

Anniversaries

11 April 1989



Four stamps marking worthwhile, if unrelated, anniversaries will be issued on 11 April. The designs are unusual in that they are based on firework displays, ideal for a thematic collection of philatelic pyrotechnics! They comprise two se-tenant pairs, of 19p (inland first class and EEC basic rate) and 35p (Airmail Zone C) stamps.

The first of the **19p** stamps shows a mortar board and marks the 150th anniversary of public education in England and Wales; the second stamp depicts a cross on a ballot paper and marks the 3rd Direct Elections to the European Parliament (stamps commemorated both previous elections, in 1979 and 1984). The first **35p** stamp shows a posthorn, marking the Postal Telegraph & Telephone International World Congress in Brighton in September; the second stamp depicts a globe and commemorates the centenary conference of the Inter-Parliamentary Union in London, also in September.



Today we tend to take education for granted, forgetting that only 150 years ago it was mostly only the more wealthy members of society in England & Wales who received any more than the most basic of education. The fee-paying public schools were well-established but for the children of the working class schooling was largely confined to "Dame Schools" or Sunday Schools established by the British & Foreign Schools Society and the National Society for the Education of the Poor.

During the Industrial Revolution, it became clear that basic literacy was essential for sustained economic growth, quite apart from social development, and Parliament took an interest. A select committee investigated in 1837 and in 1839 official inspectors of schools were appointed to supervise standards and a committee of the Privy Council was established to administer the grant voted by the Commons for the building of schools. By 1850 two-thirds of the population could read and write their name and count their pay; further improvements in basic standards of education resulted from the 1870 Education Act.

As long ago as 1951 the Treaty of Paris declared that the assembly of the European Coal & Steel Community (forerunner of the EEC), should consist of delegates either proposed by members of the respective parliaments or "elected by direct universal suffrage". A similar provision was embodied in the Treaties of Rome in 1957. The European Parliament meets in the Palais de L'Europe in Strasbourg; its 518 members represent some 320 million people. Britain sends 81 elected members to the Parliament. The 1989 elections will be the last before the remaining vestiges of trade barriers between member countries are removed in 1992. Although political differences remain between the member countries, the recent enlargement of the Community and the regular summit meetings have made Sir Winston Churchill's dream of a "United States of Europe" less remote.

All the various trade unions in the British Post Office are affiliated to the Postal, Telegraph & Telephone International – an organisation which acts as a forum for similar bodies from throughout the world. The International was founded in Vienna in 1920 and a World Congress is held every four years. The 26th Congress will be held in Brighton from 18-23 September; about 800 delegates are expected to attend. In recent times the PTTI has played an active role in developing trade union activities in Third World countries and in instigating practical training courses for trade union organisers.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union was founded

addition pictorial First Day handstamps will be available at the London Chief Office (arms of the City of London) and Durham (Cathedral). Covers to receive these handstamps should be sent to: Special Postmark Duty, City of London LDO, King Edward Street, LONDON EC1A 1AA (marking outer envelope "City of London Pictorial Handstamp") and Pictorial First Day of Issue Postmark Duty, 33 Silver Street, DURHAM DH1 3RE.

A number of special handstamps, sponsored by stamp dealers and others, will be used on 11 April – full details of these will be found in the *British Postmark Bulletin*.

Royal Mail Stamp Cards may be given any of the First Day of Issue and sponsored special handstamps. Collectors wishing to have their first day covers/stamp cards returned under cover should enclose a large self-addressed envelope when sending covers/cards in to the relevant Special Postmark Duty for handstamping.

Souvenir Cover

A souvenir cover, of similar design to the first day cover, will be available from all philatelic counters from 12 April, price 17p. This can be used to obtain relevant Anniversary postmarks after the first day of issue and will be on sale for one year.

Earlier Related Issues

Perhaps surprisingly this set includes the first British stamp to directly commemorate education. The Modern University Buildings set of September 1971 was issued to reflect British architectural rather than educational achievements.

There have been sets for both the 1979 and 1984 European Parliament elections and a set of three in January 1983 marked Britain's entry to the EEC. "Europa" (CEPT) stamps were issued in 1960, 1961 and 1969 and each year from 1980. The 1989 set, featuring Games & Toys, will be issued on 16 May.

There have been several issues connected with postal conferences and organisations – 1929 Postal Union Congress, 1949 Universal Postal Union 75th anniversary, 1963 Paris Postal Conference centenary, 1965 International Telecommunications Union centenary and 1974 UPU centenary. The posthorn emblem has appeared on most of the Europa/CEPT issues mentioned above. The only previous trade union related stamp was issued in 1968 to commemorate the

centenary of the Trades Union Congress.

Issues were made for the 46th and 62nd conferences of the Inter-Parliamentary Union in 1957 and 1975 respectively. A commemorative aerogramme was also issued for the 1957 meeting. Stamps marked the 7th, 19th and 32nd Commonwealth Parliamentary Conferences in 1961, 1973 and 1986.

This is the fifth set of British stamps commemorating mixed anniversaries, previous sets were issued annually from 1968 to 1971.

First Day Facilities in Northern Ireland

In response to many customer queries, the Northern Ireland Letter District Office wish to inform collectors in the province that First Day of Issue cancellation facilities are available at the following offices:

Special Services

Customer Care Unit
Northern Ireland LDO
20-22 Donegall Quay
BELFAST BT1 1AA

Area Mails Manager
Special Postmark Duty
51-53 Wellington Street
BALLYMENA
Co Antrim BT43 6AA

Area Mails Manager
Special Postmark Duty
Mill Avenue
Portadown
CRAIGAVON
Co Armagh BT62 1AA

Area Mails Manager
Special Postmark Duty
3 Custom House Street
LONDONDERRY BT48 6AA

The Coleraine and Newry "First Day" handstamps are no longer in use; first day covers posted at these two offices are forwarded to Ballymena and Portadown respectively.

Correction

The British Special Issues article in the December *Bulletin* should have been numbered 150, not 151. Article No. 151, on the Darwin stamps, was published last month.