

COLONEL GUY CROUCH

AN APPRECIATION

It was with much sorrow that I learned of the sudden death in his sleep, on Friday, August 17th, 1956, of my great friend and guiding spirit, Guy Robert Crouch, M.C., T.D., D.L., LL.B., R.D.P. Brevet-Colonel T.A. (Ret.), aged 67.

There must be many persons in the philatelic world, both amateurs and professionals, better qualified to write these lines than I. This sums up the great influence enjoyed by Colonel Crouch for the past 30-40 years in many branches of the subject, a fact recognised by his election at Norwich, in 1955, to the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists.

My excuses for associating my pen with this philatelic giant are twofold. I have known him over the past ten years both at work and at play and perhaps no one is better qualified to write both of the man—a true gentleman, full of understanding and highly respected, and of the philatelist or, as he would have preferred, postal historian—an expert with a thirst for knowledge and a talent for revealing and recording information—a veritable boon to any society lucky enough to have him as a member.

Colonel Crouch was first attracted to postmarks at the early age of 10 when he collected those received by the household cook from her husband during the Boer War. Before the 1914/18 War the young Crouch had already become a specialist in Army postmarks having first written to the Army Postal Authorities in 1911 after he had received mail from his brother bearing manoeuvres postal markings.

During the first World War he continued the good work and saw service with the colours in France and Italy. By 1919 there was no doubt that he was one of the foremost specialists in this sphere and he was very ready to place the knowledge he had acquired at the disposal of the Rev. P. E. Rayner when the latter compiled his booklet "A Reference List of British Army Postmarks".

Between the wars Colonel Crouch wrote and had published many scholarly articles in the *Philatelic Adviser* and the *Philatelist* as well as other periodicals, all dealing with the various aspects of British Postal History. His collections of British Army, British Airmail and early British machine covers were second to none. A quick glance at the Bibliography in Robson Lowe's Encyclopaedia, Part I, will show his versatility.

It would be true to say Colonel Crouch's first love was postmarks of the British Army. Between the wars he built up a fine collection and supplemented it during World War II with postmarks of that period. As the authority on this material he could not be equalled. His collection went back several centuries and contained so many gems that they began to seem common as one browsed through it.

I think it was with a certain amount of pride that he collaborated with his great friend Norman Hill to produce the handbook of the Second World War "British Army Field Post Offices 1939-50", although he was disappointed that this wealth of information had to be published abroad.

On the formation of the Forces Postal History Society in 1951 he was ever eager to do all he could for the hobby and to everyone's great delight he became Founder President, an office he held until his untimely death. No president could have been of greater help to a society and no honorary secretary could have felt his president so much behind him. It was indeed a pleasure to receive his support and guidance.

We must not lose sight of the fact that Colonel Crouch was also a great expert in other fields. He was a founder member and former president of the Postal History Society, a member and past president of the Aerophilatelic Society and a member of the J.P.S. among others. His knowledge in these fields knew no bounds. His death will be a hard blow to all of his

many friends who had come to regard him as being able to answer most of their problems.

In public life Colonel Crouch succeeded his father as Clerk of the County Council and Clerk of the Peace of the County of Buckingham, offices he held until his retirement last year. He also considered it a great honour to be joint Honorary Colonel until recently with H.R.H. the Duchess of Kent of the 645th L.A.A. Regt.(R.A.) Bucks T.A. He was also interested in many local societies of wide and varied tastes.

He leaves a widow who is well known as a frequent visitor to Congress and the Postal History Conference.

D.E.F.B.

A FURTHER NOTE

INTERNATIONAL REPLY-PAID POST CARDS

I have received a number of letters as a result of my notes published on July 13th. One or two interesting points have come to light.

Although the G.P.O. told me that the Q.E.II cards were placed on sale in September 1955, Mr. L. F. Newbery states that a friend of his purchased some a long time before then, and that he himself was using them in August 1955.

Mr. W. G. Mitchell, of Pinner, wrote that the National Blood Transfusion Service makes use of these reply-paid cards, the last example being the K.G.VI with the 1½d. green stamp (the old printed matter rate). Mr. Mitchell also reported the issue of these cards by Zanzibar with impressed stamps in the designs and colours of the current adhesives in two denominations: 10c.+10c. (Inland), 20c.+20c. (Foreign). Printed by De La Rue, these cards were issued on August 26th, 1952.

Another collector states that Germany issues these cards, but apart from the Zanzibar mentioned above I have not yet learned of any country that issues them at present, although one collector has cards issued by British Guiana, Gibraltar, British Honduras, Cyprus and Ireland with Queen Victoria stamps impressed.

Two types of the British K.G.VI card are now available. The later printings are in a much redder brown than the original, the card is slightly bigger and of a lighter colour. They are quite noticeable when placed side by side. One error has been reported of a card where the reply half was not printed.

I have now seen a copy of the Q.E.II card which has the normal 2d. post card stamp impressed on each half, but I notice that the Royal Crown on the top of the device on each half of the card is of the Tudor pattern. A change may be made, in the next printing, to the St. Edward Crown.

Most collectors experience difficulty in obtaining these cards from post offices and on receiving the reply section from abroad find them marked "postage due". However, if such a charge is collected by the British P.O. (which is not often) a letter to the office concerned, quoting page 85 of the 1955 edition of the "Post Office Guide" should have the effect of the charge being refunded.

I hope to hear in due course from readers overseas and may then learn of any other countries which issue these interesting cards.

N. R. HANDLEY.

THE HIGHEST PRICES FOR COLLECTIONS, LARGE
OR SMALL, ARE PAID BY

HARRY LEWIS

45/46 NEW BOND STREET, LONDON, W.1
OFFERS MADE MAY 1953