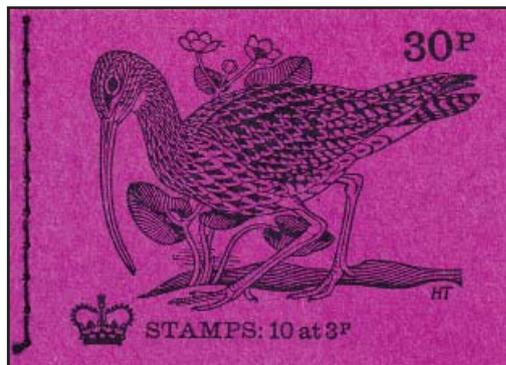


Series DB3 – Counter books for 1st-class

(1) British Birds No.1: Curlew



left
outside
front cover

right
inside
front cover

British Birds No. 1

The curlew, Britain's largest wader, is a grey-brown bird with long legs, a characteristic downward curving bill and a white rump. The clearest sign of the curlew's presence is its cry — a loud melancholy 'coor-ll', from which its name is derived. The female normally lays about four dark spotted eggs in a nest among low vegetation. Both parents share the incubation. Along with most waders the curlew feeds mainly on small molluscs, crustaceans and other creatures taken from coastal marshes and mud flats.

This is the first of a new series of British bird drawings by Harry Titcombe. There will be eight designs in the series.

HARRISON & SONS LTD., PRINTERS, LONDON.

FEBRUARY 1971

printer's imprint and edition date (outside back cover)

Book make-up

The books had two panes of stamps and five interleaves. The cover card used for the front of later printings was thicker and paler than previous ones. The interleaves were numbered 1 to 5 at the top of the central binding gutter of the primary sheet and the numbers appeared in books R1/2 and R1/3.

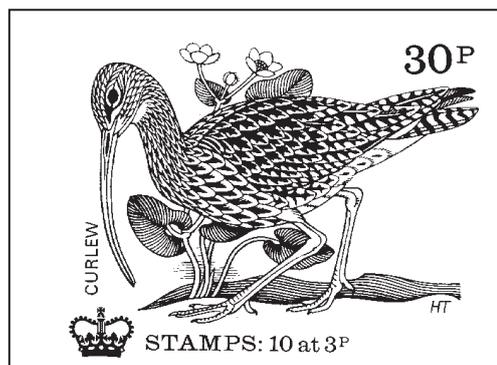
All the advertising space, including that on the pane label, was taken by Sun Life Assurance Co of Canada, not only in this edition but also all subsequent ones. Members of the public intrigued by their ubiquitous slogan: '£4,315 FOR YOU AT AGE 55' were invited to send a coupon, included on one of the interleaves in the book, for more information. In order to gauge the effect of this in the various editions, the firm changed the house number in their address each time. (In this edition it was 866, in the next one it was 682, and so on — see also the 'key' codes in the listing on page E4-31.)

face value:	30p
edition:	February 1971
on sale:	15 February 1971
colour:	black on purplish red
make-up:	FC, L1, L2, L3, DP6, L4, DP6, L5, BC
interleaf 1:	R1 / R2
interleaf 2:	A13 / A14
interleaf 3:	A15 (866) / A16
interleaf 4:	A17 / A18
interleaf 5:	A15 (866) / A19
back cover:	A20 / A21 (866)
printer:	Harrison (Halley 3)
panes:	2 x DP6
paper / gum:	OC(H)/PVA1
perforation:	14¾ x 14
perf. types:	11, P1, AP1, PAP1, PAP1a or PAP2
no. issued:	1,991,960

The first decimal stamp book to cater for users of the 1st-class service had cerise covers bearing a drawing of the Curlew, by Harry Titcombe. This was the first in a series of eight illustrations of British birds. Originally, the front cover had the word 'CURLEW' reading upwards from the crown emblem but, as descriptive notes were added to the inside front cover, it was felt that the caption was not needed and it was deleted before printing. The crown emblem was 7mm high; this was a typesetting error for the normal 5½ x 9mm crown.

Stamp content

Both panes of stamps were identical and consisted of 5 x 3p, with an advertisement label, L5, in position 4. The pane, coded DP6, is described in detail on pages E3-10 et. seq. The stamps (and labels) were printed on the Halley 3 press from cylinders B1 / B2.



cover proof showing 'CURLEW' reading upwards

DP1

2 x ½p; 2 x 2p

Printer: Harrison
Printing: Sideways left or right in gravure - Halley 3 press
Perforator: Grover comb No.1
Cylinders: B6 (½p), B2 (2p) / B1 (phosphor)
 B7 (½p), B2 (2p) / B1 (phosphor) *
 B9 (½p), B2 (2p) / B1 (phosphor) *
Used in: DB1(1), 1(2), 1(3)



DP1 - perf type P1

DP1 - perf type P1
2 phosphor bars from
9.5mm bands

above: BBL from cols 1, 3 and 5 (SR)
 centre: BBR from cols 2 and 4 (SL)
 below: BBC from col 2 or 4 (SL)

Column	DOP	Cylinders	Perforation types	Notes
DP1		OCP(H)/PVA1	2B	
col. 1	SR	—	I1, I1(½v)	1
col. 2 + 4	SL	—	P1r, P1s	2, 5
col. 3 + 5	SR	—	P1r, P1s	1
DP1/N		OCP(H)/PVA1	no phosphor	
col. 1	SR	—	I1	3
col. ?	SL	—	P1r, P1s	3, 4
col. ?	SR	—	P1r, P1s	3, 4

- exists also with broad bands left – caused by a phosphor shift; illustrated above.
- exists also with broad bands right – caused by a phosphor shift; illustrated above.
- very scarce.
- panes with both directions of printing are known, but the columns are not.
- a single pane, perf P1s, is known with broad bands centre.

Pane content

The pane, printed on Original Coated Paper and gummed PVA1 (OCP(H)/PVA1), has 2 x ½p turquoise blue and 2 x 2p greenish grey definitives. The values are arranged as vertical se-tenant pairs.

Note: * these cylinder number combinations were not used in issued books.

The stamps are overprinted with 9.5mm B3 phosphor bands to give a 4.75mm bar at both the left and right of each stamp.

The perforation gauge is 14¾ x 14.

Primary sheet

The primary sheet contains 60 panes, laid out on their sides, in 5 columns of 12. The columns are arranged so that the panes in one column lie tête-bêche in relation to their neighbours in the adjacent column.

The cylinder numbers used for panes in books were B6 (½p), B2 (2p), and phosphor B1. All cylinder numbers were trimmed off before issue so that none appear in issued books.

Printings were made from two other cylinder combinations - B7 (½p), B2 (2p) / B1 (phosphor) and B9 (½p), B2 (2p) / B1 (phosphor) - but panes from these combinations were never used in books.