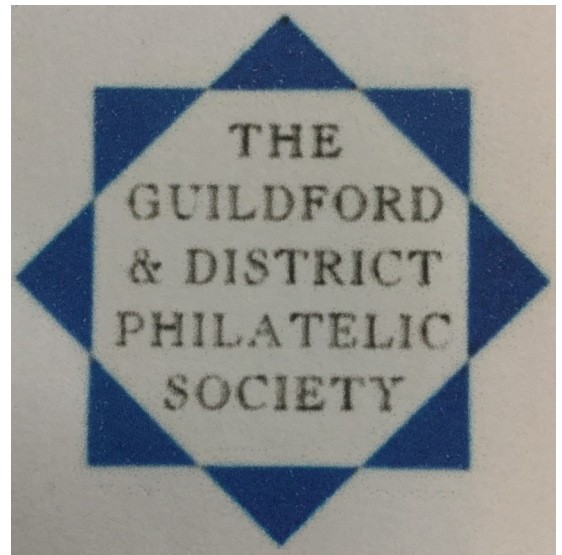


Dear Philatelic Friends—It was lovely to hear from Alan Hammond and Charles Smith last month (it can seem a bit lonely sending the newsheets out and wondering whether people have read them). Alan kindly organised this month's first article, which comes from the British Postmark Society—thank you Alan! The following articles are about some symbols on Trinidadian stamps that you may find interesting.

Stay safe and best wishes Susan Taylor



British Postmark Society, and in their latest journal is an article on the 1995 Christmas post in Bath

GIANT UPSETS 1995 CHRISTMAS POST IN BATH

by Steve Ward , forwarded by John Enfield, President & Journal Editor, British Postmark Society

During the 1990s, voluntary organisations around the country seized the opportunity offered by what was considered in some quarters to be high Royal Mail postage costs and offered their own Christmas postal services. These had varying degrees of legality; the responses by Royal Mail and their local distribution centres were similarly varied.

In Bath in 1995, it was the Scouts who arranged Christmas deliveries, drawing on at least ten years' experience in the city. The cost of a Scout stamp for a Christmas card was 12p, against Royal Mail's 19p for second-class post. After the deduction of all overheads, 7p per card was a donation to local Scout funds, 2p of that going to the Scout group that delivered the card. (By way of comparison, 12p in 1995 is equivalent to some 25p now, according to the Bank of England's inflation calculator.)

Special Scout post-boxes were sited in shops and premises throughout the city. There were four 12p stamps of different design (three are shown in figs. 1-3), all roughly perforated outside a frame of printed 'perforations', gummed and measuring 40 x 32 mm. The printing was arranged by the Bath Investment Building Society, whose logo appeared on the stamps. I am not currently aware of where the stamps could be purchased. The stamped cards were collected (sometimes twice a day) and then taken to Scout HQ in Grove Street in Bath, where they were sorted and cancelled by one of ten rectangular undated rubber cancellers measuring 50 x 20 mm. All had the lettering 'BATH SCOUTS / 'No. [1-10]' and all appear to have used black ink (two examples at figs. 1 & 2) apart from 8 and 9, seen in red (figs. 3 & 4).

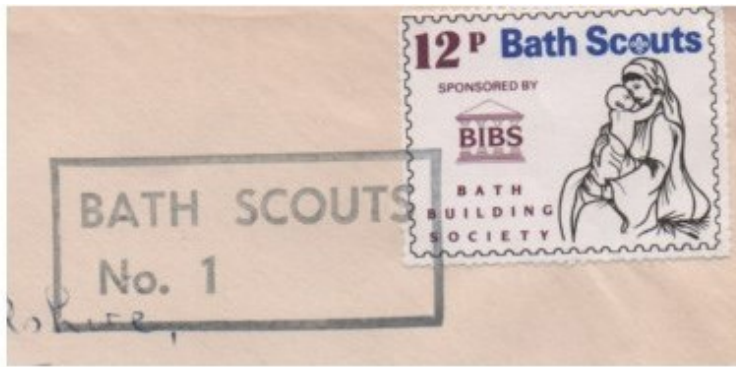


Fig. 1: 'BATH SCOUTS / No. 1
black canceller on
'Mary and Jesus' stamp



Fig. 2: 'BATH SCOUTS / No. 2
black canceller on
'Mary, Joseph and donkey' stamp

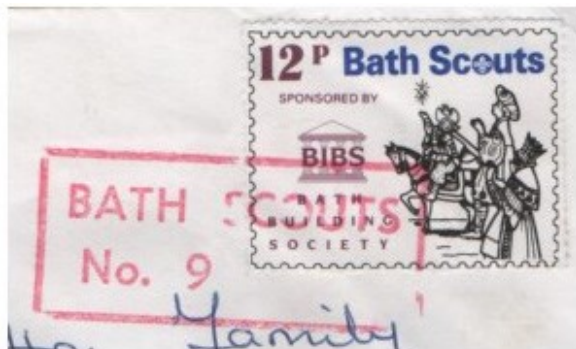


Fig. 3: 'BATH SCOUTS / No. 9
red canceller on
'Three Kings' stamp'

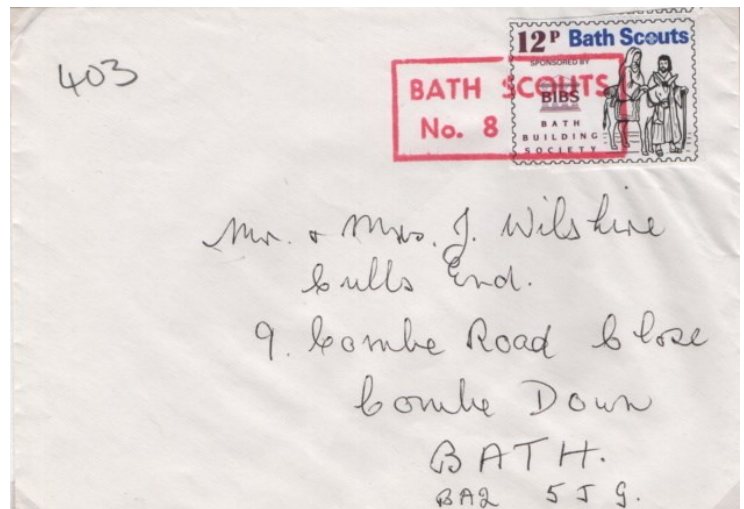


Fig. 4 (reduced): 'BATH SCOUTS / No. 8 red
canceller on 'Mary, Joseph and donkey' stamp,
with '403' delivery area number

The cards were sorted into areas, and numbered as to which Scout Group would deliver them; for example, Group 403 delivered in Combe Down (fig. 4) and Group 22 in the Midford area.

The Scouts delivered some 59,200 cards in Bath for Christmas 1995 which, given a resident city population then of around 89,000 must have been considered a good result (for the Scouts). So good, in fact, that Bath Royal Mail Delivery Office (which, according to the newspaper reports, could "expect to handle 14 million items in the run-up to Christmas" – this figure would have been for the large Bath postcode area and not just the city) "Declared War on Bath Scouts", protesting that the rival mail service run by local Scout packs had cost jobs in the city. One bone of contention had been that a few Scout cards were being posted in Royal Mail post boxes instead of the designated ones.

The official Post Early for Christmas campaign that year ("Fe-fi-fo-fum, post that card to your mum") had a giant handing an over-sized Christmas card to a Royal Mail van driver.

It wasn't long before pro-Scout campaigners in Bath were using a David and Goliath comparison as a weapon against the Royal Mail. Within a few days, the local press announced that "Bath Post Office Declares Peace with the Scouts". Royal Mail apologised for the fuss they had made and donated £20 to Scout funds. A more generous £500 was donated by the Building Society in recognition of the hard work undertaken by the Scouts and organisers.

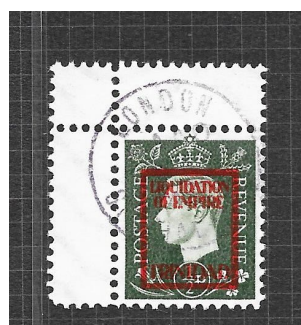
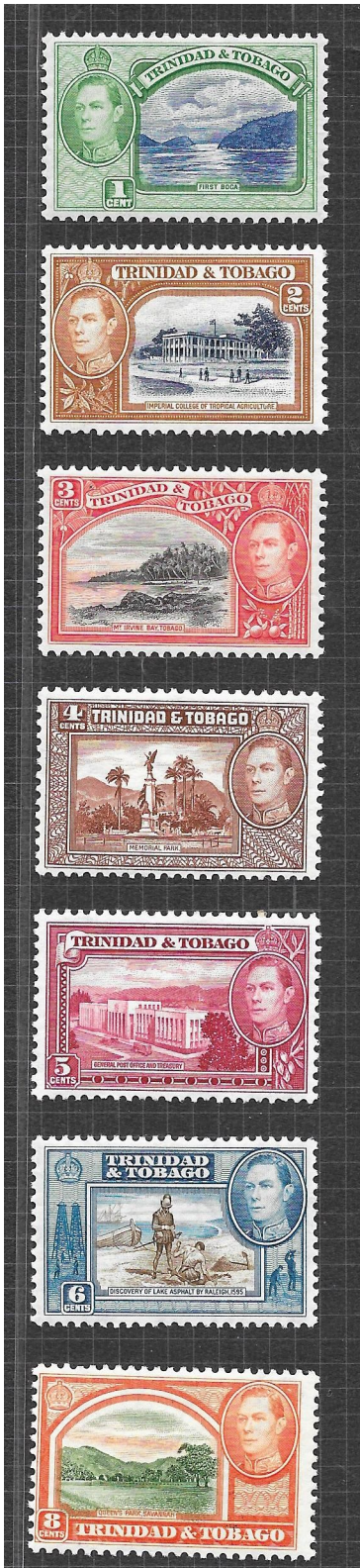
Symbols on Trinidadian stamps

We often focus on the central image of a stamp—but how often do we look at the frame that those images appear in? The 1935 and 1938 Trinidad and Tobago Definitives are a good example. Here illustrated are some of the 1938 stamps, with some interesting things to note in the frames. They show coconut trees, cocoa and sugar cane plants, tropical fruits and...interestingly, oil derricks! Bradbury, Wilkinson the printers held a competition for the frame designs. Mr Leslie Gill, the winner's first set of designs were rejected and he was asked to emphasise Trinidad's oil production in a redesign.

Trinidad had become an important oil producer and was the convoy assembly point transmitting tankers from Caribbean oil ports across the Atlantic during World War 2.

An American base was established in Trinidad and it hugely influenced Trinidad's economy, where agriculture was reducing in importance and oil was booming.

The Nazi's produced forged 1937 British Definitive stamps for Trinidad during the war, with symbolic images designed to undermine confidence in the British Empire—namely a Hammer and Sickle, Star of David and "Liquidation of Empire Trinidad" overprint.





HRH The Duke of Edinburgh

The Post Office issuing a commemorative set of stamps, on sale from June 24, they will be presented in a miniature sheet priced at £6.65.

Rather unusually the stamps will feature the Duke on his own. Usually any stamps of Philip showed him with the Queen, as these examples show.



Meetings will hopefully restart in September

Please pencil these dates in your diary and keep your fingers crossed that we shall all be back together again in September:

- 8 September AGM
- 13 October Postal Services in Surrey by Michael Miller
- 10 November British Guiana and Guyana by Susan Taylor

