrecht to Edinburgh, 1745 from Glasgow and the British Army Headquarters followed. In 1761 there was a letter London to Enkhujen with a ½ Stuiver for local delivery and it also had an S ship letter mark. A 1780

letter Hague to St. Austell was next and 1794 Maastricht to London, charged 2/1 and then 5 Stuivers (5d). It had a W marking for an insufficient address.

Mail from the Napoleonic period followed including 1795 via Yarmouth to Cuckhaven Packet via Hamburg. Amsterdam to Philadelphia 1795 via Cuckhaven and London, 1797 London to Schiedam, and from 1799 a HAAG origin marking on a POW letter. The Peace of Amiens came in 1801 and items from 1802 and 1803 were displayed, Leamington to The Hague and London to Schiedam, and 1804 London to Cognac, which had been smuggled on a neutral ship and received a Holland border mark. A few ship letters followed, Deal and London. From 1814 there was a letter charged 1s 4d London to Schiedam and at this time a ship letter was 8d. A red Amsterdam mark was shown on an 1814 Amsterdam to London letter. The Anglo-Russian invasion of Holland took place in August 1799 and Philip had three letters from September, 1799 Minto to FPO, (field post office) with a ship letter London mark and this was prepaid in an army bag and is the first letter known. From a 19th September army bag was a letter giving an eyewitness account of the battle and dated 30th September, a double rated item from Schagen. From the years 1825 to 1828 was Brielle to England correspondence, 1815 Barcelona to Schiedam via London, November 1815 Rotterdam to London with a Rotterdam origin mark, 1818 Utrecht to Edinburgh with a wheel tax and double rate, 1819 Rotterdam to London and dated 1820, London to Schiedam.

The British post charged per page or ¼ ounce, the Dutch basic rate was 15 grams, then 7 ½ grams. A letter in this section was sent from the Netherlands to the Cape Colony, with a boxed Holland mark and Indian ship letter marking, taking five months to arrive. In 1820 Belgium and the Netherlands were one country and a letter was shown from 1824 Maastricht to Ostend and Dover to Liverpool. A number of dated Dutch marks were shown, these starting in 1829.

From August 1832 packet steamers began operating and an item from 1832 London to Schiedam on the first steam crossing was shown, 1833 Rotterdam to London and 1836 Zeist to London with a Zeist straight line marking. From 1837 a Hague to Kelso letter had been forwarded to Paris and so had numerous markings, and an 1840 Liverpool to Eindhoven letter had a 1d Penny Post applied in Liverpool then was charged at 1/6 and there was another from 1843 with a Hull steamer marking. Various items to Schiedam were displayed including from 1843 an item from Hull which had a Hull steamer mark. Several items carried on the steamers were next with Ship Letter London markings and we were told that a 3 Stuiver sea tax was levied. Cholera in 1831 and 1832 meant the mail was disinfected and here included an 1832 Leith to Schiedam letter. A new agreement came into force on 1st January 1844 and British and Ireland mails to the Netherlands were charged one shilling (8 d Britain and 4d in the Netherlands). A paid P.P. mark in blue was shown. In 1844 an Amsterdam to London item dated 2nd January was on the first packet boat. From October 1846 we saw a New York to Schiedam item via Liverpool and from 1848 a letter Bradford to Amsterdam which went to The Hague not Rotterdam because of bad weather. By this time letters from Belgium were dispatched 6 days a week.

Postage stamps were rarely used but this was enforced by the UPU in 1875. A letter Lasswade to Amsterdam had a 1s GB stamp attached but was insufficiently stamped and 'not via Ostend'. There were new tariffs and the packet boats also took passengers. Several items from the 1850s were shown and an 1861 newspaper wrapper charged 2d. From 1862 was a quadruple rate and an 1863 London to Rotterdam with a late fee was shown and 1863 London to Amsterdam 8d prepaid. In 1864 came another tariff change, 8d was reduced to 3d via Calais for a time. A 1d newspaper wrapper had a 1 ½ cent tax

levied. There were registered covers and a London 1869 free item from the Foreign Office London to Flushing. An Ipswich to Harlem letter which was too heavy had a 30 cent postage due applied. Postcards came in 1871 and an uprated card to London was shown 2 ½ cents plus 2 ½ cents, a 1¼ d card Leith to Breda and from the 1880s 1d Foreign cards. The display concluded with postal stationery envelopes 1892 and 1893, a reply card Delft to Leeds and finally some more registered items.

The vote of thanks on behalf of the Society was given by Margaret Emerson for a very interesting talk and display on material that is not seen very often. Members applauded on screen.

**4<sup>th</sup> December 2023 King Charles III** a talk and display by Margaret Emerson.

As members will know, Margaret is a collector of material connected with the British Royal Family and as this was the Coronation year, Margaret decided to display items pertaining to King Charles III. The display was illustrated with postcards, stamps and covers.

Margaret started with two Tuck's postcards of the young Prince Charles who was born Charles Philip Arthur George on the 14th November 1948. One card had the additional title of HRH Prince Charles Duke of Cornwall. The next items showed his early life and there was a miniature sheet from Tuvalu depicting Prince Charles aged about two being held by his father, with Princess Anne being held by Princess Elizabeth on the occasion of her baptism on the 24th October 1950. An illustrated cover from the same country for the 40th wedding anniversary of the Queen in 1987 and also 150th anniversary of the accession of Queen Victoria, showed on one of the stamps Prince Charles as a young boy with his parents.

The next item was a postcard of the 1953 Coronation depicting the typical balcony scene, when Prince Charles was aged 4 and he is seen waving to the crowds. The Investiture of the Prince of Wales on the 1st July 1969 was a major occasion in his life and an official picture on a postcard was shown and also a stamp from Tristan de Cunha, which was actually issued to mark the royal wedding of Prince Charles and Lady Diana Spencer in 1981. These commemorative stamps issued around the Commonwealth are very useful for depicting the life of our King. The next item was an illustrated first day cover from Great Britain with the five stamps issued for the Investiture of the Prince of Wales. The images on the stamps show Caernarvon Castle over three different stamps, the Prince and a Celtic cross. This was the second GB issue to have a bilingual Welsh and English inscription. An image of Prince Charles as Prince of Wales and Colonel in Chief of the Welsh Guards was shown on a postcard. On the King's accession this role passed to the heir to the throne HRH Prince William who also assumed the title Prince of Wales. A miniature sheet issued by Penryn Island for the royal wedding in 1981 showed Prince Charles and Lady Diana Spencer on a label marking their engagement, Prince Charles on a stamp as a young boy and as a schoolboy, the Prince as a young man and in Naval uniform, and an image of the Prince as Colonel in Chief of the Royal Regiment in Wales. A royal wedding stamp from Fiji depicted Prince Charles sailing, the issue from Antigua Prince Charles as a skier, the issue from Barbados and also from Grenada showed the Prince playing polo. King Charles began his military career in March 1971 with a four month detachment to the RAF at Cranwell in Lincolnshire. On 29<sup>th</sup> July Prince Charles made his first parachute drop from a Hawker Siddeley HS 780. This was depicted on the Grenadines of Grenada stamp. Dominica and Sierra Leone showed King Charles as a helicopter pilot, having qualified at Royal Naval Air Station Yeovilton and joining 845 Naval Air Squadron, which operated from HMS Hermes.

Prince Charles was shown in the flying dress of the Royal Navy Fleet Air Arm on the royal wedding stamp from Ascension Island. The 845 Naval Air squadron is a squadron of the Royal Navy's Fleet Air Arm. Bermuda and also the Gambia issued royal wedding stamps showing Prince Charles in naval uniform.

In September 1971 after the passing out parade, the Prince started his naval career. Stamps from Bermuda and The Gambia show the Prince in the tropical naval uniform. On February 9<sup>th</sup> 1976, Prince Charles took command of the minesweeper HMS Bronington, remaining until he left active naval service in December 1976. The Turks and Caicos Islands royal wedding stamp shows Prince Charles as Colonel in Chief of the Welsh regiment and the Pitcairn Islands issue as the Colonel in Chief of the Cheshire Regiment. A pair of Dominica stamps for the royal wedding depicted the official engagement photograph with the royal wedding emblem between the pair of the stamps. Great Britain issued two stamps on the 22<sup>nd</sup> July 1981 and these were designed by Jeffrey Matthews using a photograph taken by Lord Snowdon. The designer Geoffrey Edward Matthews, 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1928 to the 24<sup>th</sup> April 2023, was a British artist who specialised in postage stamp design between 1959 and 2007. The next item was perhaps a rather unexpected royal wedding issue from North Korea (DPR Korea) on a mini-sheet with actual images from the wedding day.

Other key family events included the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother, in 2000 and a miniature sheet was issued with four stamps depicting the four generations, the Queen Mother, Her Majesty the Queen, Prince Charles and Prince William. This was issued on the 4<sup>th</sup> August 2000. Next came the mini-sheet from Great Britain issued to mark the marriage of Prince Charles to Camilla Parker Bowles. The presentation pack and the sheet are bi-lingual in English and Welsh. It was issued on the 9<sup>th</sup> April 2005, the day of the wedding. A miniature sheet was issued by the Falkland Islands to mark the wedding and an illustrated envelope was shown with the Guildhall in Windsor, the place where the civil wedding ceremony took place, depicted.

The set of stamps issued on the 14<sup>th</sup> November 2018 to mark the 70<sup>th</sup> birthday of Prince Charles was shown. The six stamps show the Prince alone, an image of the Prince and Camilla, an image with his two sons in RAF uniform, with his sons at a polo match, on his Highgrove estate and with crowds in Wales. The first silhouette of the King on GB stamps was on the flowers issue made on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2023. This was the first change of silhouette on GB stamps since 1968. The first King Charles III definitive stamps were issued on the 4<sup>th</sup> April 2023, the basic first and second class and large letter stamps. The portrait of His Majesty the King was created by Martin Jennings for the new UK coinage and was subsequently adapted for the stamps. While these become known as Jennings?

Margaret then went on to show the coronation emblem which was created by Sir Jony Ive, former chief designer at Apple. The flowers of the four countries form and surround the shape of the Saint Edward's crown and these are in red white and blue. Margaret also showed the new Royal Cyphers. The King Charles III cypher features the King's initial C intertwined with the letter R for Rex, with the three denoting Charles III and lies below the crown. The College of Arms which designed the cypher was formed founded in 1484. The Queen Consort, Queen Camilla, has an initial C for Camilla and an R for Regina below a representation of the crown. This was designed by Professor Ewan Clayton in collaboration with Timothy Noad, Herald Painter and Scrivener at the College of Arms.

The coronation Great Britain issue consisted of a mini sheet with two first class and two £2.20 stamps, which was the worldwide rate, and the sheet was issued on the 6<sup>th</sup> May



2023. Margaret showed two first day covers from the Philatelic Bureau in Edinburgh, postmarked for the new reign and the date of the coronation. The four stamps represent the King being crowned, sustainability and biodiversity, diversity and community and the Commonwealth. The GB coronation cancellations were shown in their different formats. The coronation collector's sheet shown consisted of two copies each of the four issued stamps plus four duplicated images showing the first Christmas broadcast in 2022, the King working, the King and Queen and the King in his famous brown coat. Margaret then went on to show other coronation stamps from Alderney in the Channel Islands which had actual images from coronation day, the carriage ride to Westminster Abbey, the moment of crowning, the King holding the sovereign's sceptre with cross and the sovereign's sceptre with dove and the fourth stamp is of the King waving from the balcony at Buckingham Palace. The Bahamas also issued four stamps with the journey to the Abbey, just after the crowning, the journey back to Buckingham Palace in the Gold State Coach and the King and Queen on the balcony. New Zealand issued a stamp mini-sheet the day after the coronation, with the royal cypher and images of the King and Queen. New Zealand also issued a souvenir sheet to mark the coronation which had images from the ceremony shown on the six stamps and the procession out of Westminster Abbey forming the central image of the sheet.

The full range of low and high value GB definitive stamps was issued on the 29th August 2023 with Royal Mail noting that the £3 value was no longer included. The King's image is on a white background with a matching marginal frame and a QR code alongside, often called a 2D barcode, and a simulated perforation. Margaret concluded with the new Charles III digital stamps seen on marketing and bulk mailings. This item supplied by a member, had been received in the mail on the 7th August 2023 and although called a digital stamp is actually not one. These images are applied to downstream access mail and still have a QR code element and an image of perforations.

Margaret concluded by wishing all Members a Happy Christmas and best wishes for 2024.

## **Snippets of News**

### **Stanley Gibbons Limited**

It came out of the blue but Stanley Gibbons Ltd fell into administration in December 2023. The following was issued by Strand Collectibles just before Christmas 2023.

'Despite strong growth in auctions this year and new partnerships in publications, Stanley Gibbons Group has been unable to find a solution to its long-standing historic liabilities which includes legacy acquisitions, leases and debt. The Group explored all options to resolve these liabilities however it was unable to find a satisfactory solution.

As a result, Strand Collectibles Group Ltd has bought the business and assets of Stanley Gibbons Ltd and A.H. Baldwin & Sons Ltd as part of a pre-pack administration process managed by PwC on 22nd December 2023.

Under the ownership of Strand Collectibles Group, Stanley Gibbons will continue to serve the needs of philatelists with catalogues, magazines, albums and accessories, dealing and auctions and will be launching a new digital stamp collecting experience later in the year.'

In addition Linn's Stamp News had some additional information on its website on 4<sup>th</sup> January and the key points are:

Stanley Gibbons announced in October 2023 that the production and distribution of its albums and accessories was being transferred in a licensing deal to Dauwalders of

Salisbury, a family-run firm which has traded for 60 years and which also sells Davo, Lighthouse and Hawid products. Stanley Gibbons ceased publication in 2023 of the stamp trade magazine the Philatelic Exporter.

## Changes to the validity and use of Danish stamps

As from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2024, only stamps inscribed "INDLAND" (domestic) are valid on mail to addresses within Denmark. The stamp value includes a 25 percent value-added tax. Stamps issued before 1<sup>st</sup> January are now invalid on inland letters because a value-added tax is not included in the price of stamps. Also starting this year, new Danish stamps intended for foreign destinations will have the word "UDLAND" (abroad) in the design. All Danish mail items sent abroad must be inscribed "PRIORITAIRE" (priority) or have a label attached.

The first inland and abroad stamps were issued on 2<sup>nd</sup> January, valued at 25 kroner and 50 kroner respectively. New Postnord Denmark postage rates came into force the day before namely, for domestic mail letters and postcards, 25kr up to 100 grams, 50kr up to 250 grams, and 75kr up to 2,000 grams. The equivalent rates to foreign destinations are 50kr, 100kr and 150kr for items weighing 100 grams, 250 grams and 2,000 grams, respectively. This means that from Denmark to say Sweden, a postcard would cost 50kr to send or £5.82 in Sterling.

All Danish stamps issued before January 2024 will no longer be valid for postage on letters to foreign destinations after the end of 2024.

And it goes on, Postnord Denmark's universal postal service obligation in Denmark came to an end on 1<sup>st</sup> January which in practice probably means it offers a once per week delivery of mail to households, unless you pay more.

*Based on information in Linns Stamp News 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2024*

## Looking at .... Perforations

Henry Archer is acknowledged to be the creator of both the concept of separating stamps using perforations and the first perforation machines, which were first used successfully in 1848. His patents were sold to the Postmaster General here in Great Britain and then others developed machines based on his designs and other countries started issuing perforated stamps.

**Blind perforation:** A blind perforation is a a perforation hole on a postage stamp that has not fully penetrated the paper, leaving some paper where the hole should be. The perforating pins have either not fully pierced the paper, or the paper is too thick for the perforations to be complete, which is akin to trying to use a hole punch when you have a pile of paper that is too thick for the punch. Blind perforations are not considered to be errors.

**Blunt perforation:** A blunt perforation is shorter than would usually be expected and is a defect and so in theory reduces the value of the stamp so affected. What could cause this? There are a number of possible reasons but the keys ones are:

Improper alignment of the perforation die at the printing stage

Damage to the perforation die making the perforations

Incorrect feeding of the stamps through the perforation machine.

**Comb perforations:** For this type of perforation the pins of the machine are arranged like a comb. Three sides of the stamps are punched simultaneously, row by row. There is no need to turn the paper to restart the process in the other direction. Some can end up a bit shorter than others if the paper is not moved up evenly.

**Harrow perforations:** Here the entire sheet is punched at the same time by a machine having row upon row of pins running horizontally and vertically, set at the correct spacing for the size of the stamp being perforated and size of the stamp sheet.

**Line perforation:** This is the earliest and arguably simplest of the types of perforation. A single row of pins was placed in a line on a machine and then punched down through the stamp sheets. The sheet was moved up the width of a row of stamps, the holes were punched and the process repeated across the sheet until all the horizontal rows were completed. The sheets were then turned through 90 degrees and the perforating process repeated column by column. It is rarely used today. Line perforated stamps are easy to spot as the perforations in the corners of the stamp will probably not be aligned and sheet margins can be uneven.

**Perforation Shift or Misperf** – This term refers to stamps where the perforations have been applied but in the wrong place. There are a various possible degrees of shift, from slight, which will cause the affected stamp design to be closer to one edge than normal or a severe shift where part of the stamp image is split across the perforations. In some cases this can mean the line of perforations is quite dramatic appearing as diagonals.

**Pulled perforation:** A pulled perforation stamp is one that has been separated from its sheet of stamps by being pulled along the perforations. This can happen when the stamp is removed using too much force or when the sheet is not properly aligned during the perforation process.

**Perforation angle:** This is the angle between the perforations and the edge of the stamp and usually measured in degrees.

**Perforation pitch:** This the distance between the centres of two adjacent perforations and is usually measured in millimetres.

For some more examples and images see:

<https://thephilatelist.org/know-your-stamps-a-guide-to-understanding-stamp-perforation/>

Checking perforations on your stamps, as we know, is important as you may have a rarity hiding in your collection and the perforation could make the difference between a common, cheap stamp and something more valuable. As collectors we generally aim for 'well centred' stamps, but Warwick and Warwick the auctioneers caution that on rare occasions, a stamp which has 'stolen' part of the margin of the stamps next to it, can fetch double the price. They also caution that early stamps are rarely found perfectly centred because of the production processes used. A rare stamp that is slightly off centre is still desirable. The same of course goes for watermarks. For example, looking at a relatively ordinary stamp, a copy of a mint Half Penny Green King George VI definitive, issued 1937 to 1947, with an inverted watermark is catalogued some 33 per cent higher than the same stamp with a normal, upright watermark.