

British Philatelic Bulletin

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Editorial

Included in this issue is a review of the exhibitions held in London and Bournemouth in 1940 to mark the centenary of the adhesive postage stamp. Further articles looking at the international stamp exhibitions held in London in 1950, 1960, 1970 and 1980 will be published in the months ahead, in the lead-up to the 1990 exhibition – the high-point of the celebrations marking the 150th anniversary of the Penny Black next May.

I happily recall going, as a school boy, to the international at the Royal Festival Hall in 1960 (admission 10s – four weeks' pocket money!) and am looking forward to going to Alexandra Palace next year.

The exhibition organisers are hoping for some 75,000 visitors. A lot will depend on the attention given to the exhibition by the media and it is to be hoped that the national press, radio and television will take an interest. We are used to seeing on our TV screens programmes devoted to the Chelsea Flower Show, the Motor Show and the Boat Show and I sometimes wonder if more people are really interested in these than in stamp collecting. It has been estimated that there are 4 million stamp collectors in the UK – a quite respectable potential viewing audience. The television programme makers seem reluctant to give us a series devoted to the hobby but hopefully they can find time in the schedules for a report on the Stamp World exhibition. Given that much of the material on show will relate to the 150th anniversary it should have some interest for the general public.

JOHN HOLMAN

Late News

£1.40 and £1.90 stamp books containing non-value indicator stamps printed in litho by Ques-ta will be available from the British Philatelic Bureau and philatelic counters from 19 September. The books issued on 22 August had stamps printed in photogravure by Harrison.

The cylinder used for the Harrison 1st class NVI stamp was B3; the Walsall NVI stamps were from plates W1 W1 (1st and 2nd class).

Tourist Postmarks

In an article in the June *Bulletin* we referred to the pictorial tourist postmark in use at Rye, East Sussex. We are informed that this handstamp has now been taken out of use owing to damage and that no further requests for impressions can be accepted. We regret any inconvenience and disappointment caused.

New Definitive Stamps

26 September & 2 October 1989

Several new definitive stamps, stamp and machine-vended books and stamp rolls are due for issue at the end of September and early October to cover the increased postal tariffs which are scheduled to come into force on 2 October.

Sheet Stamps

Seven new sheet stamps will be issued on 26 September: 15p light blue (second class inland basic rate); 20p black (basic rate first class inland and EEC countries); 24p terracotta (second class second stage and European, non-EEC countries); 29p purple (postcards outside Europe); 30p sage (aerogrammes and first class second stage); 34p slate (Airmail Zone B) and 37p red (Airmail Zone C).

All stamps are printed on Advanced Coated Paper (ACP) except the 15p value which is on standard fluorescent paper with a centre phosphor band. All have been printed in photogravure by Harrison & Sons Limited in sheets of 200, with PVA Dextrin gum.

Machine-Vended Books

Two new machine-vended books will be available from 2 October, day of the tariff increase.

A new 50p book will contain a pane of three stamps and a label. The stamps comprise 2 x 15p with phosphor band at left and 1 x 20p with two phosphor bands. The label reads "Please use the Postcode". The cover design features an HP42, an Armstrong Whitworth Atlanta and a De Havilland DH Dragon Rapide; the first in a series of Aeroplane illustrations by Peter Hutton.

The new £1 book contains five 20p stamps on Advanced Coated Paper plus a "Postcode" label. The cover design features Wicken Fen drainage mill, Ely – the first in a series of Mills, designs by Jeremy Sancho.

Both books were printed by Harrisons in photogravure. The £1 book has imperf outer edges. Both 50p and £1 books have been perforated using the APS Chambon perforator.

Stamp Books

A new £1.16 stamp book (formerly referred to

as window books) will be issued on 2 October; this will contain four 29p stamps for the worldwide postcard rate. The stamps, and the book covers, have been printed by Walsall Security Printers Ltd. This yields the 29p stamp printed in lithography; the stamps are on standard fluorescent paper with two phosphor bands.

Stamp Rolls

Four new rolls will be available from the Bureau and philatelic counters from 2 October:

15p Code RL containing 500 stamps, longways delivery

15p Code SF containing 1,000 stamps, sideways delivery

20p Code TL containing 500 stamps, longways delivery

20p Code SG containing 1,000 stamps, sideways delivery

The 15p stamps have centre phosphor band, the 20p stamps are on ACP. A new mixed-value roll, containing 700 strips of 3 x 4p and 1 x 3p stamps, will go on sale on 10 October.

First Day Cover Facilities

A first day cover envelope for the new sheet stamps will be available approximately two weeks before 26 September, price 17p. First day posting boxes will be provided, as usual, at most main post offices. The standard, non-pictorial "First Day of Issue" handstamp will be applied. In addition pictorial First Day handstamps will be available for the British Philatelic Bureau and Windsor.

A FDC service will be provided by the Bureau. Application forms, available from the Bureau and main post offices, should be returned by 26 September. Collectors wishing to prepare their own covers may send stamped covers bearing the new stamps to receive the Bureau or Windsor postmarks to:

British Philatelic Bureau

20 Brandon Street
EDINBURGH EH3 5TT

No First Day of Issue postmarks will be available on 2 October although collectors wishing to prepare covers bearing book and roll stamps may post them to receive the Philatelic Counter handstamps or the permanent pictorial handstamps used at the City of London LDO (National Postal Museum and Tower of London), London SW (Buckingham Palace) or Twickenham (Heathrow Airport).

Presentation Pack

A new pack (No. 19) containing one of each of the new sheet stamps will be available from 26 September, price £2.15, from the Bureau and philatelic counters.

Withdrawal of Obsolete Stamps

It is intended to withdraw the 14p, 19p, 27p and 35p stamps from sale at post offices after close of business on 30 September. The current range of machine-vended (50p & £1) and stamp (window) books (56p, 76p, £1.08, £1.40 & £1.90) will also be taken off general sale. All will remain on philatelic sale for a further year.

New Country Stamps

New 15p, 20p, 24p and 34p Country stamps for Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales will be issued on 28 November; these will be in the same colours as the new Definitives, i.e. light blue, black, terracotta and slate. Further details and information about First Day of Issue postmarks will be published in next month's *Bulletin*.

Please note that at the time of going to press the Post Office Users' National Council had not given approval for postal tariff increases. Should approval not be forthcoming, the stamps, books and rolls may not be issued on 26 September/2 October. Readers are advised to check with their local post office shortly before 26 September. Details of postal rate increases will be displayed in post offices.

Microscopes Plate Numbers

The plates and colours used for these stamps were:

19p 1A/2A (gold) 1A/2A (lemon) 1A/2A (pale blue) 1A/2A (grey) 1A/2A (black) 1A/2A (grey-black)

27p 1A (gold) 1A (lemon) 1B (drab) 1A (black) 1A (grey-black)

32p 1A (gold) 1A (lemon) 1A (orange-vermilion) 1A (flesh) 1A (black) 1A (grey-black)

35p 1A (gold) 1A (lemon) 1A (black) 1A (bright green) 1A (grey-black)

Cylinder & Plate News

The 50p and £1 machine-vended books issued on 18 July were printed from cylinders B1 B16 (phosphor B76) and B6 B21 (B78) respectively. The 50p book with "rise and fall" as opposed to APS perforations, which went on sale on 8 August, was from cylinder B2 B16 (B76).

The £1.40 stamp (window) book, Chambon printed with revised bar code, was from cylinder B30 (phosphor B81). The £1.40 and £1.90 books, Jumelle printed with revised bar codes were from cylinders B31 (B84) and B19 respectively. The second class Non Value Indicator stamps in the £1.40 stamp (window) book issued on 22 August were printed from cylinder B1 (B84).

Harrisons have recently printed 14p stamps from cylinder B33 (phosphor B83) and 19p stamps from cylinders B20 and B21 for the panes of four in 56p and 76p stamp (window) books; these panes have straight edges at top, bottom and right and are inserted in covers printed by Walsall. The numbers were trimmed from the sheets after printing so do not appear in the issued books.

Postal Stationery News

First and second class stamped envelopes were issued in June 1983. On the reverse, below the space for sender's name and address was the instruction "UK Postage paid up to 60g". At some time, probably in 1986, a revised version was ordered, worded "For use within the UK only - postage paid up to 60g". First class envelopes with this new instruction were on sale by August 1986, but the earliest use of the second class envelope seen by the Editor is July 1988. Reports of earlier usage would be welcome.

The Lord Mayor's Show

17 October 1989



Five stamps, printed se-tenant, featuring the Lord Mayor's Procession will be issued on 17 October to mark the 800th anniversary of the Mayoralty of London. The stamps, all of 20p value (basic inland first class and EEC rate) depict the procession from Guildhall past the Royal Exchange, Mappin & Webb and St Paul's Cathedral to the Law Courts. There are few events more colourful or deeply rooted in tradition than this annual display of pagentry in the heart of the City. Far more than a swearing-in of the newly elected Lord Mayor, the procession proclaims to all the ancient right of London's citizens to elect their own mayor, independent of both monarch and national government influence.

The first Mayor of London, Henry Fitz-Ailwyn, was also the longest-serving; his term of office lasted from 1189 to 1212. In 1215, King John recognised the right of Londoners to elect their mayor on condition that he should swear an oath of allegiance. Hence the origin of the Lord Mayor's Show which is built around the swearing-in of the new Lord Mayor.

Perhaps the best-known Mayor was Richard Whytngdone of Pauntley in Gloucestershire who is usually referred to as "Dick Whittington". He was Mayor in 1397, 1406 and 1419 and also served as Master of the Mercers' Company. He had close business connections with the Royal Household and was deeply involved in charity work, for example the provision of

drinking fountains for the poor.

In 1983 Dame Mary Donaldson became the first woman to be elected Lord Mayor; the current holder of the office (1988-9) is Sir Christopher Collett.

Technical Details

The stamps were designed by Paul Cox and printed in photogravure by Harrison & Sons Limited in sheets of 100 on phosphor coated paper. They measure 30 x 41mm, are perforated 14 x 15, and have PVA Dextrin gum.

Royal Mail Stamp Cards

Royal Mail Stamp Cards featuring enlargements of each of the five stamps will be available from 2 October, price 18p each. They are numbered 121A-E.

Presentation Pack

The presentation pack (No. 202) will cost £1.25. It has been designed by Silk Pearce with text by Chris Somerville. The illustrations have been supplied by the Guildhall Library, Nicola Ames, London Transport Museum and the Museum of London.

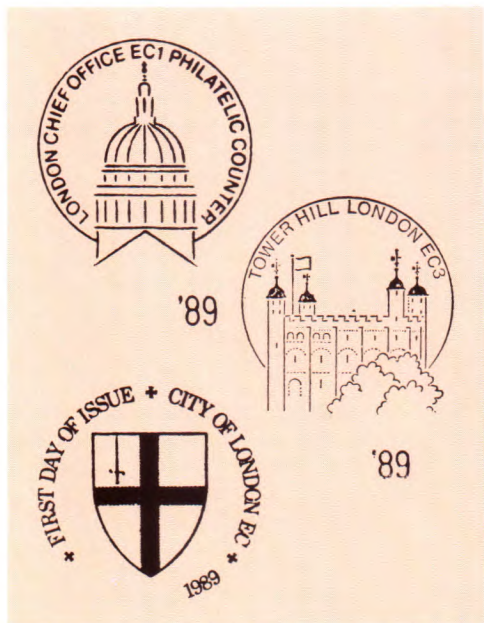
First Day Cover

The Royal Mail first day cover will be available from the British Philatelic Bureau, philatelic counters, the National Postal Museum and main post offices from 2 October, price 18p. Two



pictorial postmarks will be used for the first day cover service - one for the Bureau and one for the City of London.

A first day cover service will be provided by the Bureau with the official Royal Mail cover addressed to the destination required with the five stamps cancelled with either postmark. Application forms, available from the Bureau and main post offices, should be returned not later than 17 October.



Customers requiring only the special pictorial postmarks may obtain them under the reposting facility by sending on the first day of issue a stamped addressed envelope under an outer cover endorsed "Special First Day of Issue handstamp" to:

British Philatelic Bureau	20 Brandon Street EDINBURGH EH3 5TT
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City of London	Special Postmark Duty City of London LDO King Edward Street LONDON EC1A 1AA
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First Day Posting Boxes will be provided at most main post offices for those collectors who wish to post covers to receive the standard, non-pictorial "First Day of Issue" handstamps. In addition three relevant pictorial postmarks in

regular use at the City of London Letter District Office will be available: (1) London Chief Office Philatelic Counter, showing St Paul's Cathedral; (2) Tower Hill London EC3 showing the Tower of London and (3) pictorial "First Day" handstamp showing the City coat of arms (this was introduced in January 1989). Items for reposting should be sent to the Special Postmark Duty, City of London LDO, King Edward Street, LONDON EC1A 1AA. Please state clearly which handstamp(s) is/are required.

A number of special handstamps, sponsored by stamp dealers and others, will be used on 17 October - full details of these will be found in the *British Postmark Bulletin*, available on subscription from the British Philatelic Bureau.

Royal Mail Stamp Cards may be given any of the First Day of Issue and sponsored special handstamps. Collectors wishing to have their first day covers/cards returned under cover should enclose a large self-addressed envelope when sending covers/cards in to the relevant Special Postmark Duty for handstamping.

Special First Day Cover Cachet

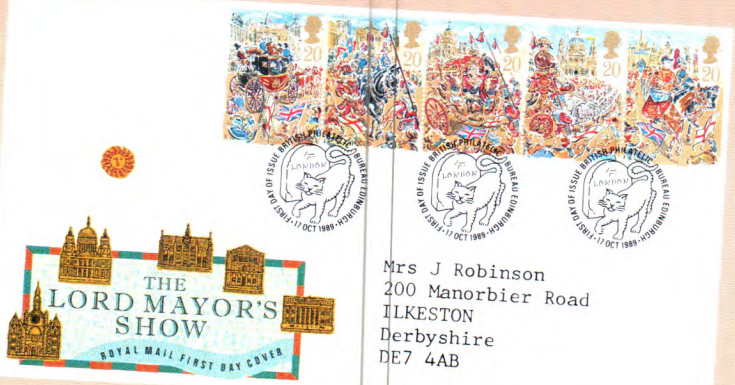
A limited number of Royal Mail first day covers will be carried in the actual Lord Mayor's Procession on 11 November and will bear a special cachet to this effect. These unique covers will cost £3 and should be ordered, by 16 October, from the British Philatelic Bureau. Further details were given in last month's *Bulletin*, page 291.

Souvenir Cover

A souvenir cover, of similar design to the first day cover, will be available from all philatelic counters from 18 October, price 18p. This can be used to obtain relevant Lord Mayor postmarks after the first day of issue and will be on sale for one year.

Earlier Related Issues

A small, but interesting, collection can be made of stamps having designs relating to the City of London. The 31p Heraldry stamp of 1984 featured the City's coat of arms; the arms of the College of Arms (situated within the city boundary) were shown on the 16p value. St Paul's Cathedral has featured on the 1s 3d stamp in the 1965 Battle of Britain set, the 9d value in the 1969 Cathedrals issue and on the 50p London 1980 stamp. The Tower of London also featured on this exhibition stamp and on the 9p value in the 1978 Historic Buildings set. City buildings are depicted on the 17p value in the 1985 Royal Mail: 350 Years of Service issue.



Stamp Design Gold Medal

At a ceremony at the National Postal Museum on 29 June, Barry Robinson, Head of Design for Royal Mail Stamps, was presented with the R M Phillips Gold Medal for his contribution to British stamp design. The presentation was made by Mr Bill Cockburn, CBE, Managing Director of Royal Mail Letters. It was appropriate that the ceremony was held at the Museum which houses the collection of Victorian stamps formed by the late Reginald M Phillips of Brighton who was instrumental in the establishment of the Museum in the mid-1960s.

The judging panel, drawn from the members of the Stamp Advisory Committee, considered that Mr Robinson's guidance and inspiration had resulted in British stamp design being more imaginative than ever before. In the past five years alone, 34 designers have produced British stamp designs, many of them for the first time. Mr Robinson, 43, has been Royal Mail Stamps Head of Design since 1980, having joined The Post Office as design co-ordinator in 1977. Previously, he was a design manager at British Oxygen Company, Bovis and P & O and a designer on *The Observer* colour magazine. He trained at the London College of Printing.



Barry Robinson (right) receives the Phillips Gold Medal from Mr Bill Cockburn, Managing Director of Royal Mail Letters

In presenting the award, Mr Cockburn spoke of the high regard for British stamps throughout the world and of Mr Robinson as not only "a champion of high standards" but as "a nice guy as well". In accepting the award, Mr Robinson spoke of the hard work and dedication of his staff and of the awards Royal Mail Stamps had received. He said he looked to the

opinion of three groups – "our peers in the world of design, philatelists and the general public". Awards had been made by design institutes, stamp magazines and the public in the form of the BBC Design Award in 1987.



The Phillips medal was first awarded, to David Gentleman, in 1969. Mr Gentleman is shown here (left) with Reginald M Phillips (right) and the then Postmaster-General, the late John Stonehouse

"Our World" Wildlife Book

A new book, a joint production by the British, Australian, Canadian, Swedish, United Nations and United States postal administrations will go on sale at the British Philatelic Bureau, philatelic counters and post shops during October. The book, designed by the US Post Office and printed by Australia Post, will contain stamps relating to wildlife and ecology; the British stamps will be the Birds set issued last January. The book will be printed in four languages and will sell at £7.50. Further details and the date of publication will be published in next month's *Bulletin*.

Royal Mail Christmas Cards

It is planned to issue Royal Mail Christmas cards reproducing the designs of the Christmas stamps; the cards will be issued in packs of 10. Further details will be given in next month's *Bulletin*.

Royal Mail Exhibition Card

The Royal Mail Exhibition Card No. 3 bearing stamps cancelled with a handstamp marking the AUTUMN STAMPEX/BPE exhibition in London (17-22 October 1989) will be available from the British Philatelic Bureau from 17 October, price £1.50 plus usual handling charge.

A cachet will be applied to cards sold at The Post Office stand at the exhibition. Collectors unable to visit the exhibition can obtain the card with cachet by writing to: Officer-in-Charge, Philatelic Counter, London Chief Office, King Edward Street, LONDON EC1A 1AA. Price £1.50 plus handling charge. Orders must be received by the date the exhibition closes, i.e. 22 October.



Supplies of card No. 3 with the previous handstamps for the Nordia exhibition (7 June) and Philexfrance exhibition (7 July) are also available from the Bureau, price £1.50 each. The card will also be available later with handstamps for Philatelia (3-5 November 1989), World Stamp Expo 89 (17 November-3 December 1989) and Spring Stampex (6-11 February 1990). Details of ordering will be given in the *Bulletin* nearer the time.

Forthcoming Events

The **Leicester Philatelic Society** will be holding a Stamp Fair at the Blackfriars Hall, Wellington Street, Leicester on 23 September (10am to 5pm). Some 13 national and local stamp and postal history dealers will be in attendance and light refreshments will be available. Admission 20p, accompanied children 10p. Further information can be obtained from: Malcolm Batty, 84 Charnwood Avenue, Thurmaston, LEICESTER LE4 8FJ.

The **Torquay Philatelic Society** are holding a major stamp exhibition and fair, "Torquex '89" at Oldway Mansion, Paignton on 14 October (10.30am to 4.30pm). This exhibition is held every two years; nine or 10 dealers will be present and there will be displays of stamps and postal history and a public stamp auction. Free parking will be available and light refreshments will be on sale. Admission 30p, under 15s 20p. Further information available from: L P Watkins, 2 Locks Close, Babbacombe, TORQUAY TQ1 3TU.

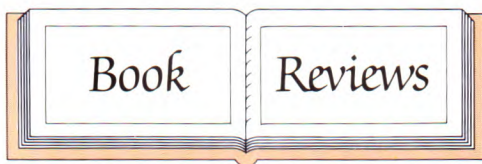
Posting Boxes

103. Another "overseas" box this month; this time a round top lamp box, of the type manufactured from 1896 to 1949, now in use in the lobby of the Captain Cook Hotel in Anchorage, Alaska, USA. The box bears the royal cipher of George V and the collection plate shows it was



used at Albert Park Road. Can any reader tell us where this road is (or was). We are grateful to Sir Kirby Laing for supplying this photograph, taken on a visit to Alaska in 1985.

Readers interested in letter boxes are reminded of the existence of the Letter Box Study Group – details of which can be obtained by sending a stamped addressed envelope to the Secretary: Sally Jones, 43 Miall Road, Hall Green, Birmingham, B28 9BS.



Copies are still available of the NPM's first annual report entitled **National Postal Museum: The Philatelic Year 1988** (28 A4 pages), which outlines Work in Progress at the Museum together with reports on the special exhibitions held in 1988, Research, Major Acquisitions, Publications and The Year Ahead. There is a review of the first 25 years of the *British Philatelic Bulletin* which since 1986 has been based at the NPM. Collectors interested in conservation will find the article by Catherine Rickman, Conservatrix to the NPM, of great value. In May 1988 a Frama machine was installed at the Museum for visitors to produce "Specimen" (non-postally valid) labels; details of the machines are included and each *Philatelic Year* contains a sample "0.00" label (these are not normally available, as the machine prints labels of 0.01 to 0.17 [pence] values). Orders to: National Postal Museum (Mail Order), King Edward Street, LONDON EC1A 1LP, price £2.

The British Philatelic Trust and the British Thematic Association have recently published **Guidelines for Thematic Judges and Exhibitors at Local and Federation Level** by Franceska Rapkin. The book, by a leading thematic collector, provides sensible advice for those contemplating exhibiting; what is acceptable to the average collector may not be so to exhibition judges. Available, price 60p to cover postage and administrative costs, from: British Thematic Association, 107 Charterhouse Street, LONDON EC1M 6PT.

The Midland (G.B.) Postal History Society have published a new, third, edition of **The Undated Circular Marks of the Midland Counties**, some 40 per cent larger than the 1986 edition and including Gloucestershire for the first time. A new, comprehensive introductory chapter is provided and the number of illustrations has been increased. Price £8, postage £1.30, from: John Calladine, Dunley House, Cranham, GLOUCESTER GL4 8HQ.

National Postal Museum

Two talks will be given to Friends of the National Postal Museum at a meeting entitled "Crossing the Atlantic" to be held in the

Museum on 30 September (11am to 4.30pm). Tony Gammons, the Museum's Exhibitions Officer, will talk about the Falmouth Packets; 1989 marks the 300th anniversary of Falmouth as a packet port. Mr G F Oxley will display 50 sheets of Scottish items addressed to a Transatlantic destination – a lot of work was involved in bringing this material back to the UK. This display was on show at Philexfrance in July. Friends, and non-members, who wish to attend this meeting should get in touch with the Secretary of the Friends as quickly as possible, address below.

The Friends' Annual General Meeting will take place on 18 November at King Edward Building (11am to 4.30pm). The philatelic events following the AGM will be provided by two Friends, Eric Ivens and Richard Blake, both philatelic designers. Mr Ivens designs first day covers and special handstamps. He trades under the name Historic Relics, and will talk about all aspects of his work and display artefacts of his trade. Richard Blake, postcard designer (some of whose cards are on sale at the Museum), will give a talk and slide show which will touch upon many postal aspects. Richard is the proud owner of a Bracket Letter Box which used to be at Somerset House; each Friend attending the AGM will receive one of his cards which will bear a cachet "Posted in the Somerset House Box". Friends will be able to have their own material stamped with a special Friends cachet, postage stamps will be cancelled with a single ring London EC datestamp.

Details of the Association of Friends and application forms for membership can be obtained from the Secretary, Ray Pottle, c/o National Postal Museum (Mail Order), King Edward Street, LONDON EC1A 1LP.

Readers are reminded that three new NPM cards go on sale on 17 October, day of issue of The Lord Mayor's Show stamps. These feature Ralph Allen, John Palmer and Sir Francis Freeling and are numbers SWL90/4-6 in the Stamp World London 90 series. A special handstamp showing a mail coach will be used at the Museum on the day of issue. It should be noted that these cards have not been designed for use as maximum cards and the Special Postmark Duty at the City of London LDO cannot accept them for postmarking on the picture side; the inks currently available for use for special handstamps have proved unsuitable for use on the high gloss finish of these Museum cards.

Exhibition Retrospect

Part 1: 1940

JAMES NEGUS

Major stamp exhibitions have been held in London since 1890 and "Stamp World London 90" next May is expected to be the best so far. In this article James Negus looks at the exhibitions of 1940 and in future articles will review the Grosvenor House and Festival Hall exhibitions of 1950 and 1960, Philypia of 1970 and "London 1980" at Earl's Court.

Next year philatelists will be visiting Stamp World London 90, the latest in the series of International Stamp Exhibitions staged in Britain. The year 1990 sees the 150th anniversary of Rowland Hill's postal reforms and, of course, the incomparable Penny Black.

A half-century ago collectors were planning fitting centenary celebrations for May 1940. The Royal Philatelic Society were at work organising an International Exhibition but unfortunately the outbreak of war in September 1939 compelled this to be abandoned.

In March 1940 the Society determined to mark the centenary in another way, however. It put in train a smaller Exhibition, devoting all the proceeds to the Lord Mayor's Red Cross and St

John Fund. At very short notice it organised from its Fellows and Members a strong showing of British and Colonial stamps and supplemented this with a remarkable assembly of artefacts showing the genesis of the Penny Black. About 100 frames were involved.

The Lancaster House Exhibition

This Stamp Centenary Exhibition was held from 6 to 11 May 1940 in the London Museum, then part of Lancaster House in Westminster. The organising committee was led by Sir John Wilson, Keeper of the King's Philatelic Collection and President of the Royal Philatelic Society. King George VI had lent items specially from the Royal Collection, at that time removed from London for safety. He took a close personal interest in what was exhibited and visited the Centenary Exhibition with Queen Elizabeth, the present Queen Mother. The actual centenary date, 6 May 1940, was marked by a Dinner with a principal toast to His Majesty's Post Office. Elegant speeches at the dinner were broadcast in celebration of this emotionally important day.

The Post Office commemorated the centen-



Fig. 1 1940 souvenir envelope with special cancel

ary itself (not the Exhibition) with a set of six stamps, ½d. to 3d., issued on 6 May. The work of Harrison staff artist, H L Palmer, they reproduce the profile portraits of Queen Victoria and King George VI, neatly linking the adhesives of 1840 and 1940.

Present-day collectors can acquire several postal and non-postal souvenirs as permanent record of the Centenary Exhibition. The stamps, for example, found ready use on special souvenir envelopes designed by Milner Gray (Fig. 1). The envelopes come in two sizes, the larger for airmail printed in black and blue, the smaller for ordinary use in black and buff. Gray's initials occur below the coat of arms scroll. Sold at 6d. each for the Red Cross Fund, these envelopes may not have been too successful; they are found used up later in the war with the commemorative part obliterated.

These souvenirs were lithographed but there also exist recess-printed envelopes by Perkins Bacon in blue, illustrated with the Chalon Head portrait of Queen Victoria. The Post Office installed a temporary branch office at the Exhibition and provided a special cancellation. This double-circle handstamp features a Red Cross and is inscribed LONDON/STAMP CENTENARY (RED CROSS) EXHIBN. It is notable for being struck in red.

recess-printed, gummed and imperforate (Fig. 2). They contained a block of four of Queen Victoria in Coronation robes, the celebrated Chalon Portrait used in early British Colonial stamps. Printed by Perkins Bacon in both black and in blue to correspond with the 1840 1d. and 2d., the Society sold the sheetlets at 1s. either colour. Perkins Bacon were, of course, printers of the original stamps in 1840.

The sheetlets are also found with recess-printed overprints: the Red Cross top left on each label and the bottom margin overprinted in red for the Lord Mayor's Fund.



Fig. 3 Waterlow sheetlet 1940

The Fund meanwhile was offering an equally elegant souvenir that Waterlow & Sons Ltd had prepared. That firm recess-printed six labels as horizontal pairs in a sheetlet which has gum and is perforated 13½ (Fig. 3). Tower Bridge (top pair) and the statue of warrior Queen Boadicea close to the Houses of Parliament (lower pair) were adapted from Waterlow's labels for the 1932 Pageant of Postage Stamps (Fig. 4).

The central pair have a splendid reproduction of the 1840 1d., se-tenant with an advertising panel. That on the left is the unissued "VR Official" stamp. Note that the 1d. stamps have three good margins each; copies detached from this sheetlet and then trimmed of the panel and perforations are sometimes encountered. There

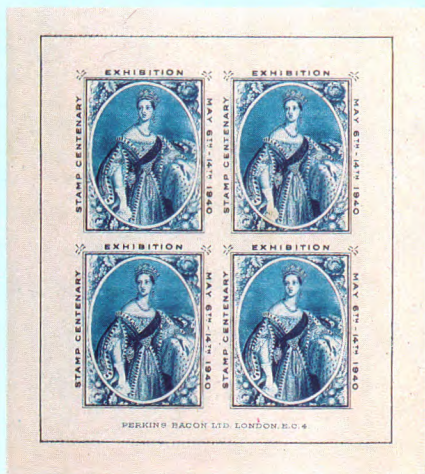


Fig. 2 Perkins Bacon sheetlet 1940

The Royal Philatelic Society produced a sheetlet of "special commemorative labels", very successful financially. The sheetlets were

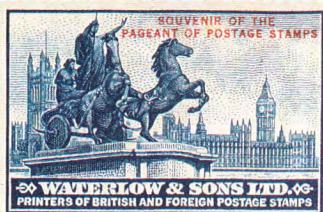


Fig. 4 1932 Pageant of Postage Stamps labels

were five colours of sheetlet: orange, bright green, lilac, claret or chestnut (each cost 6d.). The typographed overprint for the Lord Mayor's Fund in the top margin is complemented by a Red Cross on each label; unfortunately it falls on the panels in the centre row rather than the reproduced 1d. stamps. Its presence there might have alerted collectors to cut-outs.

The Waterlow sheetlet exists in an earlier unissued version perfined SPECIMEN on each of the Penny Black labels. It has no Red Cross overprints and is inscribed for the abandoned exhibition, namely "Earls Court 6th-14th May 1940".

Commemoration in Bournemouth

The key anniversary day of 6 May 1940 had thus been fittingly celebrated in London under adverse wartime conditions. Tribute is surely due to the Royal Philatelic Society for their enterprise and for philatelists' worthy response to the Lord Mayor's Appeal.

But the story of this exceptional year embraces related celebrations by the Postal History Society. With Captain Adrian Hopkins as Chairman and Robson Lowe as Organizing Secretary, it hosted the 27th Philatelic Congress of Great Britain from 3 to 6 May 1940. This took place at the Royal Bath Hotel, Bournemouth, instead of London as originally planned.

Congress produced as souvenirs a Mulready facsimile envelope and a pair of labels in the form of small sheets – one black and one blue – reproducing a Penny Black without corner letters. They cost 2s. 6d. a pair; a 1s. stapled booklet also reproduced on gummed labels 13 of "The Stamps of London" from Bishop Mark and Dockwra through to the handstruck markings of the 1840s.

An Adhesive Stamp Centenary Exhibition was then staged by the Society at the Bournemouth Pavilion from 6 to 14 May in aid of the Red Cross. We have interesting mementoes of these events, the Mulreadys and labels in conjunction with the two special postmarks (Congress and the Exhibition) cancelling Centenary postage stamps.

New European Philatelic Federation

Delegates from 26 European Federations and Associations meeting in Sofia in May inaugurated the Federation of European Philatelic Associations (FEPA). This new Federation, which parallels comparable organisations in Asia (FIAP) and South America (FIAF), has been formed after two years of extensive discussions.

The Federation will pursue the following objectives: to represent and promote European philately in its broadest sense within the aims and objectives of the Federation Internationale de Philatelie (FIP); to facilitate contact between member associations/federations; to represent a European viewpoint to other philatelic organisations; to promote interest in philately generally throughout member countries; to collaborate in stimulating interest among young collectors; to further the specialised study of philatelic material; to advise on and/or organise philatelic events within Europe; to encourage the publication and distribution of philatelic literature and to encourage the participation of exhibitors and interchange of jurors at national exhibitions in member countries.

The Committee of Management, which was elected on a regional basis, comprises: Dr A K Huggins (UK – Chairman), T Kocsis (Hungary – Vice Chairman), S Kuyas (Turkey), F Silveira (Portugal), C Sundman (Finland), J Voskuil (Netherlands – Treasurer) and K H Wagner (Austria). Any enquiries concerning FEPA should be addressed to the Chairman, Dr Huggins, c/o British Philatelic Federation, 107 Charterhouse Street, LONDON EC1M 6PT.

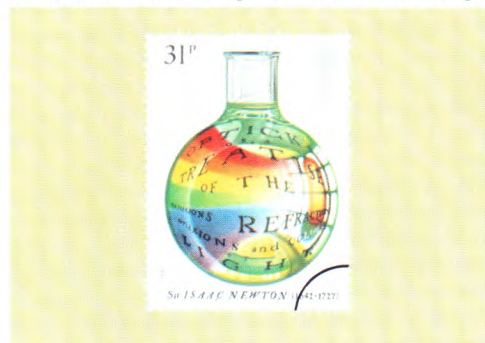
Microscopology

BARBARA LAST

Over 2,000 years ago Romans and Greeks understood that convex, or rounded, glass could focus the sun's rays on to wood to make fire, and that a glass sphere filled with water became an enlarging glass to increase light from a candle. But it was not until the late 16th century that it was found, almost by accident, that a lens could be manufactured to make scientific instruments that would enlarge anything placed under it to reveal complex and delicate structures not visible to the naked eye.

Anthony van Leeuwenhoek (1632-1723) was born in Delft and is regarded as one of the greatest early microscopists, studying the phenomena of optics as expounded by Newton. He devised about 250 microscopes with different lenses which he ground himself. He studied, drew and discussed anything from his own blood to pond water and flowers. He sent 26 microscopes to the Royal Society, London, which elected him a Fellow in 1680. He is depicted on a stamp from the Netherlands – S.G. 472.

Light travels through the air in a straight line, but if it meets another medium like glass at an angle, it bends, i.e. it is refracted. Rays of light through a microscope are refracted, and the eye transmits a magnified image to the brain. For many years the development of the microscope



as a serious scientific instrument was delayed by lens defects. The different rainbow-hued rays of light that combine to make up white light (see 1987 31p Newton stamp, S.G. 1353), vibrate at different wavelengths. A lens does not refract all

colours equally, and therefore, produces a blurred image. This fault is overcome by a combination of lenses.

Wonderful World Revealed

The wonderful new world revealed fascinated the Englishman Robert Hooke who published the first great work devoted to microscopical observations – *Micrographia*. His drawing of the Blue Fly in 1665 appears on the 27p value of the



Microscopes set issued on 5 September. This marks the 150th anniversary of the Royal Microscopical Society of London – the largest society devoted to a single scientific instrument. It adopted the delicate structure of the snowflake, magnified 100 times, as its emblem, as seen on the 19p value. Other forms of snow crystals seen by the microscope were shown on British Antarctic Territory stamps (S.G. 151-4) marking the 50th anniversary of the International Glaciological Society in 1986.

Hooke observed under his home-made microscope that a thin slice of cork was formed entirely of “little boxes” which he called “cells”. He had no idea of the importance of this discovery. Every living animal or plant is made up of cells, the basic units of life, and each cell is a tiny chemical factory governed by a central nucleus that controls everything in the body.

Chromosomes which contain DNA genes appear in the nucleus and duplicate themselves, the cell then splitting in half into two identical cells. A single chromosome carries thousands of genes which determine the development of the cell, and the nucleus controls the cells' activities. Each part of the complicated human body is composed of millions of different types of cells,

each with its own specific job. The more microscopists can discover how each part works, the greater the possibility for the repair of damaged tissues. Cancer has been extensively studied with limited success in some areas. A Brazilian stamp of 1983 (S.G. 2007) depicted cancer prevention with a microscope and crab, which is the symbol of the deadly disease under its Latin name “cancer”.



Some of van Leuwenhoek’s first experiments discerned the blurred images of the tiny moving “animalcules” which we know as the micro-organisms of the animal and plant worlds, and bacteria which are neither plants nor animals. In 1830 the father of the famous surgeon Joseph Lister perfected the achromatic lens that enabled this unknown miniature world to be inspected clearly without defects. Blood cells as seen in 1839, the year of the founding of the Society, is the subject of the new 32p stamp. One of the first acts of the Society was to standardise the size of the slide on which the specimen is fixed for observation.

Louis Pasteur

The great French biological chemist/bacteriologist, Louis Pasteur (1822-95), was the first to realise the importance of micro-organisms. Previously nobody understood how diseases were caused or spread. Researching the mysterious deaths of silkworms, Pasteur discovered that the rod-shaped fungoid organisms called bacteria living in the decomposing bodies also lived in the silkworms’ food. The diseased worms were burnt, the healthy ones fed on food containing no bacteria, and immediately the disease began to disappear.

Pasteur proved that microbes are essential to life, for they absorb the chemicals around them, breaking down decomposing bodies into their most basic chemicals to be recycled by plants and animals. Without them there would be no food to eat or air to breathe. He also proved that

lethal bacteria cannot grow in unsuitable conditions. The process of heating and then cooling milk killed the microbes of tuberculosis in the milk, and this process of sterilisation is still called “pasteurisation” today. He also demonstrated the benevolent part played by microbes in the process of fermentation and the production of cheese and yoghurt and produced a vaccine for rabies although he could not see or isolate the microbe responsible because it was too minute to be seen on his microscope. Pasteur, who appears on many stamps including the French series of 1923-6 (S.G. 396-400d), was a benefactor of mankind, although he fought continuous bitter battles against those who regarded his theories almost as heresy.

Joseph Lister (1827-1912), the Scottish surgeon and microscopist, was a firm adherent of Pasteur, believing that bacteria caused sepsis in open wounds. He insisted on scrupulous hygiene in his operating theatre, and despite scornful opposition for his cranky ideas, used disinfectant and covered wounds. Lister, and his carbolic spray, were portrayed, on British



stamps (S.G. 667-8) issued in 1965 to mark the centenary of his discovery of antiseptic surgery; hitherto operations had almost always ended in death by septic poisoning.

Robert Koch (1843-1910), the German bacteriologist, isolated the anthrax bacillus in cattle and produced a vaccine, but is probably better known as the discoverer of the tubercle bacillus which has led to the decrease in this disease which formerly exacted such a toll of lives. His portrait and early and modern microscopes were shown on Bahamas stamps in 1982 (S.G. 612-5). Koch was the first scientist to develop pure cultures of only one type bacteria, making colonies which could be studied easily under the microscope.

Eradication of Malaria

The World Health Organisation (WHO) sponsored a campaign in 1962 for the eradication of malaria. Some 115 postal administrations issued

stamps with part of the proceeds donated to the first really international effort to exterminate the scourge of the malaria mosquito. Brunei produced a set in 1988 to mark the 40th anniversary of the WHO, showing the insecticide spray and blood sample on a slide and a microscope with magnified malaria cells (S.G. 449-50).

Antibiotics

One of the greatest blessings for mankind was the discovery of antibiotics by Sir Alexander Fleming (shown on Faroe Islands, S.G. 84), the Scottish bacteriologist who accidentally observed that a curious mould (GB SG 753) destroyed microbes in a culture. Penicillin, the wonder drug, is a powerful tool against bacterial diseases. The smallest microbe of all is the virus, only visible under the powerful electron microscope. J J Thomson (shown on Swedish stamp, S.G. 523), in 1897 found electrons which are negatively charged atoms that travel in a wave like light rays. In 1931 it was found how to focus the beam of the electrons by surrounding the electrons with magnetic coils, and this instrument increased the magnifications as much as 1 million times. This developed the scanning electron microscope in 1951 by Charles Oatley and Dennis McMullen in Britain. Using the microchip of 1989 it produces a scanning electron micrograph as on the new 35p stamp. It does not pass through the specimen, but the beam is tilted to sweep backwards and forwards to scan the surface, and with the aid of secondary electrons a 3-dimensional image is thrown up on a TV screen which pictures the outside surface of the complete object. It allows operations, too delicate for normal surgery, to be performed and can detect genetic defects of chromosome cells.

Lasers attached to this microscope reveal the structure of the living cell at different levels from within, and it can picture and treat abnormalities on the retina of the eye caused by sugar diabetes, which, untreated, would inevitably lead to blindness. The latest of these sophisticated instruments is the powerful scanning tunnelling microscope which can magnify 100 million times, and can even observe nature's building bricks, the individual atom.

Nobel Winners

The Royal Institute of Chemistry's centenary in 1977 was marked by stamps honouring British Nobel Prize winners (S.G. 1029-32). The 10p stamp shows the molecular structure of Vitamin C, the first synthetic vitamin identical to that in

citrus fruits, for which Sir Walter N Haworth was honoured in 1937. The prize was shared in 1915 by the father and son W H and W L Bragg, pioneers in crystallography revealed by X-ray photographs. Sir William H Bragg is shown on a stamp from the Isle of Man (S.G. 253). Improved methods determine the structures of complex molecules such as penicillin, vitamin B12 and insulin.

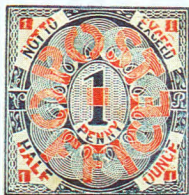


Thanks to the work done by A J P Martin and R L M Synge, Nobel Prize winners in 1952, the components of a substance can now be separated, identified and measured. The weird paint blotches on the 11p stamp shows the partition chromatography of starch, and has led to advanced DNA techniques in forensic medicine which prove that a specimen taken from a body is unique, like a fingerprint, to that one individual alone.

Microscopes play a part in all forms of modern medicine, industry, archaeology, art and oceanographic research. Ocean plankton is the subject of intense research as a possible new source of food in the form of krill, and the one-celled plants (shown on British Antarctic Territory stamp, SG. 123), that convert light and minerals into lush pasture on which the drifting zooplankton browse. Scientists believe that the dot-sized diatom (*Corethron criophilum*), shown highly magnified on the BAT stamp, and other even smaller phytoplankton might perhaps moderate the "Greenhouse effect"!

Gems from the R M Phillips Collection

167. Treasury Competition



Featured this month are two essays submitted by Charles Fenton Whiting, a printer working at Beaufort House in The Strand; he has been described as "the most professional of all the award winners". Whiting married the widow of Sir William Congreve, the inventor of a multiple plate printing method which had been used for printing revenue stamps since 1821. This method enabled security printing of an intricate design to be produced in two colours in one operation, additionally embossed if required. Whiting submitted at least seven different designs printed by the Congreve method; those shown here are to be seen on page 21 of Volume 1 of the Phillips Collection. Similar essays were also produced which had a crown as the central design and corner lettering.

Whiting was a keen supporter of Rowland Hill's ideas and in April 1839 had produced an essay for a letter sheet worded POST OFFICE PERMIT. Embossed essays by Whiting will be featured in a future Gems.

Treasury Competition essays in the R M Phillips Collection can be seen at the National Postal Museum during normal hours: 9.30am to 4.30pm Monday to Thursday and 9.30am to 4pm Friday.

Competition



Enter this month's competition and stand a chance of winning a 1988 *Royal Mail Yearbook* (containing 1988 special stamps) and a set of the Royal Mail Exhibition Card No. 2 with all six exhibition handstamps. Answer the questions below, the answers to which will be found in this *Bulletin*, and send, with your name and address, on a postcard to: September Bulletin Competition, National Postal Museum, King Edward Street, LONDON EC1A 1LP to arrive by 27 October.

The sender of the first all-correct entry drawn will be sent the Yearbook and Exhibition Cards. The senders of the next four correct entries drawn will be sent first day covers and presentation packs of the Lord Mayor stamps. Answers and winners' names will be published in the December *Bulletin*.

1. Who designed the Lord Mayor stamps?
2. In which famous London building was the Stamp Centenary Exhibition held in 1940?
3. Which British surgeon was commemorated by stamps marking the centenary of antiseptic surgery in 1965?
4. Near which Wiltshire town is the Post Office Research Centre situated?
5. Which Royal Mail Parcels labels have bar codes printed on them?
6. On what date does AUTUMN STAMPEX/BPE 1989 open?

The competition is not open to staff of Royal Mail Stamps & Philately, the National Postal Museum, their agents and their families. No correspondence will be entered into; the Editor's decision will be final.

The winners of the June competition were: L Bilton of Nottinghamshire (first prize), K Hermon of Essex, E Jones of West Midlands and T Whyte of New Zealand.

The answers were: 1. David Dale, 2. Menai Bridge, 3. Commander Frank Wild, 4. 19 February 1969, 5. Haroldswick, Unst, 6. Dan Fern.

Our thanks to all who entered.

The Post Office Research Centre

The Post Office Research Centre is an important part of The Post Office's Corporate Headquarters. Recently the *Bulletin* Editor, John Holman, visited the Centre to see some of its work and to talk to Dr A R Lane, Chief Chemist - Materials, Research and Quality Assurance Laboratory; Mr David Barton of the Engineering Division and Mr John Blackwell, Laboratory Manager for Stamp Products.



The Post Office Research Centre

On 16 May 1986 the former Post Office Chairman Sir Ron Dearing formally opened The Post Office Research Centre at Dorcan, a few miles outside Swindon. The Post Office provides many valuable services, but its major task – the movement of mail – is directly responsible for generating and inspiring much of the work of the Research Centre. The volume of mail grows at about 4 per cent a year, the number of new addresses increases at the rate of about 400,000 per annum – thus it is essential that new technology be used to handle the mail as efficiently as possible. The use of postal codes to sort the mail has created the need for advanced printing inks, printers and detectors and the pioneer sorting machines of the 1960s are now being replaced by new high-performance machines.

In this article we look at some of the work of the Centre, in particular at their studies which have an effect on stamps and will be of interest to readers of the *Bulletin*.

Postage Stamps

Before any stamp is produced, the staff of Royal Mail Stamps & Philately and the printers consult the experts at the Research Centre. It is imperative that any stamp produced will not only be printed to a high standard but fully meet operational requirements – in colour, phosphor signal and security. Colours are particularly important – the staff at Post Office counters need to be able to quickly tell one value of stamp from another, so too do the staff in sorting offices.

So important is the question of colour in relation to the phosphor signal that Dr Lane has recently discussed the problems with the Stamp Advisory Committee. The problems were explained – and illustrated – by Barry Robinson in the second part of his “Design Matters” series in last December’s *Bulletin*.

At the time of my visit Dr Lane and his colleagues were checking essays of the non-value indicator stamps (issued in stamp books on 22 August). The colours – black (first class) and light blue (second) were chosen as reminiscent of the first British stamps; fortunately the checks passed them for operational use. The same colours will be used for the first and second class values of the “special definitives” to be issued next January to mark the 150th anniversary of the Penny Post.

Specialist collectors of definitives will be only too aware of the many changes to the phosphor content of stamps over the past 30 years (the first phosphor-graphite stamps were issued in November 1959). Nowadays only second class sheet stamps are overprinted with phosphor bands, all others are printed on phosphor coated or advanced coated papers – the quality of the paper is regularly checked at Swindon to ascertain that the phosphor signal meets operational needs. A sheet of stamps from every reel printed is sent to Swindon for checking; after rigorous checks the sheets are destroyed. Any problem is taken up with the printers to ensure improved supplies in future. This checking applies not only to sheet stamps but to books; in the case of the window books careful checks were made to

evaluate the effectiveness of the adhesive used to secure the books.

The majority of British stamps are produced by Harrison & Sons Limited at High Wycombe and they provide, subject to Post Office approval, the paper they use for the stamps. The House of Questa, who print the Country stamps, some special issues and books, secure their paper from various suppliers. Until recently most Questa paper came from Henry & Leigh Slater Ltd of Bollington, Cheshire. Their premises have now been taken over by Coated Papers Ltd which formerly operated from Leek in Staffordshire. Exhaustive checks were made at Swindon to be sure that the paper supplied by Slaters and CPL measured up to the same standards as that used by Harrisons. Not only



Checking the quality of stamp (window) books

does the paper and its phosphor content have to be examined but the gum. Older collectors will remember stamps with gum arabic, one could clearly see the gum but modern adhesives such as PVA are less easy to see unless given some colouring agent. Checks are made to ensure that the gum used will adhere properly to paper but does not attract moisture so as to cause problems with sheets sticking together. Paper supplied by Harrisons and formerly by Slaters has PVA Dextrin gum; CPL paper has PVA gum. In recent times the Research Centre has advised the Portuguese Post Office about the gum used on its stamps.

It is perhaps worth recording, for the technically-minded collector, that PVA is a mixture of Polyvinyl alcohol and acetate in the form of an emulsion in water.

The use of phosphor in the future is under review. Studies have been carried out involving

the use of bar codes (as used on Canadian Christmas stamps and Royal Mail Parcels "Trakback" labels); a different gauge of perforation for the second class value; and a holograph design which could be read by sorting machinery. The different gauge of perforation could be used to produce, under suitable light, a shadow effect which could be read in a similar way to a bar code. It is unlikely that British stamps will be printed with bar codes (they would be far from aesthetically pleasing) but trials are going on with stamps overprinted with a phosphor bar code that would enable machines to distinguish each value of stamp. At the moment machines can only tell apart stamps with a single phosphor band from those with two bands or on phosphor coated paper.

Another area that has been looked at and will undoubtedly be looked at again is self-adhesive stamps, particularly in book form. We already have Airmail, Recorded Delivery and Registration labels printed on self-adhesive paper and some countries have issued self-adhesive stamps – the most famous being the "map" issue from Sierra Leone in 1964.

Greater Security

The Post Office is always aware of the need for security in all its operations, not least in preventing loss of revenue by the reuse of postage stamps. This problem dates back to 1840 when Rowland Hill found that "all sorts of tricks are being played by the public who are exercising their ingenuity in devising contrivances for removing the obliterating stamps by chemical agents and other means ...". Then the colour of the postmark ink was changed from red to black but today there is evidence that the black ink used is not totally secure and experiments are going on with different colours (and compositions) of ink.

Collectors will recently have seen green ink used for the "Lead Free" slogan (April-May 1989) – this ink was devised, hurriedly, by the Research Centre and seemed to perform its task well. It is hoped that the National Postal Museum "First Day of Issue" cancel to be used for the "special definitives" next January will be applied in red, to match the Maltese Cross cancel of 1840. John Blackwell is currently involved in finding a suitable modern ink. He can hardly be expected to come up with the formula for the original Maltese Cross ink – printer's red ink, linseed oil and droppings of sweet oil!

Security of postal orders and the recently introduced £1 Community Charge savings stamp have exercised Dr Lane in recent times. These Community Charge stamps, printed by Walsall Security Printers in four colours, are on sale at main post offices in Scotland.

Dr Lane has been involved with the inks used for meter marks, some of which are now applied in colours other than red. One particularly interesting one he showed me is worded PURCHASED USING A MIDLAND BANK "MERIT" CARD FROM A PITNEY BOWES SMART POSTAGE DISPENSER TRIAL APPROVED BY THE ROYAL MAIL. The meter is applied to mail franked by an experimental "Smart Mail" machine at Loughborough University.

Sorting Letters

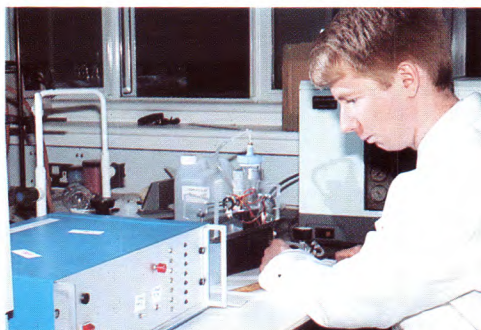
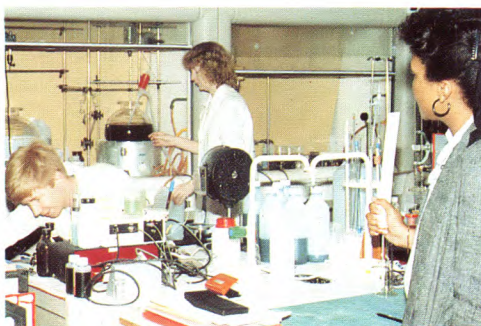
Mention was made in the February *Bulletin* (page 146) of the Postec E40 letter sorting and Optical Character Recognition machines. The E40 machine, to be used at 15 main sorting offices, can sort 32,000 items an hour. The machine has been designed not just for Post Office use, and can be supplied to any organisation which handles large volumes of mail – mailing houses, public utilities, international corporations or local/central government bodies. The sorting capacity is variable, from 94 to 250 boxes and extra modules can be added as the volume of work requires.

The OCR machines, in use at about 20 offices, are used to sort mail with typed or printed addresses; over 30,000 items can be handled each hour. The system uses a photo-diode array which digitizes the whole of the information on the front of the envelope. It matches the address information to postcodes and the postal town name held on a central file. Because of the high-processing rate of the machine, a Post Office developed ink-jet printer is used to "print" the blue coding dots onto the envelope.

Envelope Colours & Materials

The colour of paper has an effect on the readability of postcode marks, particularly when the bars are applied by an ink jet printer as used on the OCR machine for business mail.

A study has been carried out to check this effect, comprising a wide choice of envelopes; the phosphor brightness being measured by Post Office phosphor measuring equipment used for quality assurance purposes. The aim of this work is to encourage business envelope man-



Staff at The Post Office Research Centre, Swindon busy at work in the Materials, Research & Quality Assurance Laboratory

ufacturers to avoid certain shades which make reading of the phosphor difficult. Black and red are two of these colours, but some manilla shades are difficult as well.

In terms of materials, plastics have transformed the way we package goods but paper has remained the material used almost exclusively for one special form of packaging – envelopes. In recent times paper has become more expensive and plastic more flexible. It lends itself to high-speed automatic wrapping yet the form of plastic used can wrinkle and stretch, slough off labels and stick to the next envelope.

The materials group at Swindon are investigating the performance of plastic envelopes in the mail sorting process. Operational requirements under examination include stamp adhesion, code mark drying characteristics and wide-ranging physical property determinations. At present most of the plastic wrapped mail is of C5 and larger and does not go through the mechanised sorting process. Plastics suppliers are, however, moving towards smaller, machineable sizes and The Post Office wishes to automatically sort C5 in the near future. This means the plastic envelope of the future must be fully specified for operational performance. At the

moment the nearest product in terms of flexibility is the aerogramme.

The Research Centre is also looking at the problem from the other way round – working with film manufacturers to create a new kind of plastic wrapping that sorting machines can cope with. The new form of packaging it is hoped will emerge will be cheaper than paper and have the advantage of tearing less easily and have the ability to be heat-sealed – both speedy and secure.

Packet & Parcel Sorting

It is not only letter sorting that has benefitted from postal mechanisation. The problem of sorting packets is as old as the post itself – how do you take massive quantities of packets, all of different sizes, all with different addresses and place each in its correct mail bag? The new Automatic Packet Sorting Machine handles 8,000 packets an hour. Packets are brought to an input station where an operator primary sorts the packets and using a keyboard punches information about each packet into the machine's computer. From then on the operation is fully automatic – a conveyer takes the packets, in unique overhead hoppers, and discharges each into its designated mail bag.

Similar machines are in use at 27 Parcel Concentration Offices. The Research Centre is developing voice recognition machines so that operators speak the information rather than key it into the computer. The speech recogniser is loaded with a programme cassette tape of the town names it can expect and the operator "trains" the equipment to recognise his pronunciation of each town name.

Other machines developed at Swindon enable packets and parcels to be moved around the sorting office without damage and more efficiently – the "Safeglide" chute for example holds 40 per cent more parcels than a conventional chute of the same size. Made in plastic or steel, Safeglide is now also used by postal authorities in Hong Kong, Malaysia, Taiwan and Thailand. Newspapers and mail order houses also use the system.

In designing all postal mechanisation programmes, The Post Office takes into account "ergonomics" or "human engineering" – the study of the relationship between people and machines. It uses scientific information about human beings to ensure that the objects and environment created by designers and engineers can be used efficiently, comfortably and safely.

For example the latest letter coding desks have optimum reaching distances and reading angles and a clean, aesthetically pleasing appearance.

Philatelic Mechanisation

Stampac, the first automatic philatelic presentation packaging machine, was developed by Post Office engineers for use at the Philatelic Bureau. In the past the assembly of presentation packs was a painstaking and labour-intensive task. The Stampac machine can place up to two lines of stamps on a card with a speed and precision that has never been achieved before. The machine then wraps and delivers the complete packages at a rate of 1,000 packs an hour. Stamps are delivered from a cassette to "Pick and Place Heads" – vacuum blocks and suction cups which handle the stamps with extreme delicacy. Cards, automatically fed from another cassette, are positioned by a drive belt and indexing finger system. The Pick and Place Heads place the stamps behind plastic strips on cards with precision; the packages are then finished by wrapping the cards with brochures from yet another cassette. Although the concept of the Philmec Assembler is simple, its mechanics are complex – controlled by a microprocessor. The high-speed first day cover machine used at the British Philatelic Bureau in Edinburgh was also developed by the Post Office engineers. The machine affixes the stamps in exactly the same position on each cover, the stamps are then cancelled with the "First Day of Issue" postmark, applied by a letterpress process, at the rate of 20,000 covers an hour. Covers sent in by collectors will not necessarily have the stamps affixed in the same positions as the Post Office produced covers; these are cancelled by a smaller, foot-pedal Swiss machine.

In this feature I have covered what I hope are the main areas of interest to stamp collectors and collectors of modern "postal history". This does not, by a long way, cover all the work of the Research Centre. The 180 staff, many highly trained scientists, are always busy finding solutions to existing and potential problems and in so doing giving us all a better postal service. There will always be some failings – due to machine faults or human error – but The Post Office Research Centre's work ensures the effects of these are kept to a minimum. As the volume of mail grows and operational and security requirements ever change, they are never likely to want for work.

Commemorative Covers

Information given here is based on details supplied by the cover producers; requests for further information should be directed to the relevant producer and not to the Bulletin Editor.

Rocket Mail. The Raflet Stamp Club organised a Rocket Mail on 6 June. Covers are available bearing a flown cachet and the 19p Bird stamp cancelled with a Forces special handstamp commemorating D Day. The covers are being sold in aid of SSAFA, an ex-servicemen's charity. Only 250 covers were flown, of which 39 were "Damaged by Impact" and have been annotated as such. Price £2 for normal covers, £3 for damaged ones. Orders/enquiries to: Jack Follows, Raflet Stamp Club, 51 Hugh Gaitskell Court, Bilston, WOLVERHAMPTON WV14 6HE.

Royal Visit to RAF Benson. To mark the visit of HM The Queen and the presentation of colours to the Royal Auxiliary Air Force, a souvenir cover (JS (AC) 37 in the Coordinated Series) was produced on 12 June. This shows a panorama of work done by the RAAF and bears a cachet giving details of The Queen's flight from Jersey and Anniversaries stamp(s) cancelled by a special handstamp. Price: unsigned £2.25; pilot signed £3.25, signed by Air Chief Marshal Sir John Barracough £4.25 or signed by the Duke of Hamilton, Duke of Grafton or Sir Rex Hunt £5.25. Remittances to "Joint Services Philatelic Charities Fund. Orders/enquiries to: Gp Capt N T Harvey, Wardija, 7 The Beeches, Dalgety Bay, DUNFERMLINE, Fife, KY11 5SN.

Great Western Rly. To mark the 150th anniversary of the GWR extending the line from Maidenhead through to Twyford, Benhams produced a souvenir cover on 1 July. The cover shows a GWR train and has the 1975 10p "Caerphilly Castle" stamp and definitive cancelled by a special handstamp at Maidenhead. Price £2.50. Orders/enquiries to: Benham (A Buckingham) Ltd, Benham House, The Bayle, FOLKESTONE, Kent, CT20 1SD. The cover matches covers produced earlier for the 150th anniversary of Paddington station and the first run to Maidenhead. A further cover in this series will be produced next March to mark the anniversary of the opening of the Twyford to Reading line.

Royal Tournament. A commemorative cover (JS (AC) 39 in the Coordinated Series) was produced on 22 July for the Royal Tournament

at Earl's Court. The cover design features an RAF Harrier, RAF Ensign and the Tower of London; and bears definitive stamps cancelled by a special Forces handstamp. Unsigned covers cost £2.25; pilot signed £3.25 and signed by Gp Capt P. Squire, DFC, AFC £4.25. Proceeds go to the Lord Dowding Sheltered Housing Project Appeal. Orders/enquiries to: Gp Capt W Randle, 60 Shelveys Way, TADWORTH, Surrey, KT20 8QF. Remittances payable to "Joint Services Philatelic Charities Fund".

21 Years of Aviation Archaeology. To mark 21 years of Aviation Archaeology a souvenir cover (RFDC 75 in the Forces FDC Series) was produced on 25 July, day of issue of the Industrial Archaeology miniature sheet. The cover, showing Hurricanes taking off at Hawkinge, bears the miniature sheet cancelled by a special Forces handstamp and the signature of M Llewelyn, Curator of the Kent Battle of Britain Museum. Price £4. Orders/enquiries to Gp Capt Randle, address above.

London R T Type Bus. A souvenir cover has been produced by the London Transport Philatelic Society to mark the 50th anniversary of London's famous R T type bus. The cover features the R T bus in both London Transport and London Country liveries and has a one-day special handstamp of 6 August. A postcard has also been produced. Price £1.75 cover, £1.25 postcard. Orders/enquiries to: E Benton, 30 Parklea Close, LONDON NW9 5GJ.

Red Arrows. A special cover (JS (AC) 36 in the Coordinated Series) was produced on 9 August to mark the 25th anniversary of the Red Arrows and the Air Display at RAF St Mawgan. The cover shows the Red Arrows (Gnats) at Kemble in 1965 and bears a special Forces handstamp. Covers with 22p Welsh Country stamp and pilot signed cost £2.75, covers with 26p Welsh stamp and signed by all nine Red Arrows and Team Manager are available at £5.25. Orders/enquiries to: Gp Capt Randle, address above.

Second World War. To mark the 50th anniversary of the start of the Second World War, Benhams in association with national and local museums, are producing a "Philatelic History of the War" series which will last six years. Many special postmarks will be sponsored in the UK; the first on 3 September marks the anniversary of the declaration of war. The second cancel will be used at Liverpool to mark

the sinking of the SS *Athenia*, the first act of war. All covers will cost £3 or £2.50 on a standing order system. A special album will be produced. Orders/enquiries to: Benham (A Buckingham) Ltd, Benham House, The Bayle, FOLKESTONE, Kent, CT20 1SD.

Britain at War. A G Bradbury has produced a souvenir cover for the 50th anniversary of the declaration of the Second World War. The cover shows an historic picture of Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain with his personal secretary (later Prime Minister, 1963-4 and now Lord Home of the Hirsell) on the steps of 10 Downing Street on 3 September 1939. The special handstamp, used at London SW, depicts a pre-war wireless set with part of Chamberlain's famous broadcast to the nation – "No such assurance has been received ... Britain is now at war with Germany". The covers bear the 1973 Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference stamps showing the Houses of Parliament. Price £2.95 or £9.75 signed by Lord Home (overseas customers add 50p postage, remittances in sterling). Orders/enquiries to: A G Bradbury, 3 Link Road, LEICESTER LE2 3RA.

Battle of Britain/Microscopes. Forces cover (RFDC 76 in Forces FDC series) will be produced on 5 September, day of issue of the Microscopes stamps, to mark the 49th anniversary of the Battle of Britain. The cover features a scene from the cockpit of a Spitfire and will bear a special Forces handstamp. Proceeds from sales go to the Research into Cancer Immunology Trust. Covers will signed by Dr B J Randle, MA. Price £4; orders/enquiries to: Gp Capt Randle, address above.

Microscopes. To coincide with the Microscopes stamps, Benhams are producing a souvenir cover and sponsoring a pictorial handstamp at the Science Museum which holds the finest collection of microscopes in the country. The cover shows a leaf as seen through a very powerful microscope. Covers bearing the full set of Microscope stamps will cost £3.99 or £5.99 signed by the Director of the Science Museum (postage 35p extra). Orders/enquiries to: Benham (A Buckingham) Ltd, address above.

Year of the Microscope. The Year of the Microscope commemorates the 150th anniversary of the Royal Microscopical Society, acknowledged as the only truly international body of its kind. The Society has appointed A G

Bradbury to produce their official first day cover which will be postmarked in London SW where an exhibition on microscopes will be staged at the Science Museum. Covers with single stamp cost £2.50, with full set £4.75 or £7.50 signed by the Society's President (overseas orders add 50p postage, remit in sterling). Orders/enquiries to: A G Bradbury, 3 Link Road, LEICESTER LE2 3RA.

Mod Nan Eilean. To mark the second only time the National Gaelic Mod has been held in the Western Isles (since the Mod began in Oban in 1892), a special commemorative cover, with an informative filler card in Gaelic and English, has been produced. This will bear the 1986 22p Christmas stamp (Hebrides Tribute) cancelled with a special Mod handstamp at Stornoway on 6 October. The handstamp will have a Gaelic motif and is inscribed in Gaelic and English – reflecting The Post Office's own bilingual policy in areas of Scotland where Gaelic is the everyday language. The covers cost £1.20; orders/enquiries to: F G Thompson, 5 Rathad na Muilne, STORNOWAY, Isle of Lewis, PA87 2TZ.

Stampex Ulster

Autumn Stampex Ulster '89 will be held at the Europa Hotel, Great Victoria Street, Belfast on 16 & 17 September. Opening hours will be 10am to 6pm on Saturday 16th, 11am to 6pm on the 17th. Special arrangements have been made with the hotel for visitors to the exhibition; details available from the exhibition office, address below. A special philatelic souvenir will be available. Further details from: Stampex Ulster, 11 Victoria Street, BELFAST BT1 3GA, tel. Belfast (0232) 231954.

New Railway Letter Stamps

The North Yorkshire Moors Railway issued a new 20p railway letter stamp on 16 August to mark the 10th anniversary of their "North Yorkshireman" dining car train. The stamp was printed in sheets of 12 by Wayzgoose Ltd of Sleaford. A fifth 20p definitive stamp, showing locomotive No. 225 hauling "The Moorlander" train, will be issued on 9 September; printed in sheets of six by Walsall Security Printers. Mint stamps, at face value, and first day covers, are available from Mrs M Atkins, 5 Tiber View, Brinsworth, ROTHERHAM, South Yorkshire, S60 5EA.

September Digest

Issued in September

5 September: Microscope stamps - 19p, 27p, 32p, 35p

Designer: Keith Bassford

Printing: The House of Questa, lithography, 35 x 37mm, printed on unwatermarked, phosphor-coated paper, in sheets of 100 on PVA Dextrin gum.

Bureau f.d. service alternative handstamp: Oxford

Presentation pack: (No. 201) £1.35

26 September: National Definitives: 14p light blue, 20p black, 24p terracotta, 29p purple, 30p sage, 34p slate, 37p red.

Printing: Harrison & Sons, photogravure, all Advanced Coated Paper except 15p - one phosphor band. Sheets of 200.

Presentation pack: (No. 19), £1.25

Bureau f.d. service alternative handstamp: Windsor

Note: Issue of these stamps is subject to approval of tariff increase

Withdrawn in September

4 September: 13p, 18p, 24p, 26p, 31p & 34p definitives, 13p & 18p Country stamps, machine, counter & window books and coils — see August *Bulletin* (page 306). 23 June 1987 Aerogramme (singles & packs).

5 September: Edward Lear — all items.

Royal Mail Parcels Labels

From late August onwards collectors may come across colourful self-adhesive labels affixed to parcels delivered by the Royal Mail. The labels are being used as part of an internal accounting system designed to more accurately record the revenue due to Royal Mail Parcels. The labels



are being affixed by the staff of Post Office Counters Ltd on all parcels they accept - whether bearing adhesive postage stamps or meter impressions. They bear a reference number which corresponds with that on the "Parcel Traffic Schedule" document compiled by Counters staff.

Bounty Exhibition

Readers are reminded that the National Maritime Museum exhibition marking the bicentenary of the famous mutiny will close on 1 October. The exhibition is open 10am to 6pm Monday to Saturday, noon to 6pm Sunday, admission £3 adult, £1.50 child/OAP/holder of UB40 form. A coupon allowing one person free entry to the exhibition if accompanied by an adult paying standard admission was published in the June *Bulletin* (page 259). The National Maritime Museum is situated in Romney Road, Greenwich, London SE10, tel. 01-858 4422.

50p Stamp Book Variety

Part of the run of the 50p Marine Life machine-vended book (issued 18 July) was perforated on the Chambon machine with the "Rise and Fall" perforator rather than the usual APS. Specialist collectors wanting this variation are advised that they are available from the British Philatelic Bureau and philatelic counters. First day of availability was 8 August; we regret this information was received too late for inclusion in the August *Bulletin*.

British Philatelic Bulletin

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