

Preface

This is the third in a series of volumes compiled using copies of contemporary ephemeral material. Originally it was to deal with National Insurance up to 1948, but was later clumsily extended to include the post-1948 period.

It has been an exciting topic to investigate because I started from a position of total ignorance so there were many discoveries on the way. The framework of the research was philatelic as I found a wonderful, semi-organised accumulation of material in the National Archives. This included an excellent attempt to list all of the stamps up to 1948 which showed that some stamps were missing. These were found in the National Postal Museum and the British Library.

Although the Old Age Pension had been introduced in 1909 a new kind of Old Age Pension was created for payment from 1928. Both kinds of pension were provided concurrently which posed a problem for me.

The 1926 Act was about Contributory Pensions, financed by National Insurance. The non-contributory Old Age Pension of 1909 was nothing to do with National Insurance and will be dealt with in a future section of this Project (Volume II - which will be produced as last of the four). It was difficult to decide which social benefits were financed by National Insurance. For example widows and orphans received benefits whether or not they were contributors. The payment orders were distinguishable so it is assumed that the money for each came from a different source.

Pre-1948 Health Insurance involved a very large number of Approved Societies and it took a long time to locate lists of these Societies. There were also National Insurance Committees which were based on Counties and County Boroughs. These issued Medical Cards after 1913 and employed Doctors and Pharmacists on behalf of the scheme. The Post Office not only sold stamps but later could be used to pay benefits.

At this point I obtained a few unusual items such as a file which had belonged to the National Insurance Commission which bore the name William Braithwaite which I recognised from some documents I had seen at the London School of Economics, and a couple of early German National Insurance Cards. This led me to investigate his part in the setting up of the original scheme.

Post 1948 stamps in the National Archives appeared interesting although they were listed in an excellent manner for the first period only. The high value stamps, though listed, were missing. There were a large number of stamps and many categories which needed classifying in some way. There were more stamps in collections in the British Library, but these were not always clearly dated. A few later sets were neatly arranged in a logical manner and it remained for me to arrange all the others in the same way. It was not quite that easy but having done this it was clear that there were few stamps issued after 1975 in any of the collections. The Inland Revenue and Isle of Man Social Services enabled me to complete the work. They also found some cards which added to the story.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

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