

# THE ALFRED F. LICHTENSTEIN MEMORIAL AWARD

## Sir John Wilson of Great Britain 1956 Recipient

*The fifth recipient of the Alfred F. Lichtenstein Memorial Award is to be Sir John Wilson, world-famous British philatelist. This marks the first time that this award for distinguished service to philately goes to one not an American. This is significant because it demonstrates that this prized honor is an international one. Since Sir John Wilson will be in New York this coming May as an international Judge at Fipex, the medal will personally be presented at a special ceremony here at the Clubhouse on Wednesday, May 2, 1956. A biographical account of Sir John Wilson follows.*

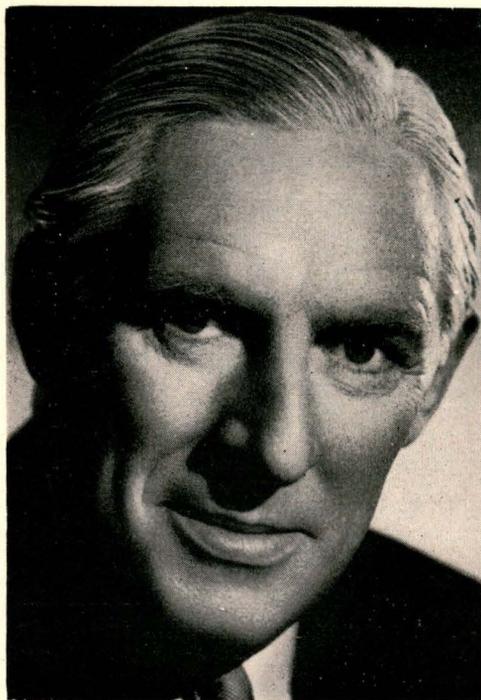
He was born October 10, 1898 at Carbeth, Killearn at Stirlingshire in Scotland. He is the second and eldest surviving son of Sir David Wilson, Bt., D.Sc. and he succeeded his father in the baronetcy in 1930. He was educated at Harrow and New College, Oxford. Then he was called to the Bar by Lincolns Inn and practiced in a Commercial

Court and at the commonlaw Bar in the 'twenties and early 'thirties.

He has been a collector from his early days as his father collected before him, and he used to help his father with his collection before it was handed over to him in 1924. The father's collection was mounted in Gibbons' Imperial albums and was fairly complete, except for the great rarities, up to 1900, including the whole world, that is Vols. I, II and III of the old Imperial albums that included pages for local stamps and cut-square envelopes. Later he decided to concentrate more on foreign stamps, as the British understand it, than on British Colonials. Thus he has specialized the line-engraved issues of Belgium, the early issues of Spain, Roumania up to 1900, Russia up to 1900 with Wenden and all the Zemstvo Posts, Korea, Shanghai, St. Thomas La Guaira, one or two Portuguese Colonies. Errors and varieties of a great number of countries, and some particular issues, which he fancied without necessarily studying the whole of a group, became favorites of his.

Sir John Wilson joined the Royal Philatelic Society, London in 1921 and was elected to the Council in 1923, continually serving on it ever since. In 1923 he was on the Executive Committee managing the Exhibition in London. He joined the Collectors Club in 1924, being for a time Corresponding Librarian when the late Dr. Brace Chittenden was in that office. He served a double term as President of the Royal Philatelic Society, London from 1934 to 1940. This was intended to cover the Centenary Exhibition planned for 1940. But the war postponed this. Thus he was re-elected President in 1949, from which he resigned after the close of the 1950 International Exhibition where he had been Chairman of the Organizing Committee. He has been on the Royal Philatelic Society Expert Committee for over thirty years becoming the chairman after Mr. Thos. Sm. Hall's death in 1937. He has collected philatelic literature on a large scale, both for working reference purposes and for

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**UNION OF SO. AFRICA**

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The writer has assembled nearly seventy marks which I regard as distinct types, but to get every "Up" and "Down" variety plus every "Number" of those with numbers—this total could probably be almost doubled.

If more scope is wanted in Southern

Africa, there are, or have been, T. P. O.'s in German South West Africa, Angola, Rhodesia, Mozambique, Nyasaland, German East Africa, Tanganyika and Kenya, with still quite a lot of pioneering work to do in the last mentioned.

Thanks to Mr. A. W. Duigan, of Johannesburg for drawing the sketch map (Fig. 10) and the small selection of T. P. O. marks.

**U. S. GRILL PATENTS**

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time subsequent to the start of the contract. Consequently the *secret marks* must have been inserted to distinguish the *new* plates made by the Continental Bank Note Co.

Most significant is the fact, here stated, that the plates in the possession of the National Bank Note Co., when their contract had expired, were turned over to the Continental Bank Note Co., the new contractor. This evidence should quiet for all time any dispute as to the origin of the *secret mark* plates. It further shows that there are Continental printings from plates without the secret marks, which should be detectable only by difference in paper and ink.

The existence of die proofs of all the denominations showing the distinguishing "secret marks" indicates that the dies were marked after being received by the Conti-

ental Bank Note Co. From these dies, new plates were prepared as required for printing.

**Summary**

The philatelic importance of these papers is beyond all question. They shed new light upon much that has been accepted as fact from the evidence provided by the stamps themselves. They contain much that has been known before. But also they disclose much that is new. We particularly want to stress the importance of the letters relating to the development of the grill and to its experimental use, prior to its adoption by the Government. The facts are here. It remains now for the students of United States stamps to make proper use of them, eliminating such controversy as witnessed in the past, because students did not have some of these documentary facts available.

**SIR JOHN WILSON**

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the early rare items. He has acted as a judge for very many international exhibitions, and as chairman of International Board of Judges in London, Madrid and Toronto, being prevented by indisposition from accepting the same honor in Cape Town, South Africa. He has exhibited "hors concours" in many foreign exhibitions from Berlin (1930) up to the present time.

Sir John Wilson has written many articles on stamps and on literature. His outstanding literary accomplishment is the production of the deluxe book on the Royal Philatelic Collection, published in 1952, and holds the Crawford and Tapling medals of the Royal Philatelic Society in this regard. He is an Honorary Life Member of the Royal Philatelic Society, London and holds membership

in the Collectors Club, the Societe Philatelique Belge, the Academie de Philatelie, Aero Philatelists, the Spanish Academy of Postal History besides being Honorary President of the Caldonian, Stirling and Indian philatelic societies.

Perhaps Sir John Wilson's most important philatelic service is his eminent position as Keeper of the Royal Philatelic Collection, having been appointed in 1938.

The nature of the above biography does not begin to do justice to the world-wide philatelic reputation of Sir John Wilson. Since about 1935, no International Board of Judges seems complete without him. His position as Keeper of the Royal Collection is an eminent one. The collection is housed in the famous Buckingham Palace, and it is there that Sir John Wilson pursues his philatelic duties. This is no honorary position, but he is constantly at work with this world-famous collection.