

BOYS' LIFE

FOR ALL BOYS

JULY 1974/50 CENTS



Stamps & Coins



Boys' Life will pay \$5 for your stamp and coin collecting hints, news items, and unusual facts that we print. Send your ideas to Stamps & Coins, Boys' Life, North Brunswick, N.J. 08902. Please list the source of news items and unusual facts. We regret we cannot reply individually to our readers' questions.

FIRST SEVEN-SIDED COIN. In the March '74 Stamps & Coins column, Ricky Landry stated that Great Britain's new 20-pence piece, issued to commemorate that country's entry into the European Common Market, is the world's first seven-sided coin. However, this distinction actually belongs to an earlier version of the 50-pence piece, minted by Great Britain in 1969 in the course of its change to the new decimal currency system ("new pence"). Queen Elizabeth II is on the obverse; the reverse depicts a bust of sitting on a lion and holding a trident and shield in his right hand, and a small branch in his left hand. In 1970 both Ireland and Jersey issued seven-sided, 30-pence coins.—\$5 to Jeff Johnson, Arcadia, Calif.

DAN BEARD STAMP. On Oct. 7, 1961, the African nation of Togo issued a stamp (Scott No. 401) commemorating the 20th anniversary of the death of Daniel C. Beard. First National Scout Commissioner of the Boy



Scouts of America, and one of Scouting's founders, "Uncle" Dan Beard was loved by American boys for his many books and articles in *Boys' Life* on camping, cooking, woodcraft, pioneering and nature.

CANADIAN CORRECTION. In the March '74 Stamps & Coins column, Gerald Halder wrote that in 1973 Canada changed the design on the reverse of its coins from the head of a

young to a crowned police officer. However, the actual depicted on the earlier reverse was not a crown, but a cartouche—\$5 to Loren Thomas, Reading, Mass.

SCOUTS DELIVER THE MAIL. Shortly after World War I, the newly organized government of Czechoslovakia did not have mail service, so this responsibility was entrusted to the country's Sea Scouts. They delivered only official mail in the city of Prague during the period Nov. 7-25, 1918.—\$5 to Mark Lange, Rialto, Calif.



(Editor's Note: Two stamps were printed for this special mail, and although they are not listed in U.S. catalogs, they are No. 1 and No. 2 in some European catalogs of Czechoslovakian stamps. The wording on these special issues translates to "Czech Scout Post" and "In the service of the National Government.")

DETECTING COUNTERFEIT BILLS. Counterfeit paper currency usually can be distinguished from legitimate greenbacks merely by looking closely at the bills. Examine the portrait carefully; on counterfeits, the picture is dull, smudgy, and does not stand out clearly from the background. The saw-toothed points of the colored seal on counterfeits often are uneven or broken off. The serial numbers on counterfeit bills tend to be poorly printed and badly spaced. In general, the fine lines of a good bill will be clear and even, while those of a bad bill will be broken and ragged.—\$5 to Rudolph Karsay, Kils, Ga.

STAMP THEFTS FOILED. In 1924 post-office robberies were frequent in many states. However, the problem was worst in Kansas and Nebraska, so those two states overprinted their names on their U.S. postage stamps (Kansas, Scott Nos. 858-869; Nebraska, Scott Nos. 860-

870). This action was taken to make it difficult for thieves to "change" the stamps, or sell them as legitimate goods, in another state. This practice was discontinued in 1930.—\$5 to Larry Zolberski, Toledo, Ohio.

EARLY AMERICAN BISECTS. When the first U.S. stamps were issued in 1847, there was a shortage of the five-cent Franklin issue (Scott No. 3), so the 10-cent Washington stamps (Scott No. 2) were cut in half diagonally and used for postage.—\$5 to N. Bolanchuk, Northport, N.Y.

(Editor's Note: Scott's catalog lists U.S. No. 2 with the following three variations:

- a. Diagonal half used as five-cent on cover, \$2,300.
- b. Vertical half used as five-cent on cover, \$4,350.
- c. Horizontal half used as five-cent on cover, \$6,750.)

NEW LAPIDARY ISSUES. Rock hounds will be pleased to know that the U.S. Postal Service recently noted America's mineral heritage with four new 10-cent stamps, issued June 10 at the National Gem and Mineral Show in Lincoln, Neb. These "Mineral Heritage" stamps, the first U.S. six-angled quartet of 1974, are also the first diamond-shaped stamps in Postal Service history. The new designs depict four semi-precious stones: amethyst, tourmaline, rhodochrosite, and petrified wood—cut and polished as gems.—\$5 to Paul Weber, Elk Grove, Ill.

FIRST 12-SIDED COINS. Great Britain was the first country to mint a 12-sided coin. The brass three-pence pieces were first struck in 1837, and despite early objections that they would not work in pay telephones or vending machines, they were issued until 1967. There were two types of this coin—one portrayed King George VI, the other Queen Elizabeth II.—\$5 to D. J. Barry, Woonsocket, Pa.

—HARRY D. THORSEN, JR.

