

## 75. British Anniversaries, 1971

Among the many hundreds of suggestions and requests for special stamps which the Post Office receives each year, there are very few indeed which can be adopted, and the ultimate choice is inevitably a matter of careful thought and of weighing 'pros and cons'. Following the literary anniversaries in July, three widely differing events were selected for commemoration on 25 August 1971 – the 50th anniversary of the (Royal) British Legion; the 1900th anniversary of the City of York; and the centenary of the Rugby Football Union. The stamps were designed by Fritz Wegner, the Viennese-born freelance artist and designer whose earlier work included the 1969 Christmas stamps and three of the 1970 general anniversaries' issues. He studied at the St. Martin's School of Art in London and became a visiting lecturer in graphic design there; his work has included illustrations for books and magazines, and he is a regular contributor to British stamp design, his most recent being the 'Folklore' issue in February of this year and the Christmas stamps of 1979 which depicted the traditional Christmas story.

Besides a pleasing uniformity in his designs – commemorative panel on the left and a broad band on the right containing the Queen's head, the face value and an appropriate emblem – Mr Wegner depicted 'people' as his central subjects. The 3p British Legion stamp showed a soldier, sailor and airman protectively flanking a member of Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service (now Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing

Corps), all wearing uniforms of the post-war era, circa 1921, when the Legion was founded, and with the Legion's poppy emblem included in the design. A Roman centurion on horseback, with the ancient multangular tower fortification at York in the background, was the subject of the 7½p stamp, while the 9p Rugby Football Union issue was represented by players in 'period' sporting gear – three of them in hot pursuit of the one with the round ball, another prostrate on the ground – based on the famous W B Wollen painting of more than a century ago. The York stamp included the city's coat-of-arms (inset), and the 'Rugger' stamp was adorned by another flower – the symbolic red rose of the English international team.

The British Legion, an organisation of ex-servicemen (now the Royal British Legion), was founded in 1921 by Field-Marshal Douglas Haig, first Earl of Bemersyde (1861-1928), who was Commander-in-Chief of the British Expeditionary Forces in France and Flanders during World War I. The Legion was established for the care and welfare of disabled and unemployed ex-soldiers, and it was incorporated by Royal Charter in 1925. Earl Haig remained its President until his death and his name is associated with the sale of poppies – made by disabled ex-servicemen – on Remembrance Day.

The ancient city of York, located at the confluence of the Foss with the Ouse, was known among the Romans as Eboracum – it was the centre



## New Illustrated Stamp Books

of Roman power in the north of Britain and many relics of that epoch still remain. It is the seat of an archbishop and its cathedral, known as the Minster, is one of the grandest in England – it was built on the site of a church erected as early as the 7th century, and was finished as it now exists in 1470. There are other buildings of great antiquity, and the Guildhall dates from the 15th century.

Rugby Union, the English association of Rugby football clubs, founded in 1871, was based on the game played at Rugby School. The division into two separate games – Rugby Union and Rugby League – came in 1895, when there was a dispute on the question of legalising payment for time lost from work by the players, all amateurs. The 'breakaway' clubs, a score of them, mostly Yorkshire teams, formed a new independent governing body, first called the Northern Union, but now known as the Rugby League. The Rugby Football Union's headquarters are at Twickenham, Middlesex.

The stamps were photogravure-printed by Harrison and Sons in sheets of 100 (10 x 10) on unwatermarked paper with two phosphor bands. Varieties include certain colours omitted on all values, notably the red-orange of the nurse's cloak and the deep blue of the sailor's uniform (which appeared grey) on the 3p, and a large white spot under the 'U' of 'UNION' on the 9p. Quantities sold were: 3p 55,211,706; 7½p 7,026,973; 9p 5,705,637; and presentation packs, 94,059.

JAMES WATSON



No. 1 of the third series of stamp books with illustrated covers to be issued on 6 May 1981 will be available from the Philatelic Bureau, philatelic counters, and other offices, as current stocks become exhausted.

Details of the make-up of each book is as follows:

50p book: 3 x 11½p; 1 x 14p; 1 x 1p; 1 x ½p. All have two phosphor bars except the 11½p which has a single bar. The illustration is of Mugdock Castle, Argyll.

£1.15 10 x 11½p – single central phosphor bar. The illustration depicts the Natural History Museum, London.

£1.40 10 x 14p – phosphor coated paper. Costume 1800-1815 is illustrated.

No. 1 of a new series of stamp books entitled 'Postal History' will be available on 6 May 1981 from the Philatelic Bureau, philatelic counters and other offices price £1.30. It will depict the 'penny black' stamp of 1840.

The make-up is as follows:-

6 x 14p – with two phosphor bars.

4 x 11½p – with a single phosphor bar.

## New Philatelic Sales Counter

A new philatelic sales counter will be opened at the Rede House Branch Office, 63 Corporation Road, MIDDLESBROUGH, Cleveland TS1 1LY on 27 April, 1981.

A special pictorial handstamp, which includes the words, 'Post Office Philatelic Counter opened 27 April 1981 Cleveland', will be used to cancel all mail posted in a special posting box sited in the Rede House Branch Office on that one day only. For customers requiring the handstamp who are unable to call at the office, normal reposting facilities will apply. Cover should be sent to:- The Head Postmaster, Head Post Office, 2 Cannon Park Way, MIDDLESBROUGH, Cleveland TS1 1AA. Hours of business at the new office are:- Monday to Friday 9.45 am-12.30 pm and 1.30 pm-4.45 pm. Saturday 9.45 am-12.30 pm.