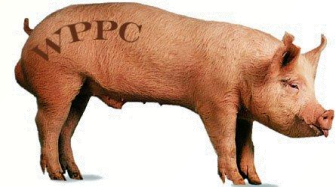




Welsh Pork



You will have noticed that an outline map of mainland Britain can look like an old witch riding a pig. If not look again. The west coast of Scotland is her face and Wales is the pig's head. Poor old Norfolk is the pig's rear end! This coincidence was used in an advertising campaign during the 1960s by the Welsh Pig & Pork Co-operative to promote Welsh Pork. They wanted to redress the balance that had tilted so much in favour of Welsh lamb and even Welsh Beef. A survey showed that of all meats 99% of people associated Wales only with lamb chops. So along with posters and adverts in the press they also had some stamps produced.

Such a campaign was in many Welsh-folk's view needed. Pigs were a vital part of the Welsh farming and rapidly becoming forgotten. Yet nearly as many place names refer to pigs as to sheep. Llanrhaedrym Mochnant means church by the waterfall in the valley of pigs, Mochdre (a common name) literally means pig farm, while Pentrych or Foel Dyrch is boar hill.



The super-imposition of an animal over a map was not new. Some nineteenth century atlas producers specialised in this form of artwork. Often it had political implications. One map of Russia showed an octopus over the country with its tentacles stretching out across the Balkans, Eastern Europe and Finland. The most infamous came as a result of Senator Gerry (legally) in 1818 redistributing the voting districts of Massachusetts to favour the Democratic Republican party. A cartoon of the new districts enhanced their outline and had a drawing of a rather nasty looking salamander overlying the new districts, and the term 'gerrymandering' was born. This map and image idea is the concept that was presented to the Co-operative by the Banw & Banw Advertising Agency.



They decided to go for an 'old and new' slant, with an antique map emphasising the tradition of pig-rearing, and a photo image of a pig because they wanted a looking 'aheadness' to the campaign. The MD of the Co-operative, Emrys Humphreys, insisted on the use of his own pig, Mervyn, a prize winning Carmarthen Long-snout.

The target for the campaign was of course the English, who were tucking into Danish bacon in a big way then; and possibly Scotland too, but they would have to be weaned off haggis and deep fried battered pork chops does not work.

Believe me. So it was in the summer of 1963 that the campaign got into full swing with the stamps being added to the holiday postcards home before they were sold. Brummies would get one from their relatives staying in Aberystwyth, and Scousers from their friends in Rhyl. Of course, businesses corresponding with clients and companies in England were encouraged to stick one of the Welsh Pork stamps on their letters.

No-one expected any backlash from these stamps, least of all from the Welsh themselves. It started during Prime Minister's question time in the House of Commons, when the honourable member for Anglesey asked the Prime Minister whether Welsh Pork would be on the menu at the banquet he would be attending that evening. After the negative reply, his supplementary question asked "What was the Prime Minister going to do about his constituency and constituents being equated to a pig's ear?" At this point the honourable member for Pembroke stood up and said that the same applied to his constituency being a pig's snout. His earned him a rebuke from The Speaker, as his question had not been tabled before the session. The Prime Minister, in a unique instance of levity, replied that it was lucky Norfolk pork was not being promoted otherwise the people of Great Yarmouth would have much to complain about. There then followed a quite lively discourse as to which comparison was worst amongst a number of MPs, with The Speaker failing to keep order until he suspended two members for a month.

The incident itself didn't directly kill off the campaign, but with the media attention on the stamps collectors became aware of them and in a collecting spree, diminishing stocks. The Co-operative decided that they had probably got enough publicity because it that they didn't need to order any more. Keep an eye out for more of these, as what you will have received today is probably not a full set.