

Collecting Machin Definitives Part 6 Postal Stationery

This final article in the series on the Machin definitives is concerned with postal stationery, which includes postcards, envelopes, wrappers, labels and airletters prestamped with the Machin head and appropriate value. Most of these items have been produced for sale in post offices, but a significant range of private Stamped to Order stationery was manufactured up to the latter part of 1973.



rubber stereo and a spirit ink quite different to the oil based letterpress inks. The stamp lost something in the changeover as the embossed design was generally considered of excellent quality, and superior to that printed by letterpress. However, a Post Office statement at that time, which also related to registered envelopes, said the change from embossed stamps to surface printed stamps was in line with the policy of changing from an expensive and slow production process to a more economic and faster process. This enabled the Post Office to make these items available much sooner than would have been possible with the previous embossed process.



Post Office material consists of postcards, lettercards, envelopes, and airletters, or aerogrammes as they may be called outside Great Britain. Printing changes, postal rate increases, experimental issues, and the growth of postal mechanisation have brought about a sufficient variety to satisfy collectors looking for a related area of interest, but distinct from postage stamps. The Machin head first appeared on postcards, reply-paid postcards, and lettercards in September 1968. Phosphor lines were added to the lettercards in 1969 and to the postcards in 1970. This range has diminished and from January 1981 consists only of the first class and second class lettercards which are gravure printed on the Chambon press. Envelopes with embossed stamps were issued in October 1969 with a new octagonal stamp designed by Stuart Rose incorporating the Machin portrait. This design was subsequently adopted for the postcards and lettercards.

In June 1974, embossed stamps on the envelopes gave way to an 'aniline' letterpress process using a

To me, three developments stand out among the changes of value and stamp colours in the twelve years since 1968. On 8 October 1973 the 3p blue was uprated to 3½p by a double ring device printed in blue "POSTAGE PAID EXTRA" with ½p in the centre. This contrasts with the commonly used method of uprating by the application of postage stamps alongside the printed stamps, and was probably necessitated by either large stocks of the 3p envelope or the lack of a 3½p stamp design.

In February 1979, the National Postal Museum in London, issued an envelope to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the Museum. It was pre-stamped with a surface printed 9p Machin stamp. Finally, the increasing significance of postal mechanisation led to the addition of a postcode reminder to the address panel on the back of the envelopes from July 1979.

Oddities include the use of different papers for some of the envelopes. I have 3p blue stamped versions with two phosphor bands on very different envelopes, one a pale blue lined paper

and the other a grey unlined paper.

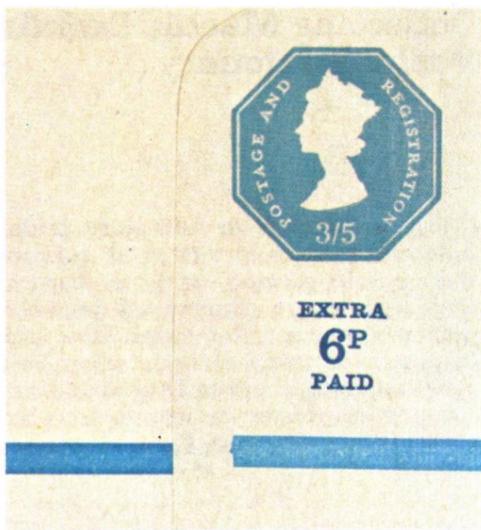
Although the 7p brown stamp with two phosphor bands was printed in the normal size for stationery envelopes, being larger than that for postcards and lettercards, the 7p brown stamp with one phosphor band issued on 13 June 1977 was unusually small. This second type was of a similar size to that used for postcards and lettercards. This may have been a mistake as the size was increased again when new values appeared subsequently. The range of registered envelopes adopted a Machin head stamp in April 1970. The octagonal design is similar to that designed by Stuart Rose for the other stationery items, but has the words "POSTAGE AND REGISTRATION" instead of "POSTAGE POSTAGE". At first the stamps were embossed but in July 1974 they were changed to the "aniline" process described earlier.

In addition to the inland series of registered envelopes there is a Forces Overseas Registered envelope with the stamps printed in orange red. This envelope is available in the "G2" size only. When posted to civilian addresses a handstamped cachet may be applied — BRITISH FIELD POST — to show that it is at a reduced rate.

As the overseas registration fee was not increased until 1 July 1971 an overseas registered envelope, with a 15p magenta stamp, went on sale until 30 June 1971. From November 1972 to March 1975 an experimental system was introduced for registered envelopes posted and delivered in Scotland, in which it was no longer necessary for staff at the delivery office to write out a receipt. Special registered envelopes were introduced without the scrim lining of the normal envelopes, the Duplex manila having a blue interior. The medium-sized 'H', and the larger 'K' envelopes had the flap to the right, whereas the small 'G' envelope had the flap to the left. This latter was discontinued in September 1975 when the flap reverted to the right side.

In May 1974, because of their success in Scotland the Post Office decided that blue lined Duplex manila should replace scrim lined manila envelopes as stocks were used up.

Of the many variants to be found I have selected two examples for illustration here. Firstly, at the time of changeover from sterling to decimal stamps in 1971, surplus stocks of 'K' sized envelopes bearing a 3/5d embossed stamp were uprated with a 6p cachet. There can't be too many examples of envelopes with two different types of currency officially applied at the same time. Secondly, a Forces Overseas Envelope posted in the UK at



Field Post Office 777 in the 1978 Festival of Brighton Philatelic Show. Finally a registered envelope was posted at the London Chief Office Philatelic Counter on 9 July 1979. This was the first day of issue of envelopes with a line for the post code added to the address panel at the back. No first day cancellation was provided but as a special concession the use of the Rowland Hill handstamp was authorised.



A new style of airletter was issued on 1 July 1968. This has an impressed 9d stamp in white, and light and dark shades of blue, designed by David Gentleman, including the profile of the Queen by Arnold Machin along with representations of two VC10 aircraft in flight. Examples with the word 'Specimen' overprinted by hand were given advance distribution to the Press on 24 June 1968.

In 1972 the size 2 airletter was introduced with the stamp consisting of the unframed Machin head of the Queen with the value '6½p' at bottom left.

Several regional definitive airletters have also

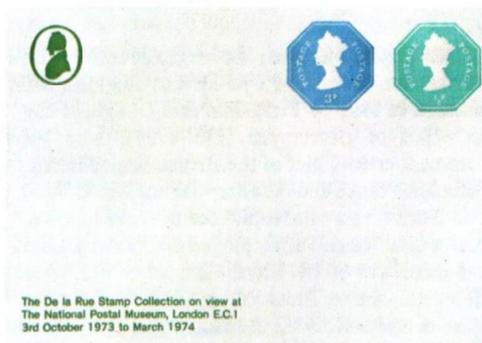
Forthcoming Events

been issued of which the first in the Welsh and English languages was issued in August 1973, and the first in Gaelic and English in May 1974.

The stamp on the first size of the airletter was changed to the unframed Machin head in June 1978.

All non-pictorial air letters are gravure printed on specially designed Chambon machines, while pictorial air letters are printed by off-set litho. Both are produced by McCorquodale Printers Ltd.

Up to October 1973 private stationery could be impressed with postage stamps, providing the order was big enough. Two different stamps were used for the purpose.



The De la Rue Stamp Collection on view at
The National Postal Museum, London E.C.1
3rd October 1973 to March 1974

A notable example comes from 1973 when an envelope was put on sale at the National Postal Museum in conjunction with a display of the De La Rue stamp collection. This envelope, which incidentally comes in two sizes from different printings, was stamped to order with the 3p blue and 1/2p turquoise embossed Machin stamps. To bring matters up-to-date, the most recent range of stationery was issued on 26 January 1981 in line with newly increased postage rates. It consists of 11 1/2p second class and 14p first class lettercards; 11 1/2p sizes 1 and 2 second class, 14p sizes 1 and 2 first class envelopes; "G", "H" and "K" registered envelopes; and the large airletter at 20p, with a statement that the small airletter is to be withdrawn. All of these stationery items were printed by McCorquodale.

D W S TADDON

Goodmayes Philatelic Society

The Goodmayes Philatelic Society will hold a Stamp Fair on Saturday 11 April 1981 in the Methodist Church Hall, Percy Road, Goodmayes, ILFORD, Essex IG3 8UA from 10 am until 5 pm. Admission is free.

Colchester and District Philatelic Society

The Colchester and District Philatelic Society will celebrate its Golden Jubilee on Saturday 11 April 1981 at the Holmwood House School, Chilts Hill, COLCHESTER CO3 5ST with a Stamp Festival. A number of dealers will be present and The Post Office will provide a special sales counter. The National Postal Museum will display some of its 'gems'. Included in the itinerary is a film show and a display of Victorian stamp boxes and letter balances.

Basildon Philatelic Society

On Saturday 25 April 1981 the Basildon Philatelic Society will hold its annual exhibition this year to be called, 'Stamp Day '81'. It will be held in St. Martin's Church Hall, Town Centre, BASILDON, Essex, from 10 am until 5 pm. Displays will include the winners of the annual competition, the prizes for which will be presented by the Head Postmaster of Basildon, Mr P Bazeley. Admission is free.

Telford Philatelic Society

The Telford Philatelic Society is holding its third stamp fair on 25 April, 1981, at the Belmont Hall, New Street, WELLINGTON, Shropshire, TF1 1NE from 10 am-4 pm. Admission is 20p for adults and 10p for children. A number of dealers will be present, and The Post Office will provide a display and sales counter. A car park is adjacent to the hall.

Philatelic Bulletins

We have heard that the following back numbers of the Philatelic Bulletin are available for sale: June 1968 - July 1977. For further details please write to, Mrs D A Ranson, Flat 1, 4 Ethelred Road, Westgate-on-Sea, THANET, Kent CT8 8SJ enclosing a stamped addressed envelope for reply.