

SOCCER

T.E. BEVAN

At age 9 the 1948 F.A. Cup final, Manchester United versus Blackpool, was my first conscious awareness of Soccer beyond the school yard. With my Dad and brother expecting United to win, along with most other Mancunians, I had to be different and back Blackpool, as with Stanley Matthews and Stanley Mortensen they must surely win. The result proved me wrong, and the whole experience cemented my interest in the game as a whole.

By 1952, now aged 13 I found I had collected many used British stamps, and I had acquired one with a horse and cart on it. I was not sure if this was a proper stamp, but it certainly came on regular posted mail, and I was assured it was a stamp. (All my other stamps had a man's head on them — King George VI). I was to find out later, it was a stamp from the Channel Island. By this time I had become aware of catalogues and how to use them for information regarding stamp issues.

My parents and I then asked friends and relatives for their stamps off the mail, and at last my first album, with stamps, was given to me. This immediately opened up a wider range of stamps to me, and it also had information about the use of tweezers, stamp hinges, and Dealers.

By 1960, and now in New Zealand, I started to swap Great Britain for New Zealand stamps. An English friend introduced me to such things as watermarks, different gums, and papers, because at that time Great Britain was having new issues with a well known watermark "Multiple Crown", also experimental coatings called Phosphor Bands.

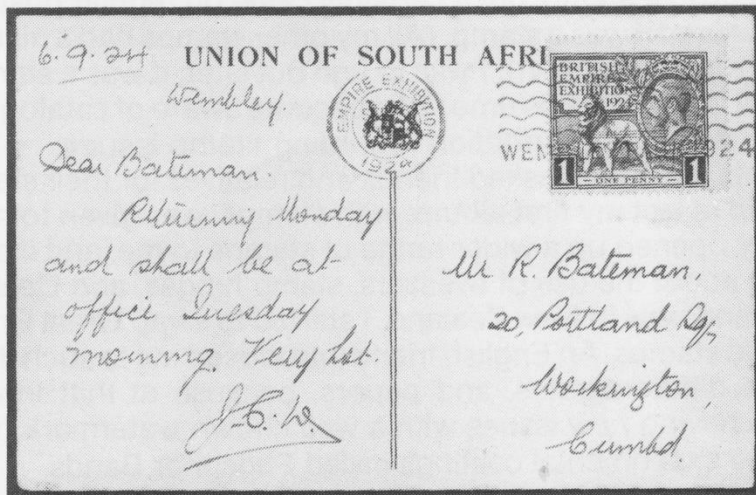
All this collecting encouraged me to join my first stamp club, in Wellington, where Postal History was explained to me and where I learnt to consider the whole envelope (cover) before I soaked off the stamps and regretting it later. Due to the wide aspect of Philately, it is sometimes difficult to realise a cover's merit, it is prudent therefore to leave it intact. Postal History could mean a cover two days old, twenty years old, or even more.

After all this collecting of stamps, covers, the odd mini sheet, and Cinderellas, twenty years on in the 1980's was the first time I had really decided to put my knowledge of Soccer, together with that of Philately; to give me the satisfaction I would gain in putting my collection into some sort of logical order.

The first stamps on a Soccer theme are the Uruguay 1924 issue for the Olympic Games, as the Uruguayan team were the winners at these Games. A close second, relating indirectly to the Soccer theme, was the issue of stamps in 1924 for the British Empire Exhibition, held at Wembley Stadium, Great Britain. The very first English F.A. Cup Final was actually played at Wembley in 1923, and has been held there every year since.



To really complement your collection try a used stamp with a very clear cancellation pertinent to your theme. This stamp has the Wembley Park cancellation which is the local Post Office nearest to Wembley Stadium, on the 1924 British stamp.



Cancellations open up an unlimited area of both pleasure and interest.



So I find I am able to collect a lot of extra items which interest me, such as covers, Cinderellas, regular issue stamps with missing colours, and Postal Stationery. Covers and Cinderellas, although of interest to me, may not be necessarily satisfactory for competitions, but this doesn't mean they do not have a place in my collection of Soccer.



The above label (Cinderella) is an excellent introduction to the World Cup part of my collection, as it shows the World body F.I.F.A., when used on the title page.

I chose to collect Soccer as a theme because I saw it as a way to combine my interest and knowledge of the sport and the material I had collected from many philatelic sources.



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