

may I suggest that he reads contemporary accounts of the miserable state of affairs these Social Reformers sought to change or even look at Gustave Doré's engravings of the period. Then maybe he will be able, like Mrs Beatrice White, to 'smell the dust and grime and dank filth of the early 19th century'.

But what would Mr Miles have us do? Gloss over the situation, pretending it never existed, by producing 'pretty' stamps.

Blame the Post Office, by all means, for choosing a miserable subject, but not David Gentleman for finding such a brilliant answer.

STUART ROSE CBE FSIA

Design Adviser/Post Office

Dear Sir,

I wonder if you would like to arrange for a short article in the Bulletin explaining how the values in our Special Issues are chosen? For example in the Social Reformers issue we have an 8½p for a first class letter, while the 10p, 11p and 13p are only useful, as far as I can discern, for some minor uses in Air Mail.

Again, consider the new 10p stamp book. The stamps in this can be used for one First Class letter, with one ½p and one 1p left over, or for one Second Class, with one ½p and three 1p left over.

I am sure the heads of the Post Office have good reasons for these things, and I think many

philatelists would like to read about them.

Yours sincerely

Pulborough, Sussex

G J GREENFIELD

Editors Note

We are aware of the shortcomings of our new machine stamp books in respect of their restricted stamp content. This has come about mainly as a result of rapid inflation and its consequent effect on tariffs but also because the coin mechanism of the vending machines currently in use will not readily accept a higher value coin than 10p. However, we hope to introduce a 50p stamp book later this year when a new coin tester which has been developed should be ready. The planned 50p machine will allow us to include a better stamp selection in our books but in the meantime we will continue to issue 10p stamp books to cope with those 'emergency' late letter postings through a 10p vend.

It has been our recent policy to include, in each issue of four special stamps, one stamp for the basic first class inland letter rate, one for the basic airmail letter rate to European countries, one for the basic airmail letter rate to 'Zone B' countries, and one for the basic airmail letter rate to 'Zone C' countries. This ensures that British Special Stamps have a wide circulation and can be seen throughout Britain, Europe and the rest of the world.

The History of the Aerogramme and the Start of Commercial Air Mail — Part Five

Pictorial Issues of Great Britain

The sale of the first pictorial Air Letter forms in Great Britain was in the nature of an experiment which began on 1 August 1963 and ended on 31 March 1964.

The forms were on sale only in the London Postal Area and in Post Offices at London Airport. They were especially meant for visitors and so two familiar London views were used.

One showed the Houses of Parliament across the Thames from the Albert Embankment, and the other, the Tower of London with Tower Bridge in the background. Approximately 500,000 of each type of form was printed by Charles Skipper and East at Basingstoke, using the lithographic process. After printing, the forms were sent to McCorquo-

dale & Co. Limited, of Wolverton, in uncut sheets of eight for cutting and gumming.

The forms cost 10d each, including 6d postage. No special stamp was used on the forms which bore the standard Air Letter stamp, designed in 1957. This was the first time that Air Letters costing more than 6d had been put on sale. In spite of the increased price the result of the experiment was sufficiently encouraging for the Post Office to issue on 23 April 1964, two pictorial Shakespeare Air Letter forms designed by David Gentleman, together with a set of five postage stamps to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the birth of William Shakespeare at Stratford-upon-Avon, on 23 April 1564.

One form included a picture of the theatre at Stratford, while the other showed various characters from Shakespeare plays from wood engravings on boxwood. The characters shown are:

Falstaff and Mistress Quickly, from 'Merry Wives of Windsor'.

Ophelia and Hamlet, from 'Hamlet'.

Puck, Titania and Bottom, from 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'.

Romeo and Juliet, from 'Romeo and Juliet'.

Brutus and Caesar, from 'Julius Caesar'.

Caliban, Prospero and Ariel, from 'The Tempest'.

The engravings of Shakespeare's head on the address panel, was based on the First Folio portrait engraving by Droeshout.

The caption to the picture of the theatre read: 'SHAKESPEARE MEMORIAL THEATRE, STRATFORD-ON-AVON' though the name of the theatre had been altered to 'ROYAL SHAKESPEARE THEATRE' in January 1963. After approximately one million forms had been printed, the error was brought to the notice of the Post Office and a new printing was made. Forms with the revised caption: 'ROYAL SHAKESPEARE THEATRE, STRATFORD-UPON-AVON', first appeared on 20 May, 1964.

2,091,552 'THEATRE' forms and 1,501,440

'SCENES' forms were printed by Charles Skipper and East, using the lithographic process. After printing, the forms were sent to McCorquodale & Co Limited, of Wolverton, in uncut sheets of eight for cutting and gumming. The forms which remained on sale until 17 July 1964, cost 10d each including 6d postage. The special stamp on the forms, which was designed by David Gentleman, was officially described by the Post Office as illustrating the exterior of the Globe Theatre, as seen on the famous 'Long View' etching of London, by Wenceslas Hollar, a Bohemian etcher (1607-1677). The stamp actually shows the building labelled 'The Globe', in Hollar's 'Long View' of London published in Amsterdam in 1647. Unfortunately, in etching his view, Hollar interchanged the labels of the Globe Theatre and the Bear Garden. The building he labelled 'The Globe' is in fact the new Bear Garden (or Hope Theatre) built in 1614 after Shakespeare had retired and the building he has labelled 'Beere bayting h(ouse)' is actually the Globe Theatre which may never have seen any production of a Shakespeare play.

This fact was brought to the notice of the Post Office by Mr I A Shapiro, of the Department of English Language and Literature at Birmingham University.

In the PHILATELIC BULLETIN No. 7, issued in May 1964, part of paragraph 16 reads: 'The stamp on the two Shakespeare forms shows the Globe Theatre as shown on the famous sixteenth century panoramic print of London by Wenceslas Hollar. We are told on very good authority that Hollar labelled his engraving incorrectly and what is shown as the Theatre is in fact the Beergarden. The engraving is however so well known that we thought it only right to use it unamended.'

The photograph of that portion of the 'Long View' showing the Globe and Beergarden was supplied to the Post Office by the Prints and Drawings Department of the British Museum. The evidence that these buildings were wrongly labelled in Hollar's etching can be

found, amongst other sources, in: 'Shakespeare Survey', Volume 1 (1948), pages 34-35, 'The Bankside Theatres: Early Engravings', by I A Shapiro and Volume 2 (1949), pages 21-22, 'An Original drawing of the Globe Theatre' by I A Shapiro. Its implications are now generally accepted by students of Elizabethan theatre history.

Prince of Wales Air Letter 1969

A bilingual-inscription Air Letter, together with a set of five postage stamps, designed by David Gentleman, was issued on 1 July 1969, to commemorate the investiture of HRH Prince of Wales at Caernarvon Castle.

David Gentleman had made a visit to Caernarvon in the summer of 1968 and viewed the castle from many different positions. After making copious notes and watercolour drawings he finally decided he liked the Castle best from the picturesque view across the river. The view of the Castle he used on the Air Letter is almost identical to that used by Lynton Lamb on his 5s Castle stamp issued in 1955.

Caernarvon Castle was built during the Norman settlement of Wales, but it was reconquered by the Welsh in 1115 and all traces of any buildings dating from that period have now vanished. The Castle was entirely replaced by another begun in 1283 during the conquest of Wales by Edward I and completed about 1330. In 1284 the future Edward II was created Prince of Wales there. In 1911 the future Edward VIII was also invested there as Prince of Wales.

With regard to the small design on the front of the form, David Gentleman explained that he had considered using one of the 'Caernarvon Arches' on his investiture stamps. In the event, he effectively incorporated a view of the Castle looking through one of them on the Air Letter.

Approximately two million forms were printed by Charles Skipper and East, using the lithographic process. The forms which remained on sale throughout the whole country until 30 September 1969, cost 10d each including 9d postage. No special stamp was

used on the forms; they bore the standard Air Letter stamp designed by David Gentleman in 1968.

Next time—Great Britain 'CHRISTMAS' Air Letters 1965-1975.

PETER JENNINGS FRPSL

Book Reviews

History of Telecommunications on Stamps

By its very nature Telecommunications is an enormous subject. In this, the first in a series of five volumes, John Ross a Fellow of the Institution of Radio and Electronic Engineers (Aust) traces the development of communications from the ages of the drum and smoke signals to the sophisticated electronic equipment of today.

Mr Ross has written brief notes about many of the scientists who have been involved in some way with the subject and illustrates them with black and white reproductions of stamps which feature them or their work. He also gives particulars of the telephone service of various countries.

Much of the text is complex, but may be of use especially to the thematic collector who has an interest in this field.

'A History of Telecommunications on Stamps' volume 1 by J F Ross B.Sc is published by Harry Hayes, 48-50 Trafalgar Street, Batley, West Yorkshire WF17 7HA price £9.

1976 Special Stamp Issues

For operational reasons, it has been necessary to alter the values of the 500th Anniversary of First Printing in Britain stamps to be issued on 29 September 1976.

The values/designs will now be:

8½p Woodcut from 'The Canterbury Tales'
10p Decorative initial and type from the 'Tretysse of Love'

11p A woodcut from 'The Game and Play of Chess'

13p Woodcut of early printing press.