

BRITISH PHILATELIC

The ROYAL MAIL magazine *for stamp collectors*

Bulletin

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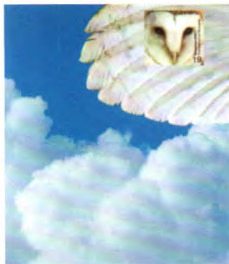
Vote in our 1999 stamp poll
• £850 in prizes to be won!



Millennium projects across
the UK have inspired 12 new
sets of stamps for 2000

**In this issue: a preview of the first set in the series,
Above and Beyond, on sale in January**

Forthcoming issues and withdrawals



Cover A barn owl is featured on the 19p in the Above and Beyond set, representing the work of the World Owl Trust in Cumbria. A preview of the set begins on page 112.

7 December	Issue Millennium Artists' Tale stamps and presentation pack; 1999 Yearpack and Yearbook (standard & leather-bound versions)
7 December	Issue Millennium miniature sheet stamp cards (five)
14 December	Issue Millennium miniature sheet and presentation pack
6 January	Issue Millennium definitive 1st class NVI stamp, issued in sheets of 200 and books of 10 printed by Walsall and Questa. Also available in presentation pack.
11 January	Issue Millennium Above & Beyond stamp cards
18 January	Issue Millennium Above & Beyond stamps and presentation pack
25 January	Issue Millennium Fire & Light stamp cards
28 January	Withdrawal To Pay labels and presentation pack. Withdrawal from Post Office Counters philatelic outlets; will remain on sale at British Philatelic Bureau until further notice

The sales period for the Millennium Moment commemorative document and coin cover has been extended. All orders must now be received at the Bureau by 31 December 1999. See November *Bulletin* for details.

Issues Note some items are available only from the British Philatelic Bureau and Post Office Counters philatelic outlets at main post offices in Bath, Belfast, Birmingham, Brighton, Bristol, Cambridge, Canterbury, Cardiff, Chester, Colchester, Coventry, Croydon, Durham, Edinburgh, Exeter, Gatwick Airport, Glasgow, Gloucester, Grimsby, Guildford, Harrogate, Leeds, Leicester, Liverpool, London (Lombard Street and Trafalgar Square), Manchester, Newcastle upon Tyne, Norwich, Nottingham, Oxford, Plymouth, Portsmouth, Southampton, Southend-on-Sea, Stevenage, Stratford-on-Avon, Truro, Windsor and York.

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The British Philatelic Bulletin is published monthly by Royal Mail, 2-14 Bunhill Row, London EC1Y 8HG • **Editor** JR Holman • **Price** 85p for single copies, from Post Office Counters philatelic outlets • **Annual subscription** £9.50 in UK and Europe, £13.50 rest of the world. Subscriptions should be sent to: British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, Edinburgh EH3 5TT • **Binders** to hold 24 issues, price £7, available by post from British Philatelic Bureau (address as above) • Royal Mail also publishes the fortnightly *British Postmark Bulletin*, giving details of forthcoming special handstamps. Available on annual subscription from British Philatelic Bureau (address above) UK and Europe £10, rest of the world £21.75 • **Copyright** Unless copyright is attributed to a specific author, any article or feature may be reproduced without formal permission, but acknowledgement should be given to *British Philatelic Bulletin*. Requests to reproduce any copyright articles should be addressed to the Editor, 2-14 Bunhill Row, London EC1Y 8HG • **Design** by Robert Maude • **Printed** in Great Britain by The White Dove Press • **ISSN** 0953 8119

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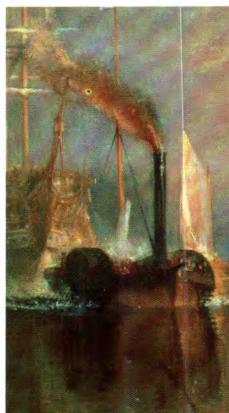
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1999 Bulletin writers

Richard Beith February

John Bird October

Paul Chesham June

Fred Gee May

Matthew Genge September

Ivan Holliday April

Peter Johnson April

Lionel Jones January, March,
May, September, November

James Mackay each month

Dorothy M Martin December

Margaret Morris August

D G A Myall February, March,
April, June, August, September,
October, December

James Negus June

Ron Negus February, March,
November

Francesca Rapkin July, Sep-
tember, October, November

Paul Reynolds May

Brian Warren April, May

Richard West November

Derek Williams February, July

ONCE AGAIN we invite you to vote for your favourite stamps and *Bulletin* writer of the year. The special stamps issued during 1999 are shown on pages 116-117. Tell us your top three sets and favourite individual stamp on the enclosed voting form. All forms will be entered in a prize draw: the first 'out of the hat' will win £400 with £100 to each of the next three drawn. Remember to return your voting form by 21 January. The favourite set of 1998 was Lighthouses, with the 20p Dormouse stamp in the Endangered Species issue as most popular individual design. I await with interest your decision on the 1999 issues.

We are also asking you to vote (on the same form) for your favourite *Bulletin* writer – listed above, with the months their articles were published. All voting forms go into a second draw, the sender of the first drawn wins £150. The favourite author will also receive £150. The winner for the past three years has been Douglas Myall – will he be the most popular again in 1999? Please note that articles by Royal Mail staff are excluded.

Details are given this month of the first of the 12 Millennium sets to be issued next year. The 48 Millennium stamps of 1999 featured important economic and social changes of the past 1000 years. The 2000 issues concentrate on the present – highlighting Millennium projects.

On behalf of Royal Mail I wish all *Bulletin* readers a happy and peaceful Christmas and New Year. JOHN HOLMAN •

Stamp scene News • UN museum, Geneva

Entry forms to be returned by 15 January, are available from F N Soutar, 1 Campbell Drive, Larbert FK5 4PP.

Scottish Junior Competition The national competition for young collectors in Scotland is open to all collectors under age 18 resident in Scotland. Each entry must be the work of a single entrant, and not the collective effort of a group. Entries can be submitted through a school, philatelic society or direct to the competition organiser in four age groups: up to 8 years, 9-12, 13-15, and 16-17. The winner of each group will receive a medal, certificates will be awarded to all participants, and the Alba Salver to the best overall entry. The best entries will most likely be entered for the Glasgow 2000 Inter Federation Competition •

Rush Express enquiries
Rushstamps (Retail) Ltd, PO
Box 1, Lyndhurst SO43 7PP.

New GB list The 136 page issue no 47 of *Rush Express* will be of interest to collectors of GB stamps from 1840 to the present. As well as stamps, the list includes varieties, booklets, first day covers, National Postal Museum postcards, railway letter stamps, cinderella material and much else. As well as a price list, it is a useful reference for many unusual items. *Rush Express* no 48, also 136 pages, lists non-GB material, much at bargain prices •

United Nations Philatelic Museum This Museum is a major attraction for collectors visiting Geneva. Opened in 1962 in the Palais des Nations, which originally housed the League of Nations, the Museum displays service stamps – normal Swiss stamps overprinted with the name of the agency for which they were issued – and documents of the League of Nations, International Labour Organisation, International Court of Justice, numerous other specialised agencies' material, and all UN Postal Administration stamps issued since 1951. An audio-visual program explains the ideas and objectives of the UN as reflected in its stamps, and a readers' corner provides access to important philatelic publications. A Museum cancellation is available on request.

An important part of the Museum's displays is the outstanding collection of Charles Misteli, a Geneva teacher, of some 11,000 items comprising all the early items of the League of Nations, International Labour Office, International Court of Justice, and member states commemorating important international conferences or plebiscites held under the auspices of the League of Nations ●



The UN Philatelic Museum

Door 39, Palais de Nations.
Open Monday-Friday 09.00-
12.00, 14.00-16.30.

Enquiries UNPA, Palais de Nations, CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland. Telephone (022) 917 4882.

Stamp Show 2000 Following the joint decision of Royal Mail and P&O Events Ltd, the latter has ended its involvement in the overall management of the Show and Royal Mail is now responsible for ensuring that the Show will be a major success. The overall theme of the Show (Earl's Court, London, 22-28 May 2000) will be 'Perspectives on the World' and each day will feature its own individual theme with corresponding handstamps. Postal administrations are being encouraged to reflect the international theme; some have already planned special stamp issues. Royal Mail's own stand will focus on 'Perspectives on Britain'.

Among the many special features will be a competition linked with Postman Pat, displays from the Royal Collection and British Library, exhibits from the Royal Philatelic Society London and the Association of British Philatelic Societies, the Poste Haste display (formerly at the National Postal Museum), and a recently withdrawn Travelling Post Office coach ●

A stamp book with commemorative label for the Show and a miniature sheet are now in preparation. Details will be announced nearer the time of issue.

Penny Black book A new book, entitled *May Dates*, comprises a survey of Penny Blacks, Twopenny Blues, Mulreadys and Caricatures used during May 1840. It is a unique reference to over 840 covers used in GB during the first month of the postage stamp. Included in the lists are known provenances and hundreds of auction estimates and realisations. Hardback, 334 pages, 750 illustrations. Enquiries: Mike Jackson Publications (see right) ●

May Dates £40. Postage: £4 UK; £5 Europe & rest of world by surface mail; £11 rest of world by airmail.

Mike Jackson Publications,
3 Cottesmore Avenue, Melton
Mowbray LE13 0HY.

Railway postcards The Railway Letter Service of the Talyllyn Railway has issued a set of six cards (numbered 14-19) to mark the return to service of locomotive No 2 *Dolgoch*. The cards, printed in a limited edition of 250, show the locomotive at work on the railway in the 1950s and 60s ●

Railway postcards Available from Sara Eade, Postmaster, Talyllyn Railway, Wharf Station, Tywyn LL36 9EY. Price £3.80 postpaid.

Royal Mail news Special stamp quantities

•New priority service labels•Fax mail ends

1998 special stamp quantities issued Figures quoted refer to the quantities supplied to post offices and the British Philatelic Bureau.

Endangered Species		Comedians	Carnival
20p	19,101,700	20p	18,454,000
26p	20,989,200	26p	20,462,800
31p	4,758,700	37p	4,500,700
37p	4,543,500	43p	4,763,400
43p	4,813,900	63p	4,628,100
63p	4,669,900	Stamp card sets	45,316
Stamp card sets	47,799		
Diana, Princess of Wales		Health	Speed
26p each stamp	30,260,820	20p	17,953,900
		26p	19,708,900
		43p	4,851,900
		63p	4,721,500
		Stamp card sets	45,360
Queen's Beasts		Magical Worlds	Christmas
26p each stamp	6,292,520	20p	287,323,000
Stamp card sets	46,096	26p	135,275,100
		37p	13,148,800
		43p	16,573,900
		63p	14,542,100
		Stamp card sets	46,736
			Book (10 x 26p) 5,112,975
			Book (20 x 20p) 6,811,475
Lighthouses			
20p	18,760,300		
26p	20,716,300		
37p	4,517,600		
43p	4,789,200		
63p	4,644,440		
Stamp card sets	45,776		

Fax mail ends Royal Mail Electronic Services will withdraw the Faxmail service from 1 December 1999. RelayOne – the Internet to physical mail messaging service – can be used as an alternative. Details of Faxmail and RelayOne were published here in February 1994 and August 1998 •

Bulletin back issues A back issue service is run by one of our readers, Maynard Davies. He has recently moved; his new address is 2 Tulk House, Ottershaw Park, Ottershaw, Chertsey KT16 0QG •

Royal Mail
swiftairplusregistered

express ☒ signed for ☒ compensation ☒
Your item is tracked until it leaves the UK.
We can't guarantee delivery time in other countries.
write details of where your item is going

Name _____
Address _____
Postcode _____
Country _____

This service is not available to all countries. Check at a post office. SV 1316 5651 4GB

For most countries you can claim up to £500 compensation for lost or damaged items.
tick if your item is worth more than £500 and you want a compensation limit of up to £2,200
write your address on the back of the package and your item's value on the front in words and numbers as follows: Insured for xxx pounds (£000)
hand the label and your package in at a post office

For post office use SV 1316 5651 4GB
SV 1316 5651 4GB

Royal Mail
international recorded

express ☒ signed for ☒ compensation ☒
Your item is tracked until it leaves the UK.
We can't guarantee delivery time in other countries.
write details of where your item is going

Name _____
Address _____
Postcode _____
Country _____

RR 8328 0059 688

write your address on the back of the package
hand the label and your package in at a post office

For post office use RR 8328 0059 688
RR 8328 0059 688

Priority services New labels for international priority services were introduced in early October. The labels, now in similar format to those for the inland Recorded and Special Delivery services, are for International Recorded, International Registered, Swiftair, Swiftair plus Recorded, and Swiftair plus Registered. The new labels will be going into use at post offices as stocks of earlier labels are used up.

The revised labels for the United Kingdom Recorded and Special Delivery services were shown here in October 1998 and August 1999 •

Post Impressions

In his final article on this exhibition at the British Library, Philip Parker looks at the modern artists

ON 30 NOVEMBER the winner of the Turner Prize was announced at the Tate Gallery. Past winners include Damien Hirst and Gillian Wearing, and the 1999 Millennium Stamps programme contains two other previous winners of this most famous prize in the British art world. Artworks by Antony Gormley and Howard Hodgkin are on show just two miles north of the Tate, in the British Library. *Post Impressions* brings together the diversity of the 48 artworks used for the 48 stamps in the most ambitious programme of commissioning ever undertaken by The Post Office. It is fitting that some of the finest talents in modern art were invited to contribute to the year, especially when British art has never been so popular on the international stage.

The lead sculpture used for Gormley's 'Test-tube baby' stamp is one of three he cast a decade ago. It is based on his own daughter, Paloma, when a few days old and is life-size. In the early 1980s, when his contemporaries were exploring abstract art, he unfashionably began making sculptures about the human body – usually his own, usually cast in metal. At *Post Impressions*, a sheet of 100 stamps underlines the replication concept, and a video explains 'IVF' technology. Gormley was a graduate of London's Goldsmiths College, and many of its 1970s and '80s graduates have taken the art world by storm, including Hirst and Wearing. Michael Craig-Martin is frequently cited as a major influence on their generation. A tutor at Goldsmiths for 25 years, he was commissioned to interpret 'Right to health' for 'Citizen's Tale', and did so in characteristic style. *Post Impressions* exhibits much of the inspiration for this subject such as detailed drawings by the pioneering civil engineer Joseph Bazalgette for Victorian public conveniences. Draftsmanship and functional objects inform Craig-Martin's work, too. Over the past two decades he has concentrated on images of some 200 everyday objects, carefully drawn and with vivid colours, which raise questions in the view-

er about their functions. Craig-Martin's ideal tap sits within his 'library' of objects, and he thinks it appropriate since a tap is the individual's point of contact with the vast public health system.

Goldsmiths College has also benefited from a rich roster of visiting artist-tutors, among them Lisa Milroy. Like Craig-Martin, she yields maximum effect with a deceptively simple approach. Her 'World of literature' stamp in this month's 'Artists' Tale' is a carefully-rendered book, a subject she explored several times on two large canvases which may be seen in *Post Impressions*.

The Artists' Tale contains works by two of Britain's most celebrated artists. Bridget Riley's paintings are frequently described in terms more familiar to music – notes and chords progressing across a canvas. In the late 1970s and '80s she travelled in India and Egypt and was particularly inspired by underground tomb paintings in Luxor. The colours from this period inform her stamp, 'World of music', described by *The Independent* as 'the most beautiful stamp ever issued'. Howard Hodgkin provides the final 1999 stamp, 'New worlds'. Like Riley, visits to India have inspired him. Unlike Riley, his paintings are not abstract: he has said that the start point for a painting is a memory of an encounter or an emotion. He explains that 'the colours aren't symbolic, specifically. I wanted to suggest a different kind of passage of time... I wanted to do something that was a cross between the familiar and unfamiliar.'

The Artists' Tale artwork features in a central, circular section of *Post Impressions*. In keeping with the conceptual approach of the art, there is just one 'historic artefact' to end this millennial celebration with them – a copy of Shakespeare's First Folio, open at the passage in *The Tempest*:

How many goodly creatures are there here!
How beauteous mankind is!
O brave new world
That has such people in't! ●

Post Impressions can be seen until 18 January 2000.

Christmas decorations and legends

Once again we are

CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS and LEGENDS

Thousands of years before Christ, the Winter Solstice was a world-wide celebration of feasts with ancient religious rites. A new significance was given to the Winter Solstice when the Church decided to celebrate the Birth of Christ on the same date. The linking of pagan celebrations with the greatest Christian festival, bequeathed to peoples of the world, a festive season incorporating a mixture of pagan and Christian customs.

The origin of decoration in houses with greenery at festive times is therefore hidden in the mists of time, and there are many superstitions surrounding the use of evergreens which were in the main, symbols of good luck and associated with keeping away evil spirits, also with fertility rites.

Over the centuries, the Crib and the Christmas tree have become the two focal points of Christmas decoration in churches and in homes world-wide, and many of the customs still exist today.



Post aus Christkindl

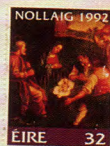


Kenn
Peter Ehlert
Wien 121
Selbstbrannt. 189/14



The Crib

The Crib is for many people, the heart of Christmas, and can be seen in churches and thousands of homes all over the world. It is of prime importance because it symbolises what Christmas is all about. History records that the first Manger scene to be created was in 354 A.D. by Pope Liberius. In 1224, St. Francis of Assisi was the first to assemble the Manger with figures of Mary and Joseph with the Baby Jesus, but with a live ox and ass, in a hillside cave at Greccio. The custom has since spread world-wide first in churches, then in more recent centuries as a major focal point in ordinary homes.



delighted to feature pages from Dorothy Martin's collection

THOUSANDS OF YEARS before Christ, the Winter Solstice was a worldwide celebration of feasts with ancient religious rites. A new significance was given to the Winter Solstice when the church decided to celebrate the Birth of Christ on the same date. The linking of pagan celebrations with the greatest Christian festival, bequeathed to peoples of the world a festive season incorporating a mixture of pagan and Christian customs.

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Over the centuries, the crib and the Christmas tree have become the two focal points of Christmas decoration in churches and in homes worldwide, and many of the customs still exist today.

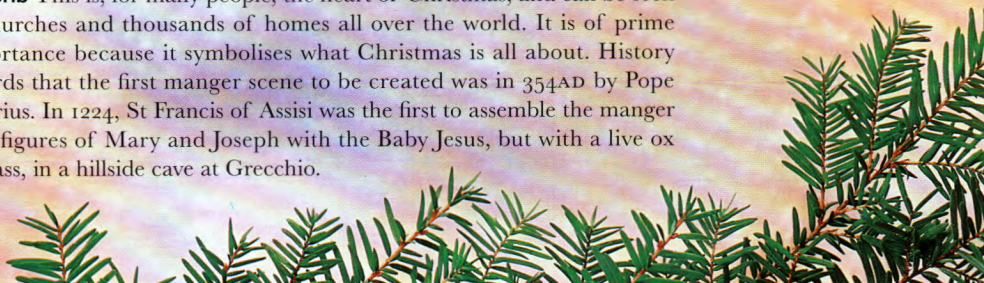
Evergreens Holly is the most significant of Christmas evergreens: it may well have been the Holy Tree reminding of a new life in its ever green leaves. Christians made wreaths of holly which symbolised Christ's crown of thorns through its prickly leaves – the red berries were said to represent drops of His blood. Village folk used to think that holly would keep away witches and tax-collectors and were therefore a token of good luck to the householder. It was also considered to be a symbol of eternal life. Wreaths of holly were hung on front doors during the Christmas season to welcome members of the family, friends and visitors. Ivy remained a pagan symbol being linked with wreaths on the head of Bacchus the god of wine! It was used as a house decoration to secure the household fertility. In medieval times holly was considered a man's plant, and the ivy represented a woman, hence they were used in fertility rites.

Mistletoe had the reputation of magic. The Druids regarded mistletoe as sacred and it played an important part in many of their elaborate rituals. It was never accepted by the Church because of these pagan associations, York Minster being the only exception. There, every Christmas, the clergy brought in a bough of mistletoe and laid it on the altar, 'a public liberty, pardon and freedom to all sorts of inferior and even wicked people at the gates of the city to the four corners of the earth' was proclaimed. Kissing under the mistletoe is peculiar to Britain. The origin of the custom is not known: it possibly had some connection with the Druidical belief in its powers of fertility.

The crib This is, for many people, the heart of Christmas, and can be seen in churches and thousands of homes all over the world. It is of prime importance because it symbolises what Christmas is all about. History records that the first manger scene to be created was in 354AD by Pope Liberius. In 1224, St Francis of Assisi was the first to assemble the manger with figures of Mary and Joseph with the Baby Jesus, but with a live ox and ass, in a hillside cave at Greccio.



Opposite This page features the manger and the crib. For many, the crib is the heart of Christmas, and is a common sight in churches and homes all over the world. Above, Mrs Martin.





Germans can claim to have originated the Christmas tree through the Paradise tree of the mystery plays. They hung apples on a fir tree and ringed it with candles, representing the fruit and brightness of the Garden of Eden.

By the beginning of the 19th century, the making of Christmas Tree decorations had become a cottage industry at Lauscha in East Germany. The attractive and artistic baubles were eventually exported to other countries as the Christmas industry expanded to factory production.

The custom of decorating Christmas trees spread to America and Scandinavian countries, and later to England. Queen Charlotte, wife of George III, set up a tree at Windsor in the 18th century; a children's party at Queen Caroline's Court took place in 1821 where there was a decorated tree in the German style. German merchants living near Manchester before 1840 are said to have decorated trees for their children, but after 1841, when Prince Albert imported trees from Coburg, the innovation really caught the public imagination.

In olden days the Christmas trees were collected and carried home by the parents and children. The youngsters made paper-chains and had great fun decorating the tree with candles and sweetmeats, and the tree would be festooned with tinsel and topped with a star to represent the Star of Bethlehem. They would dance round the tree and on Christmas Day would open their presents which would have been placed around it. Today candles have been replaced by safer electric lights and decorations have become more sophisticated and costly.

Christmas trees are a major part of Yuletide decorations in towns and villages. The world's largest Christmas tree is to be seen at Hilton Park, Wilmington, North Carolina. It is a 300-year-old oak tree with a trunk 15ft in diameter; it is festooned with moss and decorated with 750 coloured lights surmounted by the 'Star of the East'. On a platform stands a manger, a cross, and 12 lights to represent the 12 apostles. A service of song and prayer is attended by thousands of people on Christmas Eve.

The Christmas Tree The tree is sometimes associated with St Boniface (also known as St Wynfrith), an English missionary in Germany in the 8th century. He is said to have chopped down a sacred oak tree beneath which human sacrifices had been offered. As it fell, a young fir tree miraculously appeared in its place. The Saint named the fir tree as an emblem of the new faith he had brought to Germany. The Germans also believed that Martin Luther was the first to decorate the Christmas tree, in the 16th century. The legend goes that he was walking home one Christmas Eve under a clear night sky lit by millions of stars: the sight enthralled him. He was so inspired that he uprooted a fir tree and fixed candles on its branches to symbolise the starry heavens from which Christ descended. A writer in Strasbourg in 1605 said that citizens decorated their parlours with small fir trees and placed on them paper roses, sweets and apples.



Christmas 1989

GUERNSEY BAILLIWICK



GUERNSEY POST OFFICE OFFICIAL FIRST DAY COVER

CHRISTMAS 1989

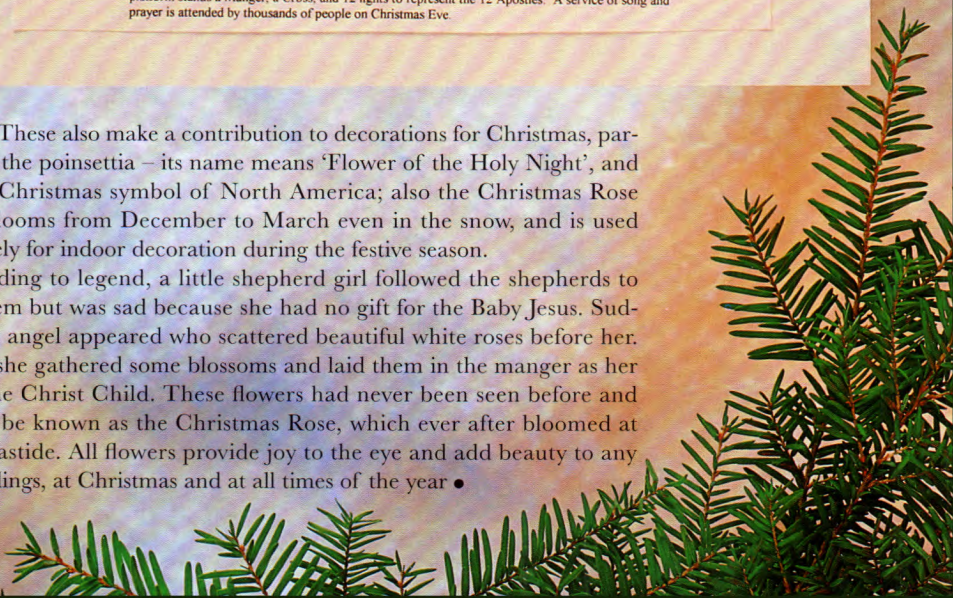


WILMINGTON, NORTH CAROLINA—The Play-Ground of the South

Christmas trees are a major part of Yuletide decorations in towns and villages and are now quite commonplace with their coloured twinkling lights. The world's largest Christmas tree is to be seen at Hilton Park, Wilmington, N Carolina. It is a 300 year old oak tree with a trunk 15ft. in diameter, it is festooned with moss and decorated with 750 coloured lights surmounted by the 'Star of the East'. On a platform stands a Manger, a Cross, and 12 lights to represent the 12 Apostles. A service of song and prayer is attended by thousands of people on Christmas Eve.

Flowers These also make a contribution to decorations for Christmas, particularly the poinsettia – its name means 'Flower of the Holy Night', and it is the Christmas symbol of North America; also the Christmas Rose which blooms from December to March even in the snow, and is used extensively for indoor decoration during the festive season.

According to legend, a little shepherd girl followed the shepherds to Bethlehem but was sad because she had no gift for the Baby Jesus. Suddenly an angel appeared who scattered beautiful white roses before her. Joyfully she gathered some blossoms and laid them in the manger as her gift to the Christ Child. These flowers had never been seen before and came to be known as the Christmas Rose, which ever after bloomed at Christmastide. All flowers provide joy to the eye and add beauty to any surroundings, at Christmas and at all times of the year •



Art on stamps James Mackay looks at how

The first year of Royal Mail's Millennium saga is neatly rounded off with the Artists' Tale, issued on 7 December. Like all the stamps in this marathon project, they are specially commissioned works. Symbolising four different aspects of what may broadly be termed art, they represent Britain's contribution to artistic endeavour at a global level.

WHEN it comes to the world of the stage, William Shakespeare (honoured on British stamps in 1964, 1988 and 1995) is regarded as pre-eminent. His life and works, both plays and poetry, have inspired countless artists in every conceivable medium, from opera and ballet to the Oscar-winning film *Shakespeare in Love*. Significantly, this film was scripted by Tom Stoppard, regarded widely as Britain's best contemporary playwright. Oscar Wilde and George Bernard Shaw (on Ireland and Czechoslovakia issues), with J M Barrie made London the centre of world drama a century ago.

Below: *World of the Stage*, the 19p Artists' Tale, by Allen Jones; The Globe Theatre by Walter Hodges, from the set of five issued in 1995; and the 26p Artists' Tale, the *World of Music* by Bridget Riley. Below right: Ralph Vaughan Williams by Juliet Pannett.

World of music Britain may have to yield to European composers in the world of music, symbolised on the 26p stamp, but it seems regrettable that British achievement in this field has had relatively scant attention in stamp issues so far. Three of the artists honoured in the series of 1985 were either born in Germany or were of German descent – Frideric Handel, Gustav Holst and Frederick Delius – although the top value was devoted to Sir Edward Elgar, the centenary of whose *Enigma Variations* is being celebrated



Romeo and Juliet.

PROLOGUE.

Chorus.

Two households, both alike in dignity,
In fair Verona, where we lay our scene,
From ancient grudge break to new mutiny,
Where civil blood makes civil hands un-
clean.
From forth the fatal loins of these two foes
A pair of star-cross'd lovers take their life;
Whose misadventur'd piteous overthrows
Do, with their death, bury their parents'
strife.
The fearful passage of their death-mark'd
love,
And the continuance of their parents' rage,
Which, but their children's end, nought could
remove,
Is now the two hours' traffic of our stage;
The which if you with patient ears attend,
What here shall miss, our toil shall strive to
mend.

XI.

K



the arts are featured on stamps old and new

this year. Britain's greatest composer, Henry Purcell (1659-95) has yet to appear on a stamp, despite extensive agitation in the tercentenary year of his death. So far, the only composer to be portrayed on a British stamp is Ralph Vaughan Williams in 1972, the centenary of his birth. A set of four in 1980, however, portrayed the great orchestral conductors Sir Henry Wood, Sir Thomas Beecham, Sir Malcolm Sargent and Sir John Barbirolli.

The written word When it comes to the world of literature (44p) the British record is both more impressive and much better served in previous stamps. Poets such as Burns, Keats, Gray and Tennyson and novelists such as Sir Walter Scott, Mrs Gaskell, George Eliot, the Brontë Sisters and Thomas Hardy have been portrayed on stamps since 1964. Others, such as Dickens, Wordsworth, Jane Austen, H G Wells and, most recently, writers of children's classics, have had to be content with stamps that depicted or symbolised their most famous creations. Such literary giants of the 20th century as Rudyard Kipling, D H Lawrence and George Orwell have been neglected in stamp depiction, so Lisa Milroy's motif of 'a closed book must serve for them all.



Above: The 150th anniversary of Thomas Hardy's birth, 1990. Below: Elgar's *Sea Pictures*, on 1985 European Music Year; Tennyson pictured in 1882 and *The Beguiling of Merlin* by Sir Edward Burne-Jones, issued in 1992; and 44p Artists' Tale.



CHAPTER VI

MY STATE of mind regarding the pilfering from which I had been so unexpectedly exonerated, did not impel me to frank disclosure; but I hope it had some dregs of good at the bottom of it.

I do not recal that I felt any tenderness of conscience in reference to Mrs. Joe, when the fear of being found out was lifted off me. But I loved Joe—perhaps for no better reason in those early days than because the dear fellow let me love him—and, as to him, my inner self was not so easily composed. It was much upon my mind (particularly when I first saw him looking about for his file) that I ought to tell Joe the whole truth. Yet I did not, and for the reason that I mistrusted that if I did, he would think me worse than I was. The fear of



Howard Hodgkin's 64p *New Worlds* symbolises Britain's contribution to the world of the fine arts.

Opposite: A detail from *The Fighting Temeraire tugged to her Last Berth to be broken up* by JMW Turner; *The Hay-Wain* by John Constable, issued in 1968; *Peace – burial at sea* by Turner, from the bicentenary set issued in 1975; *Boyhood of Raleigh* by Millais, issued by Jersey 1971; *Children Coming out of School* by Lowry, 1967; and *Still Life, Odyssey I* by Ben Nicholson, one of the Europa series of 1993.

Fine art The top value (64p) of the series symbolises Britain's contribution to the world of the fine arts. One may cite, for example, the vividly naturalistic landscapes of John Constable whose *Hay Wain* influenced many of the Romantic painters, or J M W Turner whose startling treatment of light is regarded as a major precursor of the Impressionists. Sir John Everett Millais, was the driving force in the Pre-Raphaelite Movement, which had enormous influence on artistic expression in Europe and America in the closing years of the 19th century and beyond. Paintings by other Pre-Raphaelites, such as Burne-Jones and Dante Gabriel Rossetti, were reproduced on the Tennyson stamps of 1992 (see p109). Nearer the present time the Glasgow Boys exerted an influence far beyond the city associated with them although, so far, the only one to be honoured on a stamp is Sir John Lavery whose *Evening at Tangier* appears on an Irish stamp of 1993.

Stamp depiction of modern art began with the reproduction of L S Lowry's *Children Coming Out of School* in 1967. A year later, John Piper's *Ruins of St Mary le Port* appeared on a 156d stamp. One may cite the set of three stamps of June 1971 reproducing contemporary paintings from the Ulster Exhibition, locomotive paintings by Terence Cunco (1985), the array of contemporary paintings and sculpture on the Europa series of 1993, landscapes by the Prince of Wales (1994) and cat paintings by Elizabeth Blackadder (1995). In the same year the Springtime set in the Four Seasons series was devoted to the plant sculptures of Andy Goldsworthy. There have also been several individual stamps in other issues. One of the celebrated horse paintings of Sir Alfred Munnings appeared in the Derby series of 1979, while paintings by Beryl Cook and L S Lowry were included in the 1995 Greetings booklet.

Royal Mail patronage This raises an interesting point which is so often overlooked. In commissioning original artwork for stamps from artists, both well established and just starting out on their careers (like Sally Stiff and Laura Stoddart in the Christmas stamps of 1972 and 1996), Royal Mail is a foremost patron of the fine arts. This tradition goes back to 1840 when Rowland Hill commissioned his friend William Mulready RA to design the pictorial covers that have since become known by his name.

The dividing line between fine and applied art is a very narrow one, and much of the work which eventually ends up as a postage stamp starts life as a painting in the traditional sense. This is particularly true of the graphic arts in general, though occasionally the role of fine art is given greater prominence, as, for example, when an artist of such international calibre as David Hockney was asked to design the Single European Market stamp of 1992 and one for the Millennium series.

In the present set, Royal Mail has drawn upon the talents of such well-established artists as Allen Jones (RA 1986) and Bridget Riley (created CBE in 1972, CH 1999) for the 19p and 26p stamps. Relative newcomer, Canadian-born Lisa Milroy (44p) joins Sir Howard Hodgkin (64p) in proving that painting is very much a living force ●

Books p108-9, by Geoff Dann; Ralph Vaughan Williams p108, the National Portrait Gallery London; Cellist p108-9, Pictor International London; Detail from *The Fighting Temeraire tugged to her Last Berth to be broken up, before 1839* by JMW Turner (1775-1851) p111, National Gallery London/Bridgeman Art Library.

Text © James Mackay 1999



CONSTABLE 1821 / HARRISON



Turner 1775-1851



LOWRY

HARRISON



EUROPA

BEN NICHOLSON STILL LIFE, ODYSSEY I



The World Owl Trust Sanctuary for 49 species of owls from all over the world, the Trust's captive breeding and release programmes ensure the preservation of rare species such as barn and eagle owls. A barn owl was shown on the 17p in the 1986 Nature Conservation set, voted by *Bulletin* readers their favourite set that year.



National Space Science Centre

Visitors to Leicester's Space Centre will be able to view the far reaches of the universe beneath the skies of a high-tech planetarium. Children in the Challenger Learning Centre can learn about astronauts and simulate the tasks they perform on a shuttle mission.



The Torr's Millennium Walkway

From the steel cantilever bridge of this aerial walkway, curving across the sandstone landscape of Torr's Gorge in Derbyshire, visitors have a bird's-eye view of the River Goyt which powered textile mills in the Industrial Revolution, giving rise to the industrial town of New Mills.





Scottish Seabird Centre Remote cameras will monitor the gannets on Bass Rock in North Berwick and relay live film to interactive displays at the Centre, allowing visitors to study the world's largest single rock gannetry. A gannet was shown on the 35p value of the Birds issue in January 1989.

Above and Beyond is the first set of 12 Millennium Issues for 2000, inspired by Millennium projects throughout the UK. The 19p stamp features a barn owl, to represent the work of the World Owl Trust at Muncaster Castle, Cumbria

- The 26p denomination symbolises the National Space Science Centre in Leicester where visitors will be able to

see the universe in a high-tech planetarium • The Torrs Millennium Walkway, the last link in a 225-mile national walking route, is the subject of the 44p value • The 64p depicts gannets on Bass Rock, which visitors will be able to study at the Scottish Seabird Centre, North Berwick •



Above and Beyond goes on sale at post offices and philatelic outlets on 18 January



A well-illustrated presentation pack (above, price £1.90) and stamp cards (price 25p each) will be available at main post offices and philatelic outlets.

Technical details

Printer The House of Questa
Process 19p 26p 64p gravure
 44p litho
Size 37 × 35mm
Sheets 100
Perforation 14 × 14.5 44p;
 13½ × 14 others
Phosphor One band 19p; two
 bands others
Gum PVA
Central gutter horizontal 44p;
 vertical others



Cylinders and colours

19p & 26p Q1 greenish yellow
 ● Q1 magenta ● Q1 pale new
 blue ● Q1 black ● Q1 silver

44p Q1 black ● Q1 bistre-
 brown ● Q1 buff ● Q1 silver

64p Q1 greenish yellow ● Q1
 magenta ● Q1 blue ● Q1 black
 ● Q1 silver ● Q1 orange

All have Q1 phosphor number



FIRST DAY FACILITIES Unstamped Royal Mail FDC envelopes will be available from main post offices and philatelic outlets about a week before 18 January, price 25p. Orders for FDCs with the stamps cancelled by a pictorial first day postmark of the Bureau or Muncaster, Ravenglass must reach the Bureau by 18 January. Price £2.22 UK (including VAT) or £1.89 overseas (no VAT).

Collectors may send stamped covers on the day of issue to: British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, Edinburgh EH3 5TT, or Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, Forth Street, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 1AA (Muncaster postmark), marking the outer envelope 'FDO001' (Bureau), or 'FDO002' (Muncaster). Covers can be posted or handed in at main post offices for the Muncaster postmark. A non-pictorial Muncaster postmark is also available from the Special Handstamp Centre, request 'FDO002 NP'.

Details of the Muncaster postmark, also sponsored handstamps for 18 January will be announced in the *British Postmark Bulletin* – available on subscription from the Bureau (£10 UK/Europe; £21.75 elsewhere). For a sample copy write to: The Editor, British Postmark Bulletin, Royal Mail, 2-14 Bunhill Row, London EC1Y 8HQ. Covers may bear just the 19p Above and Beyond stamp for any philatelic postmark in use on 18 January ●

Millennium postmarks Readers are reminded that special arrangements have been made for the dual-postmarking of philatelic mail with 31 December 1999 and 1 January 2000 cancellations. These arrangements were published as a supplement to the August Bulletin and are again included as a supplement to this issue.

Shown here are the two Royal Mail postmarks for 31 December and 1 January. Collectors may obtain these by submitting covers, bearing at least 1st class postage, to Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, Mount Pleasant, London EC1A 1BB. Request handstamp No 6294 (31 December) or 6295 (1 January) •



Millennium miniature sheet A Millennium miniature sheet containing four new 64p stamps, designed by David Gentleman, will be issued on 14 December 1999, price £2.56. Details were published here last month •

Millennium philatelic products Pages for the year 2000 for the Millennium Stamps Album are now available from the Bureau, price £9.99. A presentation case has been produced to display the Millennium packs and covers. Enquiries: British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, Edinburgh EH3 5TT •

Millennium definitive A new 1st class NV1 definitive will be issued on 6 January 2000 and will replace the standard 26p definitive at post offices in England for the rest of the year. Supplies will be available at post offices in Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales for customers preferring this Millennium definitive to the country stamps. The new NV1 will also be available in books of 10 as well as in sheets of 200.

The stamp features the Machin head of The Queen, adapted from the current definitive by Richard Scholey of The Chase design group. It is being printed in gravure in brownish olive in sheets of 200 by De La Rue and in books of 10 by both Questa and Walsall. All will have two phosphor bands. The stamp will also be included in the *Special by Design* prestige stamp book to be issued in February (details in next month's *Bulletin*).

A Royal Mail first day cover envelope will be available at main post offices, price 25p, about one week before 6 January. Serviced covers can be ordered from the British Philatelic Bureau, price 72p UK (includes VAT), 62p overseas (no VAT). Orders should be received at the Bureau by 6 January. Please state if Bureau or Windsor first day cancel required.

Collectors can post or hand in FDCs at main post offices for the pictorial Windsor first day postmark. Covers can be sent on the day of issue to the British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, Edinburgh EH3 5TT (Bureau postmark, reference FD DEF 00 01) or Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, Wexham Road, Slough SL1 1AA (Windsor postmark, FD DEF 00 02). A non-pictorial Windsor postmark is also available (FD DEF 00 02 NP).

For details of all sponsored handstamps for 6 January, see the *British Postmark Bulletin*. The presentation pack containing the new stamp will cost 60p •



1999 Favourite stamps poll

FOR THE 14TH YEAR running we are inviting you to vote for your favourite stamps. Shown below are the special stamps of 1999. Tell us your top three sets and favourite individual stamp (numbered 1-54) on the enclosed voting form. The stamps from the Millennium miniature sheet are included but not the stamps from the Solar Eclipse sheet which are the same as the 64p Scientists' Tale stamp, No 32.

Remember to return your form by 21 January for entry in our £500 prize draw ●

The stamps in each set are numbered from left to right

Inventors' Tale

1 2 3 4



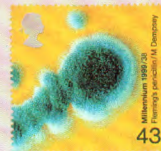
Travellers' Tale

5 6 7 8



Patients' Tale

9 10 11 12



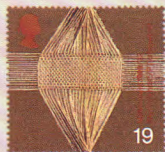
Settlers' Tale

13 14 15 16



Workers' Tale

17 18 19 20



Entertainers' Tale

21 22 23 24

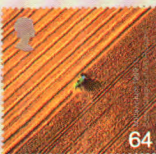


**Citizens' Tale**

25 26 27 28

**Scientists' Tale**

29 30 31 32

**Farmers' Tale**

33 34 35 36

**Soldiers' Tale**

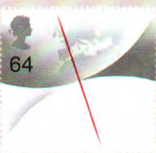
37 38 39 40

**Christians' Tale**

41 42 43 44

**Artists' Tale**

45 46 47 48

**Millennium miniature sheet**

49 50 51 52

**Royal Wedding**

53 54

Stamps under the hammer

The Editor visits Spink & Son, a major stamp auction house, and finds much to admire

IT IS ALWAYS interesting to go behind the scenes of any large organisation and to see at first hand the work they do. In mid-October I visited the premises of Spink & Son in London's west end, one of the UK's foremost stamp auctioneers. Spink & Son was founded in 1666 and hold the Royal warrant as medallists to The Queen, the Duke of Edinburgh and the Prince of Wales. They are a relatively new name in the stamp world, having taken over the stamp auctions formerly run by Christie's Robson Lowe in 1997. The Managing Director of Spink, Tim Hirsch, and Richard Watkins, Director of the Stamp Dept, both served their philatelic apprenticeship at Stanley Gibbons. In addition to stamps, Spink deals with coins, medals, banknotes, militaria, books, etc, the fine arts being handled by another part of the company. Spink has approximately 90 staff; eleven, including three consultants, work in the Stamp Dept.

Spink holds about 20 stamp auctions a year, each with between 800 and 1400 lots. Most lots have an estimate of at least £100 although a look through recent catalogues revealed items from £40 upwards. Sales are divided between Great Britain, British Empire and Foreign, and are held mostly in London but also in Australia, New York, Hong Kong and Singapore. The Stamp Department has representatives in Australia and Italy in addition to overseas offices in New York and Singapore. The addresses of all departments and offices with the names of the principal staff are published in all catalogues. In addition one member of staff is permanently 'on the road' in the UK visiting collectors who wish to sell their collections. Richard Watkins explained that selling a collection can be a 'traumatic experience', especially for collectors who have built up a collection over 40 or 50 years. Spink aim to handle the sale not only efficiently but with sensitivity and to make the experience 'enjoyable and successful' for all concerned. This is done through keeping the paperwork (for the vendor) to a minimum,

involving the vendor, if requested, in lotting and describing the material, ensuring widespread publicity for the sale, and a good after-sale service.

Cataloguing Great care is taken in describing the properties and Spink catalogues are noted for their accuracy and high-quality colour illustrations. Using their extensive reference library (much of it ex Robson Lowe), Spink staff research the provenance of material. All catalogues are produced by Christie's printers, their compilation a mixture of computer technology and old-fashioned 'paste-up' techniques to achieve the required result. Most catalogues have a print run of thousands. All this work is, not surprisingly, time-consuming and so it normally takes four to six months for items to reach the auction room, the exact time, says Mr Watkins, depending on the 'substance and importance of the collection'. The time of the auction is carefully planned, some months being better than others. The aim of publicity, through advertising and magazine articles, is to 'celebrate the sale' – all part of the service to vendors and buyers alike.

Type of auctions General auctions comprise lots submitted by up to 40 vendors whereas 'named sales' are auctions of the collection of one owner. These are sometimes under the vendor's real name, sometimes a pseudonym is used – chosen by the vendor or by Spink. Recent examples include the 'Stanley' and 'Staircase' sales of Falkland Islands and Bahamas. This year's named sales have included the Morris H Ludington collections of Bermuda, Bahamas and Turks Islands. The Bermuda sale in June realised over £1 million, and Richard and his colleagues were looking forward to the Bahamas and Turks auction (9-10 November) at the time of my visit.

Spink auctions cover most philatelic subjects from pre-stamp covers to the 1950s although better modern material is offered. Specific postal



In pride of place at Spink's GB sale on 15 December will be this block of six of the 1d black (see description overleaf).

history auctions are no longer held but much postal history material is included in both general and named sales. Accumulations are offered occasionally, also philatelic literature although storage problems limit the extent of these. Bulky material, says Richard, offers us a challenge, not least in packing it for despatch to purchasers after a sale. Spink are happy to include single items as well as collections but the normal minimum consignment is £500.

Many of the vendors are people who have bought from Spink (or Christie's Robson Lowe) auctions, others make an approach when they wish to sell all or part of their collections. Many sales are of 'estate collections' of deceased collectors. London auctions are held in Ryder Street and are normally attended by 50 or 60 bidders plus auction agents who may bid on behalf of up to 50 collectors. Telephone bids are taken for the more important sales and auctions and of course bids can be submitted by post. Catalogues are normally available four to six weeks before an auction. Items can be viewed at Spink's offices in advance – viewing dates and times are given in the catalogues.

Team work Richard Watkins stressed that he and his colleagues work very much as a team although each has particular 'spheres of responsibility'. Nicholas Startup handles Australia and Singapore, David Parsons South Africa, West Indies, and Europe, Neill Granger Hong Kong and the Far East, and Richard himself concentrates on GB, assisted by consultant Mark Stephenson who, says Richard, 'has handled the best GB on the market over the past decade'. The stamp team is ably assisted by consultants and hard-working administrative staff to ensure the smooth running of the department. Receipts are issued for all material received for sale, each item given a stock number which it retains throughout the system. Special instructions of the vendors are noted, the method of payment, etc. Most of the work is now computerised and errors are few and far between. However, says Richard Watkins, auctioneering remains a 'complex business' – and judging by the variety of activities I saw during my visit I am sure he is right.

Retail arm Spink has recently started stamp dealing, in addition to the sales, and is building up a stock of good GB and British Empire material from pre-stamp to George VI. Prices range from £200 and items are offered at their stands at exhibitions as well as to callers. A list of 750-1000 items is in preparation and will be available early next year. Collectors of specific countries are invited to register their interests, request photocopies of items in stock, and submit wants lists of the 'more serious stamps' they are seeking. The retail arm, with Bill Lea as director, aims to cater from the medium to specialist collector, providing single items, sets, proofs, and postal history.

Spink were proud to be involved in the Rare Stamps of the World exhibition at Claridge's in July (see October *Bulletin*), and will have a stand at the Bangkok exhibition in March and Stamp Show 2000 in May. They hope to attend the Asda show in New York and España 2000 in Madrid. Even when they don't take a stand, staff attend exhibitions to meet clients. As well as members of staff regularly touring the UK, 'valuation days' are arranged in Europe to advise potential vendors.

New home and magazine Spink are to expand their operation in new premises in the new year. Richard Watkins is excited at the prospect of even better facilities than they have now to provide an improved service for collectors. The address of Spink's new home will be announced shortly. They also plan a new collectors' magazine covering the full range of material they auction. Philatelic articles will appear in the new magazine now that *The Philatelist and P7GB* has ceased publication. It is 'sad', says Richard, to see this well-known title disappear but 'times change' and the magazine in its existing format was simply no longer viable. The new publication is expected to be quarterly and will be available on subscription. Collectors will await the first issue with interest.

Forthcoming GB sale At the time of my visit work was nearing completion on the GB sale for 15 December. This includes a 'good spread' of properties from about 25 vendors, including some pre-stamp items as well as good Victoria stamps, Mulreadys and modern errors. Pride of place goes to nice mint blocks of the first two stamps. A block of four of the 1840 2d blue, Plate 1, corner letters BG-CD (SG 5), has large part original gum and good margins. Even better is a block of six of the 1d black, Plate 2, corner letters FA-HB, with left sheet margin text reading 'In Wetting the Back be careful not to remove the Ce(ment)'. Blocks of six of Plate 2 are believed to be the largest multiples outside institutional collections. Another fine item is the 1867 square £1 on blue paper, unused with original gum.

Modern items in the December sale include imperf errors of the 1979 11p Dogs (SG 1077a) and 1985 17p Famous Trains (1272a). Errors on modern commemoratives remain popular.

The Mulready covers/lettersheets include one attractively hand-coloured, with black Maltese Cross and red 'CREWKERNE' handstamp of April 1841, and one, addressed to Dublin, with 'LATE MAIL' handstamp, red Maltese Cross and black 'CASTLE/BLAKENEY' datestamp of January 1841. Another, with red Maltese Cross, addressed to London and back-stamped Oundle May 1840,

bears the following charming little verse on the front:

'Come, men of all lands – be they ever so many
We offer you commerce of soul for a penny;
A penny to Lapland – to China the same!
So, at least, seem our figures and types to proclaim
As the thing our friend Baring would have us believe
And when did a Whig ever mean to deceive?'

Amongst the interesting items of postal history is a letter from a lady to her brother at Lincoln's Inn with a beautifully struck 'STOCKPORT' scroll handstamp in red. The letter, dated 1795, gives details of travels. An intriguing cover of 1858 was sent 'via Marseilles' bearing London Paid and Liverpool transit marks. Addressed to Honolulu, it bears a Singapore datestamp and a 'Returned for/Postage' marking. It is described as 'an enigmatic item with the point of departure and routing most unclear!'

I was pleased to see, and handle, an historic letter sent from Llangollen to London in 1807, bearing various rates in manuscript and a superb strike of an unrecorded large crowned crescent-shaped 'MORE TO PAY' handstamp together with OSWESTRY/182 mileage mark and London Paid arrival datestamp. The letter contains an order for books from Lady Eleanor Butler who lived, as a recluse, with a female friend, Sarah Ponsonby. The 'Ladies of Llangollen' were known as 'the most celebrated virgins in Europe'. Their habit of wearing semi-masculine clothes led inevitably to rumours about their relationship. The letter is rightly described in Spink's catalogue as a 'spectacular rarity and exhibition item', with an estimate of £1500-1800.

I greatly enjoyed my time at Spink and was impressed by the variety of work required for successful stamp auctions. It was all conducted in a businesslike and efficient way, but retaining a gentlemanly and scholarly approach to life which, in my view, is stamp collecting at its best ●

Enquiries Spink Stamp Department, 5 King Street, London SW1Y 6QS. Telephone 0171 747 6932. Fax 0171 747 6940.

Books Scotland and Philately series • New sg Catalogue

Scotland and Philately Number 15 in the *Scotland and Philately* series, by Ken Norris and Stanley Brown, reproduces selected special handstamps, slogans, covers and aerogrammes relating to the Borders and South West – an area of less dramatic scenery than the Highlands, but still steeped in history, customs, and especially literary associations. The town of Kelso is noted for its races (advertised on a slogan in 1970), and Floors Castle – the magnificent home of the Duke of Roxburghe – shown on special handstamps used in the 1960s and early 1970s on mail posted at the Castle Open Days. Covers were serviced in 1986 with the Royal Wedding stamps – Prince Andrew proposed to Sarah Ferguson while they were staying at the Castle. Galashiels and Melrose are rugby towns and special covers and postmarks commemorate the Gala Rugby Football Club and the Melrose Sevens. Sir Walter Scott, who lived at Abbotsford, was honoured in 1971 by a special stamp and cover depicting his monument in Edinburgh. A special handstamp was used in 1992 to mark the 450th anniversary of the birth of Mary, Queen of Scots who stayed briefly in Jedburgh at a house now named after her.

Shown are some 22 handstamps used in 1996 in connection with the Robert Burns stamps, also a cover produced for the Scottish Philatelic Congress in 1974 featuring both Burns and John Paul Jones, the Scottish-born founder of the US Navy, honoured on a US stamp in 1976 •

Scotland and Christianity Mr Brown starts a new series of thematic books with *Scotland and Christianity*, which features philatelic material showing Scottish cathedrals, abbeys, David Livingstone, Mary Slessor, the Papal visit of 1982, Kildalton Cross, National Bible Society, also covers produced by the Church of Scotland, the Roman Catholic and Methodist Churches, and the Salvation Army •

Borders and South West and **Scotland and Christianity** are available from Stanley Brown, 14 Buchan Drive, Perth PH1 1NQ, price £1.50 each postpaid.

Stanley Gibbons Part 1 Catalogue: British Commonwealth Both volumes of the 2000 edition were published on 1 October. Volume 1 lists all British stamps and those of countries from Abu Dhabi to Ireland, Vol 2 Jamaica to Zimbabwe. The British listing extends to the Entertainers' Tale set of 1 June, with the Royal Wedding stamps (15 June) found in the Addendum. The new definitions issued in April are included in the listing of the omnipresent Machins. The price increases for British stamps up to 1937 incorporated in the *GB Concise* catalogue published in April are repeated here but there are additional increases for George VI issues and a few Wildings. The George VI 1937-47 definitive set is increased used and the 1941-2 Pale Colours and 1950-52 Colour Changes are all up both mint and used. In his preface, Editor David Aggersberg states: 'It is reported that a number of commemoratives and greetings stamp sets from the last ten years are difficult to find in quantity, and prices here may have further to go.' The two scarcest greetings sets – 1989 first issue and 1990 20p Smiles remain at £28/£20 and £28/£22 respectively. The preface lists the major revisions carried out in the catalogue, principally affecting the listings for Australia, Ireland, Malaysia, Montserrat, St Vincent, South Africa, Togo, and Tonga. Additional watermark varieties and booklets are included.

David Aggersberg's now traditional comments on the state of the stamp world are worth reading. He notes: 'The growing activity of post office marketing departments threatens the rationale of the postage stamp with issues being produced as "collectables" illustrating aspects of popular culture, rather than for postal purposes. If the link with the postal service is lost, then such stamps will become nothing more than stickers.' He refers readers to the criteria for listing stamps in the sg catalogue •

Stanley Gibbons Part 1 Catalogue: British Commonwealth £29.95 per volume from SG Strand shop or from Stanley Gibbons Publications, Parkside, Ringwood BH24 3SH. Postage £1.50 UK for one volume; post-free both volumes. Europe £8. Rest of World £8 one volume, £12 both.

Decimal stamp books 49 Specialist report by D G A Myall

A retrospective The publication of the seventh edition of *'The Bookmark' Catalogue of Decimal Stamp Books* (reviewed in the *October Bulletin*) prompts me to take a brief look back over the past 30 years or so of GB stamp books. The Post Office has issued definitive stamps in book form for nearly a hundred years. At one time it numbered them in series but abandoned this in 1943. When I wrote the first edition of *'The Bookmark' Catalogue* in 1973, I revived the practice and allocated books to different series according to the purpose and form of their issue. These are prefixed DB for decimal book.

Just prior to decimalisation in 1971, there had been five series of books with pre-decimal Machin stamps. These catered for different types of customer and comprised a two shilling (2s) book sold through machines and four books sold over post office counters costing four shillings and sixpence (4s6d), five shillings (5s), six shillings (6s) and ten shillings (10s). Following the introduction of the 2-tier post on 16 September 1968, the minimum inland letter rates became 4d for 2nd class and 5d for 1st class. The 2s book had two panes of four and provided postage for six second class letters. All the counter books had panes of six stamps. The 4s6d book contained one pane of 1d and two of 4d stamps, and was intended for users of both services. The 5s book had two panes of 5d stamps and was for users of the 1st class service. The 6s book had three panes of 4d stamps and was for users of the 2nd class service. The 10s book provided a mix of stamps suitable for both services and contained two panes of 5d, two panes of 4d and one pane of four 1d se-tenant with two 4d.

On decimalisation, these five books were succeeded by four books; one sold through machines and three over the counter. The machine vend book cost 10p, the equivalent of 2s, and gave a mix of stamps for either three first class letters or four second class ones; it was allocated to series DB1. The decimal book for users of the 2nd class service cost 25p (5s) and allowed for 10 postings; it was allocated to series DB2. The book for

users of the 1st class service cost 30p (6s) and also gave 10 postings; it was allocated to series DB3. There was only one counter book providing a mix of stamps for both services. It contained four panes and cost 50p (10s). It provided either 15 1st class postings and two 2nd class, or 10 1st class and eight 2nd class. It was allocated to series DB4.

Over time, new DB series have been allocated to meet changes in content or forms of issue, such as books with folded covers and the retail (window) books. Of particular interest, perhaps, are those sold in machines and I know several collectors who specialise in these. The machines in use on decimal day were known as F machines as it is Post Office practice to code vending machines in alphabetical sequence. This is why the first machine to vend se-tenant coil strips in February 1971 were called G. When the 10p books were issued with folded instead of stitched covers on 10 March 1976 they contained a single pane of six stamps comprising two at ½p, three at 1p and a 6p. These books were experimental and were allocated to series DB6. It lasted, with changed contents, until it was replaced with the first of a series of 50p books sold through modified machines known as F2. Further modifications led to the introduction of H and J machines (the letter I was not used), vending 50p books and, later, K and L electronically operated dual vend machines dispensing 50p and £1 books. These were allocated to different DB series. The electronic machines are still in use and now vend either £1 or £2 books.

If you are wondering what happened to series DB5, this is an occasional series and was allocated to the sponsored, later prestige, books. There was a pre-decimal precursor in the 'Stamps for Cooks' £1 book issued on 1 December 1969. This was an experiment aimed at the housewife's handbag. Today's books are aimed at the collector. You either love them or hate them but as well as providing exceptionally well-printed and informative pages, several contain stamps not obtainable from any other source, which are of interest to all who wish to form even a fairly basic



Book covers of 1971 referred to an exhibition at the National Postal Museum marking 80 years of British stamp books.

collection of Machins. Some are very well known, including the $\frac{1}{2}$ p side bar stamp from the first Wedgwood book, now retailing at around £50 but there are several others less well known and therefore cheaper. The N Ireland book of 1994 contains the only 6p stamp printed by lithography yet it will cost you less than £2. Similarly, the National Trust book of the following year has just one 10p stamp. Again, it is the only one of this common value printed by lithography but it will cost you no more than the 6p mentioned above. There are many others I could mention but I am running out of space.

If you are interested in the development of decimal stamp books over the past 28 years, you may be pleased to know that the latest edition of *'The Bookmark' Catalogue* is available to non-members for the first time. For details of how to obtain your copy see the October *Bulletin*.

GB stamp book centenary On 19 March 1971, the 25p and 30p book covers referred to an exhibition being held at the National Postal Museum which commemorated 80 years of British stamp books. This took as its starting date a private production of 1891 which was an envelope containing a memorandum book with advertisements and a single perfinned penny lilac; it was not a book of stamps. An illustrated account of it was given in the *Bulletin* of October 1970. The first book of GB stamps issued by the Post Office itself

became available on 16 March 1904. The true centenary of British stamp books will, therefore, occur in 2004. I hope that it may be marked officially in some way, perhaps by a prestige book recounting the development of GB stamp books.

World Changers prestige book revisited In my October article I said, apropos the millennium stamps, that there was no discernible difference between the booklet and sheet versions of some of them. In fact, there are slight differences in the perforations. Closer examination of these reveals some surprises.

All four booklet stamps were printed and perforated by Questa and have 23 complete holes on the vertical sides (ie, ignoring the corners). So also does the Jenner sheet stamp and this is the only one of the four which has the same gauge in both versions. The other three stamps have 24 complete holes in the vertical direction, one more than their booklet equivalents. In addition, the De La Rue Turing stamp has 25 complete holes in the horizontal direction which is again one more than the Questa version. The really interesting thing is that, taking the sheet and booklet stamps together, Questa used three different gauges.

Both Jenner stamps were perforated by an APS machine. However, the swarf (powdered paper and gum) is at the top of the holes on the sheet stamp and at the right of them on the booklet stamp. This suggests that they were printed and perforated inverted and sideways right respectively. (Incidentally, the definitives on the se-tenant pane were also printed sideways right, making all of them new stamps for the specialist.) Similarly, the position of the swarf shows that the Turing stamp was printed inverted by De La Rue and sideways right by Questa. Neither version of the Darwin or Faraday stamps has any swarf, indicating that they were perforated by a comb machine. However, two different machines were probably used since the holes on the Darwin booklet stamp have a raised rim like the edge of a volcano while the others are sharp and clear. None of these millennium stamps has elliptical perforations •

Postbag

Post Impressions exhibition Congratulations on an excellent exhibition. After seeing it referred to in the *Bulletin*, my husband and I decided to visit. Not only was it interesting to see the designers' original work and to understand the background to the inspiration behind each one, but to see and appreciate the various skills and techniques used to produce the finished design. Visiting the new British Library was also a 'first' and it provided a great setting for a most impressive exhibition. Reading about the designs in each *Bulletin* has been most informative, but the exhibition greatly added to the appreciation of the whole series.

MARY RUSSELL, CRAWLEY ●

Millennium stamps I am pleased that someone had the courage to write in and say how awful the Millennium stamp are (August *Bulletin*). The most disappointing were the Entertainers set. I thought at last Royal Mail were going to acknowledge entertainers who actually got up on stage and entertain live. Films, television and especially sport have all been well covered in previous issues. (Does the Selection Committee have an obsession with sport? We even had two consecutive sets in 1996.) I was quite pleased to see Freddie Mercury depicted but thought British-born John Lennon would have been preferable – despite his minute appearance in 1988. What about Lord Olivier to represent the legitimate stage or Marie Lloyd to represent music hall? Or maybe Max Miller for comedy. Thank goodness for the Workers' Tale set – the stamps at least look well on the envelope. For some sort of continuity all 48 stamps should have had borders or not. Many of the sets are just a mish-mash of conflicting images. My favourite (26p Workers) not really 'designed' at all but a beautiful David Hockney. The worst (26p Citizens) I truly thought was a Royal Mail joke of some kind.

MRS A OWEN, HEMEL HEMPSTEAD ●

Bulletin back issues Ray Moores of 14 Penhurst Road, Bedhampton, Havant PO9 3NX has for sale copies from February 1981 to January 1991. Offers should be sent to him at the above address ●

Millennium and definitive issues I agree very much with the remarks of Geoff Dunn (September). The background of all the stamps is very interesting to read, however some of the designs can only be described as ghastly. I will find it very hard to choose the best set of 1999 as there is not one set where there is not at least one very drab and ugly stamp.

I sometimes wonder if any of the Stamp Selection Committee are actual stamp collectors – I would say not! I have collected GB stamps from the early 1960s, and like some of your readers would like to see a change in our definitives after years and years of the same drab design. Think what attractive ones we could have to represent England (rose, three lions, flag of St George, etc), and I am sure Northern Ireland would also welcome new designs. Scotland and Wales now have new stamps – how about England and Northern Ireland? I would much appreciate it if the new definitives were in books.

MISS E D THULBORN, CAMBRIDGE.

What do readers think – both as users of the post and collectors – of the idea of definitives for England along with the issues for Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales? Or should country stamps be scrapped in favour of a pictorial definitive series covering the whole of the UK? There is one stamp collector on the Stamp Advisory Committee – Dr Jean Alexander who has served on the Committee for nearly 20 years.

ED ●

Posting boxes The September feature showed a double-aperture box in London, the apertures now marked for First Class and Abroad and Second Class mail. Formerly the division was between London and Abroad and Country mail. London and Abroad used to be sorted at the Eastern Central District Office and the London Foreign Section based in King Edward Street, whereas Country mail was sorted at the Inland Section at Mount Pleasant. With the closure of the ECDO and London FS, duties moved mainly to Mount Pleasant and thereby did away with the need for this segregation.

ANDY PENDLEBURY, ROYAL MAIL, LONDON EC2 ●

NVI stamps In the August *Bulletin* Douglas Myall says the 1989 issues were the first adhesive NVIs. They may have been the first adhesive postage NVIs but not the first use, by the Post Office, of adhesive NVI stamps. They were first used on TV licences. Prior to their introduction the TV licence was a value document to be produced, like postage stamps, under security conditions and to be re-printed each year as the licence fee was increased. Because we had to go for the cheapest producer a new licence in the numbers required took some six months to print during which time the BBC was losing income from the increase in the fee. Parliament was very touchy and it was not possible to start printing in advance of Parliamentary approval of an increase even if one could be sure that the increase would not be modified.

I, therefore, introduced an adhesive TV licence fee stamp. It bore no value – the indication lay in the colour. They were printed long before any change in fee was introduced and were issued to post offices a few weeks before the changed fee was approved. All I had to do was announce that the existing fee stamp of colour ‘x’ was to be replaced by the colour ‘y’ and the value of ‘y’. The licence then became just a form to be validated by the attachment of the TV stamp and could be printed cheaply in quantity for use at any time. The gain to the BBC was six months of the increase in the fee every time the fee changed – some £5 million when I introduced the concept in the early 1970s, and, of course, substantially more subsequently. It is very likely that the introduction of NVI stamps for postage is a logical development of my TV stamp. FRANK LANGFIELD, BRISTOL.

Frank Langfield worked for the Post Office; he set up the Philatelic Bureau in 1963 and was the first Editor of this Bulletin. ED ●

Bulletin back issues I have accumulated most issues of the *Bulletin* from the early 1980s. I no longer want them but would prefer to pass them on to someone rather than send them to recycling.

Anyone interested in collecting them from me or paying the parcel postage for sending should contact me on 01572 72 2773. PHILIP WALKER, OAKHAM ●

Posting boxes 190

THIS MONTH'S BOXES are located in Grytvikken on South Georgia Island in the South Atlantic. The photographs were submitted by Mr & Mrs C Pollard of Zimbabwe. The first is in the wall of the post office, described by the Pollards as 'the most southerly British post office'. The box, brightly painted with the Royal cipher picked out in gold, bears the name of the manufacturer, W T ALLEN & CO LTD LONDON below the cipher. The second box is in the Grytvikken Museum, 100 yards closer to the equator than, and 500 yards across the bay from the post office. Of interest is the collection notice NEXT SHIP 15TH DECEMBER. Mr & Mrs Pollard point out that this 'wasn't really in time for Christmas except perhaps on the Falkland Islands'. Apart from an undisclosed number of temporary British Army personnel, the only other residents of Grytvikken in the summer are the Postmaster and Museum curator and their wives and a part-time helper who normally shears sheep in the Antipodes.

The post office at King Edward Point features on a recently issued stamp from South Georgia & the South Sandwich Islands ●



For details of the Letter Box Study Group send a SAE or IRC to the Membership Secretary, Mrs V Scott, 38 Leopold Avenue, Handsworth Wood, Birmingham B20 1ES. The Group produces many interesting publications and postcards.

Competition Identify the stamp from the detail and win £100



September's detail was from the Farmers' Tale Millennium stamp *Mechanical farming*. Ray Skinner of West Sussex won first prize, and 20 runner-up prizes were also sent. Our thanks to all who entered.

SIMPLY identify the special stamp from the detail above and send your answer, name and address on a postcard (or back of a sealed envelope) to December Competition, British Philatelic Bulletin, Royal Mail, 2-14 Bunhill Row, London EC1Y

8HQ. The sender of the first card to be drawn on 14 January will receive £100. Twenty runner-up prizes will also be awarded.

The competition is not open to Royal Mail employees •

Special Christmas draw

WE HAVE four copies of Douglas Muir's much-praised book *Postal Reform and the Penny Black* to give away; also four 1999 Royal Mail Yearbooks, and four sets of blocks of four of the new Machin high value stamps.

For a chance to win in each draw send separate postcards with your name and address to British Philatelic Bulletin, Royal Mail, 2-14 Bunhill Row, London EC1Y 8HQ. Clearly mark the card(s) Postal Reform Draw, Yearbook Draw, or High Values Draw. All entries must be received by 14 January •



Douglas Muir's book was published by the National Postal Museum and reviewed here in September 1990.

Events

Until further notice Postal Memorabilia displays at Museum of Lincolnshire Life, Burton Road, Lincoln; Manchester Postal Museum, Wythenshaw Park, Manchester; and Oldham Post Office. **Enquiries** D Harrop, 15 Hawthorn Road, Stockport SK4 3DQ

until 18 January 2000 'Post Impressions' display of Millennium stamps and related artefacts, books, manuscripts, etc, sponsored by Royal Mail, at British Library, Euston Road, London NW1. Closed 25 December-4 January. **Enquiries** 0171 412 7332

January Exhibition by Anglo-Boer War Philatelic Society at Bath Postal Museum, 8 Broad Street, Bath BA1 5LJ. **Enquiries** 01225 460333

2-6 February Stamp 2000 at Wembley Exhibition Centre. **Enquiries** Sylvia Cook, Stanley Gibbons Ltd, 01425 461353

1-5 March Spring Stampex at Business Design Centre, London N1. **Enquiries** Stampex 0171 490 1005

2-4 March Philatex at Royal Horticultural Hall 2, London SW1. **Enquiries** 01268 726687 •

Late news

1988 Christmas error discovery Stamp dealer Andrew Lajer of Hurst near Reading reports the purchase at Autumn Stampex of a 1988 yearbook containing the Christmas stamp with value 13p instead of 14p. The yearbooks were made up with the 13p stamp before the postal rate was increased to 14p and the stamp had to be reprinted. The stamp was changed in the vast majority of yearbooks but some 13p stamps escaped. The couple who sold the book to Mr Lajer purchased a number of yearbooks (different years) at a car-boot sale for just £5 each book. The error is priced in the Stanley Gibbons catalogue at £5500 •

Post Impressions A colourful six-page folded card Exhibition Guide has been produced for this Royal Mail sponsored exhibition on show at the British Library until 18 January.

Any UK reader who would like a copy of the guide should send a stamped (19p or 26p) c5-size self-addressed envelope to British Philatelic Bulletin (Post Impressions), Royal Mail, 2-14 Bunhill Row, London EC1Y 8HQ. Overseas readers should send an addressed envelope and an international reply coupon. Requests should be received by 14 January •

Designs on the Millennium There has been a good response so far to the competition organised by Glasgow 2000 for boys and girls to design a label on the theme of 'The Year 2000'. The competition is divided into two classes, under 12 and 12 to 16, and has been assisted by a very generous grant from the Scottish Philatelic Trade Association. A circular sent out during the summer to all 200 directors of education in Scotland, as well as the youth officers of the philatelic federations in England and Wales, has produced an excellent response with entries submitted so far from all parts of the UK as well as overseas countries.

Competition organiser Frank Soutar comments, 'I am particularly heartened by the terrific response we have had, especially from the Glasgow special schools.' He also notes that Perthshire is well to the fore, two schools alone,

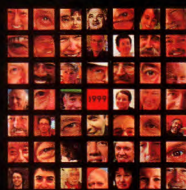
in the rural areas of the county, submitting 14 and 15 entries respectively. Depending on the number of entries received, it is hoped to arrange a wall display of them at Glasgow 2000 itself, at the Scottish Exhibition and Conference Centre, 17-19 November. Closing date for entries is 31 December 1999 and entry forms can still be obtained from Frank Soutar, 1 Campbell Drive, Larbert FK5 4PP, telephone 01324 552248.

Judging will take place in January, and the results will be announced shortly thereafter. The winning entry in each class will form the basis for a souvenir sheet, to be printed by Enschedé and available for distribution in September. Renowned artist and postal historian George Kay has designed a poster publicising a competition open to students at the four art colleges in Scotland to design a souvenir cover for the exhibition. JAMES MACKAY •

Revenue Society hosts Congress 2000 Coinciding with its 10th anniversary, the Revenue Society of Great Britain has been invited to host the 82nd Philatelic Congress of Great Britain. This will take place at a central London venue, 8-10 September 2000. It is believed to be the first time a specialist society has been given the honour of hosting the Congress. Enquiries: J Kalp, 26 Parkfield, Chorleywood WD3 5AZ •

Rare Penny Black cover auctioned Harmers auction on 12 October included a block of eight 1d Blacks used on a cover dated 14 May 1840. This realised £32,200 against an estimate of £25,000. There was strong bidding for a collection of postal stationery reply cards and misdirected mail. A Mulready 1d with MISSENT/TO BIRMINGHAM fetched £1495 and a 1911 *Windsor Chronicle* newspaper with violet wrapper sent by the London-Windsor flight mail went for £1995 (est £1250). Foreign countries lots drew considerable attention, especially a fine Holy Land collection. A cover from Safed to the UK realised £25,300 (est £5000). Enquiries: Harmers of London, 91 New Bond Street, London W1A 4EH •

GIFTS FOR YOURSELF OR A FELLOW COLLECTOR



THE STORIES BEHIND THE STAMPS



"I've used pen-and-ink on occasion and even been prodded into doing the odd wood engraving. But I'm most comfortable with scraperboard. It's a technique which allows you to draw in exactly the way you want to. I could see that my style corresponded quite nicely with the industrial



process of shipbuilding: the scaffolding that's involved, the actual shape of the individual plates that make up a hull. That kind of thing works pretty well with my technique. It's almost a technical rendition that you can do with scraperboard, somewhat similar to Victorian train engravings."

The lavishly-illustrated Royal Mail Year Books provide authoritative background stories on each issue of special stamps based on interviews with the stamp designers. Stamps are supplied on stock cards ready for mounting in the book. Each book supplied in a matching slip-case.

The **1999 Year Book**, with 50 special Millennium and Royal Wedding stamps, goes on sale on 7 December, price £25.95 (£75 leather-bound). *Leather-bound versions are available only from the Bureau.*

The popular Royal Mail Collectors Packs contain stamps on stock cards with a colourful and informative brochure giving details of the

stamp subjects. **1999 Year Pack** on sale from 7 December, price £19.95.

On sale at the Bureau, Post Office Counters philatelic outlets and main post offices.

Bulletin readers can order both Year Book and Year Pack at a special price of £24.75 and £18.15. Orders must reach the Bureau by 28 January quoting reference 99-ABC.

British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, Edinburgh EH3 5TT
Telephone 0345 641 641 (UK), 0131 550 8989 (overseas)



Reference 99-ABC



Royal Mail