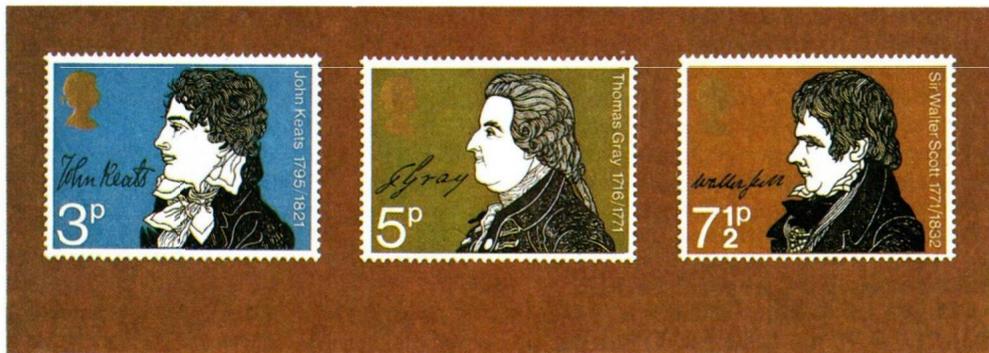


74. Literary Anniversaries, 1971



This was the second series of literary anniversaries — Dickens and Wordsworth were commemorated in June 1970 — and the designs portraying three of Britain's illustrious poets were again the work of Rosalind Dease, based on contemporary drawings and engravings. The choice of subject was of course governed by the appropriate anniversary dates, and it was fortuitous that three 'literary giants' were eligible for commemoration — 3p John Keates, 150th anniversary of death; 5p Thomas Gray, bicentenary of death; and 7½p Sir Walter Scott, poet and novelist, bicentenary of birth. The stamps appeared on 28 July 1971.

Miss Dease essayed numerous designs — some in vertical format — and had problems in obtaining a suitable likeness in each case, as many of the early portraits, busts and sculptures were somewhat fanciful versions. None of these difficulties is apparent in the three matching profiles which were printed in black against coloured backgrounds, accompanied by facsimile signatures of the three poets. The Queen's head was printed in gold and then embossed. Ronald Maddox submitted alternative designs featuring the historic places associated with the three celebrities — Keats' house in Hampstead, Stoke Poges (Gray's home and grave) and Abbotsford (Scott's last home on the Tweed).

John Keats, 1795-1821, was born in Finsbury, London, the son of a livery-stable proprietor. He was apprenticed to a London surgeon and subsequently practised medicine himself, but from 1817

he devoted himself to literature. Beset by financial difficulties and threatened by consumption, he sought a sunnier clime and died in Rome. His principal works were 'Poems' (1817), which contained much of his finest verse; 'Endymion' (1818), 'Lamia', 'Isabella and other Poems' (1820); and a series of magnificent odes — 'To a Nightingale', 'On a Grecian Urn' and 'To Autumn'. Keats' letters are many and famous.

Thomas Gray, 1716-1771, was born in Cornhill, London, and devoted his early life to the study of Greek literature, producing (in 1747) his 'Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College', and (in 1750) his greatest work, the 'Elegy written in a Country Churchyard'. The church was that of Stoke Poges, Buckinghamshire, beside which is the poet's grave; his mother lived at nearby Stoke Court (then West End Farm). Other works include a notable 'Ode to Adversity', 'The Pindaric Odes', 'The Progress of Poesy' and 'The Bard', all of which were mainly classical in form and romantic in expression. In 1768 he was presented by the Duke of Grafton with the professorship of Modern History at Cambridge, a sinecure office with £400 a year.

Sir Walter Scott, 1771-1832, distinguished poet and one of the greatest of British novelists; was born in Edinburgh. Professionally a lawyer, he early chose a literary career and his first success was 'The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border' (1802), followed by 'The Lay of the Last Minstrel' (1805), the first poem which gained him popular favour, then 'Marmion' (1808) and 'The Lord of the Isles' (1814). His last 18 years was the period of

the Waverley novels, first published anonymously, which won world acclaim — 'Waverley', 'Guy Mannering', 'Old Mortality', 'Rob Roy', 'The Heart of Midlothian', 'The Bride of Lammermoor', 'Ivanhoe', 'Kenilworth' and numerous others. In 1826 he faced financial ruin when his publisher and printers failed, but he continued to write to the end. He is buried at Dryburgh Abbey.

The stamps were photogravure-printed by Harrison and Sons in sheets of 100 (10 x 10) on unwatermarked paper with two phosphor bands. Printing flaws included the gold (Queen's head) omitted (3p and 5p), gold embossing omitted (7½p) and phosphor omitted (all values). Quantities sold were: 3p 61,635,564; 5p 9,767,700; 7½p 7,678,266; and presentation packs, 104,724.

JAMES WATSON

New Stamp Advisory Committee

A new Stamp Advisory Committee was recently appointed by the Post Office for the period 1981-1983.

The Committee's main function is to advise on the development of the design of special stamps from the artwork stage to the final essay, to be submitted for the Queen's approval.

In addition to the Post Office members, the Committee consists of experts in design, philatelists and representatives of public opinion.

Members of the new Committee, some of whom have served on the previous Committees, are:

The Chairman, Nigel Walmsley, Director of Postal Marketing, The Deputy Chairman, John Mackay, head of the Counter and Stamp Marketing Division.

Dr Jean Alexander: Fellow of the Royal Philatelic Society, London and an expert on Great Britain's stamps. She is a thematic collector, and in collaboration with her husband, writes regularly on Great Britain stamp issues.

Lady Casson FSIAD: Fellow of the Royal College of Art. She has a private practice as architect and designer for private and public buildings and interiors, and is design consultant to various companies.

Michael Colvin: Conservative MP for Bristol (North West).

Keith Grant: has been director of the Design Council since 1977.

Roger de Grey RA: Principal of the City and Guilds of London Art School.

Dr Alan Huggins: Senior Assistant Secretary of University College, London; a life-long philatelist, a past President of the Great Britain Philatelic Society and a Fellow of the Royal Philatelic Society; he is also an editor, and author of philatelic and other works.

Andrew Mantle: assistant secretary in charge of the Posts and Giro Branch, Department of Industry.

Richard Negus FSIAD FSTD: a past President of the Society of Industrial Artists and Designers. He is a partner with his wife, of Negus and Negus, design consultants.

Eric Ogden MP: Labour Member of Parliament for Liverpool from 1964.

Mrs Gabrielle Pike CBE JP: Chairman of the Woman's Forum and past National Chairman of the National Federation of Women's Institutes. Her experience of public life covers service on the food standards committee of the Ministry of Agriculture, the National Trust, the ITA and the Advertising Standards Authority.

Lord Reilly MA, Hon Des RCA, Hon FRIBA, Hon FSIAD: was Director of the Design Council until June 1977. He is a member of many public bodies including the Council of the Royal College of Art, the design panel and environment panel of the British Railways Board, and the Historic Buildings Committee of the GLC.

Barry Robinson: Design Advisor to the Post Office.

Professor Herbert Spencer RDI Dr RCA: Professor of Graphic Arts at the Royal College of Art; Master of the Faculty of Royal Designers for Industry and Vice President of the Royal Society of Arts.