

Bulletin

Millennium Soldiers' Tale •
Meteorites and post offices

THE TIMES, TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 1918

THE ARMISTICE SIGNED.

HISTORIC MORNING CEREMONY.

"CEASE FIRE" ON ALL
FRONTS.

APPEAL

SON.

THE NEW

RESIST.

...ster issued the following
yesterday morning:—

The Armistice was signed at 5 a.m. this morning, and hostilities are to cease on all fronts at 11 a.m. to-day.

The following messages were yesterday transmitted through the wireless stations of the ...

...ent:—

... delay for evacuation prolonged the left bank of the Rhine



G.S. G.S. 3062.

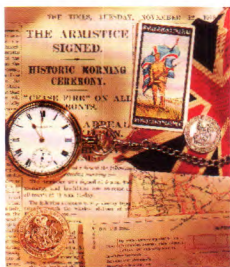
108050 m.

Any trench apparently organised for fire.
Other trenches. Important ones shown by thick line. Old or disused by dotted line.

British front line trench
Entanglement or other obstacle
Ground cut up by Artillery fire



Forthcoming issues and withdrawals



Cover Royal Mail's Millennium Stamps series honours British soldiers of past and present: from conflicts of the Middle Ages, through the World Wars to the peacekeepers of today.

Trench maps courtesy G H Smith & Son; cigarette card courtesy Imperial Tobacco Limited. Photograph by Geoff Dann.

Correction Due to a technical error, two lines were deleted from page 369 of the August *Bulletin*. The section headed 'Electricity' should continue: 'electro-magnetism, mainly in 1820-41 and 1845-46, which laid the foundations for all the practical applications of electricity since then.'

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

1 September	Withdrawal Stamp books 4 × 30p; 4 × 37p (Tourist cover); 4 × 63p (issued 5 May 1998)
1 September	Withdrawal Aircards (issued 1 September 1998)
6 September	Withdrawal Stamp books: 10 × 1st definitives and greetings 'Create a Card'; 4 × 30p; 4 × 37p and Questa 10 × 1st (issued 7 September 1998)
7 September	Issue Millennium Farmers' Tale stamps and presentation pack
21 September	Issue Millennium retail book containing 8 × 1st class NVI stamps & two 26p Farmers' Tale stamps (£2.60)
21 September	Issue World Changers prestige stamp book (£6.99)
28 September	Issue Millennium Soldiers' Tale stamp cards
30 September	Withdrawal Speed stamps, presentation pack, and stamp cards
1 October	Issue 4 × 1st stamp book with commemorative label for Rugby World Cup; Philatelic Numismatic Cover bearing pane and £2 Rugby coin; Rugby pictorial aerogramme
5 October	Issue Millennium Soldiers' Tale stamps and presentation pack
5 October	Issue 'E' (European rate) definitive in sheets, printed by De La Rue (previously issued in books printed by Walsall)
5 October	Withdrawal 1998 Christmas aerogramme and air-card
12 October	Withdrawal Breaking Barriers prestige stamp book
19 October	Issue Christmas aerogramme
26 October	Issue Millennium Christians' Tale stamp cards

Contents



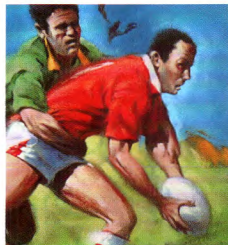
Stamps, post offices – and meteorites? The name of your local post office may be connected to the spectacular fall of a meteorite to earth. Dr Matthew Genge explains an unlikely link **20**

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

Issues and withdrawals for September and October **2**

Stamp scene Societies; Exhibitions; Report on self-adhesive stamps **4**

Royal Mail news Rugby World Cup; New stamp books; Collectors Club; Christmas hymns and carols aerogramme **6**



Post Office Heritage Collections Proposed 1874 farthing designs **9**

British Farmers James Mackay on centuries of change in agricultural life in Britain **10**



Post impressions Philip Parker reviews the major Royal Mail sponsored exhibition at The British Library **15**

Millennium stamps A preview of the tenth of Royal Mail's 12 sets of stamps for 1999 **16**



Philexfrance '99 Report by Franceska Rapkin **23**

Decimal stamp books Part 47 by DGA Myall **24**

Posting boxes **26**

Postbag Letters to the Editor **27**

Special prize draw Win Royal Mail Yearbooks **28**

Greetings stamp labels 1992 Memories issue, by Lionel Jones **29**

Bulletin binders and back issues **29**

Competition Identify a special stamp and win £100 **30**

Events for September and October **30**

Late news **31**

Stamp scene Exhibitions • Societies news

• Report on self-adhesive stamps



Stampex opening times

22 September	12.00-19.00
23-25 Sept	10.30-18.00
26 September	10.30-16.00

Admission £3 opening day, £1 other times. A free ticket was enclosed in last month's *Bulletin*.

Further tickets are available from the Stampex office, 107 Charterhouse Street, London EC1M 6PT. Telephone 0171 490 1005.

Autumn Stampex The second of this year's Stampex exhibitions, organised by the Philatelic Traders' Society, will be held at the Business Design Centre, Islington London N1, 22-26 September. The exhibition includes the National Competitions, organised by the British Philatelic Trust and the National Youth Stamp Group. For the first time the entries from younger collectors will comprise the British Youth Stamp Championships sponsored by Stanley Gibbons. The NYSG will be arranging attractions for young visitors and various philatelic societies will hold meetings during the exhibition. Exhibiting seminars, run by Frank Jones and Francis Kidde, will be held on Saturday and Sunday. All visitors will be able to enter a draw for a £50 voucher prize each day, and 50 lucky visitors will find £5 vouchers, placed at random, in their free Stampex information packs.

Some 100 dealers will attend, with over a quarter of these from overseas, and the Jersey, Guernsey and Isle of Man postal administrations will have stands offering their current stamps and philatelic products. Royal Mail will have its 'supermarket' self-service stand together with a counter service for collectors with more specialised requirements. A posting box will be provided on the stand for posting mail to receive the exhibition handstamp. Covers may also be sent to the Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, Mount Pleasant, London EC1A 1BB, requesting Stampex handstamp and stating date(s) required. Covers should bear at least 1st class postage and be submitted not later than the date requested •

Details of Midpex 2001 will be announced in due course.

Midpex The third national philatelic event, Midpex 99, was held on 3 July in the Midland Sports Centre for the Disabled in Coventry – sponsored by Cavendish Philatelic Auctions, with a guarantee from the Midland Philatelic Federation, and support from the ABPS and BPT. About 700 visitors toured the displays of 60 specialist societies and the stands of 38 dealers. The raffle raised £170 towards the Centre's acquisition of a special needs vehicle for the disabled •

Enquiries M Day, 0151 339 5422 or D Popplestone 01703 446143.

Picture Postcard Show The 1999 show takes place at the New Royal Horticultural Hall, London SW1 on 1-4 September. Organised by the Postcard Traders' Association, this friendly event is popular with postmark collectors and postal historians as well as postcard collectors. Open 12.00-20.00 opening day, 11.00-20.00 2 & 3 September and 11.00-18.00 4 September. Admission is £4 on the opening day, £2 others •

Philatelic dealer honoured Max Stern, the respected Australian dealer, received the Order of Australia in The Queen's Birthday Honours List for his services to the philatelic community – the highest accolade ever awarded to a philatelic trader. At age 78 Mr Stern is still an active football player as well as stamp dealer. We offer our congratulations •

Stamp '99 souvenir sheet Included in this month's *Bulletin* is a souvenir sheet reproducing the three winning designs in the Stamp '99 stamp design competition. Our thanks to Questa for once again making the sheet available for *Bulletin* readers •



Two of the winners – Oliver Coleman (age 7), and Afia Allen (10) visited The House of Questa on 14 July to see the sheets being printed (with Questa's Paul Singleton, left, and John Whittaker of Royal Mail, below). After touring the printing works, they enjoyed a west-end show as part of their prize.

Collect 99 Following on from the success of their Wembley stamp exhibitions, Stanley Gibbons is relocating its Collect exhibitions to Hall 3 of the Wembley Exhibition Centre. The 1999 event, run in association with *Collectables Magazine*, will be held on 16-17 October. Amongst the attractions will be a display of Wembley memorabilia by Alan Sabey, noted for his philatelic collections of 1924-25 Empire Exhibition and other exhibitions and events held at Wembley. Some of his memorabilia collection was displayed at Stamp '95. Collect 99 caters for collectors of stamps, postcards, coins, banknotes, ceramics, diecast models, books, autographs, memorabilia and much else. The 1997 and 1998 events proved there is a market for shows covering a wide range of collecting interests •

For details of Collect 99 also Stamp 2000 (Wembley, 2-6 February), contact Sylvia Cook, Exhibitions Manager at Stanley Gibbons. Telephone 01425 461353.

British Thematic Association At the recent AGM, Margaret Morris succeeded Franceska Rapkin as President of the Association; Mrs Rapkin becomes the first Honorary Life Member of the BTA. John Hayward was appointed Chairman in place of Brian Sole, and Christine Earle is the new Vice Chairman. Brian Asquith stood down as Treasurer, his place being taken by Tony Farmer •

For details of the BTA send a stamped addressed envelope to the Membership Secretary: Ian Paton, 15 Humberstone Road, Cambridge CB4 1JD.

Bolaffi International 1999 Each year the Bolaffi organisation in Italy publishes an illustrated listing of the best and rarest stamps sold in the main auctions throughout the world during the previous year. These books are major works of reference and collectors' items in their own right. The volume covering 1998 is now available. It contains 320 colour pages, 1478 record prices, covering items from over 100 countries sold at over 60 auction houses. The text is in English •

Bolaffi International 1999 £35, from Steven C Kander (Philatelists) Ltd, 20 Broadfield Avenue, Edgware HA8 8PG.

Earlier volumes, for 1995-98, are still available.

For a copy of the report send a legal-size SAE (collectors in the USA) or two international reply coupons (collectors outside USA) to: Salm Foundation, 1029 N Dearborn Street, Chicago, IL 60610, USA.

Self-adhesive stamps The Arthur Salm Foundation of the Collectors Club of Chicago has published a 2300 word report on the Pressure-Sensitive Adhesive United States Stamps. When self-adhesive (pressure-sensitive) stamps made their appearance in the 1960s most stamp collectors considered them as gimmicks. Today, 85% of US stamps are produced in this format. Collectors want to know how to store and preserve these issues and remove them from envelopes. The report, written by Ken Lawrence, an experienced researcher and expert on self-adhesive stamps, answers many of the collectors' concerns. This is the fifth report published by the Arthur Salm Foundation which conducts research on philatelic products •

Royal Mail news Rugby World Cup • New stamp books • Christmas aerogramme



The Rugby Union World Cup label pane, above, and a detail from the pictorial aerogramme, opposite, illustrated by Simon Jones.

Rugby Union World Cup The 1999 World Cup will be staged at various venues in the United Kingdom, Republic of Ireland and France starting on 1 October. The final will be held in the new Millennium Stadium at Cardiff Arms Park on 6 November. To mark this great sporting event, Royal Mail will issue a commemorative label booklet, aerogramme and a philatelic numismatic cover (PNC).

The booklet containing four 1st class XVI stamps and the pictorial label will be available from the British Philatelic Bureau and Post Office Counters philatelic outlets, price £1.04. Unfolded label panes, same price, will be on sale at the Bureau only. The label, designed by Moseley Webb Design Partnership of Newport, Gwent, uses an illustration by Peter Sutton of a rugby tackle. It is inscribed bilingually, CWPAN RYGBI'R BYD 1999 CYMRU/RUGBY WORLD CUP 1999 WALES. The book was printed by Walsall Security Printers in gravure, seven colours being used for the stamps and label.

The label pane will also be available used on a PNC, designed by Moseley Webb, cancelled by a special Cardiff bilingual postmark of 1 October. The cover encapsulates Royal Mint's 1999 £2 coin which features a rugby ball on the reverse. The PNC, available from the British Philatelic Bureau, costs £12.95; early ordering is advised.

The pictorial aerogramme will be available from post offices in Wales and from the Bureau and philatelic outlets, price 45p. It was designed by Moseley Webb printed by Rexam Envelopes.

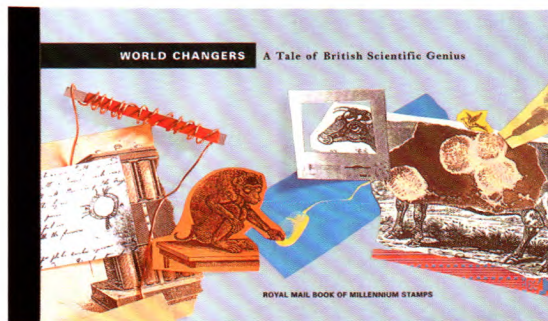
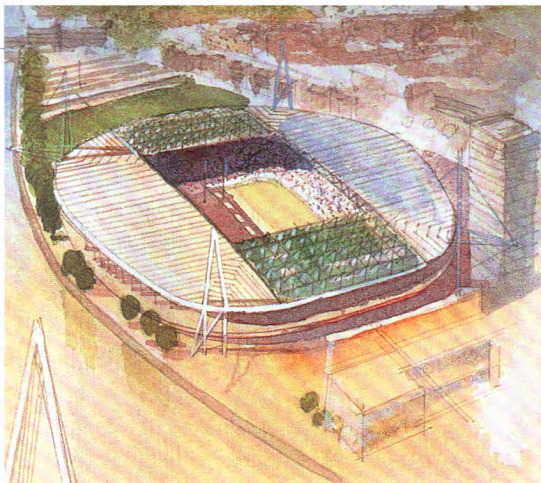
Details of any sponsored special postmarks for 1 October will be announced in the *British Postmark Bulletin*.

The Rugby Union World Cup was first staged in Australia and New Zealand in 1987. The final of the 1991 Cup was held at Twickenham, the

tournament commemorated by a 37p stamp and a Scottish aerogramme. The 1995 championship was held in South Africa whose team beat New Zealand in the final.

In addition to the Royal Mail issues, the 1999 tournament is also being commemorated by a stamp from France (11 September).

This Union World Cup should not be confused with the Rugby League World Cup, first staged in France in 1954. England and Wales hosted the 1995 World Cup; five stamps marking the event and the centenary of Rugby League. An article on rugby, both league and union, was published in the *Bulletin* of November 1995 •



New stamp books Readers are reminded that two new stamp books, previewed last month, will be available from 21 September. The *World Changers* prestige stamp book contains four panes of Millennium stamps and a mixed pane of definitives. The book, available from main post offices, the Bureau and philatelic outlets, costs £6.99.

Shown above is the mixed value definitive pane from the *World Changers* prestige book. Specialist collectors will note that the phosphor bands on this pane are somewhat wider than the bands on the 1p, 19p and 26p stamps in the £1 book also printed by Questa. The centre bands on the pane of 4 × 20p *Patients' Tale* stamps are also wider than on the sheet stamps issued in March. The perforations of the stamps in this book are as shown opposite.

The second Millennium book contains a pane of eight 1st class *NTV* definitives and a pane of two 26p *Farmers' Tale* stamps. The left sheet margin of this pane bears the wording 'From the *Farmers' Tale* set/Issued: September 1999'. These book stamps were printed by Walsall whereas the sheet stamps, issued 7 September, are by De La Rue. Details of any sponsored special postmarks for 21 September will be announced in the *British Postmark Bulletin* •

The *World Changers* prestige stamp book cover and mixed value definitive pane.

Perforations

Pane 1 (20p <i>Patients' Tale</i>)
13½ × 14
Pane 2 (44p <i>Scientists' Tale</i>)
14½ × 14
Pane 3 (26p <i>Scientists' Tale</i>)
14½ × 14
Pane 4 (63p <i>Inventors' Tale</i>)
13½ × 14
Pane 5 (<i>Machins</i>)
15 × 14

Note The 19p stamp in the *Machin* pane has centre band, not band right as stated in the August *Bulletin* p363.

New Mail Centres The new £17 million Mail Centre at Sheffield was officially opened by Mr Richard Dykes, Managing Director of Royal Mail, on 1 July. The new £22 million Chester Mail Centre at Chester West Employment Park was opened on 2 August to process mail from Chester, North Wales and Wirral. Chester's main delivery office remains at Station Road, together with enquiry office and customer service centre ●



Friends of the NPM The Association of Friends of the National Postal Museum continues with an impressive programme of events including future visits to Rexam Envelopes (formerly McCorquodales), printers of Royal Mail postal stationery, and the Great Central Railway at Loughborough. The 1999 Annual General Meeting, at the Phoenix Suite, Mount Pleasant on 27 November, includes a talk 'A Range of Hills' by Dr I David Hill, great, great, great nephew of Sir Rowland Hill. A special cover will be produced for the event.

The latest issue of the Friends' journal *Cross Post* contains articles on the carriage of mail during the railway strike of 1919 (by Richard Beith), Welsh regionals in Monmouthshire (Giles Allen), Sloper's Patent and Perfins (Michael Bament), a listing of covers and other souvenirs produced by the Friends in 1998 (James Negus), and report of the 1998 AGM. *Cross Post* is available to non-members, price £2.

For details of all Friends activities contact the Secretary, Ray Pottle, PO Box 40, Uckfield TN22 2SP. Telephone 01825 766546 ●

Collectors Club membership is £5 for two years, or just £7 for five years UK; and £9.50 or £13.50 overseas.

Collectors Club The July issue of the colourful Royal Mail *Collectors Club* magazine featured the Citizens' and Scientists' Tale stamps and Solar Eclipse miniature sheet, illustrations of the winning entries in the Settlers' Tale stamp design competition, an interview with a young collector as well as poems, drawings and jokes sent in by readers. The September magazine includes articles on the Farmers' Tale issue as well as free stamp offers and competitions. September's special offer is three sets of greetings cards for the price of two.

The Collectors Club is aimed at collectors aged between six and 14 and has over 50,000 members worldwide. *Bulletin* readers who would like to join a young collector to the Club should send a cheque, payable to Royal Mail Collectors Club, to Collectors Club, Dept 2397, Sunderland SR9 9XN. Gift membership is also available: please call 0191 501 3350 for details ●

Christmas aerogramme This year's aerogramme will be available from post offices, the Bureau and philatelic outlets from 19 October, price 45p. Designed by Brody Neuenschwander, it features angels, a shepherd with dog and sheep, with text from well-known Christmas hymns and carols. It complements Mr Neuenschwander's design for the forthcoming Christians' Tale 19p stamp (2 November). The aerogramme was produced by Rexam Envelopes Ltd. The 1998 aerogramme and aircard, both featuring angels by Irene von Treskow, will be withdrawn from sale at the Bureau and philatelic outlets on 5 October ●

Post Office Heritage Collections Designs for proposed farthing stamps of 1874

THIS MONTH'S TREASURE, formerly on display in the National Postal Museum (now closed), comprises designs for a proposed 1/4d stamp. In 1874 Perkins Bacon and De La Rue respectively produced six and seven designs for farthing postage stamps. The only documentation known is a note in the Perkins Bacon engraving book dated 20 November 1874. No date is recorded for the De La Rue designs, but they are assumed to have been produced at about the same time. The Perkins Bacon designs are composite; the heads were cut from the 1/2d stamp which they printed and the line-engraved backgrounds were cut from stock proofs. The artist added the corner letters and value in pen (or brush) on paper which was superimposed on the background. Two of the designs are somewhat strangely valued 'Quarter Penny'. In the event no farthing stamps were produced; these designs remaining as quaint examples of what might have been.

Proposed farthing stamps

Below, designs by Perkins Bacon. All designs are in the Reginald M Phillips collection and are thought to be unique.

The Post Office Heritage Collections

Freeling House, Mount Pleasant (Phoenix Place entrance), London EC1A 1BB. Enquiries: 0171 239 2570.

PUBLICATIONS Copies of the National Postal Museum's *Review* of 1996 and 1997-98, also the first four of its *Special Stamp History* books (1929 Postal Union Congress; 1935 George V Silver Jubilee and 1936 proposed Memorial stamps; 1936 proposed Edward VIII Coronation; and 1953 Coronation) are all available from the British Philatelic Bureau, address opposite •

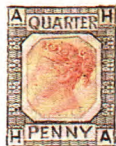
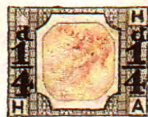
British Philatelic Bureau

20 Brandon Street, Edinburgh EH3 5TT. The *Reviews* cost £5 each, the *Special Stamp History* books £7.50 each.

Association of Friends The Friends of the NPM continues with events and visits, also publication of the *Cross Post* journal and postcards featuring items from the PO Heritage Collections (further information opposite) •

Enquiries

Ray Pottle, PO Box 40, Uckfield, TN22 2SP. Telephone 01825 766546.





The 19p Farmers' Tale stamp, above, is Royal Mail's Europa stamp for 1999. The Europa symbol is included in the top right corner.



Clockwise from top right: the British Isles seen from space – red indicates pasture, and arable land appears orange-brown; one of the 1989 Food and Farming Year stamps and a special handstamp; sowing seed by hand in the Middle Ages; and harvesting barley in Berwickshire, Scotland.



British farmers With Farmers' Tale stamps on sale this month, James Mackay describes vast changes in the nation's agricultural life

THE 19p STAMP designed by David Tress shows the method of farming in strips, practised from time immemorial until the late 18th century. It has to be admitted that the agriculture of Britain up to that time was of the poorest and most rudimentary quality. The land was unenclosed, the livestock of each hamlet grazing together, and the arable land occupied in common fields or run-rig. The land was divided into strips which were allocated annually to different people, and a portion of the strips allowed to rest, or lie fallow, when the soil had been utterly exhausted by continual cultivation over a period of years.

In Anglo-Saxon times the peasantry, who made up the bulk of the population, generally lived in a *tun* or enclosure, the wattle and daub huts huddled together. It was a subsistence economy, each township producing barely enough for its own needs – rye for bread and barley for beer. Root and green vegetables were quite unknown. The peasantry kept flocks of sheep, much prized for their wool. Goats provided milk for cheese, and the pigs that foraged on acorns and beechnuts in the surrounding forests yielded meat and much else besides, for it was wittily remarked that everything about the pig could be consumed, except its squeak.

Feudal system The custom of holding land in common, rotating cultivation and allocating strips, was intensified under the Normans, who introduced the feudal system. The *tun* became the *vill*, and at the bottom of the heap were the villeins and bondsmen who had no property of their own and were entirely in the hands of their masters. Peasants working in the fields appeared on the 17p stamp of 1986 marking the 900th anniversary of the Domesday Book. At the other end of the scale were the landowners, the great barons and their retainers, the knights and esquires. Gradually a middle class of yeomen or tenant farmers emerged, paying rent in kind and later in cash. By the beginning of the 17th century, however, clover was being grown as a means of improving the soil, and carrots were being cultivated in some parts of southern England. Sir Richard Weston, British ambassador to Bohemia during the Thirty Years' War, introduced clover to England about 1645. Within a decade this crop alone resulted in a vast improvement of agriculture in England and had begun to spread to Ireland and Scotland.

Nothing illustrates more immediately the changes wrought in British life over the past 200 years than the latest set of stamps in the Millennium series, the Farmers' Tale. The subjects of the 19p and 64p stamps are separated by a mere two centuries, and yet they are worlds apart in technique, technology and crop-yield. The Farmers' Tale set is issued on 7 September.

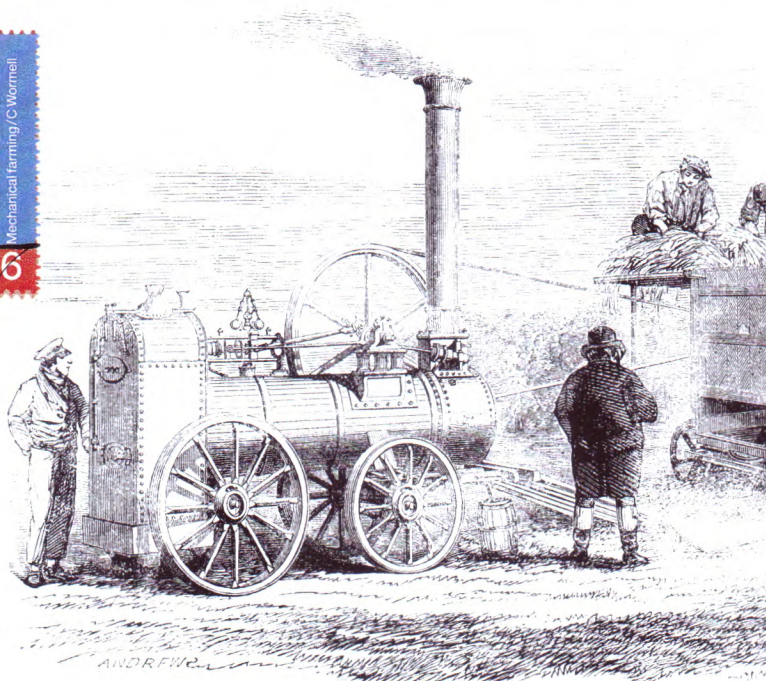


The Neolithic field system on the 1993 Irish stamp, top, is little different from the method of farming in strips shown on the 19p Farmers' Tale stamp. Peasants working in the fields appeared on a 1976 stamp to mark the 900th anniversary of the Domesday Book.



Christopher Wormell's 26p design shows a farmer with a rotary seed drill, invented by Jethro Tull in 1701. Hitherto seed had been broadcast – scattered at random. Now it was possible to sow seed in rows, which was much more economical in seed as well as permitting the more efficient cultivation of fields.

Steam power accelerated the rate of rural change in the 19th century. Right, a steam-driven thresher demonstrated at the Great Exhibition in 1851.



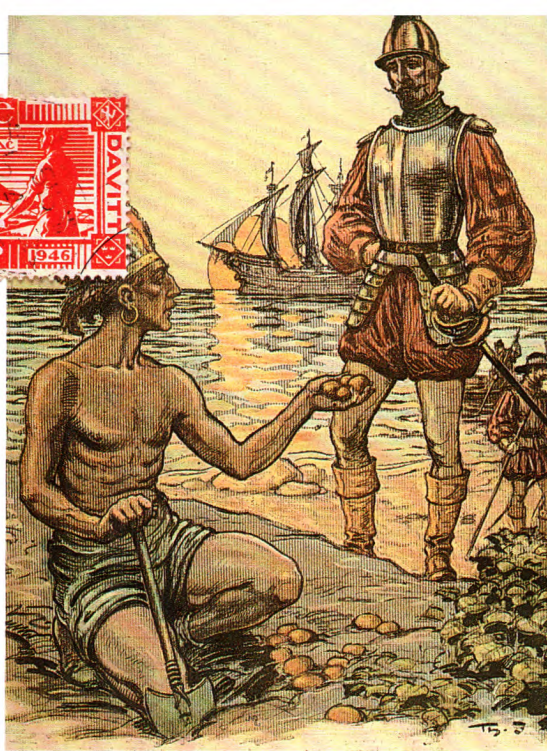
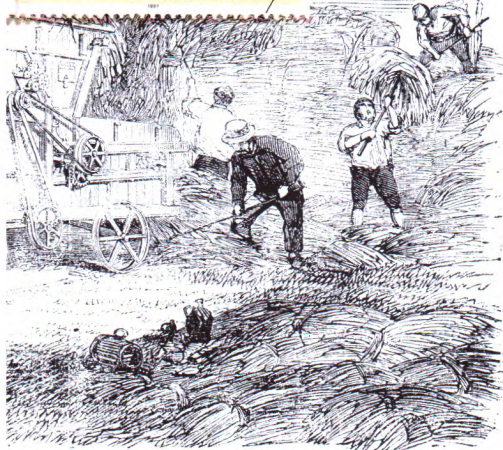
There is a range of postmarks used at RHAS showgrounds from 1911 until a permanent site was acquired at Ingliston, near Edinburgh, in the 1970s.



Rural change The movement which has come to be known as the Agrarian Revolution started around 1760 when the population of the British Isles rose. The demand for foodstuffs by the rapidly expanding towns and cities went hand in hand with a vast increase in the money supply occasioned by the development of manufacturing industry and commerce. The price of foodstuffs rose sharply, and increased wealth enabled tenant farmers as well as landowners to invest their capital in the land. The arable land was consolidated into larger holdings, the old run-rig system abolished and the open fields and common lands enclosed. Prior to 1760 only 244 acts had passed through Parliament for the enclosure of land; in the reign of George III alone the number rose to over 3000.

The enclosure movement drove many of the landless cotters and labourers from the rural districts into the rapidly growing towns and cities where they formed the core of the new industrial proletariat. The reign of George III – aptly known as ‘Farmer George’ – was also a time of enormous improvements in agriculture and all aspects of animal husbandry, and the introduction of mechanical techniques. The swing plough, invented by James Small of Berwickshire, and the threshing machine, invented by Andrew Meikle of Dunbar, were among other devices which revolutionised mechanical farming.

The movement for agricultural improvement witnessed the founding of the Royal Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland whose bicentenary was marked in 1984 by five stamps showing breeds of British cattle.



New crops In 1788 the Swedish turnip and the potato oat, the one introduced by Patrick Miller of Dalswinton and the other discovered by accident, led to vast improvements in animal husbandry. Arguably the most important vegetable to be imported from abroad, however, was the potato, originally a native of the Andes which Sir Walter Raleigh (shown on a 7½p stamp of 1973) introduced to Ireland from Virginia in the 1590s. The potato spread from Ireland to Lancashire and by 1680 was beginning to spread to other parts of England.

The potato eventually replaced barley as the staple diet of the peasantry, especially in Ireland and Scotland, and the blight which destroyed crops in the 1840s led to what the English term the Potato Famine, but which in the areas actually affected was known more starkly as the Great Hunger. In 1846, when the famine peaked, Ireland witnessed the birth of Michael Davitt and Charles Parnell who would dedicate their lives to land reform.

Significantly, two of Ireland's earliest commemorative issues had an agricultural theme, the 2d of 1931 celebrating the centenary of the Royal Dublin Society and showing a reaper, and the pair of 1945 showing a youth sowing the seeds of freedom, marking the centenary of the death of Thomas Davis, founder of the Young Ireland movement. Two stamps of 1973 featured a tractor ploughing a field, to publicise the World Ploughing Championships at Wellington Bridge, and in 1992 a set of four highlighted various aspects of modern Irish agriculture – a far cry from the Hungry Forties of 150 years earlier.



Irish issues have marked the land reforms of Michael Davitt and Charles Parnell (top right, 1946), and the Great Hunger or Potato Famine, 1996.

Above: the 44p Farmers' Tale stamp, by Tessa Traeger, and a Spanish conquistador being introduced to the potato in South America.



The subject of the 64p value, by Robert Cooke, is satellite farming.

A vast cornfield and a loaf of bread symbolised agriculture on the 1986 34p Industry Year stamp.

Harvesting p10, Laurie Campbell/NHPA; Land-use satellite map p10, NRSC Ltd/Science Photo Library; medieval sower p10, by permission of The British Library; medieval digger p11 and potato p13, Mary Evans Picture Library; steam thresher p12, Illustrated London News Picture Library; ploughing p14, Liz Artindale.

Modern farming In the early 19th century field drainage and top-dressing led to a vast increase in the land brought under cultivation. Steam power and later the internal combustion engine accelerated ploughing, reaping and the processing of crops, from the threshing of corn to the baling of hay and the digging of root crops. In the past half century there have been enormous strides in farm mechanisation and the use of synthetic fertilisers and pesticides. Ditches and hedgerows have been eradicated in order to create vast prairie-like fields treated by crop-dusting aircraft and ploughed by tractors with enclosed cabins and all mod cons. A vast cornfield, with a loaf of bread in the foreground (above), symbolised agriculture on the 34p stamp of the Industry Year set of 1986.

Crops resistant to climatic changes and herbicides have been engineered genetically, sheep have been cloned, and even the computer has been pressed into service, combined with aerial photography and navigation satellites to give farmers a precise profile of soil and crops, analysing variations caused by disease, pests, drought or soil conditions.

Regional farm buildings were the subject of six 10p stamp booklets, designed by Norman Battershill and issued in 1978-79, while exotic and rare breeds of farm animals were featured on the covers of four 50p booklets in 1982-83. Associated with farming are the country crafts featured on five 70p booklets of 1978-79 and wind and water mills on £1 booklets of 1989-90 •

Post impressions Philip Parker looks at the art of Royal Academicians at the Royal Mail sponsored exhibition

THE Royal Academy Summer Exhibition finished in mid-August. Seen by more than 100,000 visitors, undoubtedly a big attraction was the room hung with six recent paintings by David Hockney of the Grand Canyon. One of these was sold for \$3 million during the show.

A mile or so north of the RA, however, is another impressive Hockney, prints of which may be purchased for 26 pence. His 10-foot wide painting of Yorkshire's Salts Mill, somehow bathed in a beautiful Californian light, is on show at Post Impressions, the major exhibition at The British Library. The 26p prints are, of course, stamps taken from the painting for the Millennium programme. The painting was created in 1997 and on his return to California, Hockney continued his landscape explorations – and the Grand Canyon paintings emerged.

At the British Library exhibition his painting is accompanied by exhibits from Salts Mill, including a beautiful Victorian print of the mill and sample books of the fabrics the mill produced.

Opposite the Hockney, in the Workers' Tale section, is an equally extraordinary canvas by Brendan Neill RA. His airbrush technique was used to dramatic effect in his painting of Lloyd's building in the City. In places, up to 40 layers of paint were applied to create the lustrous finish of the steel and glass structure. Among the accompanying exhibits bringing 'City finance' to life is an original engraving by Rowlandson of Lloyd's Coffee House in 1798.

The original artwork of all 48 Millennium Stamps can be enjoyed in the exhibition, and six of these are by Royal Academicians. Sir Eduardo Paolozzi's huge sculpture of Newton dominates the Library's forecourt, but inside in Post Impressions is the other end of the scale of his art – the stamp and mixed media artwork he created for Royal Mail on 'Computers'. Visitors can use touch-sensitive TV screens to explore the history of computers, especially Alan Turing's contribution. Turing's work was suggested to Paolozzi by



Royal Mail's Design & Editorial team. On headphones one may listen to Paolozzi describing his design approach, which also casts light on his robotic-like sculpture of Newton. The artist was so enthralled by the subject that he has since developed a personal project exploring Turing's work.

The audio points are a feature of the exhibition, and some 20% of the Millennium artists were interviewed especially. Video is another feature, and accompanying Peter Blakes' photographic collage of rock star Freddie Mercury is a video of the charismatic performer himself.

In the Christian's Tale section there is a complete change of pace. Here, and in the Artists' Tale, one can view artwork and stamps of sets yet to be issued. Craigie Aitchison RA has created a jewel-like figurative painting, a modern reworking of the Nativity theme, which is accompanied by an early 13th-century psalter (above). Quite different in scale and style is fellow Academician Allen Jones' study of two dancers for the 'World of the stage' stamp to be issued in December. Jones was asked to explore the British heritage of performance and the stage, and close by his vibrant watercolour is a first edition of Shakespeare's First Folio. Jones has played on the idea of both looking at a stage performance and viewing a work of art – and indeed a stamp ●

Post Impressions The British Library, Euston Road, London NW1. Free entry. Open every day. The David Hockney painting will leave the exhibition at the end of September.

The Soldiers' Tale

The tenth of the 12 sets of Millennium stamps to be issued during 1999 is on the theme of soldiering



The Soldiers' Tale stamps go on sale at post offices and philatelic outlets on 5 October

THE DESIGN of the **19p** stamp, by Andrew Davidson, features King Robert the Bruce at the site of his famous victory against the English at Bannockburn in 1314. This was a turning point in the Scottish Wars of Independence. The equestrian statue of Bruce by C Pilkington Jackson, unveiled by HM The Queen at Bannockburn in 1964, was studied by Fritz Wegner when he designed the 1974 Great Britons (Medieval Warriors) stamps (see *Bulletin* July 1974). The statue has featured on special handstamps used on 21 July 1987 (Scottish Heraldry issue) and 25 January 1996 (Robert Burns). On the new stamp the King is shown holding a shield painted with the Lion Rampant of Scotland – as shown on the recently issued 26p Scottish country stamp.

The **26p** value, designed by Rod Kelly, recalls the Civil War, showing a cavalier and roundhead helmet, symbolic of King Charles I's disagreements with Parliament which led to the seven year war and his eventual execution. Four stamps marking the 350th anniversary of the Civil War





The 19p stamp shows King Robert the Bruce at Bannockburn. The 26p value recalls the Civil War, fought between supporters of the King and Parliament. The 44p represents the horror of the world wars, in contrast to the 64p stamp, which celebrates the peace-keeping soldier of today. Above, British troops moving up to the front, Ypres, 1917 (Hulton Getty).



Cylinders and colours

19p W1 black ● W1 stone ● W1 silver ● W1 phosphor

26p W1 lemon ● W1 black ● W1 grey ● W2 silver ● W1 black ● W1 gold ● W1 phosphor

44p W1 grey-black ● W1 black ● W1 silver ● W1 phosphor

64p W1 greenish-yellow ● W1 red-orange ● W1 bright magenta ● W1 pale new blue ● W1 black ● W1 bright blue ● W1 phosphor

Don McCullin's sombre design for the **44p** stamp reminds us of the horrors of the two world wars in which many millions perished or were severely injured. The lives of countless families were ruined or disrupted by the conflicts, particularly the First World War – the war to end all wars.

In contrast, Christopher Corr's colourful **64p** design celebrates the peace-keeping activities of soldiers since the end of the Second World War. Under the aegis of the United Nations or NATO, British troops have performed an important role in containing conflict and the rebuilding of communities, most recently in Kosovo.

For three of the four designers, these are their first Royal Mail stamps. Andrew Davidson, on the other hand, designed the 1993 Sherlock Holmes stamps and illustrated the 1988 Transport & Communications and 1988 and 1990 Christmas stamps. He has also designed stamp book covers. Born in Cambridgeshire in 1958, Mr Davidson was brought up in Scotland.



Presentation pack The well-illustrated pack above (price £1.90) will be available from philatelic outlets and main post offices.

FIRST DAY FACILITIES Unstamped Royal Mail FDC envelopes will be available from main post offices and philatelic outlets about a week before 5 October; price 25p. Orders for FDCs with the stamps cancelled by a pictorial first day postmark of the Bureau or London SW must reach the Bureau by 5 October. Price £2.22 UK (including VAT) or £1.89 overseas (no VAT).

Collectors may send stamped covers on the day of issue to: British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, Edinburgh EH3 5TT, or Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, Mount Pleasant, London EC1A 1BB (London SW postmark), marking the outer envelope 'FD9923' (Bureau), or 'FD9924' (London SW). Covers can be posted or handed in at main post offices for the London postmark. A non-pictorial London postmark is also available from the Special Handstamp Centre, request 'FD9924 NP'.

Bilingual Welsh/English versions of the London SW handstamps can be obtained by sending covers to the Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, Penarth Road, Cardiff CF1 1AA, quoting reference FD9924 Bil (pictorial) and FD9924 NP Bil (non-pictorial).

Sponsored handstamps will be announced in the *British Postmark Bulletin* – available on subscription from the Bureau (£10 UK/Europe; £21.75 elsewhere). For a sample copy write to: The Editor, British Postmark Bulletin, Royal Mail, Gavrelle House, 2-14 Bunhill Row, London EC1Y 8HQ. Covers may bear just the 19p Soldiers' Tale stamp for any philatelic postmark in use on 5 October.

MILLENNIUM PHILATELIC PRODUCTS A well-illustrated Soldiers' Tale pack (price £1.90) and stamp cards (25p each) will be available from main post offices and philatelic outlets. A Millennium Stamps Album, with pages for the 1999 issues, is available from the Bureau. Price: album and slipcase £19.99; sets of pages only £9.99. A presentation case has been produced to display the Millennium packs and covers. Enquiries: British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, Edinburgh EH3 5TT •

Future millennium issues The Christians' Tale set (2 November) features Charles Wesley's hymn 'Hark, the Herald Angels sing' (19p), King James I and his Bible (26p), St Andrew's Cathedral, Scotland (44p), and the First Christmas, painting by Craigie Aitchison (64p). Books containing the 19p and 26p stamps will also be issued on 2 November. The Artists' Tale set (7 December) features specially commissioned paintings *World of the Stage* by Allen Jones (19p), *World of Music* by Bridget Riley (26p), *World of Literature* by Lisa Milroy (44p), and *New Worlds* by Sir Howard Hodgkin (64p).

A 'Millennium Timekeeper' miniature sheet containing four new 64p stamps by David Gentleman will be issued on 14 December and a Millennium definitive on 6 January 2000. The Millennium 2000 series begins on 18 January with a set entitled Above & Beyond. This is followed by Fire & Light (1 February), Water & Coast (7 March), Life & Earth (4 April), Art & Craft (2 May), People & Place (6 June), Stone & Soil (4 July), Tree & Leaf (1 August), Mind & Matter (5 September), Body & Bone (3 October), Spirit & Faith (7 November), and Sound & Vision (5 December) •



Technical details

Printer Walsall Security Printers

Process Litho 19p, gravure others

Size 37 × 35mm

Sheets 100

Perforation 14 × 14.5

Phosphor One band 19p • two bands others

Gum PVA

Central gutter Horizontal



Stamps, post offices – and meteorites?



The 1957 USSR stamp, top, shows the Sikhote-Alin fireball by the artist Medvedev, who witnessed the event. Eyewitnesses described the fireball as brighter than the Sun. Its light and associated sonic booms were seen up to 400 kilometres away.

The Tunguska stamp of 1958 depicts its fireball over the pine forests, and a portrait of L.A. Kulik, a Russian scientist instrumental in unravelling the mystery of this event.

Right, a Perseid meteor trail. The Perseid meteor shower, seen around 12 August each year, has around one meteor per minute at its peak.



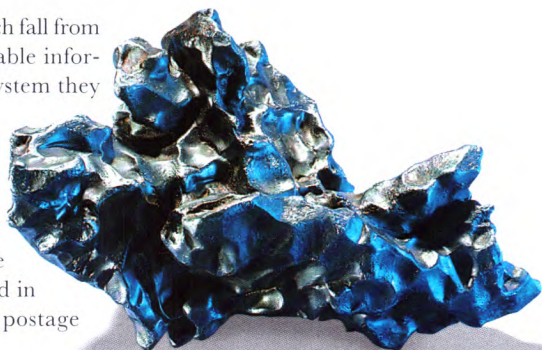
Matthew Genge traces a curious connection

METEORITES ARE THOSE NATURAL OBJECTS which fall from space to Earth, and although they provide valuable information on the history and origins of the solar system they are not particularly renowned for having much to do with the postal system. The fall of a meteorite is, however, often a spectacular event to those who are lucky enough to witness it and the meteorites themselves are treated as national treasures. It is perhaps not surprising then that these momentous occasions have been commemorated in a number of countries with special editions of postage stamps.

Three meteorite stamps have been issued, two by the then USSR and one by Greenland. The first of these commemorates the largest meteorite fall to occur in recorded history in the Sikhote-Alin mountains, Siberia at 10.38 on 12 February 1947. The fireball depicted on the stamp was formed by the enormous heat generated by friction of the Sikhote-Alin meteoroid with the atmosphere as it slowed from more than 11 to 1 kilometre per second and was witnessed by thousands of people. Expeditions from the USSR Academy of Science recovered around 23 tons of the Sikhote-Alin meteorite from pits up to 12 metres deep scattered across a pine-covered hillside, the largest fragment weighing 1745kg. One piece weighing 13.6kg had split a 70cm thick cedar tree into two. Sikhote-Alin is an iron meteorite that is probably a fragment of the metallic core of an asteroid and travelled around 300 million kilometres to reach the Earth.

The second meteorite postage stamp issued by the USSR commemorates the 1908 Tunguska event. At 12.16am, on 30 June, 1908 an explosion with an energy estimated at 20 megatonnes occurred over the Tunguska river in Siberia. The explosion, which happened at around 4km altitude, caused devastation of the pine forests over an area of 2000km², however, due to the sparse population no human casualties were incurred. Pine trees in the area were ignited by the heat of the explosion but only their outsides were charred since the enormous winds caused by the shock wave that blew down the trees also blew out the fires. The fallen trees lay in a radial pattern that centred on a point on the Tunguska river. These phenomena also occurred in nuclear airbursts and it is perhaps fortunate that the Tunguska event occurred in 1908 rather than during the height of the cold war.

Expeditions from the USSR Academy of Science were puzzled by the absence of an impact crater or meteorites and found instead only tiny iron and nickel-rich droplets covering the region. It is now believed that the Tunguska event was caused by the cataclysmic breakup of a 60m wide fragment of a comet in the atmosphere over Siberia. Comets are bodies consisting of ice and dust and are particularly fragile. They come from the outer reaches of the solar system, up to one third of the way to the nearest star.



A fragment from the Sikhote-Alin meteorite which fell on 12 February 1947 in Siberia. It broke up as it fell, producing thousands of such fragments, creating 106 craters and cutting down entire trees. (Detlev van Ravenswaay/SPL)



The Cape York meteorites, the largest ever found, were commemorated on a 1978 Greenland stamp. An eskimo knife fashioned from meteoric iron is shown on a pattern of iron minerals known as Widmanstätten texture, revealed when the meteorite is cut and polished.

The final meteorite stamp, issued by Greenland in 1978, commemorates the Cape York meteorites. These iron meteorites, recovered from Greenland, together represent the largest meteorite ever found totalling 58 tons. The first pieces of Cape York were recognised by the British explorer Captain Ross on his 1818 expedition to find the Northern Passages when he noted that the Eskimos of Melville Bay, Northern Greenland were using tools with walrus bone handles and iron blades. Sir Joseph Banks, the president of the Royal Society, ordered the analysis of the Eskimo knives returned to London by Ross and discovered that they contained substantial nickel indicating an extraterrestrial origin.

Over the following 90 years numerous Danish, Swedish, British and US expeditions were dispatched with the secondary goal of finding the iron mountain of the Eskimos. Although numerous small meteorites were obtained from the Eskimos it wasn't until 1894 that the American explorer Peary was shown the main masses of the Cape York meteorite.

The three large meteorites rediscovered by Peary were known to the Eskimos as the Tent, the Woman, and the Dog, and weighed 31, 3 and 0.5 tons respectively. Peary described how the irons were surrounded by piles of blue coloured basalt stones that had been transported for hundreds of miles by generations of Eskimos to use as anvils in beating the iron into knife blades. In 1895 and 1897 Peary managed to transport all three meteorites back to New York. Another 3.4 ton mass was discovered in 1913 and was transported to Copenhagen. A final mass of 20 tons called the Agpalilik iron was recovered in 1963 by V F Buchwald and was also sent to Copenhagen where huge slabs of the meteorite were cut and polished. These showed the crosscutting pattern of iron minerals known as Widmanstätten texture (left) that is typical of iron meteorites. The Cape York meteorites have provided science with detailed information on the formation of cores in asteroids. The Cape York stamp shows the Widmanstätten pattern seen on the polished slabs of the Agpalilik mass and an Eskimo knife fashioned from meteoritic iron.

Beyond the three postage stamps there is one more tenuous link between meteorites and the postal service. All meteorites are named after the place they fell or were found. Today any place shown on a map is acceptable, however, in the past it was an unwritten convention that the nearest town with a post office should be the preferred choice since these were frequently the towns shown on easily obtainable maps. Most of the 21 meteorites that have fallen in Britain, including Glatton, Beddgelert, and Barwell, owe their names to the chance location of their fall and the Post Office ●

Philexfrance '99 Report by Francesca Rapkin RDP, FRPSL

THERE IS NO DOUBT that stamp exhibitions as we knew them in the past are no longer a viable proposition. I am not convinced, however, that the massive spectaculars such as IBRA, and more recently, Philexfrance are the way ahead. In Paris, the philatelic exhibits were lost in a huge hall crowded with spacecraft, airplanes, railway carriages and ... lakes. At least, unlike IBRA, the three dimensional displays were related to the carriage of the mail. Imaginative lighting was reserved for the non-philatelic features and as a result, the stamp exhibits were not easy to study, and some almost needed a torch to be seen. Most were not shown off to advantage.

Whose idea was it to have miniature lakes placed strategically around the hall? One collector was heard to remark that this was a breeding ground for mosquitoes, and that more than one person had been bitten! While this was an exaggeration, it was certainly true that the water added to the humidity, to the detriment of the stamps – as well as the dealers and visitors. At times, the heat and humidity in the hall was almost unbearable, especially since the organisers decided to economise on the use of air conditioning.

Once again, as at IBRA, the vast hall made wear and tear on the feet and ligaments inevitable. A figure of some 199,000 visitors by the second Friday, the day I came home, was being quoted. Yes, there were many visitors, but 199,000? I think not. I can only believe that everyone who was sold a season ticket – and there were many – was automatically assumed to have visited the exhibition every day, making eleven visits to add to the total. Go out for lunch and return in the afternoon and you are clocked in again. This way the figures soon add up, but give a distorted picture. The Germans' estimate of 120,000 visitors in comparison was far more realistic. However, unlike IBRA, at no time did one feel that the hall was either crowded or full. There were rarely many people studying the exhibits, nor were dealers overly crowded for much of the time. Passport activity around the postal administrations was steady, rather than frenzied.



When the exhibition opened, school holidays had already started, so there were no large school parties, and Parisians who can afford to leave the city in July were also absent. Entry to the exhibition was neither inviting nor welcoming. The giant scaffolding, clad in grey sheeting, which masked the interior of the hall was rather intimidating.

Someone on the organising committee deserves a medal for coming up with a new and most innovative way of numbering the exhibits! Firstly they were divided according to their frame allocation: five or eight frames. These were then listed alphabetically by the name of the exhibitors. This meant that German exhibits, in the traditional class, which should have been grouped together, were spread all over Europe. The same applied to the Great Britain exhibits in the Postal History class, and in all the other exhibits. This was particularly difficult for anyone who wanted to study a particular group of countries or subjects and involved much unnecessary walking.

One can't help feeling the organisers missed an opportunity to invite and excite a new audience. The railway carriages, planes and post buses could have been used to house hands-on exhibits, instead of static displays. Giant screens, as at Italia '98, could have been used to good effect, and lectures on specific topics, perhaps at the frames might have won some new adherents. My impression was that the dedicated collectors would take what they needed from the exhibition, but the merely curious would leave with their opinion intact that stamp collectors are a strange crew! ●

Decimal stamp books 47 Specialist report by D G A Myall:

Se-tenant pairs A large part of this series of articles has dealt with new issues and their cover changes, especially those which promote special events. At the time of writing (June) the next books are not due until September/October – see page 302 of the June *Bulletin*. This gives me an opportunity to deal with a subject for which booklets provide almost the sole source – se-tenant pairs. (A few derive from coils.) For some reason, se-tenant pairs are more popular on the continent than they are in these islands. But they look very attractive on the album page and they are easy to obtain, with very few rarities (depending on one's definition).

Collins' dictionary defines se-tenant as: denoting two postage stamps of different face values and sometimes of different designs in an unseparated pair. The word 'designs' in this definition can be liberally interpreted. It can, for example, include stamps with deliberately straight edges on different sides, or with differently placed phosphor bands. Even the word 'stamps' can be stretched to include labels such as those which appear in the centre of some of the panes in prestige books. Pairs can be joined together either horizontally or vertically.

Britain's, indeed the world's, first se-tenant pairs came from sheets and were issued on 6 May 1840. Each penny black stamp in the sheet had different corner letters, a fact which surely brings them within the meaning of different designs. You would have to be very rich to assemble a collection of all the possible pairs from this source. In this article I want to bring your attention to those which are available from decimal booklets.

The first decimal pairs The first decimal se-tenant pairs occurred on panes in the very first decimal stamp books, issued on 15 February 1971. The 10p machine-vend books contained two panes of four. One contained 2×2 p vertically se-tenant with $2 \times \frac{1}{2}$ p; the other had 2×1 p vertically se-tenant with $2 \times \frac{1}{2}$ p. The reason for this make-up was that the combination of $2\frac{1}{2}$ p was the minimum 2nd class letter rate at the time.



However, the vertical arrangement meant that the bottom stamp of a pair was likely to miss being cancelled, with the risk that it could be reused. To counter this, the layout was changed so that the pairs were horizontal. Booklets with the new panes were issued on 15 July 1971. These four pairs, two vertical and two horizontal, and the reason for the change, would make an interesting first page of a decimal se-tenant collection.

Counter books issued on decimal day contained panes of six units. This was a carry-over from the former arrangement which was based on a duo-decimal currency. Panes of ten were not to be issued until March 1976. Meanwhile, the panes contained five stamps, the sixth unit

a collection of se-tenant pairs from virtually their sole source



Se-tenant pairs from early decimal books of 1971, opposite, and from prestige books, above.

Douglas Myall published the 3rd edition of his *Deegam Catalogue of Machin Se-tenant Pairs* in 1995 (reviewed here May 1995). It is still available, with updates, price £13.70 post-paid in the UK, £14.70 elsewhere from: D G A Myall, 2 Elizabeth Ave, Bridport DT6 5BA.

being a label. The first labels contained advertisements and were printed by the same cylinder which printed the value. This, in my view, makes pairs of stamp plus label legitimate contenders for the collection, although I would not go so far as to suggest that the pair of labels on one of the panes in the 25p book should qualify.

The use of the label unit for commercial advertisements ceased when the appointment of the advertising contractors, Canonsreach Ltd was not renewed in 1973. The need for such a sixth unit continued however, and the labels were left blank, although they carried phosphor bands. Although there is no text or design on them, I include them in my se-tenant collection.

There was one pane in the first decimal counter books which provided a se-tenant pair that would meet anybody's definition. It occurred in the 50p book and consists of a 3p and a 2½p horizontally se-tenant. An interesting feature of this pair is that the 3p has two phosphor bars while the 2½p has a single side-bar at the left instead of at the centre as normal. Side bar phosphors are most often caused by the fact that a one bar stamp is printed se-tenant with a two bar stamp.

Prestige books In May 1972, collectors of decimal se-tenants were presented with a bonus in the form of three of the panes in the *£1 Story of Wedgwood* sponsored book (a forerunner of today's prestige books). Two of these contained 12 stamps in three rows of four. Each row was the same but every stamp on a row was different. One even contained three different 2½p stamps, with the phosphor bar at the right, left and in the centre. The fourth pane had only six stamps, $4 \times \frac{1}{2}p$ plus $2 \times 2\frac{1}{2}p$ but it contained the $\frac{1}{2}p$ left band, a difficult stamp, horizontally se-tenant with a $\frac{1}{2}p$ two bands and vertically se-tenant with a $2\frac{1}{2}p$ left band. These arrangements were so unusual that Royal Mail declared that the panes qualified for their full first day cover treatment, although the individual values had already been issued in other forms. This ground-breaking book set a precedent for all subsequent sponsored or prestige books and these are often the sole source of some stamps. It also led to some collectors embracing se-tenant triples and foursomes.

Mention of the prestige books reminds me that the *Scots Connection* book of March 1989 included the first se-tenant pairs of stamps with country symbols. The pane of nine has a label in the centre surrounded by 14p, 19p and 23p values. If you include the label as a legitimate part of a se-tenant pair, there are three horizontal and four vertical pairs obtainable from this pane or, rather from four panes if you want all seven. In the *Beatrix Potter* book you can even find stamps from different UK countries se-tenant with each other. Possibly the most prolific source of pairs is



Se-tenant pairs from Christmas books. The 8p over 10p pair is from a mis-cut pane.

the pane of nine in the Stamp World 90 prestige book which contained eight different stamps and a label yielding six horizontal and six vertical, the maximum possible from a pane of nine.

Machine-vend books One of the most attractive features of pairs comprising different values is that they are different colours. Some of the most visually appealing occur on panes from machine-vend books with folded covers. Part of the reason for the frequency with which these books

contain pairs is that they often have to make up the face value to a round figure of 50p, £1 or £2 to suit the fact that the machines are coin-operated. Also, to ensure that the folded books stay flat and do not jam the machines, the number of units was fixed at a multiple of four from around 1979. One could form a wide and interesting collection from these books alone.

I cannot leave this subject without mentioning the Christmas books which contained definitive stamps from 1978 to 1982. These had a row of 10 1st class stamps over a row of 10 2nd class ones. They provide only vertically se-tenant pairs, a good reason for including these in one's definition. Among the few difficult pairs in the se-tenant field are those from panes in the 1979 Christmas book which were miscut by one row. These yield 8p over 10p instead of the other way round. Even so a full pane of 10 pairs costs only £75.

I hope that this short overview has persuaded you that decimal se-tenant pairs are worth collecting for their own sake. One advantage of collecting se-tenants is that one can often retrieve an entirely satisfactory pair from a pane that has badly trimmed perforations and which would otherwise be of little value ●

Text © D G A Myall 1998

Posting boxes 188



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

THIS MONTH's photographs were submitted by Trevor Peat of Rickmansworth and J V Starkey of Great Grimsby. The first (at far left) is a refurbished Edward VII dual-aperture box outside the entrance to Liverpool Street Station on the Metropolitan Line in London. Mr Peat comments that he has noticed a number of the boxes in the city have been repainted. The two apertures are for first class and abroad and second class mail respectively. Formerly the division was between London and abroad and country mail.

In marked contrast to the city of London is the peaceful North Yorkshire village of Rosedale. Left is the George VI wall box in the post office there. The time plate shows one daily weekday collection at 4.10pm. Except at the base, the GVI enamel plate shows little wear and tear ●

Postbag

Millennium issues Congratulations on an interesting series – I don't like every design but do enjoy reading up on the background to the issue. I now know about migration to Scotland (20p Settlers), the medieval wool trade (19p Workers), and Robert Owen (44p Citizens) – all the result of looking at the stamps and reading about the subject in my local library. At age 78 I find it is never too late to add to one's knowledge. I look forward to the rest of the sets in this series. GEOFF DUNN, LUTON ●

Post Millennium I support Mr Baxter's view (June) that once the Millennium issues are complete Royal Mail should restrict the number of issues of commemorative/special stamps. Mr Baxter suggests seven issues including Christmas. Some years will have more events or anniversaries worthy of stamps than others. I think nine issues should be the absolute maximum which would balance out others in which there might be only three or four. Over a five year period I think the average should be six sets a year. The number of prestige books should be kept to one a year – of good quality such as the Definitive Portrait and Profile on Print books. I am eager to see the third in this series. The Speed book was disappointing. Finally I must say I have rather enjoyed the Millennium stamps although the design quality has varied considerably from a joy to behold to best forgotten! EDITH ANDERSON, PLYMOUTH ●

Number of issues I agree wholeheartedly with G L Baxter (June) – six sets of special stamps each year, plus Christmas, is an adequate number. This ensures enough stamps to maintain interest without the unsettling feeling that we collectors are being exploited each time we buy them. Too many issues leads to them becoming commonplace, collectors become blasé about them, and they are, in effect, no longer really very special. The Millennium is perhaps a special case and 12 sets each year in 1999 and 2000 are justified. But from 2001 I hope we will revert to six. MICHAEL SPICER, TONBRIDGE ●

Bilingual postmark Your readers may be interested to know that bilingual dies are now in use at Shrewsbury sorting office. The new dies read 'Shropshire & Y Canolbarth' (replacing Mid-Wales). MARTIN EVANS, SHREWSBURY ●

Bulletin Back Issues I have for sale back issues from September 1988 to May 1996 with just February 1991 missing. All are in mint condition and there are also 17 mixed date earlier issues. The price is £5 if the buyer collects or £15 postage paid to any UK address. JOHN MARDEN, 23 Knolls Close, Worcester Park KT4 8UR ●

New definitives The recent Scottish and Welsh stamps show just how good our stamps can be if we set our mind to it. Hopefully the same designers can be employed for a new definitive series with designs that promote Britain and its people, not just its head of state.

Although I live in England, I will be using the new Scottish and Welsh stamps on my mail! DAVID RATCLIFFE, MACCLESFIELD ●

Country stamps I have received the new Scottish and Welsh stamps and am delighted that Royal Mail has marked the significant political developments in Scotland and Wales by way of their new elected assemblies. Some immediate points occur to me, and I wonder if these are shared by others? It is well known worldwide that the only stamps which do not bear the name of the issuing state are British. Would it not have been a good opportunity to introduce somewhat more identification than the symbols (which mean something to collectors and some others, but probably little abroad), by adding the country names?

Secondly, I note that though there is token recognition of the Welsh language on two of the stamps, there is no concession at all to Scottish Gaelic. Why, I wonder? Finally, there is also a new assembly in Northern Ireland. Why has this not been marked in a similar way? W J MURPHY, MALAHIDE, CO DUBLIN ●

Country stamps Congratulations to Royal Mail for producing such striking and nationalistic stamps for Scotland and Wales. Would it now be asking too much for a similar effort to be directed at the definitives of Great Britain, to replace those boring, boring, boring Machins? HAMISH M BRUCE, CARLISLE ●

Scientists' Tale stamps In the July *Bulletin* (p342) is the statement 'Sir Isaac Newton invented the reflecting telescope in 1668'. In fact the Scottish mathematician, James Gregorie, FRS (1638-75) invented a reflecting telescope in 1661, described, along with the laws in his book *Optica promota*. The astronomical telescope, made by Galileo Galilei (1564-1642) and improved by various of his successors, chiefly Christiaan Huygens (1629-95), was limited in its development by the rather poor materials then available. Gregorie's idea was that magnification should be achieved by the use of a concave parabolic mirror near the focus of which is a small concave elliptical mirror.

Optica promota was published in London where Gregorie had gone in the hope that he might find workmen capable of making the optical system for his telescope. In London he made friends with John Collins (1625-83), mathematician and Fellow of the Royal Society, who introduced him to Reive (Reeve or Rives), the most skilled glass-grinder of the time. However, the task proved too difficult and Gregorie never succeeded in making his telescope. Meanwhile Newton, four years Gregorie's junior, independently invented a reflecting telescope which was exhibited at the Royal Society in 1672. His design was similar, using a concave parabolic mirror, but in place of Gregorie's small elliptical mirror, Newton used a plane mirror and placed the eye-glass in the side of the tube, thus removing the necessity of having a hole in the centre of the main mirror. This improved design is called the Newtonian telescope, although, as Newton admitted, it was only a variation on the Gregorian form. Through Collins, Gregorie and Newton held a friendly and interesting correspondence for several months, debating the relative merits of their telescopes (*Correspondence of Isaac Newton*, 1, p61 onwards).

After the development of speculum metal for mirrors and of true parabolic mirrors by James Short (1710-68) of Edinburgh – the most celebrated telescope maker of the 18th century – the Gregorian telescope was successfully made, and was the standard instrument for two centuries. Although reflecting telescopes are still used (Mount Palomar, Mount Wilson, etc), the refracting telescope is probably commoner, being developed when optical glass and engineering had improved enough to make this possible.

So, strictly speaking the reflecting telescope was 'invented' by Gregorie, and independently discovered by Newton several years later. Newton, however, was the first to succeed in making his telescope.

I hope *Bulletin* readers might be interested in this much-abbreviated story. Thank you for a marvellous publication of which I have a complete set from Volume 1! DR PAUL LAWRENCE, ABERDEEN ●



James Short, the celebrated telescope maker of the 18th century, commemorated on an Ascension Island stamp.

Special prize draw

Win Royal Mail Yearbook In a general office tidy-up we have found a number of Royal Mail Yearbooks and offer these in a special draw. Senders of the first six cards drawn on 1 October will receive a leather-bound yearbook, the next 15 will be sent a standard year book. Our choice of year. Simply send your name and address on a postcard or back of a sealed envelope to: Yearbook Draw, British Philatelic Bulletin, Royal Mail, 2-14 Bunhill Row, London EC1Y 3HQ ●

Greetings stamps labels 1992 Memories, by Lionel Jones



THE 1992 GREETINGS STAMPS featured a delightful montage of memorabilia, including a model car, cigarette cards, pocket watch and marbles. Of particular interest to stamp collectors is the design featuring an 1854 1d red stamp used on cover. The 12 labels that accompanied the stamps were attached by an inter-panneau gutter. The labels bear seven different messages – With Love (twice), Best Wishes (three), Sweet Memories,

Congratulations, Forget-Me-Not, Happy Birthday (three) and Thank You, printed in various scripts. Like the stamps, they were designed by Trickett & Webb and printed by Harrison & Sons Ltd on their Jumelle press. They were perforated on the APS perforator, gauge 14.75 × 14. In the greetings books the right margin of the label pane was trimmed off, but a wide margin is present on the panes sold in presentation packs ●

Bulletin binders and back issues



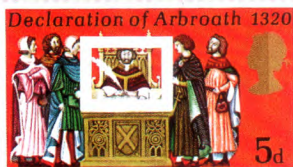
BINDERS to hold two years' issues of this *Bulletin* are available from the British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, Edinburgh EH3 5TT, price £7 (order code PB001). A binder for the *British Postmark Bulletin* is also available, price £6.50 (order code PB322).

Back issues of the *British Philatelic Bulletin* are available for six months from the Bureau, at 85p each. For earlier issues contact Maynard Davies, Casula, 3 Romans Way, Pyrford, Woking GU22 8TP. Enclose SAE or international reply coupon with enquiries and state issues required.

A series of Bulletin Publications was launched in 1992. No 6, *The British Empire Exhibition Stamps of 1924 and 1925* by Alan Sabey, is still available from the British Philatelic Bureau, price £2.95. Please note all earlier titles are now out of print.

For a sample copy of the *British Postmark Bulletin* write to: The Editor, British Postmark Bulletin, Royal Mail, 2-14 Bunhill Row, London EC1Y 8HQ. The Postmark Bulletin is available on subscription from the British Philatelic Bureau (address above): £10 UK and Europe; £21.75 Rest of World (Airmail) ●

Competition Identify the stamp from the detail and win £100



June's detail was from the 1970 stamp commemorating the 650th anniversary of the Declaration of Arbroath. L Andrews of Bedford won first prize, and 20 runner-up prizes were also sent. Our thanks to all who entered.

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

8HQ. The sender of the first card to be drawn on 15 October will receive £100. Twenty runner-up prizes will also be awarded.

The competition is not open to Royal Mail employees •

Events

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

Until 18 January 2000 'Post Impressions' exhibition at British Library: see page 15.

1-4 September Picture Postcard Show 1999 at New Royal Horticultural Hall, London SW1. See page 4.

18 September Kent Federation Autumn Rally at East Malling Village Hall

22-26 September Autumn Stampex at Business Design Centre, London N1. See pages 4 and 31.

25 September Portadown & District Phil Soc Stamp Exhibition and Collectors Fair at Portadown Town Hall, 10.00-16.30. Dealers, displays, commemorative booklet (£1.50). Admission free. **Enquiries** J Proctor, 01762 334964

25-26 September Exhibition Study Group Annual Convention at Saville Hotel, Clarence Parade,

Southsea. Displays, sales tables, annual dinner (prior booking required). **Enquiries** Bill Tonkin, 0181 777 8861

October exhibition Thomas Musgrave, Postmaster of Bath at Bath Postal Museum, 8 Broad Street, Bath BA1 5LJ. **Enquiries** 01225 460333

2 October SW Scotland Phil Fed Congress at Queen Margaret Academy, Ayr

2 October Letterbox Study Group 'Get Together' at the Toby Midway, on A508 between M1 Junction 15 and Northampton, 10.00-15.00. Members' displays, chat, sale of postbox items. **Enquiries** Mrs Helen Crabtree 01536 762127

5-10 October Bulgaria 99, European philatelic exhibition, Sofia. **Enquiries** Union of Bulgarian Philatelists, PO Box 662, BG-1000 Sofia, Bulgaria

9 October Ashford (Kent) PS Stamp & Postcard Fair at Norton Knatchbull Grammar School, Hythe Road, Ashford, 10.00-16.30. **Enquiries** D H Todd, The Cottage, Bockhanger Lane, Kennington, Ashford TN24 9BP

Late news



Millennium stamps Christians' Tale, the next in the Millennium stamps series, will be issued on 2

November. Full details will be published in next month's *Bulletin*.

Bulletin move The *Bulletin* office moved from Finsbury Square, London EC2 to Royal Mail, 2-14 Bunhill Row, London EC1Y 8HQ on 9 August. All correspondence should now be sent to the new address •

British PO in South Africa The British Post Office has beaten its French, German and Canadian counterparts to a multimillion pound contract to modernise the South African Post Office. The British Postal Consultancy Service will work with New Zealand Post International on the three-year project •

Autumn Stampex Details of further attractions at this national exhibition are now to hand. It will include a display, arranged by David Harrop, from the artefacts of the Manchester Postal Museum entitled 'The Terriers', depicting the many aspects of the mail systems in wartime. The theme of Kids Corner, organised by the National Youth Stamp Group, will be Farming, in keeping with Royal Mail's latest Millennium stamps, Farmers' Tale. There will be the usual popular Children's Free Auction on the Saturday. Over the weekend there will be meetings of the Great Britain Philatelic Society, Decimal Stamp Study Group, Ceylon Study Circle, Crash and Wreck Mail Society, Postage Due Mail Study Group, and Concorde Study Circle. Information about the Stamp Show 2000 will be available on the Royal Mail stand where collectors can register for free tickets.

E stamp in sheets A NV1 stamp, coded 'E' to prepay the basic letter rate to European countries was issued in books of four in January. From 5 October this will be available in normal sheets of 200 from main post offices in England and Northern Ireland, the Bureau and philatelic outlets. The sheet stamp will be printed by De La Rue, whereas the book stamps are by Walsall. It is not regarded by Royal Mail as a new stamp and thus no first day facilities will be available. The E stamp will not qualify for the Royal Mail first day postmarks to be used on 5 October for the Millennium Soldiers' Tale stamps. Scotland and Wales already have their own 'E' stamps, issued on 8 June.

Autumn Stampex is at the Business Design Centre, Upper Street, London N1, 22-26 September. See page 4 for further details •

Sheets of 6p and 30p definitives will be withdrawn from sale at post offices on 4 October. They will remain available from the Bureau and philatelic outlets. Any remaining stocks of books of four 30p stamps will also be withdrawn at post offices on 4 October •

Post Office Archives We are pleased to announce that building and renovation work is now complete and full access to the records is again available. Post Office Archives is located at Freeling House, Mount Pleasant (Phoenix Place entrance), London EC1A 1BB. Enquiries 0171 239 2570 •

Farmers' Tale On the sheets of Farmers' Tale stamps, phosphor cylinder numbers are opposite row 8, not 18 as stated in the August *Bulletin* •

post impressions

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