

AIR POST STAMPS

By DOUGLAS ARMSTRONG

(Editor of "Stamp Collecting," etc.)

More British Air Mails

Extension of the British inland air mail service over eight new routes this month will doubtless result in a rush for "first flight covers" by air post enthusiasts, but there the interest is likely to end unless the Postmaster-General should see fit to remove his ban upon special vignettes. Some of the operating lines may be disposed to follow the example of Highland Airways, Ltd., by providing distinctive etiquettes for the benefit of collectors, and it is understood that a new and improved form of Post Office air mail label will be introduced about the same time. After that, in the absence of official backstamping, there will be nothing to distinguish letters sent by air from those despatched by rail, road or sea. Nothing is simpler than to affix an air mail label to an ordinary letter after it has been through the post with the object of making it saleable as an air post cover, and the only way in which this form of deception could be overcome would be if the air mail label was allowed to be affixed adjoining the postage stamp, so that both the stamp and the label received the postmark at the same time. It seems doubtful, however, whether the powers that be would countenance such a departure from precedent.

The new British air mail label is a more elaborate affair than any that has gone before. Printed in blue, the recognised international colour, it has a lined instead of a solid background, with a winged insignia in the Egyptian style surmounting the inscription, "BY AIR MAIL—Par Avion" in two lines.

Collect Air Mail Labels Now!

Now that H.M. Postmaster-General has shown the way by undertaking the carriage of mails by air without extra charge it seems probable that other countries may be induced to follow suit, so far as internal air routes are concerned. It must not be forgotten, however, that America tried the same experiment some years ago, but was forced to abandon it on account of the high cost of operating the air mail service over long distances. Nevertheless, it is not unlikely that some of the European nations may shortly adopt a similar policy, with the result that the number of special air mail stamps will be considerably reduced. The natural corollary must be an increase in the collecting of air mail labels of all nations, as distinct from stamps of specific denomination. Already a number of far-sighted collectors are gathering together subsidiary collections of air mail etiquettes which to-day can be picked up for the proverbial song, but when the vogue develops are calculated to be in keen demand at greatly enhanced prices.

Latest U.S.A. Air Stamps

Consequent upon the reduction of the American domestic air mail fee from 8 cents to 6 cents with effect from July 1, the 8c. air stamp has been replaced by one of the lower denomination printed in bright orange but otherwise identical as to design and format. A stamped 6 cents air mail envelope is also to be provided.

The Washington Bureau of Engraving and Printing has also in active preparation a combined air mail and special delivery stamp of 16 cents value which it is expected will be taken into use early in August. The main feature of the design is the American Eagle with wings outspread, the words "AIR MAIL" and "SPECIAL DELIVERY" being inscribed vertically upon either side.

New Air Post Stamps

Additions to the air stamp collections have been few and far between this month past. Syria included in an elaborate series commemorating the anniversary of the founding of the republic a set of ten values for air post purposes illustrating an aeroplane over the town of Bloudan, designed by M. S. Namani and beautifully printed by the Parisian Institut de Gravure. Guatemala sends us some more emergency air stamps extemporised by overprinting on the ordinary postage types of 1929 the 2 centavos carrying the inscription, "Aereo Interior 1934" and the 5c. and 15c. "Aereo Exterior 1934."

Another Rocket Post

A purely private vignette depicting a rocket in flight to an island printed in red for letters and in green for printed matter has been provided by the promoters of a second British rocket post experiment that was carried out between the islands of Lewis and Scarpe in the Hebrides on or about July 27 and 28. These unofficial "stamps" bear the designation "Western Isles Rocket Post" and are being offered

unused for 2s. 6d. the pair. Something like 4,800 missives were proposed to be shot between the two islands, and four of the letters are said to have been addressed to H.M. the King. Apart from their interest as pioneer experiments it cannot be too strongly emphasised that neither the post nor its stamps have any status, official or even semi-official.



FIRE-RESISTING GLOVES

Orders for a stock of fire-resisting gloves have been placed by the Air Ministry with Bells Asbestos Engineering Co., of Slough, after the wearer had been put through an "ordeal by fire." These asbestos gloves form part of the standard fire-fighting equipment of the Royal Air Force, and may give invaluable service in the rare cases when aircraft take fire after a crash. Before they were accepted by the Air Ministry stringent tests were applied, both by the manufacturer and the Air Ministry, to satisfy requirements regarding their fire-resisting properties and ease of manipulation. One of the tests to which the firm subjected the wearer was to pick up a piece of blazing coal from a fire and hold it in his gloved hand until the coal had completely burned out and cooled. Following this the gloves, known as the "Bestobell," were tested by the firm to show that the texture was sufficiently fine to allow the wearer to manipulate a small nut and bolt which were red hot. Official tests, which came later, required that the gloved hand should be placed over the forced draught of a blacksmith's forge and remove a piece of red-hot coal from the air jet. No undue heat was felt. Other tests applied by the Air Ministry were that the wearer should: Grasp a $\frac{1}{2}$ in. steel bar after it had been heated to cherry red, and hold it until the temperature of the bar dropped to black hot; hold the gloved hand in the forced draught of a forge fire for a period of thirty seconds; take a $\frac{1}{2}$ in. rod, red hot, place it in a vice, and then bend it with his gloved hand. The tests were passed satisfactorily, and the man had not even scorched his hands.

N.B.M. FOR RACING

It is a great help to flying people when they can be assured that they can use ordinary petrol as supplied to motorists without losing any performance from their engines. That this is so in the case of National Benzole Mixture is shown by the fact that the first three in the S.B.A.C. Trophy Race at Bristol used this spirit.

A NEW SILENCER

Considerable advance in silencing aero engines is claimed for the Vokes-Blanvac silencer which is made by C. G. Vokes, Ltd., of Putney. It operates on the principle of turning the pulsating movements of the exhaust gases into a steady stream by whirling them through baffle-cones inside the silencer. Satisfactory tests have been carried out at the Royal Aircraft Establishment at Farnborough. We hope to have an opportunity of testing this silencer ourselves shortly.



PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

Aeronautical Research Committee Reports and Memoranda. No. 1577. Westland Hill Pterodactyl, Mark IV. Part I.—Experiments on One-Fifth Scale Model. By A. S. Batson. Part II.—Full Scale Tests. By J. E. Serby. July, 1933. Price 1s. 6d. net. No. 1582. Aileron Angles in High Speed Manoeuvres with Single Seater Fighters. By B. V. Williams and J. H. Hartley. September, 1933. Price 6d. net. London: H.M. Stationery Office, W.C.2.

Electric Resistance Welding. New Process Welders, Ltd., Scott's Road, Southall, Middx.

Anuario de la Gran Bretaña, 1934-35. Price 2s. 6d. net. Trade & Travel Publications, Ltd., 14, Leadenhall Street, E.C.3.

Aluminium Sheet Metal Work, 1934. The British Aluminium Co., Ltd., Adelaide House, E.C.4.

Coupe Deutsch de la Meurthe. Regulations for 1935.



PATENT AERONAUTICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Abbreviations: Cyl.—cylinder; i.c.—internal combustion; m.—motors. (The numbers in brackets are those under which the Specification will be printed and abridged, etc.)

APPLIED FOR IN 1932

Published August 9, 1934

32326. VICKERS-ARMSTRONGS LTD. and J. P. WATSON. Bomb-dropping sights for use on aircraft. (413,338.)

APPLIED FOR IN 1933

Published August 9, 1934

1314. BRISTOL AEROPLANE CO. LTD., A. H. R. FEDDEN and F. M. OWNER. Cooling arrangements for the cylinders of internal-combustion engines used on aircraft.

1315. BRISTOL AEROPLANE CO. LTD., A. H. R. FEDDEN and L. F. G. BUTLER. Gun actuating or controlling mechanism for use in association with aircraft engines. (413,350.)

11486. L. R. TOWER and BOEING AIRPLANE CO. Means for controlling aircraft. (413,456.)

12937. WILMOT, MANSOUR & CO. LTD. and J. W. BRISTOW. Toy aircraft. (413,466.)

33635. C. DORNIER. Aircraft of the helicopter type. (413,336.)