

BRITISH PHILATELIC

The ROYAL MAIL magazine for stamp collectors

Bulletin

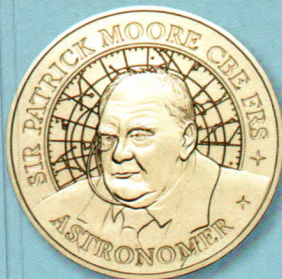
Volume 44 Number 6

FEBRUARY 2007 £1.20

Postbuses • The Sky at Night
• Machin anniversary issue



The Sky at Night: Marking 50 years of the celebrated TV programme, a set of six stamps featuring nebulae is on sale from 1 February.



ONE NIGHT, IN 1996, I spent several hours in my observatory studying the planet Jupiter... Then a thought struck me...

Sir Patrick Moore, in *The Sky at Night* presentation pack



Forthcoming issues and withdrawals



Cover Main image: the Eagle Nebula, captured by NASA's Hubble Space Telescope. Margaret Morris writes about such wonders of the night in her article on page 172. Royal Mail's Sky at Night issue was previewed in the November 2006 *Bulletin*. Medal from the Sky at Night medal cover (see January *Bulletin*, p139).

Issues All items are available from Royal Mail Tallents House (address below); selected items are available at Post Office branches and Post Office philatelic outlets at main post offices in Bath, Birmingham, Brighton, Bristol, Cambridge, Canterbury, Cardiff, Chester, Colchester, Coventry, Croydon, Durham, Edinburgh, Exeter, Glasgow, Grimsby, Harrogate, Leicester, London (Trafalgar Square & Eastcheap), Newcastle upon Tyne, Norwich, Nottingham, Plymouth, Portsmouth, Southampton, Southend-on-Sea, Stevenage, Stratford-on-Avon, Stroud, Truro, Windsor and York.

Royal Mail Tallents House 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB, UK. Telephone order line (08.30 - 17.00 Monday to Friday): 08457 641 641; from overseas +44 131 316 7483. Minimum handling charge UK £1.45, Europe £1.55, rest of world (airmail) £2.15. Some products can be ordered on Royal Mail's website: www.royalmail.com/shop

25 January	Issue Sea Life stamp cards
1 February	Issue Sea Life stamps and presentation pack ● stamp book: 6 × 1st definitives with postcode label on inside front cover
6 February	Issue Sky at Night stamp cards
13 February	Issue Sky at Night stamps, presentation pack and medal cover
20 February	Issue Ingot Pack: George VI 1d stamp
22 February	Withdrawal Brunel stamps, miniature sheet, presentation pack, stamp cards and prestige book (coin cover to be withdrawn 22 March)
22 February	Issue World of Invention stamp cards (7 cards – 6 stamps and miniature sheet)
28 February	Withdrawal Welsh Assembly miniature sheet
1 March	Issue World of Invention stamps, miniature sheet and prestige book ● 'Glorious Wales' Generic and Smilers sheets
6 March	Withdrawal Fun Fruit & Veg Generic and Smilers sheets; Moving Home, The White Ensign, Stick & Send, and Home & Away Smilers sheets
15 March	Issue Abolition of the Slave Trade stamp cards
20 March	Withdrawal Ice Age Animals stamps, presentation pack and stamp cards
22 March	Issue Abolition of the Slave Trade stamps, presentation pack and coin cover
22 March	Withdrawal Brunel coin cover
27 March	Issue Definitives: 16p, 48p, 50p (new colour), 54p, 78p. Country stamps 48p and 78p for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland

Contents

Royal Mail Post Bus

Billesdon district services from Friday, 7.9.1973
Flat rate fare: 5p.



Postbus anniversary The postbus service, inaugurated in 1967, is a rich subject for collectors. Martin Robinson tells the story so far **178**

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Issues and withdrawals

January to March **162**

This month The Editor previews this issue **164**

Stamp scene

Stampex; Torquay; NPS library; The Dublin Find; Swiss post buses; Periodicals; Auction news **164**

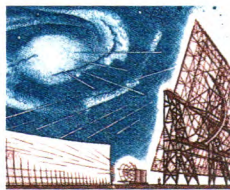
Royal Mail news

Special issue programme; New Generic and Smilers sheets; Medal and coin covers; George VI Ingot Pack; Adam Novak **168**



Mainly Machins Report by DGA Myall **170**

Night wonders A theme suggested by Margaret Morris **172**



Machin anniversary A preview of Royal Mail's special issue to mark 40 years of Machins **175**

Treasures of the BPMA

The 1967 EFTA issue by Martin Robinson **181**



Eminent collectors Ron Negus on the career of Charles Nissen **182**

Philately online A GB program is reviewed by Ron Negus **185**

Belgica 2006 A report from Richard West **186**



Cover corner Two 6os Transorma covers **187**

Obituaries Kenneth F Chapman & Alexander Newall **188**

Prize draw Win one of 10 mystery prizes **189**

Competitions £200 to be won in two easy-to-enter competitions **190**

Events to April **190**

Late news **191**

This month The Editor previews this issue

THIS YEAR, as most readers will be well aware, sees the 40th anniversary of the current definitive stamp design, known simply to collectors worldwide as the Machin. The anniversary will be commemorated in June by a miniature sheet, prestige book and other products. Both sheet and book will contain stamps reproducing the original 4d Machin of 1967 and a portrait of the late Arnold Machin, chosen by his son Francis. I am sure these will be well received by the large number of Machin collectors, the more enthusiastic of whom declare themselves 'Machin Maniacs'. The £1 definitive is being replaced by one printed in ruby to mark the 40th anniversary; this is a permanent change and a new addition to the Jeffery Matthews colour palette. The Machin anniversary issue is previewed this month.

It is also the 40th anniversary of the introduction of postbuses in the UK and an article on this subject is included in this month's *Bulletin*, showing some of the items of postbus memorabilia that can be collected.

Twice the age of both Machins and postbuses is James Negus, a former contributor to this *Bulletin* and best-known as a writer on philatelic literature and as Editor of the Stanley Gibbons Stamp Catalogue, 1977-81. Jim retired from philatelic activity a few years ago, but I am sure many collectors who know him, or have read his works, will join me in wishing him well for his 80th birthday this month. Jim's younger brother Ron is still active in the philatelic world as Archivist of the Royal Philatelic Society London and contributes the popular 'Philately Online' feature for this *Bulletin*.

Finally, don't forget Spring Stampex at the end of this month (see opposite), preceded by Philatex at the Royal Horticultural Halls, London SW1 on 22-24 February. Both are worth a visit. JOHN HOLMAN, EDITOR ●



James Negus, 80 this month

Stamp scene News and upcoming events: Glenn Morgan keeps you posted



Exhibits at Torquay 2006.

Torquay 2006 Further to John Holman's report from the successful ABPS National Stamp Exhibition held last November, following are details relating to four of the exhibits that I especially enjoyed viewing.

Steve Boorn's International Thematic 'The Heart is Life' (winner of a Gold medal, plus no fewer than three Special Awards) tells a very personal story, with a poignant prologue and epilogue about his receipt of a transplanted heart. I have seen this exhibit progress over several years and Steve has always been willing to listen to anyone and everyone's advice about exhibiting, taking the best comments and incorporating them into his display. It has certainly paid-off big time.

It was good to see Cinderellas on display at Torquay, as I have always stated my belief that this is a collecting area rich in possibilities. Due to my long association with the National (previously Junior) Philatelic Society, Eric Rust's display 'The Ideal Stamp' was of particular interest to me.

Over 48 pages he showed what must be as complete a collection of this material from the 1912/13 shows in London and Paris as can be formed. A well-deserved Vermeil medal was awarded by the jury.

Inter-Federation exhibits (three allowed per region) came from around half of those eligible, showing good support for the first 'all classes' National show outside London. Despite Kent winning the ABPS trophy, my own favourites were the displays from the North-East: 'Pre-Decimal Machin Definitives 1967-71', 'Censorship at St Helena during the Anglo-Boer War', and 'From Foot to Rail: the Development of Mail in and through Fife'.

Michael Oliver's five-frame display in the International Traditional class, 'The De La Rue Colonial Key Plate Issues' won a Large Vermeil medal. DLR's ingenuity in creating generic stamp face designs requiring only the insertion of the colony's name and stamp face value is undoubted. I had not realized, though, that these Key Plates had continued in use through six reigns to 1954, with the Leeward Islands having examples from QV to QEII.

The very high standard of exhibits and the great support for the competitions at Torquay 2006 augurs well for the future of these shows; I look forward to the Croydon event at the Fairfield Halls, 23-24 November •

Croydon exhibiting Adult classes: Allan Jones, email allan@jones2888.freemove.co.uk or telephone 01322 522916. Youth Championships: Richard West, email richwest@btinternet.com or telephone 020 8644 7834.

Spring Stampex 2007 The now customary Business Customised Sheet will celebrate well known (and some not so well known) innovators and inventors. Those celebrated are Sir Alexander Fleming, Sir George Caley, John Logie Baird, Sir William Hillary, William Caxton, Sir Rowland Hill, Sir Frank Whittle, Florence Nightingale, Percy Shaw and Richard Trevithick. Each is shown on labels alongside the 'Thanks' Hallmark water-activated stamp design, and the margin depicts some of their achievements. Sheet price to be announced. Number 12 in the series of free postcards will be available; its subject had yet to be confirmed at the time of going to press.

A main attraction at Stampex will be part of the 'Moving the Mail' exhibition mounted by the British Postal Museum & Archive, previously on show at the Coventry Transport Museum – see Martin Robinson's report in the October *Bulletin* (page 53).

Royal Mail's stand will offer its full range of stamps and products; the new World of Invention stamps go on sale on the second day of the show. Posting boxes will be provided for the Stampex special handstamps •

Stampex opening times

28 February	12.00-19.00
1-3 March	10.30-18.00
4 March	10.30-15.00

The Business Design Centre, Upper Street, London N1.
Admission is free on all days.
Enquiries: 01252 628006.



NPS library closure NPSL will move to new premises during March and an announcement as to where this will be is due. Meanwhile, the amount of work needed to log, sort and shift three floors of material dating back to the 1860s is enormous, so the library will close until April. Every effort will be made to facilitate borrowing and returning books that are out on loan during NPS meeting days, but this will be subject to Health and Safety regulations, and browsing will not be possible. Books may also be returned in weekday NPS office hours, but unfortunately the library will not be open. This will disappoint some collectors who regularly use the library, but it is simply not practical to be open while undertaking the packing – and I should know, as I am the Librarian who is project managing the move! •

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London EC1M 6PT.

GBPS Membership Secretary, Peter Tanner, Highstandings, 13 St Hubert's Close, Gerrards Cross, Bucks SL9 7EN, e-mail peter@tanner.freemove.co.uk

SGB Secretary, P R de Rooij, Verlengde Horstlaan 4, 3971 MP Driebergen-Rijsenburg, Netherlands, e-mail p.de.rooij@inter.nl.net or see website www.sgbritannia.nl

BTA Membership Secretary, Peter Denly, 9 Oaklands Park, Bishops Stortford CM23 2BY, Website www.brit-thematic-assoc.com

ABPS For more details write to Mike Brindle, PO Box 199, Thetford IP24 3WX.

Society periodicals The Great Britain Philatelic Society's November/December *GB Journal* contains features, some in colour, on KGV1 Emergency Stamps, QV 1/2d Stamp, HMS *Atlanta* and the Bermuda Triangle, Even More Seahorse Discoveries and an Index to volume 44. The *GBPS Newsletter* contains its popular mix of smaller features on many aspects of the world of collecting British philatelic material, including the VR Penny Black, KGV1 Coronation, GBPS 1966 Exhibition and four features on cancellations •

Britannia News is the publication of the Studiegroep Britannia, now in its 37th year of operation. The December 2006 issue of their journal includes features on many varied aspects of GB collecting and, despite being written in the Dutch language, is worth obtaining for its extensive illustrations alone, and if you can either read Dutch or you have the technology to type the text into an online text translator there is much to discover •

December's *Themescene* (British Thematic Association) includes special features on Explorers and Chinese Treasure Ships, as well as reports on exhibitions (Washington, España, and Stampa) and news of BTA activities and members. There is a tribute to Elizabeth Miller, a BTA stalwart, who sadly died in September. A number of new Crown Agents issues are featured, and some recent British special handstamps as announced in the *British Postmark Bulletin*. The Association runs a library, and librarian Ron Backhouse provides an update of articles now in the library, covering subjects from aircraft and art to playing cards and police. *Themescene* is a well-produced magazine, edited by Wendy Buckle •

The December issue of *ABPS news* (Association of British Philatelic Societies) includes the awards for the Torquay exhibition, a report on Autumn Stampex, and a profile of new ABPS Membership Secretary Alan Godfrey, in addition to reports of meetings of local and specialist societies. Advance details are given of the next ABPS exhibition, at the Fairfield Halls, Croydon, 23-24 November 2007. This event will include the Philatelic Congress of GB, and Congress Papers will be presented on the Saturday afternoon. Editor Richard West announces that he is to stand down as Editor after seven years; a new Editor is being sought to continue his good work •



Book review The subtitle of *The Dublin Find: The Most Important Stamp Find in GB Philately* claims a great deal, so it was with some curiosity and, dare I say, not a little doubt that it could be the most important British stamp find, that I started reading, for I was only vaguely familiar with the discovery. In no time at all I was hooked! This is a tale of intrigue and secret stamp dealing by the Post Office at the very beginning of the 20th century, and a modern investigation into where the stamps may have ended up.

The first part of this publication was written by Don Madden and examines the background to the Dublin Find, describing how in 1899 various stamps and postal stationery dating from the 1840s were apparently found at the Dublin and Edinburgh post offices, and possibly London as well. Leading Post Office officials decided to obtain as much money for these as they could on the philatelic market, but instead of admitting who was selling the material, they arranged for PO employees to sell it at auction under

their own names. It is a story of cover-ups, undercover agents, death under 'extra-ordinary circumstances', a '...rather slippery person...', incarceration – many of the requirements of a good novel, but this is not fiction. This first section includes some 34 photographs, memoranda, letters and the like, together with tables, references and acknowledgements that all help to explain the story and the characters involved.

Part two was written by Karl Louis and investigates what has happened to the philatelic items since their discovery. There are 76 separate pieces illustrated (mostly pairs or blocks), together with eight diagrams of where these singles or blocks of stamps came from in each sheet and who has owned, or now owns, them (ie their attribution, such as the 1841 Penny Red, plate 9, top left block of 18 '1938: de Worms. Now: BPMA').

Original source files held at BPMA were consulted, and considered to be the most important for research as they provided 'hard facts'. Photographs from the Earl of Crawford's collection and from the RPSL's Expert Committee also helped to put together the jigsaw. Karl's Card Index Register of multiples was also of immense use; his reconstruction of the 1840 line-engraved Crawford sheets saw the award of the Tapling Medal following publication of the results of his study in *The London Philatelist*, January 2005.

Douglas Muir, Curator, Philately, at the BPMA states in the foreword: '...An excellent study based on very extensive research...Karl Louis's reconstructions of the material from subsequent sales of broken down sheets is a remarkable achievement.' This is a valuable addition to the GB philately and a truly great read, dispelling non-collectors' doubts about the hobby being boring! I heartily recommend that *Bulletin* readers purchase a copy while they are still available ●

The Dublin Find A4 size, full-colour soft covers, 64 pages in b/w, including 13 pages of relevant advertising. £15 plus postage: Inland £2.00; Europe (air) £3; Rest of world (air) £5, (surface) £3. Available from: Mike Jackson Publications, 3 Cottesmore Avenue, Melton Mowbray LE13 0HY, or www.mjpublications.com

Auctions Spink will auction Mailboat Cancellations and St Lucia (Peter Jaffe Collection) on 7 March, followed by GB and Single Vendor sales on 8 and 21 March respectively, and British Empire Stamps on 12 April.

Cavendish's 29 November sale included two cartons of early to modern duplicated accumulation/collection (1000s of stamps), sold for £2640 with an estimate of just £360! A plate 11 Penny Black cover sent from Beaminster to Hathersage realised £977 (£750), and a quadruple Maltese Cross cancel on a single Penny Red on cover from Peterhead to Aberdeen (September 1841) made £575 (£100). A scarce set of 18 18th century carriers' letters with parcel endorsements achieved £575 (£150). The next auctions are Literature (6 February, postal only) and Collections, etc (14 February) ●

Spink Telephone 020 7563 4000 or see www.spink.com

Cavendish Telephone 01332 250970 or see website www.cavendish-auctions.com

Post buses As the number of post bus services in the UK continues to decline as its 40th anniversary approaches, the Swiss postal service has recently celebrated the centenary of its buses with a special event in the Bernese municipality of Aarberg. A report in *GSM* stated that 'Switzerland without post buses is unimaginable'. What a shame that we do not hold our own buses in the same esteem as they do in Switzerland – perhaps their love affair with the motorcar is not so strong? A whole range of post bus souvenirs is available from the Swiss shop at the website address opposite ●

www.postbus.ch/en/index_pag/pag_bestellen_shop/pag_postauto_shop.htm

Royal Mail news New issues and products



Sea Life: issued 1 February

Special stamps There are two issues this month – Sea Life on the 1st, followed by The Sky at Night on the 13th. Next month's two issues are World of Invention and Abolition of the Slave Trade (previewed in December). Next month we will be previewing the British Grand Prix issue (3 July) and publishing a list of the stamps for 2008. The Grand Prix stamps mark the centenary of Brooklands, the world's first purpose-built oval motor racing track, and the 50th anniversary of Stirling Moss winning the British Grand Prix. The six stamps feature the racing cars of Graham Hill, Jackie Stewart, Nigel Mansell, Stirling Moss, Jim Clark, and James Hunt ●

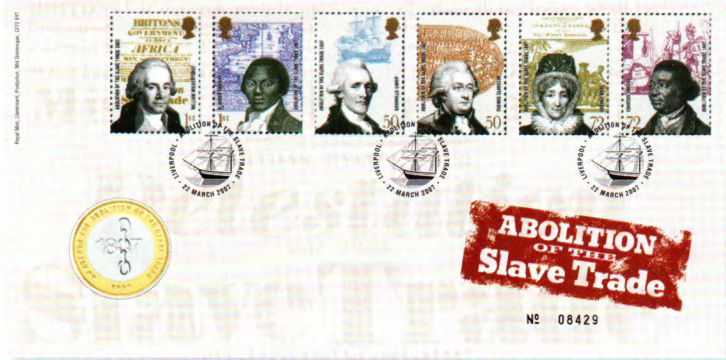
Coming off sale The Brunel stamps, miniature sheet, pack, cards and prestige book will be withdrawn on 22 February; the Brunel coin cover will remain on sale for a further month. The Welsh Assembly miniature sheet will be withdrawn on 28 February and the Ice Age Animals stamps, pack and stamp cards on 20 March ●

Generic and Smilers sheets Readers are reminded that a new generic sheet, entitled 'Cymru Wych – Glorious Wales' containing 20 Wales 1st class stamps and adjoining labels showing Welsh scenery will be available from 1 March, price £6.55. Both stamps and labels are self-adhesive. The stamp will also be available in a Smilers sheet with the customer's own image printed on the adjoining labels.

The Generic and Smilers sheets of Fun, Fruit & Veg stamps will be withdrawn on 6 March, also the following Smilers sheets: 'Moving Home' (20 Moving Home Occasions stamp 2002), 'The White Ensign' (White Ensign stamp originally issued 2001), 'Home & Away' (Aeroplane and Postman Occasions stamps of 2004), and 'Stick & Send' (Face, Duck, and Baby Occasions stamps of 2004). All stamps in these Smilers sheets are printed litho. Following these withdrawals, all remaining Smilers sheets have definitive-size stamps and the new larger labels (double definitive stamp size).

Generic sheets are those with pre-printed labels; Smilers sheets have a customer's own image printed to order. For details of how to order Smilers sheets phone 0845 074 2000 (UK customers) or +44 131 316 7483 (overseas), or pick up a leaflet/order form from a Post Office branch. Orders can be placed over the web (www.royalmail.com) using digital photos. One Smilers sheet of 20 1st class stamps costs £14.95, two-four sheets £13.95 each, and five-nine sheets £11.95 each. Enquire for prices of larger quantities ●

Stamp Ingot Packs The second Ingot Pack for the Edward VIII and George VI stamps will be available from 20 February, price £27.95. The ingot features the George VI 1d definitive, issued on 10 May 1937, two days before his coronation. Handling charge on all ingots £1.45 UK, £1.55 Europe, £2.15 rest of world. All orders and enquiries to Royal Mail Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB. UK order line 08457 641 641 (overseas +44 131 316 7483) ●



The Abolition of Slavery coin cover, on sale from 22 March. Price £15.50.

Medal and coin covers A new medal cover for the Sky at Night stamps will be available from 13 February, day of issue of the stamps, price £14.50. It bears the six stamps cancelled by a special Greenwich handstamp. A coin cover for the Abolition of the Slave Trade issue (22 March) will bear the six stamps cancelled by a special Liverpool postmark, price £15.50. The filler card includes a slavery timeline, illustrated with 19th century West African objects. The £2 coin features the year '1807' with a broken chain.

The last of the four country coin covers goes on sale on 23 April – this bears the England country stamps and a £1 coin showing the Millennium Bridge, Gateshead, price £13.50. The three earlier covers (Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland) are still available, price £13.50 each. The four covers will be available later in a collection folder.

Further coin/medal covers in 2007 will include the Machin anniversary, Scouts and Queen's Diamond Wedding issues. The 2006 Brunel coin cover will be withdrawn from sale on 22 March; order now from Tallents House (order code ANO42, price £15.95) if you still need this for your collection •

New stamp book A new book of six 1st class stamps, with a postcode advert on the inside front cover, will be available from Tallents House and Post Office philatelic outlets from 1 February. It will go on sale at Post Office branches and retail outlets as supplies of existing books are used up •

Obituary We are sorry to report the death in December of Adam Novak, who was Director & General Manager of Royal Mail National, 1995-99. Amongst many areas of responsibility, Mr Novak was in overall charge of Royal Mail's philatelic section, and chaired the Stamp Advisory Committee. Highly intelligent and a committed 'marketeer', he was keen on self-promotion, even to the extent of wanting his own *Bulletin* feature. Articles entitled 'Chairman's comments' appeared under his name between December 1997 and July 1999. He took a genuine interest in the design of stamps, but did not find the philatelic community much to his taste, although he was enthusiastic about the Rowland Hill Awards. After leaving Royal Mail, he bravely fought illness, and his death in his early 50s has saddened his former colleagues. We extend our sympathy to his family •



Adam Novak

Mainly Machins Specialist collectors report by D G A Myall



Scotland miniature sheet and self-adhesives book with Smiler.

Scotland miniature sheet On 30 November 2006, the first of four miniature sheets to be issued honouring the patron saints of the four countries of the union was issued. Each country's sheet will be printed in gravure by De La Rue, and will bear two wide-format special issues depicting the saint and an important landmark of the country concerned plus two 1st class pictorial definitives, one of them being the current stamp. The other features the national flag or a national symbol.

Called 'Celebrating Scotland', the date of issue of the first sheet is that of the patron saint of Scotland, which is known as Saint Andrew's day. Very little is known about St Andrew himself. He was thought to have been a fisherman in Galilee who became an apostle of Jesus Christ, the founder of the Christian religion. (Scotland is one of the few countries to have one of Christ's disciples as their patron saint.) He was said to have been crucified by the Romans on a diagonal cross and his bones, or some of them, were carried to Scotland where a religious settlement was founded in his name. Legend has it that a white cross appeared in the sky following Andrew's appearance in the dream of a Scottish king prior to a battle with the English and promised him victory. This is said to be why the cross is white on a blue background. The cross subsequently became a motif in Scotland's national flag.

The saint's stamp in the miniature sheet shows him against a background of a shoal of fish and a net. The other special stamp depicts a floodlit Edinburgh Castle. Both have a face value of 72p. This is the current cost for a worldwide airmail letter up to 20g and I expect that many of these

special stamps will be used for sending Christmas greetings to the many expatriate Scots who now live in almost every country of the world. The red 1st class definitive depicts a heraldic lion rampant, and is almost indistinguishable from that issued in sheets and the Scottish Parliament sheet of October 2005. (For specialists, the make-up of the vignetted bars on stamps from the two miniature sheets differs slightly.) The other 1st class definitive is based on a revised image of the saltire or x-shaped cross of Scotland which has been the image on the 2nd class pictorial definitive for that country ever since this was first issued in June of 1999. Used singly, there is potential for confusion of the public here although sorting machines will have no problem as the phosphor bars on the two stamps will ensure that both the 1st and 2nd class stamps are treated correctly. If you collect pictorial definitives, make sure you get your 1st class saltire as this sheet may be the sole source of this stamp.

The second sheet in this series will be issued on 23 April 2007, the national day of the patron saint of England, Saint George. The two special 72p stamps will feature the saint and the Houses of Parliament. The other two saint's days will be celebrated in 2007 and 2008. I expect that the face value of the special issues will have altered before they are seen.

New coil stamps You may recall that rolls of 500 × 2nd class PIP letter stamps were issued on 15 August last. Rolls of 1000 of both classes were issued on 3 October. The rolls of 500 1st class PIP letter stamp were not issued until 14 November.

All of these rolls were printed by De La Rue and are conventionally gummed with pva. There are no cylinder numbers. The stamps are identical even if they come from rolls of different sizes, so bear these dates in mind if you are a collector of first day covers.

The specialist Machin dealers are also offering stamps from rolls of 10,000 printed in gravure by Enschedé – these are self-adhesives. The rolls are sold to large mail order houses who prefer to use stamps instead of post-paid impressions, as they are more likely to have the human touch and so encourage a response. They can be supplied from Tallents House, but only in complete rolls; there is no philatelic distribution of the stamps from them. The rolls are the only source of self-adhesive stamps for the PIP letter services in coil form, and they include a feature which is not present on the equivalent stamps from booklets. Every 10th stamp has a five-digit number printed on the reverse. This counts down so that it is easy to see how many stamps are left on a roll. These jumbo rolls do not have leaders. Similar rolls of 10,000 self-adhesive stamps were printed by Enschedé in 2003; these have pre-PIP stamps. Although mint singles or strips from these rolls cannot be supplied to collectors by Tallents House and you will naturally have to pay a premium to obtain any from dealers, used examples from commercial mail are worth looking out for.

Self-adhesives book of 5 + Smiler On 16 January, by the time you read this, a book of six 1st class self-adhesive stamps will have been issued. It is unusual in that it contains five of the gold PIP letter stamps and one of the ‘Love’ Smilers stamps first issued in October 2005. Royal Mail considers these small-format Smiler stamps to be definitives. Many collectors, on the other hand, regard them as special issues in view of their origin. This difference of opinion will no doubt give the catalogue editors a headache. The stamp portion of the book was shown in the January *Bulletin* (page 137); the inside front cover bears the exhortation ‘don’t just send a stamp’, and reproduces one of the 2nd class stamps marking The Queen’s 80th birthday.



One of the Smartstamps produced by the Society of Olympic Collectors in 2004 (see October 2004 *Bulletin*, page 45).

Matrix overprints In my previous article I wrote about the Smartstamp and Online stamp schemes which do not carry The Queen’s head but include a barcoded matrix unique to each printing. This can be read by machines, and carries an impressive amount of information, including the class of service, amount paid, date to be used by and delivery address. Did you know that this kind of overprint was once seriously considered for use on Machin stamps?

An account of the technical changes affecting Machin stamps in the period 1990-93 was given in the October 1993 *Bulletin*. It was written by Dr A R Lane, then head of Royal Mail’s Materials Research Laboratory. Part of this account dealt with possible changes to phosphor information printed onto stamps and read by machines. Then, as now, this consisted of vertical bars, the width and number of which activate the mail sorting process. Dr Lane posed the intriguing possibility that the scanners on the machines used might be asked to read more information on the stamp’s surface, such as its value if it was coded in a form ‘similar to that shown in the illustration’. The illustration referred to appeared on page 31 of that issue of the *Bulletin*. This shows a Machin stamp without a value, photographed under ultraviolet with a barcoded matrix very similar in appearance to those now in use for the SmartStamp and Online schemes. Machin stamps with this kind of phosphor overprint were never issued, but the research work was clearly not wasted.

Incidentally, the stamp in the illustration has elliptical perforations at the top instead of in the usual place. Machins with this feature appeared only once, and then by accident. In 1996, three non-cylinder £1 machine-vend books were found which had been perforated in reverse, yielding a total of six 1p, three 20p and nine 26p stamps with the error ●



Visit World Stamp Expo 2000, Anaheim, California, July 7-16, 2000

Images from the Hubble Space Telescope named in honor of distinguished American astronomer EDWIN POWELL HUBBLE

Eagle Nebula

NASA's Hubble Space Telescope captured the beauty of a dramatic region of star formation. This stellar nursery, known as the Eagle Nebula, features pillars of dust and gas that act as cocoons for embryonic stars.

33USA

EAGLE NEBULA

33USA

LAGOON NEBULA

33USA

GALAXY NGC 1316

Night wonders A theme by Margaret Morris

UNDERSTANDING OF THE various objects which appear in the sky took many centuries and at first was confined to observing the relative positions of these objects and their motions. With the invention of the telescope it became possible to gain a better understanding of their physical characteristics, but it was only when telescopes became really large and powerful that the nature and diversity of many fuzzy patches of light, originally called 'nebulae' (clouds), became clear.

In 1845, William Parsons, Third Earl of Rosse, completed his giant telescope (opposite, top left) in the grounds of his estate at Birr in Ireland. This instrument had a 72-inch diameter light-gathering mirror housed between massive stone piers. With it, he was able to see that the 'nebula' in the constellation of the Hunting Dogs was actually a spiral form. It is a fairly typical galaxy with two arms spiralling out from the centre, the only unusual feature being a 'blob' at the end of one arm (since catalogued as a separate small galaxy). This beautiful object was nicknamed the 'Whirlpool' (opposite, centre, second from top), and it has become something of a tradition to accord nicknames to such objects. For example in *The Sky at Night* set, the 'Eskimo' nebula got its name because it resembles a face surrounded by a parka (see front cover of this *Bulletin*). Others take their name from the constellation in which they are situated – for example, the Andromeda Galaxy, the galaxy nearest to our own (right). The Andromeda Galaxy is a 'standard' spiral form with two small adjacent galaxies, and it is believed that our own Galaxy would look very like this if seen from a distance.

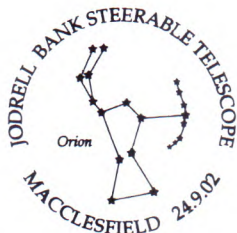
We live on a modest-sized planet orbiting a fairly ordinary star (our Sun) which is situated on one of the arms of our own Galaxy, known as The Milky Way. We see this with the unaided eye as a fuzzy band of light, but it is composed of countless individual stars. This marks the plane of our Galaxy. There are some gaps in The Milky Way, where dark matter obscures the stars. The Milky Way appears on several stamp designs including one from Hungary (opposite, left, second from top) which additionally features the Mark I radio telescope at Jodrell Bank (reminding us that galaxies are also studied and mapped nowadays in radio frequencies).

There are a fair number of stamps and other philatelic items depicting galaxies. The Astronomy miniature sheet and prestige stamp book *Across the Universe* issued by Royal Mail in 2002 would make a good place to start a collection (opposite, top right, with a 'galaxy' postmark). However, the first stamps to depict actual galaxies based on photographs were issued in 1942 by Mexico, to mark the inauguration of the astrophysical observatory at Tonanzintla. These show several different types of galaxy, including the 'Sombrero' (opposite, far left, third from top), which is simply a galaxy seen edge-on with a broad band of obscuring material across its middle. The 'Horse's Head' (opposite, bottom left), is an area of gas and dust hiding from us the brightness of part of the Orion Galaxy in which it appears, and takes its nickname from its distinctive shape. ►

The beautiful Sky at Night stamps were issued this month to mark the 50th anniversary of television's longest-running show. They may be thought of as a tribute to past astronomers and today's technology



Andromeda – the nearest galaxy to our own Milky Way.



The constellation Orion on a postmark of 2002 (applied in silver ink).

These 1942 stamps also reveal the state of astronomical photography at that time, which was straightforward black and white, the clarity and detail depending on the length of exposure. It is important to remember that the dazzling images which we are now used to seeing in glossy coffee-table books on astronomy mainly depend on image manipulation which is employed to highlight individual features such as the presence of different gases and can provide a better understanding of structure.

To cite the Eskimo galaxy again, on one of the first class stamps, this image was built up from separate filter images, first monochrome and then coloured, which were stacked to produce a composite image. It is useful to remember that in addition to the teams which designed, built, launched and controlled the Hubble Space Telescope, there is also an important image-processing team.

In addition to the beautiful sky objects themselves, it is possible to find on stamps some of the astronomers who have contributed to research on the galaxies – although so far France has failed to honour Charles Messier who created an early catalogue of these objects. To this day, many of the earliest-discovered nebulae and galaxies are known by his classification which consists of the initial *m* plus a number – for example, *M31* is the Andromeda Galaxy. Another classification system was *NGC*, standing for New General Catalogue. More modern classifications also exist.

Amongst the astronomers associated with galactic research, one should include Edwin Hubble, who appears on several philatelic items but is best seen on the margin of a large USA miniature (how big is ‘miniature’?) sheet. This contained 20 stamps – four each of five designs – with, very helpfully, a brief description of each design printed on the back (see p172). Hubble sketched out a diagram showing a number of different types of galaxy and some of these are to be found on stamps – for example, the barred spiral form on the French stamp with the Nançay radio telescope (page 172, top centre). Some other scientists associated with galactic research are Bessel,

Eddington, Einstein, Galileo (first to see that the Milky Way was composed of stars), the Herschels (father and son), Kant, Lemaître, Newton and Oort – all of whom can be found on stamps.

The ground-based instruments and spacecraft which have advanced our understanding of these distant objects also appear on numerous issues, as well as on postmarks and other collectables.

Another possibility would be to include the many stamp designs depicting the constellations in which these galaxies are situated.

All in all, this attractive issue could spark off an interesting and unusual collecting theme with plenty of scope. Perhaps Royal Mail’s tribute to Sir Patrick Moore may do as much to popularise astronomy as the presenter of *The Sky at Night* has himself done so successfully for so many years ●



Margaret Morris studied astronomy at Glasgow University and later worked in the University Observatory. One of the world’s leading thematic collectors, it is not surprising that astronomy is one of her themes. She wrote *An Introduction to Thematic Collecting* (Bulletin Publication no5, 1998) and an article about the solar eclipse in the August 1999 *Bulletin*. A profile of Margaret was published here in June 1997. Above: receiving the Stanley Gibbons medal from John Farthing and Sir Patrick Moore, for her astronomy display in 1980.

40th anniversary of the Machin design

T H E M A C H I N D E F I N I T I V E S



F O R T I E T H A N N I V E R S A R Y

AS MANY *Bulletin* READERS will know, this year marks the 40th anniversary of the Machin definitive series which started with three stamps (4d, 1s and 19d) on 5 June 1967. To mark the anniversary Royal Mail will issue a miniature sheet, prestige stamp book, a new £1 definitive, and a number of other products on 5 June 2007.

NEW DEFINITIVE A new £1 definitive will be printed in a ruby colour for the 40th (ruby) anniversary, replacing the current mauve colour in use since 1995. Ruby is a new Jeffery Matthews colour. The stamp will be printed by De La Rue in gravure in sheets of 200.

MINIATURE SHEET The anniversary miniature sheet comprises the new and obsolescent £1 stamps, with two new special 1st class stamps (size 35 × 37mm), one showing Arnold Machin, the other the 4d stamp from 1967. The portrait of Arnold Machin was supplied by his son Francis. The stamps are captioned 'ARNOLD MACHIN 1911-1999' and 'FIRST MACHIN ISSUED 1967'. The sheet will be printed by De La Rue in gravure, and measures 127 × 73mm. It was designed by Jeffery Matthews and Together design group. The images of Arnold Machin and the 4d stamp on the two special stamps are embossed, so they stand out from the sheet. It will also be available in a presentation pack, and in a press sheet containing 12 miniature sheets (as printed before guillotining into individual sheets). The pack, written by Arnold Machin's son Francis, was designed by Webb & Webb Design Limited and features many ceramics from the Machin Archives and a photograph of Machin at work in his studio watched by his young son. The pack includes a facsimile of Arnold Machin's signature. ►

ROYAL MAIL TALENTS HOUSE EDINBURGH
"THE MOST FAMILIAR PIECE OF 20TH CENTURY BRITISH SCULPTURE"
A N WILSON
5.6.2007

"WINDSOR"
"THINGS MEN HAVE MADE WITH WAKENED HANDS"
D H LAWRENCE
5.6.2007

There will also be a first day postmark for Stoke-on-Trent, Machin's birthplace. Details to follow.

Sponsored handstamps will be announced in the *British Postmark Bulletin*. For a free sample copy, write to: The Editor, British Postmark Bulletin, Royal Mail, 148 Old Street, London EC1V 9HQ.



GENERIC SHEET A sheet of 20 of the 1st class stamp showing Arnold Machin will be available. Accompanying labels feature the original Machin definitives, from ½d to £1, issued between June 1967 and March 1969. This will make a nostalgic souvenir for collectors who have the original stamps.

The Machin: The Making of a Masterpiece Stamp panes are:

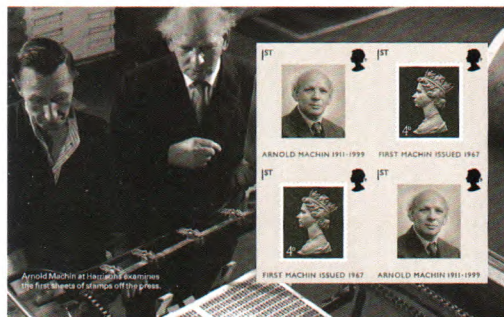
- 1 Definitives: top and bottom rows 2p, 48p, 2p, middle row 46p, label (Machin head of The Queen wearing tiara), 46p
- 2 Definitives: top and bottom £1 ruby, separated by a label showing the Machin head as seen through a camera lens
- 3 Anniversary stamps: top row Arnold Machin, 4d stamp; bottom row 4d stamp, Arnold Machin
- 4 Definitive stamps: top and bottom rows 1st class 'Large', 2nd class 'Large'; middle row 1st class standard size, label (showing Sir Rowland Hill), 2nd class standard size

PRESTIGE STAMP BOOK A new book entitled *The Machin: The Making of a Masterpiece* contains four panes of stamps. The main images on three panes feature Arnold Machin at work, visiting printers and at the National Postal Museum. The book includes many interesting illustrations of Machin at work, with sketches and essays showing how the Machin stamp came about. The images are from the British Postal Museum & Archive, and courtesy of Francis Machin. The book includes

Arnold Machin's words from the 1969 Post Office film *From Picture to Post*. It is sure to appeal to all Machin collectors, and we expect a strong demand for it. *The Machin: The Making of a Masterpiece* was written by Douglas Muir and Peyton Skipwith and printed by De La Rue. All the stamps are gravure, on gummed paper. The London 2010 Festival of Stamps logo appears on the back cover, for the first time on a Royal Mail philatelic product.

The definitives pane with central label showing The Queen wearing a tiara will be available on FDC with Tallents House or Windsor postmark.

The Machin
The Making of a Masterpiece
A Royal Mail book of stamps



Prestige stamp book From top left: the front cover, and panes 2, 3 and 4. Pane 4 (at left), with Rowland Hill in the central label, also features a quotation by Arnold Machin: 'I wonder what Rowland Hill, the founder of the Penny Post, would have to say about stamp design today.'

FIRST DAY FACILITIES Unstamped Royal Mail FDC envelopes will be available from main Post Office branches and philatelic outlets about a week before 5 June, price 30p. This can be used for the new £1 definitive, miniature sheet, or panes from the prestige book. Pictorial First day postmarks will be provided for Tallents House and Windsor.

Collectors may send stamped covers on the day of issue to: Royal Mail Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB (Tallents House postmark), or to one of Royal Mail's Special Handstamp Centres (Windsor postmark) marking the outer envelope 'FD0725' (Tallents House), or 'FD0726' (for Windsor). Covers can be posted or handed in at main Post Office branches for the Windsor postmark.

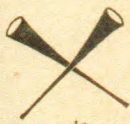
OTHER PRODUCTS A number of other products are now in preparation – details will be given nearer the time.

MACHIN LITERATURE AND EXHIBITION We will be publishing a booklet on Machin stamps as no 13 in our Philatelic Bulletin Publications series. This will be sent out free with the May *Bulletin*. The British Postal Museum & Archive will publish a major work, *A Timeless Classic: The Evolution of Machin's Icon*, written by Douglas Muir, BPMA Curator Philately. There will also be a special BPMA exhibition to mark the Machin anniversary ●

Machin Anniversary prices

Definitive stamp	£1.00
Miniature sheet	£2.68
Presentation pack (miniature sheet)	£3.20
Press sheet	£64.32
FDC envelope	£0.30
Serviced FDC (sheet, UK customers)	£3.63
Serviced FDC (sheet, overseas)	£3.09
Prestige stamp book	£7.66
Serviced FDC (PSB pane, UK)	£2.78
Serviced FDC (PSB pane, overseas)	£2.37
Generic sheet	£7.35

Post Bus



POST OFFICE

30p

0890



Royal Mail Post Bus

POST BUSES
ARRIVE IN BERKSHIRE

1 JULY 1974

HUNGERFORD, BERKSHIRE

DE CYMRU / DE ORLLEWIN
SIWALES / SIWEST

Royal Mail



Post Continental

0032

0869

A
POST OFFICE
CORPORATION

POSTBUS FARE 5p

Issued subject to published
conditions of carriage

Nº 302

ROYAL MAIL
POSTBUS NWPR 3

GRIZEDALE FOREST

Single fare

14p

POST

OFFICE



Ripon Card Series NEPR 8

First Postbus in
YorkshireMasham - Ripon
Harrogate
North Yorkshire

24th March 1982

From top left: 1974 Broughton-in-Furness postcard; 1974 Diss-Gislingham ticket; Wadebridge ticket 1977; Narberth ticket with 'first day of service' star, 1994; 1974 Hungerford handstamp; a 1990 photograph of Wadebridge postbus; 1976 Billesdon ticket; 1979 Grizedale Forest ticket; and 1982 Masham-Ripon handstamp and cachets.

Royal Mail's postbuses 1967-2007 by Martin Robinson

ON 20 FEBRUARY 1967 the first 'postal minibus', as it was then called, set out on a journey between Llanidloes and Llangurig, in Montgomeryshire (now Powys) in mid-Wales, some 20 miles east of

Aberystwyth. This first vehicle was a Morris J2 minibus, bearing a head-board inscribed POSTAL BUS, and with seating to carry seven passengers.

Carrying mail together with passengers is of course not a new idea, and there are plenty of examples in this country as well as in Europe and Scandinavia, from mail coaches and private contractors' vehicles to modern buses run by the Post Office. However most are or were passenger vehicles carrying some mail, rather than postal vehicles offering some passenger facilities, which better describes the British model. At the time when there were two postal deliveries a day, a vehicle could leave its base in town in the early morning on a delivery run, then pick up passengers from nearby villages whilst making the morning collection on the way back, giving them time to do their shopping or visit the doctor's surgery before being dropped off on a second delivery and collection run early- or mid-afternoon. Local arrangements made it possible to transport schoolchildren, hospital visitors and those wishing to catch ferries or air services.

Four experimental routes opened in 1967/68: Llanidloes-Llangurig, followed by Honiton-Luppitt in the South West and Penrith-Martindale in the North West in October, and Dunbar-Innerwick in Scotland in June 1968. Of these, sadly, only the last survives, the Honiton-Luppitt route closing in 2004 and the two others in 2006. The postbus network, which grew rapidly and had over 280 routes in operation over the last 40 years, is now in rapid decline and at the time of writing only 95 are still running.

The reason for this is two-fold: although the first services ran at a loss, when the PO became a corporation in 1969 it was eligible for grants towards the cost of buying the vehicles, a fuel tax rebate and subsidies towards running costs from local authorities and development boards. In recent years, loss of subsidies from cash-strapped authorities and falling passenger numbers have made it increasingly difficult to justify running the services. The second factor is of course the reduction of postal collections and deliveries.

So this article is an elegy for a well-loved service which at the present rate of decline (over 40 closures so far in 2006) may soon be nothing more than a memory, which is a pity, as riding on a postbus, although not the quickest or most direct method of transport, is usually very cheap, a friendly experience, and often the only form of public transport available, especially in remote areas of Scotland and Wales where in their day the services were thickest on the ground.

The services were and are also popular with collectors – members of the Post Office Vehicle Club as well as those more interested in philately and postal history. The former are interested in the vehicles themselves and have compiled exhaustive fleet lists, made long excursions to take photos and ride on the vehicles, and even kept tabs on those sold out of service. ►

In 1997 the Editor requested an article to coincide with the thirtieth anniversary of Royal Mail's postbus services. Now, ten years on, he has asked me to write again to mark the fortieth.



One of the stamps issued in 1985 for Royal Mail's 350th anniversary, showing a rural postbus.

The first postbuses were Morris J2 vans, then a few Bedfords introduced in the early 1970s. Soon however the standard vehicle became the rather ungainly Commer 11-seater (later renamed Dodge); this was unsuitable for rough terrain, so some Land Rovers were used in Scotland. The next generation of vehicles included the Leyland Sherpa 11-seater, later renamed the LDV Pilot, with the larger LDV Convoy 15-seater where greater passenger numbers required; some of these are still in use today. Meanwhile, some routes required only small vehicles; the list of 4-seater estate cars includes the Morris Marina, the Austin Maestro and Montego, Ford Escort, Mondeo and Sierra, then Peugeot 405, last in this list being the smart-looking Peugeot 406 Estate with all the modern driver comforts including GPS. Meanwhile the Land Rovers were replaced by the Vauxhall Brava, one of which was thoroughly tested in the Highlands before a batch (mostly, but not all, 4x4) was taken into service in 1998 and lasted until 2005.

The latest development is for the 4-seaters to become effectively small vans with windows (unlike the Land Rovers in which the view for passengers was strictly limited), and the current fleet includes Vauxhall Combos and Peugeot Partners that fit this bill. Replacing the Vauxhall Brava was a 4-wheel drive Peugeot Partner Trekka with improved ground clearance more suitable for rough terrain. The LDV high-roofed Convoys remain in use today, but in 2003 the last group of Pilots was replaced by a new batch of low-roof Convoys, each vehicle fitted especially for Royal Mail with a locked compartment next to the driver and a mail cage at the rear, leaving space for 8 passengers. At present Royal Mail is evaluating the Mitsubishi L200 4x4, the postbus version of which is a strange-looking vehicle with a mail compartment tagged on at the back like an afterthought.

For philatelists and postal historians, there is an enormous amount of collectable material: sets of postcards, many issued in the 1970s and 1980s by the then regional postal boards; and souvenir covers marking the launch of a route or a milestone such as the 50th or 100th route in Scotland, often with special handstamps and cachets. There are different sorts of tickets issued by drivers as receipts for fares paid: at first old bus ticket machines were used, but the most popular tickets with collectors are the specially-printed little cards on which stamps were stuck to the value of the fare and cancelled with a dated rubber stamp bearing the route name. Later paper tickets are less exciting. My own collection also contains timetables, route maps, leaflets, grill cards and posters, as well as photos – my own and those acquired from other enthusiasts. There is even a commemorative stamp, one of the set issued in 1985 to mark the 350th anniversary of the Royal Mail Public Postal Service, which shows a rural postbus.

We enthusiasts are indebted to the pioneers in the field, especially to the late Len Newbery, who used to write about postbus services in the *Bulletin* and whose own postbus collection is now in the British Postal Museum and Archive, and to the much-missed Ben Jenkins, who for many years edited the indispensable *Ride the Royal Mail Post Bus*, a task now continued by Robin Farmer. I am grateful to Colin Peachey for his vehicle summary and for a list of services which is to be published in a later magazine. ●

Further information

Post Office Vehicle Club: 32
Russell Way, Leighton Buzzard
LU7 3NG

Postbus Appreciation Society:
Woodclyffe, Eight Bells Close,
Buxted TN22 4JT.

Previous postbus articles by
the author were published in
the *Bulletin* in February 1997,
March 1998 and June 1998.

Treasures of the BPMA Martin Robinson on EFTA stamps



Proposed designs for the EFTA stamps: essays dated 21 November 1966 by Peter Wildbur (left), and two by Nicholas Jenkins.

In 1960 seven European countries – Denmark, Austria, the UK, Norway, Portugal, Sweden and Switzerland – together established the European Free Trade Association, with Finland becoming an associate member a year later. Its aim was to reduce tariff barriers between member states and the Foreign Office was keen to mark the ‘achievement of free trade’ at the beginning of 1967. In a letter from the Foreign Office to the GPO, it was hoped that a common design might be adopted by all member countries, or even that a common stamp might be current in any EFTA country.

The GPO thought this a ‘wild and vague’ idea and, whilst conceding that free trade merited a special issue, declared the period from December 1966 to January 1967 to be unsuitable because of the Christmas pressure period and a new issue of National Insurance stamps in January.

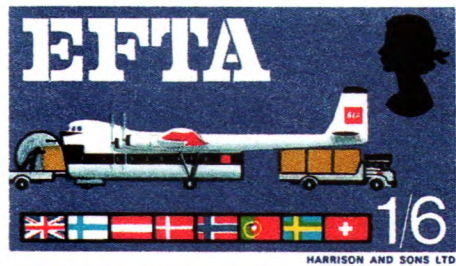
Other EFTA countries were known to support the proposal for special stamps, and the Board of Trade thought it important that Britain should not be seen to lack enthusiasm; there was even a suggestion that Britain should organise a design competition, similar to that held for the annual CEPT stamps. However a communication failure seems to have occurred at the GPO and as a result no action had been taken by the end of February 1966, by which time the Board of Trade and other EFTA members were becoming anxious. Despite efforts during March and April, it was too late to achieve a common design as other countries were already making their own arrangements, and all Britain could do was to prepare its own stamps and encourage any uncommitted partners to do the same. In the end all did, except Austria but including Liechtenstein, an affiliated member by virtue of its customs union with Switzerland.

The Stamp Advisory Committee considered the subject and decided that designers could incorporate the official EFTA symbol (a ring of eight flags enclosing an octagonal shape), or pursue their own ideas, although there was some concern about the use of other countries’ flags after the rejection some months earlier of one of the proposed World Cup designs which included the flag of North Korea.

An issue date of 20 February 1967 was decided upon, and to keep the issue within manageable proportions it was also decided not to include the 4d inland letter rate, but to have only denominations of 9d (European letter rate) and 1s6d (air-mail to most countries). Peter Wildbur, Nicholas Jenkins and Jock Kinneir were invited to submit designs, and the printers were also approached: Bradbury Wilkinson declined because of existing commitments, but Harrison & Sons Ltd commissioned Clive Abbott.

The SAC preferred one design each by Wildbur and Jenkins, and Harrison & Sons essayed three designs (see above). It was subsequently pointed out that the Scandinavian flags on the Jenkins designs had the vertical bar of the cross in the centre rather than left of centre, and that the central lion motif was missing from the Finnish flag on the Wildbur design (later enquiries revealed that the lion was displayed only in the presence of the Head of State, so it would have to be deleted from the Jenkins designs).

The Postmaster General (Edward Short had by now replaced Anthony Wedgwood Benn) saw the essays but said he would like to see all the designs submitted before making a decision, and opted for the two pictorial designs by Clive Abbott, featuring a cargo ship with rail wagons (9d) and an



The two issued 1967 EFTA stamps, designed by Clive Abbott.

airfreighter with road vehicles (1s6d). He recommended these to The Queen as best symbolising 'the movement of trade within the Association'.

The Stamp Advisory Committee did not take kindly to being overruled, believing that the decision had been taken for political reasons. They were offended by the lack of consultation by the PMG and threatened to resign en masse; in fact the Committee was soon afterwards dissolved and replaced a year later by a new group constituted by the GPO and with some Council of Industrial Design representation. The Abbott designs went on sale on 20 February 1967, but the fact that a third of the issued stamps remained unsold after twelve months indicates that they were not very popular with collectors or the public.

The British Postal Museum and Archive holds all the artwork and essays for the EFTA stamps of forty years ago, as they do for all British stamps, so it is possible to consider the whole issue from the file of minutes and correspondence together with the pictorial evidence in front of one as well. Alternatively, Giles Allen's excellent 1994 *Special Stamp History* no 49 distills the facts into a well-told story •

Eminent collectors The life

IN THE FIRST HALF of the twentieth century, collectors of GB material eagerly awaited the arrival of *The British Philatelist* each month. This magazine, comprising of 528 issues, from March 1908 to February 1954, was the brainchild of Charles Nissen, the London dealer and philatelic publisher. In its inaugural number, he declared that 'Our chief aim is to publish every month really valuable and reliable information on British Postage, Telegraph, Fiscal and College Stamps, Postcards and Envelopes.'

Charles Nissen was born in 1880. Because his father had died while he was still at school, he had to begin working at the age of 14 to help support his widowed mother and her four other children. He decided he would become a stamp dealer and in partnership with Alfred Riley, opened an office in High Holborn. His first significant transaction was the purchase of a parcel of old letters written by famous people; he sold these at £1 each to their relatives. Some years later, after the business had grown substantially to become Charles Nissen & Co Ltd, Arthur Riley was appointed as company secretary.

Nissen was always seeking to increase his stock and soon came to be known affectionately as 'the magpie dealer'. His particular interest was in all aspects of British stamps, but he began his career by concentrating on the study of GB used abroad. He soon became an expert in this field, and wrote exhaustive articles about them for *Gibbons' Stamp Weekly*. These were co-authored along with IJ Bernstein. As a result of their researches, GB used abroad were given a separate listing in Gibbons' catalogues. Nissen was also a noted Revenue collector and had joined the Fiscal Philatelic Society in 1908.

Having operated as a stamp dealer for just four years and not yet 21 years of age, Charles Nissen became famous for his discovery of a major fraud against the British Post Office. This came about when he bought a large quantity of old telegraph forms from a waste paper merchant, so that he could soak off all the one shilling postage stamps that had been put on each one to indicate that

of Charles Nissen RDP, 'a giant among giants', by Ron Negus

the required telegraph fee had been paid. These forms had all been used at the London Stock Exchange from 1872 to 1873. During that period, the brokers on the Exchange used telegrams, as being the quickest method available, to advise their clients of any business they had completed on their behalf.

Whilst looking through this large accumulation of the 1 shilling green stamps, Nissen realised that many of them were on unwatermarked paper, instead of that with the expected 'spray of rose' watermark. Particular design faults were also apparent, and some of the corner-letter combinations he found were ones that had never been employed on the genuine stamps.

The discovery was reported to the Post Office and a full investigation was made. The forgery was confirmed, but too many years had elapsed for the Post Office to apprehend the forger. Nor were his accomplices ever found, for it was they who had sold these forged stamps at the Stock Exchange Post Office branch, and pocketed the income from their sale.

Nissen's name soon became famous when the national press finally revealed this story, and his standing amongst the philatelic community increased enormously. The Post Office sent him a special letter of thanks. Later, when the Junior Philatelic Society was formed in 1899, Charles Nissen joined and was appointed Hon Counterfeit Detector. He held a position on that Society's Expert Committee until his death, and he was acknowledged to be its foremost authority on GB stamps. His pre-eminence in the field came about for a number of reasons, including his skill in philatelic research as well as his considerable stocks of material.

His other very important claim to fame was as a philatelic publisher. This began as early as 1897. During that year, the famous Fred J Melville approached him with the manuscript of his eight-page pamphlet called 'Stamp Collecting'. Nissen



helped him by publishing the monograph. The two became close friends until Melville died, at the start of the Second World War – by which time Nissen had also published many of his later works.

His other publishing successes in the field of handbooks included *Pre-Victorian Postage Stamps and Franks* by G A Foster (1910) and Sir Edward Bacon's standard work *Line Engraved Postage Stamps of Great Britain* (1920).

His own work, *The Plating of the Penny Black*, which was written in close collaboration with Bertram McGowan, was published in 1922. This book described and illustrated the 2,880 varieties of the world's first postage stamp. The two authors were honoured for this book by the Royal Philatelic Society London, in the same year, with the award of the prestigious Crawford Medal. Their book remains the authority on this particular subject to this day.

Whilst these books were very significant titles, Charles Nissen is still remembered best as the publisher of the magazine *The British Philatelist*. This soon became a primary resource, and many discoveries about GB issues first appeared in its erudite pages.

As a stamp dealer, many significant collections passed through his hands. His involvement with the Great Britain material from the Lord Crawford collection was interesting. This had been sold in 1913 to help to pay the death duties on Crawford's estate – the purchaser was a Mr R B Sparrow. Soon afterwards Sparrow enlisted, and was sent to fight in France. Before he left, he passed the Crawford GB material to Nissen with the instructions to 'price it up, sell it for me, and take your commission'. As a result, many of the rarities which now appear in Gold Medal collections bear the small annotation 'ex Crawford'.

At all the Ferrary sales in the 1920s, Charles Nissen acted as the agent for King George V, and made a number of purchases for the Royal Collection. For this service, and also for having filled

a similar capacity at other famous auctions earlier, his firm was appointed a Royal Warrant holder, as 'Stamp Dealers to the King' in 1934. This philatelic accolade had only been conferred once before, to Stanley Gibbons Ltd. All subsequent monarchs have renewed these Warrants.

Nissen was invited to sign the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists in May 1923 at the 10th Philatelic Congress, held in the Hotel Cecil, London. In that same year, a London International Exhibition took place and was visited by King George v. On reaching Nissen's stand, the King shook his hand and thanked him for his book on the Penny Black.

A final act, for which Charles Nissen will always be remembered, took place during 1936. In the previous year, the firm which had printed the Penny Black – Perkins, Bacon & Co – had gone into liquidation. Nissen, in conjunction with his son Harry, and another London dealer, Tommy Allen, bought most of the firm's papers, blocks, dies, proofs, etc from the liquidators. They sold some of this material on the open market. The vast majority of the remainder, made up of estimate, letter and account books and other documents concerning security printing, was offered to the Royal Philatelic Society London. The Perkins, Bacon archive is still held, in secure conditions, at the Royal, where researchers from home and abroad consult it. Without the intervention of the Nissens and Allen, this vast resource might have been lost to philately.

At about this period, Charles Nissen became seriously ill, due to overwork, and his son took a greater role in conducting their business. At the outbreak of the Second World War, Nissen was advised to move his business and his family from London. He took them to Llangollen in North Wales and, with Harry's help, continued to operate from there. It proved to be good advice, because in 1941 his former offices in Bloomsbury Street were totally destroyed in an air raid.

Charles Nissen was married in 1906 to Selina Woolf. Their son, Harry, was born in the following year, and their family was completed in 1911 with the arrival of their daughter, Elsie. Harry was destined to become a director in 1935, and

later the owner, of his father's business, which he acquired following Charles's death on March 13 1944. Harry's own health began to deteriorate in the 1960s, and he was unable to devote as much time to the business as he had done previously. The company still had an unrivalled stock of GB material, and in 1977 Charles Nissen & Co were purchased by Gibbons for £861,000. A Nissen advertisement of 1952 is shown below.

In an obituary, published in the March 1944 issue of *The British Philatelist*, editors L N and M Williams wrote: 'He was one of the select band of whom it can truly be said that they were born to philately. He rose from humble beginnings to become a giant among giants, and his contributions to the advancement in the stature of philately will stand as a memorial to him for very many years to come. His memory will ever be green in circles where the stamps of Great Britain are collected and studied, for he did more to promote and further their study than any other man before him' •

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Chas. Nissen & Co. Ltd.
Stamp Dealers



By Appointment to
H.M. King George VI

GREAT BRITAIN

INEXPENSIVE PLATE PROOFS

Singles and Blocks of four.

We can also supply Blocks of four of the following items pro rata.

1877	4d. Pl. 15 imperf. in bl. grn. on wmkd. paper..	20/-
	Do. red-brown do.	20/-
	Do. brown do.	20/-
	Do. mauve do.	20/-
1881	1d. lilac, imperf. on buff paper	7/6
1880	4d. green, imperf. on buff paper	7/6
1902-10	1d. imperf. proof in pale green	30/-
	1d. imperf. proof in deep green	25/-
	1d. imperf. proof in carmine	30/-
	6d. imperf. proof in black on thin card	30/-
Plate proofs in issued colours in buff paper, 4d. 7/6; 1d. 7/6; 4d. 10/-; 5d. 10/-; 10d. 12/6; 2/6 20/-; 5/-		
1911	K.E. 1d. imperf. issued col. on wmk. paper, o/p cancelled	15/-
1911-2	Geo. V 1d., Die 1b, imperf. on gummed paper	40/-
1912	Geo. V 1d. Deepened Die, imperf. in issued colour	15/-
1914	2d. Postage Due, perforated Colour Trials on wmk. paper in 12 different unissued colours, at each	10/-
Do.	2d. do., but in colours of the issued 4d., 1d., 3d., 5d. and 1/- each	15/-
1881	Postal Fiscals, perf. and wmk. orb. Set 4 col. trials	40/-

We shall be pleased to forward any of the above items for inspection.

Chas. NISSEN & Co., Ltd.,
65 Victoria Street, LONDON, S.W.1
 Telephone: ABBey 6806

Philately online Ron Negus tests an updated GB program



Product Name: Stamp Organiser
Version: 1.0.0.3
Copyright: 2006 A G Bradbury
Company Name: A G Bradbury
Designed By: A G Bradbury
Developed By: The High Way.co.uk Ltd

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www.bfdc.co.uk This site still contains full details of Adrian Bradbury's first day covers, as well providing access to the Stamp Organiser particulars described below.

Stamp Organiser allows a user to create a computer-based inventory of their collections of British stamps, first day covers, presentation packs, PHQ Cards and QEII stamp booklets. Details for these items on the underlying database cover all of GB, plus Royal Mail/Post Office issues from Jersey, Guernsey and Isle of Man. These entries are illustrated in full colour, which makes the task of identification simpler. Although the database is comprehensive, the program allows for scans of non-standard items from the user's own collection to be added to it, so that everything can be recorded.

THE online shop of designer and dealer Adrian Bradbury was described here in November 2003. His new FDCs feature regularly in the *Review* that accompanies each month's *Bulletin*. At the end of my previous article, I mentioned that Adrian also offered a computer program to catalogue British first day cover holdings.

At that time, this program was just about to be expanded. Now, after a great deal of design work, plus extensive testing, the revised version has been released. The program, called Stamp Organiser, is described on Adrian Bradbury's website (see above). An important feature is the provision of two limited versions that can be downloaded from the website free of charge. The limitation of the free software is that only a small part of the full database of nearly 18,000 images is accessible. The purpose of this offer is to allow collectors to test the program against their own requirements. In this way, they only have to commit themselves to buying the program if they are fully satisfied with it. This method of distribution is often used for business software, but I don't think I have seen it applied to a philatelic product before.

As well as being able to try the program before buying it, potential customers can also download the 30-page User Notes. This document explains in full how the program works, and also includes screen shots. With the trial program to hand, plus the User Notes, there is no reason for collectors to buy something that subsequently proves to be unsuitable. If the trial is acceptable, then the full program can be purchased at £75. It is delivered on a CD with clear installation instructions.

The screens upon which a user adds details of each item, or set, in his collection are of different designs to suit the nature of material being entered. The entries made here can be basic or advanced, depending upon a collector's desires. Much of each screen can be completed by selection from drop-down lists in the relevant entry spaces. Non-listed detail is simply typed in. After data has been entered, and stored, it can always be re-visited for amendments. Routine back-up facilities are also included for security purposes.

When sufficient fundamental details of holdings have been recorded, the program provides an integral reporting system. Printed summaries can be produced as want lists, or as a record for insurance purposes, for example. Holdings can be classified within their own 'collections', if required, so that the electronic record can match a physical situation where material may be housed in separate locations.

This very brief outline is simply designed to note the appearance of a new computer program on the market. A panel of GB collectors has tested it over the last six months, and their comments have led to many design improvements. It is a significant addition to the tools available for keeping a computer inventory for British stamps, and all GB collectors are recommended to check out its relevance for their own needs •

Belgica 2006 Richard West reports from a well-organised exhibition in Brussels, staged by the Belgian Post Office



Above: the Belgica '06 logo and Birthe King, whose display 'Denmark: Conscience, Conflict and Camps 1932-1949' won a gold medal and the award for the best exhibit in the Open Class. Right: The Royal Mail stand at Belgica.



BELGICA 2006 was initially going to be purely an international stamp exhibition for young collectors, continuing a succession of such exhibitions first held in Luxembourg in 1969. While the principle is sound, unfortunately the target audience does not encourage trade participation, vital to meet the costs, so the organisers of the Belgium exhibition decided to also allow one frame, open class and thematic exhibits.

The exhibition, held 16-20 November last year, was organised by the Belgian Post Office, under the direction of Frank Daniels, about to retire from his role as heading the philatelic operations. The organisers had a budget of about £1 million, raised through the sales of philatelic items. The venue was two of the halls at Brussels Expo, the international convention and exhibition centre adjacent to the famous Atomium. The result was an attractive, very spacious exhibition, combining the display frames, dealer's stands and postal administrations from around the world.

The focus was mainly on youth, with plenty of activities that drew large crowds, including performances by youth orchestras, plus interviews with various Belgian sport and dance personalities (*Strictly Come Dancing* is highly popular in Belgium). There was no shortage of young visitors: the Post Office paid the costs to enable schools to hire coaches to visit the event.

The exhibits were divided into areas for each of the classes, interspersed with blocks of dealer's stands: visitors could hardly avoid either displays or dealers. However, not all the trade was happy with the results. The collectors who visited tended to come from Belgium, whereas it was hoped the event would attract a far more international clientele. 'Foreign' visitors tended to be collectors who were exhibiting.

The event also included a separate youth exhibition, at 'national' level, with the entries mainly from the home country.

The many postal administrations present, including Royal Mail, found that their stands were mainly grouped together. The Belgian Post Office was understandably kept very busy, as on every day something was released – stamps, miniature sheets or postal stationery.

There was the now ubiquitous 'personalised' stamp opportunity, although it has to be said the operation was not as slick as that used by Royal Mail at events such as Stampex. A fairly lengthy registration process was required, with a wait of two hours after the photograph was taken before a personalised sheet was ready: from Royal Mail the process is instant.

There were fourteen entries from British exhibitors, including two from young collectors Jade Needs and Simon Moorcroft. Particularly pleas-

ing was the gold medal achieved by Birthe King in the Open Class for her 'Denmark: Conscience, Conflict and Camps 1932-1949', which was also declared the best in the class.

The traditional awards banquet (or Palmares) was held on the Saturday evening, except that no awards were actually presented, which must have been rather a disappointment for Birthe, following her achievement.

However, it was an enjoyable exhibition, with fine displays, and certainly extremely well organised, although it has to be appreciated that Frank Daniels was able to enlist many Post Office staff to lend a hand during the course of the event. The plans are already in hand for the next international stamp exhibition in Belgium, planned for Antwerp in 2010 •

Results of the British entries at Belgica '06

Gold Birthe King: Open Class (Denmark: Conscience, Conflict and Camps 1932-1949) (and best in class in the Open Class) • **Brian Moorhouse:** One frame (Tierra del Fuego) (plus Special Prize) • **Barrie Jay:** One frame (French Prisoner of War Mail 1798-1815) (plus Special Prize) • **Steve Boorn:** Thematic Class (The Heart is Life) (plus Special Prize)

Large Vermeil Jade Needs: Youth Class (Australia King George V) (plus Special Prize)

Vermeil Christopher King: One frame (Denmark, Slesvig and Holstein, The Wars of 1848-1851) • **Arthur Woo:** One frame (Nicaragua: The British Post Office in Creytown) • **Lesley Marley:** Thematic Class (A Whale's Tale) • **Alan Huggins:** One frame (Great Britain – the Revaluation of Postal Stationery Following the Reduction in Rates in 1922) (plus Special Prize) • **Geoffrey Hood:** Thematic Class (More Than a Pretty Picture)

Large Silver Francis Kiddle: the Thematic Class (Goats)

Silver Patrick Pearson: One frame (Free Polish Forces in Iraq) • **Geoffrey Oxley:** Open Class (An Outline of the Social History of Havana) • **Simon Moorcroft:** Youth Class (Sir Winston Churchill – the Greatest Briton)

Cover corner 1960s covers with the Transorma marking



THE TWO COVERS this month, submitted by Mr C Aldridge, will be of interest to first day cover and postal mechanisation collectors. Both were addressed to Brighton and carry a red marking applied by the Transorma sorting machine used at Brighton sorting office from 1935 until 1968. The 1961 cover (top) carries stamps marking the Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference held in London, cancelled with the Conference slogan postmark at the London SW1 office. The 1963 cover bears the New Zealand stamp marking the opening of the COMPAC telephone cable; commemorative stamps were also issued by Australia, Britain, and Fiji.

Mr Aldridge mentions that two postcards have been issued for the Transorma machine, and a special 50th anniversary cover was produced by the Postal Mechanisation Study Circle in 1985. The postcard produced by the National Postal Museum in 1985 was shown in the March 2006 *Bulletin*, on page 218.

For details about the Transorma machine, see Douglas Muir's articles in the *Bulletin* of January and February 1985 •

Obituaries Kenneth F Chapman, a great philatelic journalist and tireless worker for organised philately • Alexander Newall, founder member of the British Aerophilatelic Federation

KENNETH F CHAPMAN, the distinguished philatelic journalist and former contributor to the *Bulletin*, died in November, aged 96.

Ken Chapman was an influential and highly respected figure during an association with stamps and publishing lasting for many decades. His career was marked out from the beginning by the fortunate chance of securing a job in January 1928 with Harris Publications Ltd. There he served his editorial apprenticeship under the exacting proprietor, Albert H Harris, working on *Philatelic Magazine* and a masterwork of bibliography, *The Standard Index to Philatelic Literature 1879-1925*. He was frequently to praise Harris's direct inspiration for his own successful career as a journalist.

In July 1933 Chapman left the company to become a dealer with Selfridge's stamp department but postwar saw him appointed Public Relations Officer for the British Philatelic Association. This marked a return to journalism, as he became simultaneously the editor of the BPA's *Philately*. From 1949 he also acted as the philatelic correspondent for *The Times* newspaper.

Chapman came into special prominence in 1951 on moving to edit the long-established weekly *Stamp Collecting*, a magazine combining up-to-the-minute news and 'scoops' with high-quality reference articles; there he rapidly established a style of full, but fair, reporting in support of ethical philately. The correspondence columns in particular also continued to attract lively debate throughout his tenure. With advancing years, he eventually stepped down after 26 years accepting the editorship of a monthly publication in lieu. This was the magazine of his apprentice days – *Philatelic Magazine* – from which he finally retired in 1980. At the unexpected demise of both *Stamp*



Kenneth F Chapman

Collecting and *Philatelic Magazine* in 1984, he came back as a Consultant Editor to their successor title, *Stamp News*, continuing until the recession stopped publication of that paper, too, in 1986.

He continued writing for various other publications, reminiscing with valuable background detail on many events drawn from his busy life at the heart of philately. To the *British Philatelic Bulletin* Chapman contributed

51 instalments during 1986-95 for a series on 'Philatelic Terms Explained'. Writing under the name Francis Kennedy he also ensured that the much-appreciated series 'British Special Stamps' continued after James Watson's death: the further 45 articles published 1986-92 were supplemented with 18 more in *Bulletin Publication No 1* (1993), completing the story as far as the 1986 Christmas issue. He was also the author of several general handbooks for collectors, published commercially.

An indefatigable worker for organised philately, Chapman served in many major posts, notably for the British Philatelic Association and for Congress, at which he gave four papers over the years, and whose Congress Medal he received in 1968. He spoke and judged all over the country in support of local societies, of which he was a firm proponent. When Edward Short first created Royal Mail's reconstituted Stamp Advisory Committee in 1968, Chapman – with the late R A G Lee – were automatically appointed to give voice to the interests of collectors. His counsel was also sought in 1990 by his joining the Board of the National Postal Museum.

With his wife, Dorothy, Ken Chapman lived in Britwell Salome, Oxfordshire. Later they moved to be near his family in Lancashire, where 'Dot' predeceased him. ►

DOUGLAS MUIR WRITES: Ken was my first, and greatest, 'mentor' in philately. When I worked for him at *Stamp Collecting* he was already universally described as the doyen of philatelic journalists, and his judgement and advice were always sound and freely given. His desk and his office were renowned as one of the sights of the old philatelic world, off the Strand in London.

He was also a great supporter of philatelic societies, giving innumerable lectures and running a highly successful philatelic weekend at Pendley Manor, Tring for many years. It seemed that his knowledge of philately was infinite, having been involved in so many of the great occasions of the past. The forgeries, or rather the 'reproductions', of Sperati was a particular, specialist subject on which he wrote with authority.

His experience of printing was largely in the days of letterpress and hot metal when the unions held complete sway and management and an editor could touch nothing without causing a strike. Thus, he was justifiably proud on his initial retirement to be banged out of the printing works (with all the workers clashing any metal to hand as he walked through the entire floor for the last time), an honour normally only accorded to well-liked, long-serving printers.

Mild of temperament but firm in his beliefs, he also had a pawky sense of humour and told many an entertaining tale. He was perhaps the last of his generation of great philatelic writers •

Richard West interviewed Ken Chapman about his lifetime in stamps – see Bulletin July 2005. The article was published to commemorate his 95th birthday. ED

Alexander Newall FRPSL, who died on 8 November, aged 92, was a well known aerophilatelist and a founder member of the British Aerophilatelic Federation. He started stamp collecting as a child, as most of us did, and later went on to form specialised collections of classic Switzerland, Swiss Airmails and later on British Airmails and latterly the Siege of Przemsyl, all to a very high standard. With these collections he received many national and international awards, including the Grand Prix at Ameripex '89, two Gold Medals

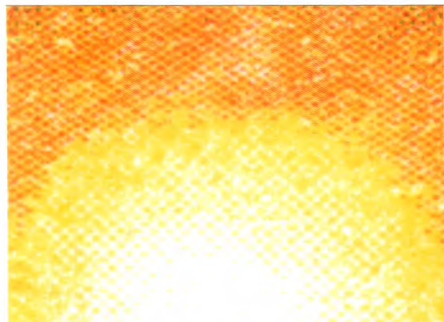
at Israphil '85 and Stockholmia '86, followed by three Large Gold Medals at Polska '93, Bangkok '93 and Singapore '95. In the 1970s there were two national aerophilatelic organisations in the UK, the Aero Philatelic Club, London, founded in 1923, and the British Air Mail Society, founded in 1958. Alex could not understand why there should be two separate organizations, and he was the driving force behind bringing us together into the British Aerophilatelic Federation. In the early 1980s we held three exhibitions at the RAF Museum at Hendon, and one of my lasting memories is of Alex standing with Francis J Field (the doyen of Aerophilately), Group Captain Sir Douglas Bader (of Battle of Britain fame), Group Capt Bill Randle (First President of BAeF) and myself, watching parachutist John Irving landing in the grounds with a bag full of souvenir covers. Alex, a national and international judge, wrote two books, *Fakes and Forgeries of Airmail Stamps* and *British External Airmail until 1934*, and numerous articles. He served as Vice-President of the International Federation of Aerophilatelic Societies (FISA) and edited their bulletin for many years. He was also a former Vice-President of the FIP's Aerophilatelic Commission, and had been elected to the Aerophilatelic Hall of Fame in the USA. Alex was a BAeF Past President, and remained a Patron of the Federation at the time of his death. *Brian Asquith, President BAeF* •

Special prize draws

ONCE AGAIN we offer our popular Mystery Prize draw, with some excellent prizes! To win one of 10 mystery prizes, send your name and address on a postcard to: Mystery Prize Draw, British Philatelic Bulletin, Royal Mail, 148 Old Street, London EC1V 9HQ, to arrive by 28 February •

2009 stamps poll Over 1700 *Bulletin* readers sent in a voting form from the November *Bulletin*. All forms went into a draw, and 2006 Yearbooks go to: G Fowle, Warwickshire; D Hunt, USA; G May, Somerset; I Gow, Inverness-shire; and R Turner, Middlesex. Our thanks to all who replied •

Competitions Win £200 in two easy-to-enter competitions



November identify The detail is from the 2006 Animal Tales (Kipper) stamp. The winner was K Anson of USA.

November knowledge The answers: 1) 2d maroon or lake brown, 6d crimson or bright reddish purple; 2) Brussels; 3) James Mackay. The winner was C de Haer of Australia.

Runner-up prizes were also sent for each competition. Our thanks to all who entered.

FIRSTLY, identify the stamp from the detail above. Send your answer to February *Identify* Competition. Secondly, test your philatelic knowledge by answering the questions below. Send your answer to February *Knowledge* Competition.

- 1 What is the colour of the current 20p Machin definitive?
- 2 Which set of Millennium stamps featured Frog's Legs?
- 3 Who designed the 2006 Christmas stamps?

Send your answer (addressed to either February *Identify* competition or February *Knowledge* competition), name and address on a postcard or back of a sealed envelope to: British Philatelic Bulletin, Royal Mail, 148 Old Street, London EC1V 9HQ. The senders of the first cards drawn in each competition on 16 March will receive £100. Runner-up prizes of presentation packs, stamp cards or FDCs will be awarded in each competition. These competitions are not open to employees of Royal Mail •

Events

Until 19 April 'Elizabeth: Queen & Icon' exhibition at British Postal Museum & Archive, Freeling House, Phoenix Place, London WC1. **Enquiries** 020 7239 2570.

22-24 February Philatex (London International Stamp & Cover Show) at RHS Lawrence Hall, Greycoat Street, London SW1. Open Thurs 11.00-19.00, Fri 10.00-18.00, Sat 10.00-17.00 **Enquiries** 020 8946 4489 or website www.stampshows.net

28 February - 4 March Spring Stampex at Business Design Centre, Upper Street, London N1. **Enquiries** Stampex 01252 628006.

10 March Spring BasPex stamp fair and exhibition, organised by Basildon Philatelic Society, at Barstable School, Timberlog Close, Basildon, 10.00-16.00. Free admission and car park. Over 12 dealers.

20-21 April Scottish Philatelic Congress at Dewar's Centre, Glover Street, Perth, 10.00-17.00. Over 50 stamp, postal history and postcard dealers, national and junior competitions, invited displays. Hosted by Perth Philatelic Society. **Enquiries** See website www.scottishphilately.co.uk

28 April Association of Sussex Philatelic Societies Spring Convention at University of Brighton, Lewes Road, Brighton. Talk on The Queen's Philatelic Collection by Michael Sefi.

A useful Stamp Fair & Auction Diary is published six times a year. The annual subscription is £4 UK, £6 Europe, £12 USA & Canada. The Diary covers events throughout the UK, and includes postcard fairs and auctions. It is available from S Reeves, PO Box 109, Enfield EN3 5QF; telephone 020 8292 5361; e-mail fairs@stampdiary.com •

Late news

Royal Mail update Any remaining stocks of the 37p definitive were withdrawn from general sale at Post Office branches on 30 December; it will remain on philatelic sale until further notice.

New postal rates will be introduced on 2 April. The basic 1st and 2nd class inland rates (standard size to 100g) will increase by 2p and 1p to 34p and 24p; letters to Europe and worldwide airmail, both by 4p to 48p and 54p respectively. Five new definitives will go on sale on 27 March – 16p pink, 48p rhododendron, 50p light grey, 54p rust and 78p emerald green. The 50p is in a new colour to avoid confusion of the existing colour with the 1st class stamp. The 46p stamp (old gold) will be brought back into general use for overseas surface mail rate. New 48p and 78p country stamps for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland will also be issued on 27 March; all these will be printed in gravure. New packs will be available, one containing the new definitives (excludes the 46p), and one containing the eight new country stamps, price £3 and £5.55 respectively. Serviced FDCs will cost £3.37 UK/£2.87 overseas for the definitive stamps (Tallents House or Windsor postmarks) or £1.96 UK/£1.67 overseas for each of the four country issues (TH or country capital postmarks).

The 9p, 12p, 42p, 44p, 50p (sand), and 72p definitives, and the 44p and 72p country stamps, will be withdrawn from sale at Post Office branches on 31 March (or 1 April where a branch is open on Sunday). They will remain on philatelic sale until further notice.

Revised prices will apply to stamp books/rolls/sheets containing NV1 stamps. The standard air-letter will remain 48p.

As a result of the changes in postal rates, the Celebrating England miniature sheet (23 April) will contain 78p stamps, not 72p as stated here in January. The sheet will now cost £2.24, the pack £2.75, and the serviced FDC £3.11 UK or £2.65 overseas. Five stamp cards, reproducing the four stamps and the complete sheet, will cost £1.50 per set. The Glorious England generic sheet will now cost £7.35 •

Upgraded IMPs The first of the Integrated Mail Processor machines were introduced at Watford mail centre in August 1996; today there are 138 IMPs and IMPEXS in operation. Technology has moved on, and as part of a £50m project led by Royal Mail engineering department and manufacturers Siemens, all machines will be upgraded to reduce jamming, and to enable them to read a much wider variety of envelope markings, correctly recognise the value of a stamp, to provide better cancellations with inkjet printers, and enable the handling of awkward square envelopes. The improvements should extend the lifetime of the machines by another 10 years •

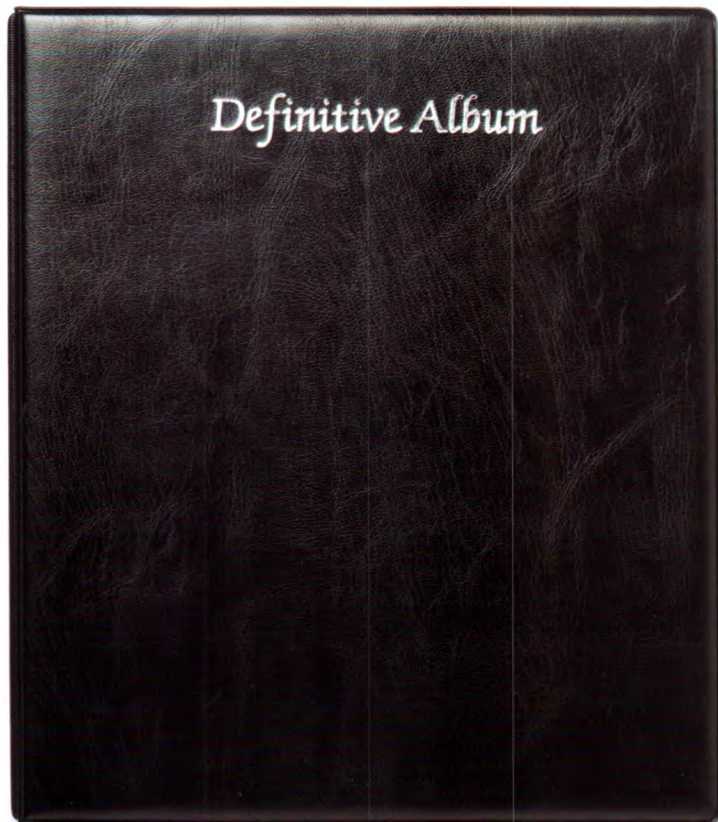
Auctions In Stanley Gibbons All World auction on 14 December, a strip of six Perkins Bacon 1d essays for the stamp tender of 1879 realised £160 (estimate £100-120). An unissued 1979 Rowland Hill miniature sheet with values of 9p, 10½p, 11p and 13p made £18,000 (£10,000-12,000), and an accumulation of hundreds of presentation packs, including some of the early ones, sold for £900 (£650-750). A run of 20 Royal Mail Yearbooks, 1986-2005, went for £220 (£260-300). For details of future sales telephone SG on 020 7836 8444 or e-mail auctions@stanleygibbons.co.uk •

Spink will hold auctions of Mailboat Cancellations and GB on 7-8 March. Enquiries 020 7563 4000 or see website www.spink.com •

Mail transport exhibition The British Postal Museum & Archive's 'Moving the Mail' exhibition, which has been described by the *Daily Mail* as 'an amazing array of unlikely vehicles', is on display at Bletchley Park, Milton Keynes until June 2007. Admission to Bletchley Park is £10 for adults. For details of the exhibition see Martin Robinson's report in the October *Bulletin*. Items from the exhibition will be shown at Spring Stampex (28 February - 4 March) •

Back issues Roger Malinski is seeking volumes 1-7 of the *Bulletin*. Any reader having copies to dispose of should contact him on 01977 619995 •

Definitives: a new album from Royal Mail



Prices

Album: £19.50, order code PA723

Extra leaves £6.99 (pack of 10), code PA725.

Slipcase: £7.50, code PA676 (Smilers slipcase, which is the same colour)

Handling charge: Album & slipcase: £2.95 UK, £5 Europe, £14 elsewhere.

Leaves: £1.45, £1.55 or £2.15

To coincide with the 40th anniversary of the Machin definitives, Royal Mail has introduced a stylish new album designed to house all types of definitives, with quadrille pages headed as Country, Castles and Wilding, as well of course as the current Machin series.

Silver embossed on black leatherette, containing 12 Wilding/Machin pages, five country definitive pages and three Castle definitive pages.

Continuation pages 2006 pages for Royal Mail's Deluxe Album are now available, price £14.95 (PW029), and for Smilers album £5.99 (PA714). Handling charge £1.45 UK, £1.55 Europe, £2.15 elsewhere.

Royal Mail

Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB
Telephone orders: UK 08457 641 641; overseas +44 131 316 7483. Internet orders: www.royalmail.com/shop



Royal Mail



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