

STAMPING AROUND WITH NICK

“One — Two — Three”

An extraordinary, maybe unique cover bearing the world's first three postage stamps has recently come to light. Writing under the above heading in “The Philatelic Journal of Great Britain” (PJGB in short) well-known postal historian and publisher Robson Lowe opened his report of the discovery by stating “Anything is possible but the use of the first three adhesive stamps in the world on one cover is something which we never expected to see”.

Discovered in the archives of the Earls of Lauderdale, Scotland, the cover consists of a large printed “Weekly Return” form weighing an ounce. Postage was paid with a two-pence blue plate II/IB posted at Lauder on the 7th July, 1841 travelling via Edinburgh to Dunbar where it arrived the following day. The Earl of Lauderdale, to whom it was addressed, had in the meantime moved to the South, so the form was redirected to Dunse, postage being paid by a one penny black, plate VI/NK and a one penny red, plate VIII/JG, creating a remarkable entire.

Plating the Penny Black

Few stamps of the world have the fascination for collectors associated with the “Penny Black” and fewer still have experienced the recent rapid price appreciation of this stamp.

Thus the re-issue of the long out of print “Guide Lines To The Penny Black” by P.C. Litchfield is especially timely.

Following a general introduction describing the engraving and layout of the penny black, there is a plate by plate discussion of the plate flaws, entries and re-entries, the check letters and guide lines, the distinctive dots and spaces, all of which contribute to an appreciation of the individual characteristics of the stamps, which combined with the 120-page charting enable the task of plating.

Originally published in 1949, the work remains one of the greatest philatelic literature contributions. The hard-cover red-cloth bound volume, 223 pages, was published as Vol. 44 of the Billig Philatelic Handbook Series by HMJR Co., P.O. Box 6628, Hollywood, Florida 33021.

The Electric Lamp

The next time you put on the light, throw a glance at that old fashioned electric lamp and thank Sir Joseph Wilson Swan for it. Swan was born in 1828 in Sunderland and during the month of August 1979, the Sunderland Post Office made use of a machine slogan cancellation marking the Centenary of the Electric Lamp and paying tribute to Sir Joseph Wilson Swan, its inventor.

Antiques

If you want an antique view of the Quarantine Harbour, Malta, you have a choice between two collector's items: an original Water Colour of 1830 in frame or a print from an engraving by Benoist. The latter cost £M5 while the former is priced a handsome £M450. Both are listed in a 20-item price list and available from Said International Ltd., 43/2 Zachary Street, Valletta, Malta.

Award to British Designer

Britain's top award for postage stamp design—the Phillips Gold Medal—went for the second time to David Gentleman for works including the popular “Twelve Days of Christmas” set of 1977. The 22-carat, 3½ inches across gold medal is presented to a person making the greatest contribution to the British Post Office stamp design over a 5 year period. The latest award covers the years 1974-1978.

David Gentleman (49) has designed a total of 22 issues of stamps for the Post Office and was awarded the first Phillips Medal for the years 1965-1969. His work has been chosen for its versatility and quality as well as for the amount of thought that went into his designs.

Presentation of the medal was made by Mrs. Elsa Phillips, widow of Reginald M. Phillips on June 29 at Sussex University. The late R.M. Phillips, who established the award, donated his priceless collection of

stamps to form the basis of the National Postal Museum and founded the philatelic unit at Sussex University, Brighton.

Another to The Faroes

The youngest “stamp country” in the world, the Faroes, issued the most beautiful stamp in Europe during 1978. The stamp is the 140 ore value illustrating the Old Library at Torshaven, released on December 7th, on the occasion of the 150th Anniversary of the Faroese National Library. The stamp was engraved by world-famous Czeslaw Slania and printed by the Finnish National Bank Note Printing Works of Helsinki.

The award was made by the Organizing Committee of the Naples annual international philatelic exhibition. This exhibition is a traditional philatelic event born one year after the establishment of the CEPT in Montreaux, Switzerland on the initiative of the Italian philatelic journalist Renato Russo. The manifestation has three purposes: to present the “Europa” stamps; to act as a Salon every other year for European/African stamps; to select the winner of the “Grand Prix Napoli dell'Arte Filatelica”. Between April 27 and May 6, the XIX Stamp Exhibition “Europa 79” and the XIX Philatelic Salon of African Countries was held in Naples at the Museo del Palazzo Reale.

The award consists of a framed relief—the rearing horse, symbol of

the city of Naples—produced in heavy silver plate weighing 10 kilograms demanding a solid nail in the wall.

Unusual Hobby

Any hobby is possible but the collecting of “anything to do with rationing” is one hobby that sure is unusual to us, and we have encountered some out-of-the-way hobbies during our long years of association with the local Hobbies Society.

We recently received a request from a U.S. Collector who collects anything to do with rationing (shall we coin the word ‘rationology’ to describe this hobby?) of all periods, especially during World War II. Richard S. Hebert of P.O. Box 603, Auburn, N.Y. 13021 stated in his letter that his collection consists of ration books, coupons, token and all “forms” concerned with rationing. His U.S. collection is fairly extensive but his European items number only a few. I suppose at the moment Mr Hebert is chasing after ‘petrol coupons’ as well.

If any reader has anything to spare, our “rationologist” would be willing to trade mint and used U.S.A. stamps.

Calling Florists

In May 1876, the French scientist Eduard André made camp in Buena-vista in the region of Narino, Colombia and was impressed by what he originally mistook for beautiful birds but in reality were heart-shaped ver-

million red flowers. Several botanists of the time made extensive studies of the plant and though many claimed discovery, the plant is catalogued under the name of “Anthurium Andreanun” in honour of André, its apparent discoverer.

In 1878, this beautiful flower from Narino (the plant is also known as *Anthurium Narinenses*), was exhibited with great publicity at the International Fair of Paris, and each plant fetched up to 500 francs. In the meantime, an enterprising young German botanist, F. Karl Lehmann, began shipping the anthurium plants to the millionaire Baron de Rothschild under the condition that Lehmann would not disclose the origin of the plants, in order to maintain the commercial monopoly in Europe, where it was greatly admired.

Today these sweet little flowers can still be admired in glass-houses or alternatively on a set of four small-size stamps recently released by the Postal Administration of Colombia. The stamps feature the flower in the four known shades: pink, red, white and violaceous black.

Sectional Catalogues

At last, the main catalogue publishers have realized the inconvenience of the old-fashioned inflexible, bulky and expensive catalogues. This year we have had several innovations with sectional catalogues seemingly put on a permanent footing.

Stanley Gibbons launched a new-style catalogues to supersede the

three volumes for "Europe" and the four for "Overseas" countries. In all, there will be 21 sectional catalogues with countries grouped on the basis of collecting interests.

The first three catalogues appeared in July, 1979 and cover the following countries France (Colonies, Post Offices Abroad, Andorra, Monaco, Occupation issues, protectorates and mandate territories); Germany (the Empire and Republic, Third Reich, post-war Allied Occupation, West and East, ex-Colonies, P.O.s abroad, Saar and Danzig); China (Shanghai, Taiwan, Tibet and Foreign P.O.s).

In Autumn 1979, three other parts were published, namely: Austria and Hungary (including Bosnia and Herzegovina); Benelux (Belgium and Colonies, Netherlands and Colonies, Luxembourg); Central America (Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama). Further installments of sectional catalogues are planned for Winter, Spring and Summer 1980.

Unificato, the catalogue of the Italian Philatelic Dealers (CIF) this year has received a complete reshuffle and five new sectional catalogues have been published in August, a series to be known as "Unificato Internazionale" grouping the most important and collected countries. All the five sectionals are in the traditional full-colour style, and cover the European area. The volumes all follow a listing corresponding to the Marini albums, in chronological se-

quence (including airmail stamps and Souvenir/Miniature Sheets), and are all reasonably priced, almost a bargain. The countries catalogued sectionally are: Austria, France, Germany, Great Britain and Ireland, Switzerland, Liechtenstein and the United Nations.

Sassone, the popular Italian publishing house based in Rome, have for a number of years published sectional catalogues with success. Europe has been sectionalized into thirteen volumes and in addition a catalogue for Israel and another for the United States. For this year, Sassone have launched a new catalogue, for the first time in full colour and covers the whole Italian Area (Old States, The Reigns, Social Republic, The Modern Republic, the Vatican, San Marino, and returns to the catalogue, the S.M.O.M.). In addition the catalogue lists the 21 most collected zones in Italy, which of course include such countries as Portugal, Spain, France and Malta. To be known as "Sassone Blu" it is the "grande novità del 1980".

Christmas Greetings

Are you seeking an original way to send your Christmas Greetings next year? As a stamp-collector, you might want to tie up your good wishes with philately. The Christmas Island Postal Administration this year employed a special "Christmas Greetings" hand cancellor for postmarking Christmas mail during the period 1 November - 24 December. The word-

ing on the cancellor reads "Christmas Greetings from Christmas Island" arranged on the circumference of the cancellor with the word "from" together with the date located in the centre. Details are available from The Philatelic Bureau, Christmas Island, Indian Ocean.

AirMalta First Flights

According to the official statistics, courtesy of AirMalta, we have at hand the "weight of mail" carried on this year's first flights by the national airline — Malta — Kuwait/Dubai and Malta — Lyons (see V. 9 No. 2 "Malta — A Diary, page 32).

Malta — Kuwait=6 kgs; Malta — Dubai=7 kgs; Malta — Lyons=10 kgs.

The Fine Arts

Thematic philately has developed into a remarkable species of philately and continues to attract into its fold new comers to the hobby as well as seasoned philatelists. Groups catering for particular and generic subjects have mushroomed all over the world and the amount of information now available to the thematic collector enables him to enjoy fully his venture into the vastness of thematic philately.

Over 20 years ago, the Fine Arts Philatelists was established. The FAP is an international society devoted to a wider understanding and enjoyment of all aspects of the Fine Arts through philately. Gradually the Society, because of excellent coverage

of the various components of its professed theme by other organizations, decided to "purify" their fine arts coverage by restricting itself to painters and paintings, sculptors and sculpture, and archeology (antiquities), though such a "purification" may not always be possible and wise.

However, for those whose themes are catered for by FAP, the Society provides an excellent and very informative "Journal" with checklists on the main three themes and "Masterwork" supplements for various countries published in the quarterly "FAP Journal". The Fine Arts Philatelists may be contacted through the Secretary, Jewell Sonderegger, P.O. Box 1606, Midland, MI 48640, U.S.A.

I.P.P.C. Award to Greece

Greece was named winner of the International Philatelic Press Club's 1979 Award for outstanding service to stampdom's professional journalists. This was recently announced at the I.P.P.C. Convention at the New York Coliseum. The prestigious award was established in 1966, and is awarded annually to that postal administration judged to supply the best stamp news about its stamp issues to philatelic journalists, editors and the mass media.

Greece has made remarkable improvements through its philatelic bureau in providing details about its forthcoming stamp issues. When John Frangakis became head of the Greek Postal Administration he sought the assistance of the International Philatelic Press Club for ad-

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vice on how best to inaugurate a news release programme. Originally sent out as mimeographed releases, over the years, news from Greece became more informative and expeditiously despatched. Also cited as a reason for their selection, members of the judging committee pointed out to the fact that press releases are translated into several widely used languages. Appointed to judge the 1979 Award by I.P.P.C. President Charles Hahn, were members who regularly receive and can therefore appraise all releases distributed by the world's postal administrations. Last year, the I.P.P.C. 1978 award was bestowed on the Malta Postal Administration and members of The Philatelic Society will recall I.P.P.C. Chairman, Mr. Ernest A. Kehr, talking about the award to Malta during his recent visit to Malta

Robson Lowe Auctions

The following is the programme of philatelic auctions scheduled for the first four months of 1980:

Bournemouth

- 9-10/I — General Sale with Cindirellas.
- 6- 7/II — General Sale.
- 8/II — Postal History with Aden, Somaliland, etc.
- 5- 6/III — General Sale.
- 9-10/IV — General Sale.

London

- 22-23/I — British Empire.
- 5/II — G.B. Specialised.
- 19/II — Europe and Overseas.
- 20/II — British North America.
- 4/III — British West Indies.
- 5/III — British Empire.
- 27-28/III — G.B. Specialised.

Basle

- 18/III — G.B. Classics.
- 18/III — **Malta Covers and Proofs.**
- 19/III — Austria and Lombardy-Venetia.
- 20/III — Europe/Far East.

Tokyo

- 15-16/II — British Asia and Asia.

Geneva

- 24/IV — Italian Airmails.
- 22/IV — Holland, Palestine, Israel.
- 26/IV — Tasmania/Victoria.