

BRITISH PHILATELIC

The ROYAL MAIL magazine for stamp collectors

Volume 42 Number 4

DECEMBER 2004 £1.10

Bulletin

Vote in the 2004 stamp poll •
Father Christmas on stamps



Forthcoming issues and withdrawals



Cover Details from some of Mrs Martin's many Christmas issues and postal stationery featuring Father Christmas. Photography by Geoff Dann.

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

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30 November

Issue Stamp roll: 1000 x 1st class gold • Coin cover: Scotland £1 coin & Scottish country stamps • Ingot pack: George V Mackennal definitive.

18 December

Withdrawal Rugby Winners miniature sheet and presentation pack.

4 January

Issue Farm Animals stamp cards.

11 January

Issue Farm Animals stamps, presentation pack and Smilers sheet.

12 January

Withdrawal Classic Locomotives stamps, miniature sheet, stamp cards and coin cover (presentation pack already sold out).

29 January

Withdrawal Hong Kong Stamp Expo Smilers sheet.

A subscription to this magazine makes an ideal Christmas present for a philatelic friend or relation. It keeps them informed of new Royal Mail issues and events in the philatelic world and provides interesting articles by leading philatelists and postal historians. To book a subscription, send the name and address of your friend or relative to Tallents House (address opposite). Annual subscription £11.75 UK & Europe, £16.75 rest of world (airmail). Binders and storage boxes are available, at £8.50 and £9.95 respectively.





Father Christmas Dorothy Martin's traditional feature follows Father Christmas on his gradual transformation from a saint into a jolly man in a sleigh full of toys **116**

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This month The Editor previews this issue

2004 Bulletin writers

Simon Armitage March

Colin Baker October,
November

James Mackay February,
May, August to November

Dorothy Martin January,
December

Glenn Morgan April to
September

Douglas Myall March, May,
July, September, December

Ron Negus each month

Martin Robinson June,
October, December

Richard West each month

Bob Wilcock August, October

ONCE AGAIN we invite you to vote for your favourite stamps and *Bulletin* writer of the year. The special stamps issued during 2004 are shown on pages 108-09. Tell us your top three sets and favourite individual stamp on the enclosed voting form. All forms will be entered in a prize draw: the first four 'out of the hat' will each win £50. Remember to return your form by 14 January. The favourite set of 2003 was Extreme Endeavours, and the most popular individual stamp was Cecil Beaton's portrait of 'The Queen' from the Coronation anniversary issue. We also invite you to vote (on the same form) for your favourite *Bulletin* writer – listed here, with the months their articles were published. All voting forms go into a second draw for two more prizes of £50. The favourite author will receive £100 and the runner-up £50. Last year's winner was Douglas Myall, with Dorothy Martin second. Please note that articles by Royal Mail staff are excluded.

Details are given this month of the first two special stamp issues of 2005. We also have our now customary article on Christmas stamps by Dorothy Martin, and a profile of Dorothy by Richard West to mark her 90th birthday at the end of this month. We wish her a very happy birthday.

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

Stamp scene 2005 exhibitions • Stampex • Meetings • Literature • Isle of Man issue

For details of the Wellington Park Hotel exhibition, contact Peter McBride on 028 8673 7804.

2005 exhibitions There will be international exhibitions in Sydney, Australia (21-24 April), Brno, Czech Republic (10-15 May), and Hanover, Germany (2-5 June). The UK commissioners for these exhibitions will be John Sussex, Yvonne Wheatley, and Robin Pizer. In the UK, Spring Stampex will be 23-27 February, Midpex (Coventry) 25 June, and Autumn Stampex 14-18 September. A stamp exhibition will be held at the Wellington Park Hotel, Malone Road, Belfast on 28-29 May. The Wellington Park Hotel was the venue for Stampex Ulster back in May 1975 •

Stampex Some 6400 collectors visited Autumn Stampex at the Business Design Centre in London (15-21 September). David Harrop's 'Postal Miscellany' from the Manchester Postal Museum included a shotgun carried by a mail coach guard, and *Stamp Magazine* mounted a display to mark its 70th anniversary. Some 10 bays in the gallery were occupied by wide-ranging and extensive displays by the China Philatelic Society of London and the Hong Kong Study Circle. On the 'Village Green' area were displayed the entries in the senior and junior National Competitions (see Stampex report in this *Bulletin*). The Royal Mail stand was busy, especially on the Thursday when the Woodland Animals stamps went on sale. Many customers posted FDCs to get the two Stampex handstamps available that day.

There were good sales of ingot covers and Smilers sheets, especially the 'Rule Britannia' sheet containing the 'Union Jack' stamp.

Many youngsters visited the National Youth Stamp Committee stand on the Saturday and Sunday. Jack Germaine from Islington was fortunate to win a Penny Black, donated by Dauwalders, in the lucky dip. In the British Youth Stamp Championships, the following special awards were made: ADPS Trophy (most promising) – Mathiynan Nithiynananthan; Gillian Birchnall Trophy – Jessica Moore; Benham Trophy – Jade Needs; Stanley Gibbons Trophy – Simon Moorcroft; Urch Harris Trophy – Charlotte Rookes, and Melville Cup (best entry overall) – Jade Needs •

The NYSG can offer help and advice in starting up a youth stamp club. Write to: National Youth Stamp Committee, 46 Woodville Road, Ham, Richmond TW10 7QN for details.

Philatelic Society meetings On 2 December Barrie Jay's display to the Royal Philatelic Society London will be 'The Continental Connection 1423-1815', followed by displays from London Members (15 December), 'GB 1913-34 High Values – the Seahorses' (6 January) and 'Postal Heritage Trust' (20 January). There will be a Young Collectors Day on 15 January •

Royal Philatelic Society
London 41 Devonshire Place,
London W1G 6JY.

The 11 December National Philatelic Society meeting will comprise the Annual Competitions. The meeting starts at 14.45, with the library open from 11.00. Enquiries to address opposite, or see www.ukphilately.org.uk •

National Philatelic Society
107 Charterhouse St, London
EC1M 6PT.

Literature *Bulletin* contributor Richard Beith has written and published *British South American Airways 1946-1949*, sub-titled 'A sourcebook for aerophilatists, with notes on previous attempts to introduce a British South Atlantic air mail service'. For some years Richard has enjoyed researching less popular or less well-known air mail services. In 1994 he reported his findings on BSAA here and in the journal of the American Air Mail Society. Since then interest in collecting BSAA covers and ephemera has grown and in 2000 wreckage of one of the aircraft (*Star Dust*) was discovered high up in the Andes – the subject of a book and television documentary. His new book expands the magazine articles and includes notes on earlier attempts at starting a British South Atlantic air mail service together with appendices listing the BSAA fleet and reproducing sample timetables. The book, well-illustrated in black & white and colour, is well-written, both precise (with many references given) yet an enjoyable read •

British South American Airways £16.50 postpaid UK, £17 surface mail or £18.50 airmail outside Europe, from Richard Beith, 14 Middlecroft, Guilden Sutton, Chester CH3 7HF.

The 2004 (18th) edition of *Bolaffi International* includes all the top prices from 46 worldwide auction houses during the philatelic season 2003 and the first half of 2004. It lists some 2058 lots with a total hammer price of over US\$50 million, with a special chapter devoted to the top ten prices and top ten items since 1970 •

Bolaffi International 75 euro plus shipping. Enquiries: Mrs M Amiotti, Bolaffi, via Cavour 17, 10123 Torino, Italy, e-mail mamiotti@bolaffi.it

The 2005 edition of *Collecting British First Day Covers* lists all FDCs from the Uniform 4d Post (December 1839) to the Crimean War stamps of October 2004. All FDC and postmark types are listed with prices for special hand-stamps given in a two-column structure for ordinary (or commercial) and official (sponsored) covers. The collector will also find detailed listings of relevant CDs and slogan postmarks on FDCs. Definitive FDCs are listed separately with sub-sections for commemorative labels, prestige books, regionals, booklets and varieties (perfs, papers, phosphors, etc) •

Collecting British FDCs Price £12.50 (postage £1.95) from stamp shops or the publisher: A G Bradbury, 3 Link Road, Leicester LE2 3RA. Telephone 0116 270 5367.



Paintings stamps The Isle of Man PO issued six stamps on 21 October featuring paintings of the island by Alfred Heaton Cooper (1864-1929) who visited in 1908 to produce a series of paintings for a book. The two shown at left are this year's contribution to the Europa series, bearing the EUROPA 2004 logo. Address enquiries to: Isle of Man Philatelic Bureau, PO Box 10M, Douglas, Isle of Man IM99 1PB, or see website www.iompost.com •

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

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

Harmers Telephone 020 8747 6100. Website www.harmers.com

Sotheby's For future sales of the Baillie collection, contact Sotheby's on 020 7293 5000 or see website www.sothebys.com

Heinrich Kohler enquiries Telephone +49 (0) 611-39381 or see website www.heinrich-kohler.de

Auctions Spink broke the world record for an Australian philatelic item on 23 September when a left-hand marginal block of 15 of the 1852 New South Wales 3d stamp realised £119,600, doubling the pre-sale estimate. The block was cut from a part sheet of 38 stamps presented to Sir Daniel Cooper, Governor of NSW and first President of the London Philatelic Society •

Cavendish held three sales on 23-24 September. In the Norman Bennett Hong Kong and Michael Scott Archer Overland Mail sales over 100 lots realised over £1000 each. A rare GB used in Constantinople cover to Peking went for £1495. In the general sale a Roman writing tablet made £3,220 and a used GB 1883 10s cobalt £2760. Material is now being accepted for 2005 sales •

Harmers 30 September 'Lots & Collections' auction realised prices from £40 to £11,762 with a total sale price of £167,795. GB lots were popular – a collection in three Lighthouse albums went for £7646 (est £4000) and two other collections made £2588 and £2352 (ests £1500 and £1200). Top price was for a collection of British Occupation of Italian Colonies which included Middle East Forces 1942 1d to 5d in control blocks of 10. On 14 December Harmers auctions the Jeffery K Weiss collection of Seychelles •

The Sotheby's sale of Part 1 of the Sir Gawaine Baillie collection (29 September - 1 October) realized £3.6 million; 86% of lots were sold. Top price of £240,800 was paid by a US dealer for a sheet of the 1880 2s brown watermark spray plate 1 (est £200,000-250,000), and a UK collector paid £100,800 for a 2d blue plate 1 block of four (HA-1B) (£45,000-50,000). An example of the unissued Edward VII 2d Tyrian Plum went for £54,000 (£20,000-25,000), and a block of 30 2d blue (OG-SL) realized £67,200 (£60,000-70,000). Richard Ashton of Sotheby's commented: 'The sheet of the 2s brown fetched one of the highest prices ever achieved for any British stamp and the 2d Tyrian Plum set a new world record for that stamp at auction. Items from the later period – 1913 onwards – also achieved outstanding prices, in particular for the Sea Horses issues of George V and the modern varieties of Elizabeth II' •

The Heinrich Kohler auction in Wiesbaden (30 September) included an unused Penny Black with sheet margin which went for 11,000 euro (est 2000 euro). Good prices were also achieved for German States and Swiss material and All World lots. The next auction will be 26-29 January. A special catalogue with international rarities will be for viewing on the Kohler stand at Monacophil this month •

Royal Mail news 2005 issues programme • Yearbook and pack • Smilers • Charges

Forthcoming special issues The 2005 programme starts on 11 January with 10 stamps depicting Farm Animals. The stamps were previewed here last month. There will be two issues in February – six stamps showing views of South West England in the British Journey series (8 February); and six stamps, a miniature sheet and a prestige book on the subject of Charlotte Brontë's famous novel *Jane Eyre* (24 February). Both issues are previewed in this *Bulletin*. Please note this is a change of date for the Jane Eyre issue, and the Castles miniature sheet will now be issued on 22 March instead of 24 February as originally announced. The set marking the centenary of the Magic Circle will now be issued on 15 March.

On 21 April we will launch a joint issue with Australia Post on the subject of World Heritage Sites. The six stamps will be printed in three horizontal se-tenant pairs showing a British and an Australian site. The British sites will be: Hadrian's Wall, Stonehenge, Blenheim Palace and Neolithic Orkney. The Australian sites are: Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park; Wet Tropics, Queensland; Greater Blue Mountains area; and Purnululu National Park.

A set featuring the Trooping of the Colour will be issued on 7 June, a miniature sheet marking the 60th anniversary of the end of the Second World War follows on 5 July, and the Transport theme issues of recent years are continued with a set featuring motorcycles on 19 July. This year's Europa theme is Gastronomy and a set of food stamps will go on sale on 23 August, followed by a set marking the 50th anniversary of Independent Television on 15 September. A key set of the year will be the issue commemorating the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar on 18 October. The annual Christmas issue will be go on sale on 1 November •

Rowland Hill Awards Last month's *Bulletin* included a form for readers to nominate in both the Royal Mail Innovation and British Philatelic Trust sections of the Rowland Hill Awards. The nominations will then be short-listed for final judging. The awards for 2004 will be made at a ceremony in London next Spring. Forms should be returned by 31 December to Rachel Lonsdale at the addresses given on the form. All forms will go into a draw for £100 worth of Royal Mail philatelic products •

Enquiries about the Rowland Hill Awards should be sent to Rachel Lonsdale, Royal Mail, Mail Media Centre, Stukeley Street, London WC1V 7AB, or telephone 07736 787 122.

2004 Yearbook and Yearpack The new Yearbook, now on sale, contains information and spaces for all special issues of 2004 (see Martin Robinson's review on pages 105-07 for a description of each issue). As always the book gives interesting background stories to each issue with details of the designers. Price £34.95 for the standard version (order code AYO85) or £75 deluxe leather-bound edition (AYO86). The latter is available only from Royal Mail Tallents House. The 2004 Yearpack containing the same special stamps costs £29.95 (ARO56) •





Coming off sale Any remaining stocks of 2004 Christmas stamps, stamp books, presentation packs, stamp cards, and airletters will be withdrawn from sale at Post Office branches after business on 24 December. Supplies will remain available from Royal Mail Tallents House until next November. The Rugby Winners miniature sheet (shown at left) and presentation pack will be withdrawn on 18 December, and the Classic Locomotives stamps, miniature sheet and stamp cards will be withdrawn at Tallents House on 12 January. The Classic Locomotives pack is already sold out •

Smilers sheets Readers are reminded that generic Christmas Smilers sheets are now on sale, containing 10 1st class and 10 2nd class 2004 Christmas stamps. The sheet was shown in October's *Bulletin*. The stamps in these Smilers sheets are all printed by lithography, whereas the stamps from other sources are printed in gravure. For details of how to order customised versions of the sheets, with your own image printed on the labels phone 0845 074 2000 (UK customers) or +44 131 316 7489 (overseas). Visit website www.royalmail.com/smilers to place an order using digital photos. Customised sheets will also be available through Snap Digital photobooths at selected Post Office branches and Safeway stores.

The next issue of a Smilers sheet will be for the Farm Animals stamps on 11 January 2005 •

Storing the Bulletin Binders and box files are available for storing this and the *Postmark Bulletin*. The sturdy box files, in maroon for the *Philatelic Bulletin* and green for the *Postmark Bulletin* are available from Royal Mail Tallents House, priced £9.95 each. Order code PB349 (Philatelic), PB350 (Postmark). The files will store 30 copies of the Philatelic and about 50 of the Postmark Bulletins. The traditional binders for the Philatelic and Postmark Bulletins cost £8.50 each (order codes BB001 and PB322 respectively) •

Collect British Stamps The 2005 (56th) edition of the ever-popular Stanley Gibbons *Collect British Stamps* colour checklist is now available, price £9.95, from Royal Mail Tallents House in Edinburgh as well as from Stanley Gibbons Strand shop and Publications centre at Ringwood, and stamp and book shops •

Draw winners Winners of High Value stamp packs in our September draw were: I Smith of Macau, SAR China; J & P Woolford, Australia; R Sands, Leicestershire; and Mrs P Dixon, Hants. Winners of *Collect British Stamps* and *Collect British Coins* (August) were: D Benoist, Germany; E Gilbert, Herts; J Taylor, South Africa; J Farmer, Surrey; A Sietneickas, West Yorkshire; and C Reich, Australia •

Royal Mail handling charges Royal Mail will introduce handling charges for orders received from 1 January 2005 for the following products: Albums, Binders, Continuation pages, Leaves, Yearbooks, Coin Covers, Medal Covers, and Stamp Ingots. The new charges, which we have to introduce to cover our fulfilment costs, will reflect the dimensions of the item(s) in the order and the delivery address. Details are given opposite.

Only one charge will be raised per order per address regardless of how many items are involved, and the higher charge will be applied where an order contains both a bulky item and a two-dimensional product. For example, if we receive an order for a Yearbook and a Coin Cover for delivery at the same address within the UK, the handling charge will be £2.95 even if we despatch the items separately. It will therefore pay to order all your items in one go. Full details about these charges and the products affected will be included in the December Stock List •

Bulky items	
Within the UK	£ 2.95
Europe, outside UK	£ 5.00
Outside UK/Europe	£14.00

Two-dimensional items	
Within the UK	£ 1.30
Europe, outside UK	£ 1.55
Outside UK/Europe	£ 2.15

Bulky items: albums, binders, Yearbooks. Two-dimensional items: coin covers, medal covers, stamp ingots, continuation pages and leaves

New Royal Mail stock book A handsome stock book with 16 pages, each with 10 acetate clear strips, is now available – ideal for keeping your stamps in prime condition prior to mounting in an album. The stock book has a racing green cover with 'Royal Mail Stock Book' inscribed in gold •

New stock book £7.95 (order code PA690) from Royal Mail Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB.

Royal Mail Special Stamps Reviewed by Martin Robinson

ROYAL MAIL SPECIAL STAMPS 21, the 2004 year-book, is now available (standard version £34.95, deluxe leather-bound version £75). As ever, it is a handsome volume, in a burgundy slipcase bearing symbols relating to stamp subjects and production printed in silver to form a large '21'. The book cover itself, also burgundy, has the same design in blind embossing. The book's 12 chapters run to 64 pages full of beautiful images and interesting information on each of the year's special issues, which are included to insert in the mounts provided. Author Fay Sweet and designers GBH are to be congratulated on a superb production.

Much of the background to the Classic Locomotives stamps concentrates on the history and development of the Bluebell Railway and the volunteers who run it, and also covers Trevithick's locomotive, the Beeching cuts and the rise of preserved railways. There are photographs, posters and memorabilia, and reference to the well-loved paintings of Terence Cuneo, each with his trademark mouse lurking somewhere; and the section about the design process mentions the elaborate photo shoots involved in producing the images.

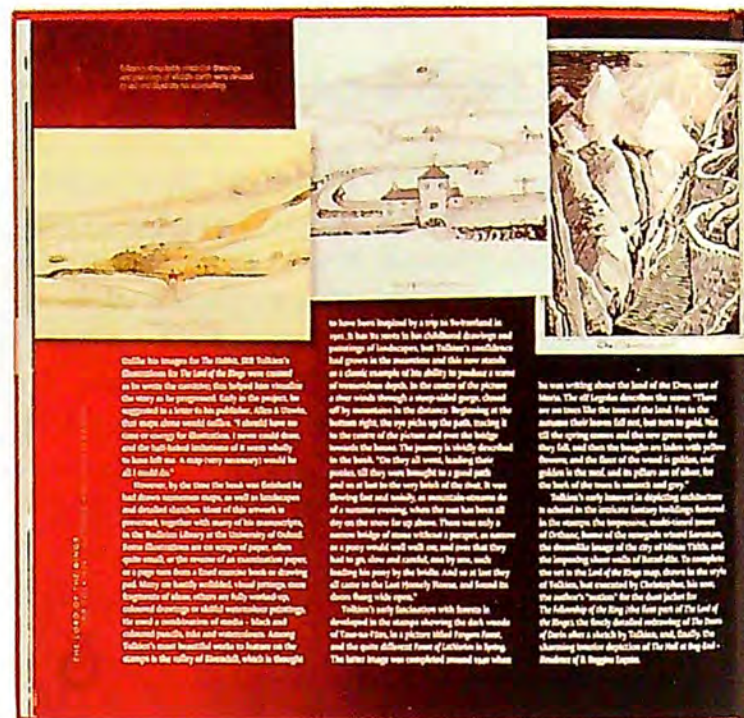
For the Occasions issue – Japanese-born cartoonist and illustrator Satoshi Kambayashi's envelope designs – there is a history of the greetings card, from the earliest known cuneiform letters on clay tablets in clay envelopes, dating from 1900BC in what is now Turkey, through Henry Cole's 1843 Christmas cards (one of which sold at auction in 2002 for £22,500!) to the present 2.5 billion cards delivered each year by Royal Mail.

The Lord of the Rings is officially the UK's favourite book, ahead of the works of Jane Austen, Charles Dickens and Leo Tolstoy, and the stamps came soon after the release of the third film of the acclaimed trilogy (what shall I get my son to take me to see this Christmas?), and also marked the 50th anniversary of *The Two Towers*, the second part. The genesis of the books is described, as are the merits of JRR Tolkien's work, as illustrator as well as author, in conjuring up the symbols, maps, landscapes, forests and architecture of Middle Earth. The illustrations were chosen after research into the Tolkien archive of sketches, drawings and watercolours at the Bodleian Library, Oxford.

Continuing series The Northern Ireland stamps continued the British Journey begun in Scotland in 2003 and continued in Wales later in 2004. The designer comments that suitable photographs of the landscapes evocative of the province's history and folklore, full of conflict and prodigious deeds, were difficult to find, partly because the tourism industry is still relatively small.

The Entente Cordiale set marked a century of Anglo-French cooperation and The Queen's state visit to France; it was also the second joint issue with La Poste, the first being 10 years earlier, for the Channel Tunnel. The entente was about outlining common aims and interests, and settling colonial disputes, but it has come to mean much more, including alliance in two wars, set pieces like Concorde and the Tunnel, and a British love affair with France which has led 100,000 Britons to buy a home there. We also learn of the story behind the choice of the abstract designs by artists Sir Terry Frost and Sonia Delaunay.

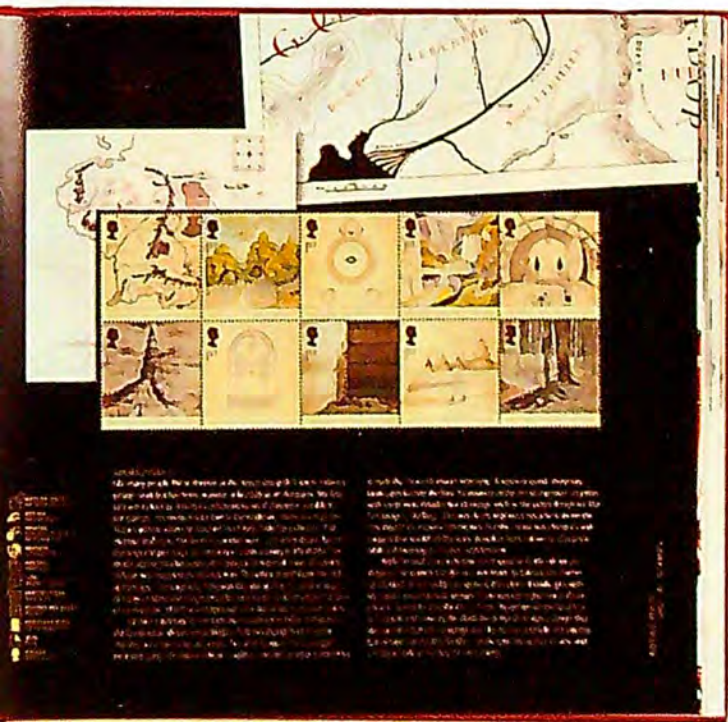
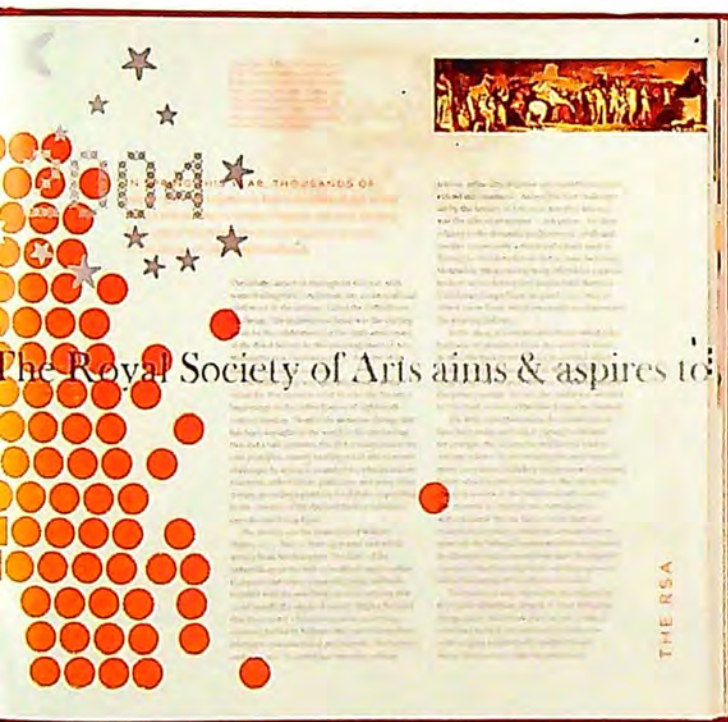
The *Ocean Liners* issue celebrated the launch of the QM2, the largest and most lavish liner ever built, and the first new transatlantic liner in a generation, whose luxurious appointments are lovingly dwelt on. The text deals with Brunel's *Great Western* and the birth of the Cunard line; the development of paddle wheels, screw propellers and iron hulls, and the move from transatlantic crossings to cruises. I enjoyed reading the story of the first crossing of the *Great Eastern*, when a cow was washed off the deck and through a skylight into the passenger saloon. We also hear of emigrants in steerage, and of war service when liners became troop carriers and hospital ships. The design section tells of the selection of paintings by maritime artists of three centuries.



Gorgeous pressed flowers The Royal Horticultural Society was born at the turn of the 19th century, when hundreds of new plant species were being brought back to the UK from all over the world. The Society has its gardens at Wisley and elsewhere, and runs shows like those at Chelsea and Hampton Court; and we read about famous gardeners like Joseph Paxton of Chatsworth and Gertrude Jekyll. This chapter is illustrated with

some gorgeous pressed flowers, and we learn of the digital techniques used for the stamps that emphasise the fragility and beauty of the flowers and acknowledges Fox Talbot's early 'photogenic drawings'.

The chapter about Wales regales us with thick-walled castles and high-tech industry, the sense of a national identity, culture, the arts, dramatic scenery, and the Celtic heritage of music, song



and poetry. Everyone is familiar with Tom Jones, Shirley Bassey and Bryn Terfel, but did you know that Luciano Pavarotti made his first appearance as a teenager in a male voice choir at the 1955 International Eisteddfod? The Millennium Centre is finished and the National Assembly building is emerging, fittingly for the 600th anniversary of the first Welsh Parliament, and two of the stamps make reference to Owain Glyndwr.

Social challenge The Royal Society of Arts is still setting itself social and economic challenges in its 250th year, acting as a catalyst for scientists, educationalists, industrialists and politicians. (I must confess immodestly that in 1986 I had the honour of addressing the Society on the subject of School-Business Partnerships, in the presence of Prince Philip, Brian Redhead and other luminaries.) Rowland Hill was the first recipient of the Society's Albert Medal, and Tim Smit, creator of the Eden Project, received it in 2003. The RSA was behind London's Blue Plaques, the Royal College of Music and the Festival of Britain, and many other things. The stamps represent Derek Birdsall's second foray into stamp design, the first almost 40 years ago with the Post Office Tower issue, and he boldly said: 'Why be frightened of text – Let's have stamps full of text.'

The Woodland Animals chapter concentrates on Mark Hamblin, who photographed some of the animals in the set, and we hear of his patience in setting up hides and waiting for hours and days for the right shot. In selecting pictures, the criteria were to be able to see the animals' faces, and to have a sense of the woodland environment. My curiosity as to which animals' prints are shown on the special handstamps from Woodland, Bishop Auckland and Tallents House is satisfied.

Attention The Crimean War stamps feature ordinary soldiers, but we also read about the Charge of the Light Brigade, Florence Nightingale, Mary Seacole, and the Victoria Cross. This was the first modern war in the way it was reported by photographers like Roger Fenton and correspondents like William Howard Russell. The stamp images are taken from portraits commissioned by Queen Victoria herself – the very fine detail is due in part to the men's being used to standing to attention.

Raymond Briggs is one of Britain's most successful and influential authors and illustrators of children's books, like *Father Christmas*, *Fungus the Bogeyman* and *The Snowman*, later made into a favourite film. Briggs himself describes the design process of this year's Christmas stamps.

The Yearbook is an enjoyable read; I am already looking forward to the 2005 edition •

Favourite stamps poll 2004

FOR THE 19TH YEAR running we are inviting you to vote for your favourite stamps. Shown below are the special stamps of 2004. Tell us your top three sets and favourite individual stamp (numbered 1-75) on the enclosed voting form. Remember to return your form by 14 January for entry in our prize draw •

Classic Locomotives



1



2



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4



5



6

Occasions



7



8



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Lord of the Rings



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N Ireland



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Entente Cordiale



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35 Ocean Liners



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41

RHS



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44



45



46



47

Wales



48



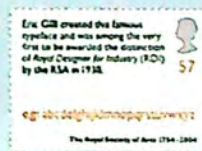
49



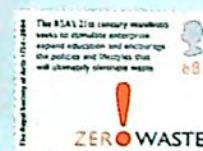
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53 RSA



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Woodland Animals



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66



67



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69

Crimean War



70



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72



73



74



75

Christmas

A British Journey: South West England



Technical details

Printer De La Rue

Process Gravure

Stamp size 35mm square

Sheet size 25 and 50

Perforation 14.5

Phosphor One band 2nd class, two bands others

Gum PVA

Gutter pairs Vertical

Cylinder numbers & colours

All values D1 silver • D1 black
• D1 magenta • D1 yellow •
D1 deep blue (2nd) or cyan
(others) • D1 phosphor

A FURTHER six stamps in the British Journey series, featuring the beautiful scenery of South West England, go on sale at Post Office branches and philatelic outlets and Royal Mail Tallents House on 8 February. They are: 2nd class Old Harry Rocks, Studland Bay, Dorset; 1st class Wheal Coates, St Agnes, Cornwall; 40p Start Point, Start Bay, Devon; 43p Horton Down, Wiltshire; 47p Chiselcombe, Exmoor, Somerset; and 68p, St James's Stone, Lundy, Devon. The stamps were designed by Phelan Barker Design Consultants using photographs by Fay Godwin (2nd class), Joe Cornish (1st & 68p); Rob Talbot (40p); Andreas Heumann (43p); and Brian Pearce (47p).

The stamps will be issued to Post Office branches in sheets of 25. However sheets of 50 with gutter margins will be available from Post Office philatelic outlets and Royal Mail Tallents House.

Ballard Down forms the eastern tip of the great chalk ridge of the Purbeck Hills. Sheer cliffs drop 500 feet to the sea, with the Old Harry Rocks offshore. Wheal Coates at St Agnes, now in the care of the National Trust, stands in a dramatic position on a ledge 300 feet above the sea. The great sweep of Start Bay in South Devon is best seen from Little Dartmouth and the A379 follows the beach for two miles between Slapton and Torcross. Horton Down is five miles from Devizes, an area of beautiful farmland in the chalk downs. Chiselcombe is near Lynmouth on Exmoor – a 170,000 acre plateau of moorland and upland farms with deep wooded combs along the main rivers. Much of the land is owned by the National Trust. Lundy is a small island, three miles long and half a mile wide, 11 miles off Hartland Point, Devon. It is now owned by the National Trust and is a place of natural beauty.



FIRST DAY FACILITIES Unstamped Royal Mail FDC envelopes will be available from main post offices and philatelic outlets about a week before 8 February, price 25p. Orders for FDCs with stamps cancelled by a pictorial first day postmark of Tallents House or The Lizard, Helston must reach Tallents House by the day of issue. Price £3.27 UK or £2.79 overseas.

Collectors may send stamped covers on the day of issue to: Royal Mail Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB (for Tallents House postmark), or to one of the Royal Mail Special Handstamp Centres (Lizard postmark) marking the outer envelope 'FDO503' (Tallents House), or 'FDO504' (Lizard). Covers can be posted or handed in at main Post Office branches for the Lizard postmark. A non-pictorial Lizard postmark is also available from Special Handstamp Centres: request 'FDO504 NP'.

Sponsored handstamps for 8 February will be announced in the *British Postmark Bulletin* – available on subscription from Tallents House (£12.25 UK/Europe; £24.95 elsewhere). For a sample copy write to: The Editor, British Postmark Bulletin, Royal Mail, 148 Old Street, London EC1V 9HQ.

PHILATELIC PRODUCTS An illustrated pack (price £3.10) and stamp cards (30p each) will be available from main Post Office branches and philatelic outlets and Tallents House. The pack, written by Will Hodgkinson, takes the form of a journey through the West Country, with information on (and illustrations of) some key tourist sites: Stonehenge, the Royal Crescent at Bath, Glastonbury, and the Eden Project. The pack, which includes a quotation from Thomas Hardy's poem *Wessex Heights* (1896), was designed by Russell Watson-Fisher. The main illustration is of Durdle Dor, Dorset.



Top row: Over Stowey church in Somerset (2000); Padstow Harbour and Newquay Beach, Cornwall (2002).

Middle Row: the ancient Tarr Steps bridge, Exmoor (1968); Dunster Beach, Somerset and Studland Bay, Dorset (2002).

Bottom row: St Mary the Virgin church, Huish Episcopi, Somerset (1972); Tin mine, St Agnes, Cornwall (1989); and Clyffe Clump, Dorset (1990).



South West stamps A number of previous issues have featured places in the South West. As well as those shown above, these include: St Mary Le Port church, Bristol (1968); Bush House, Bristol (1984); and Eddystone Lighthouse, Plymouth (1998). A sunflower representing the Eden Project, the head of a *Gigantiops destructor* ant, representing Wildscreen at Bristol, and a bather symbolising the Bath Spa Project were depicted on stamps in the Tree & Leaf, Mind & Matter and Body & Bone sets in the Millennium series (2000).

South West places have also featured on a number of stamp book covers: Temple of the Sun, Stourhead, Wilts (50p, August 1982); Kennet & Avon Canal (90p, August 1978); Marlborough College, Wilts (£1, July 1993); Tin Mines, Cornwall (£1.20, June 1980); and Lyme Regis, Dorset (£1.45, August 1983). Finally, Durdle Dor was included on one of the 'Landscapes of Britain' aerogrammes issued in 1989, and glass making in Tiverton on the 'English Crafts' aerogramme of 1999 •

Jane Eyre Charlotte Brontë's immortal novel



An exhibition of the work of Paula Rego, whose paintings feature on these stamps, is on at Tate Britain, London SW1 until 2 January. Enquiries: 020 7887 8000.

SIX STAMPS and a miniature sheet featuring characters from Charlotte Brontë's novel *Jane Eyre* go on sale at Post Office branches, Tallents House and Post Office philatelic outlets on 24 February. Please note the change of issue date; the issue was originally scheduled for 3 March. There will also be a prestige book (see p114). The stamps, designed by Peter Willberg, feature illustrations by Paula Rego. 2nd class: Mr Rochester, the master of Thornfield who Jane falls in love with only to discover he is already married. 1st class: Come to Me – Jane receives a telepathic plea for help from Rochester. 40p: In the Comfort of her Bonnet – as the new governess to Rochester's daughter, Jane arrives at the George Inn at Millcote, where she is beset with doubts and fears. 57p: La Ligne des Rats – Adele (Rochester's daughter) recites *La Ligne des Rats: fable de la Fontaine* to Jane. 68p: Refectory – at Lowton School the young Jane is subjected to a starvation diet. £1.12: Inspection – the sadistic head of Lowton school Rev Brocklehurst has Jane placed upon a stool so that he can get a look at her.

FIRST DAY FACILITIES Unstamped Royal Mail FDC envelopes will be available from main Post Office branches and philatelic outlets about a week before 24 February, price 25p. Orders for FDCs with the stamps/minature sheet cancelled by a pictorial first day postmark of Tallents House Edinburgh or Haworth, Keighley must reach Tallents House by the date of issue. Price £4.25 UK or £3.62 overseas. Please state if stamps or miniature sheet required.

Technical details

Printer Walsall Security Printers

Process Lithography

Stamp size 27 × 37mm

Sheet size 25 and 50

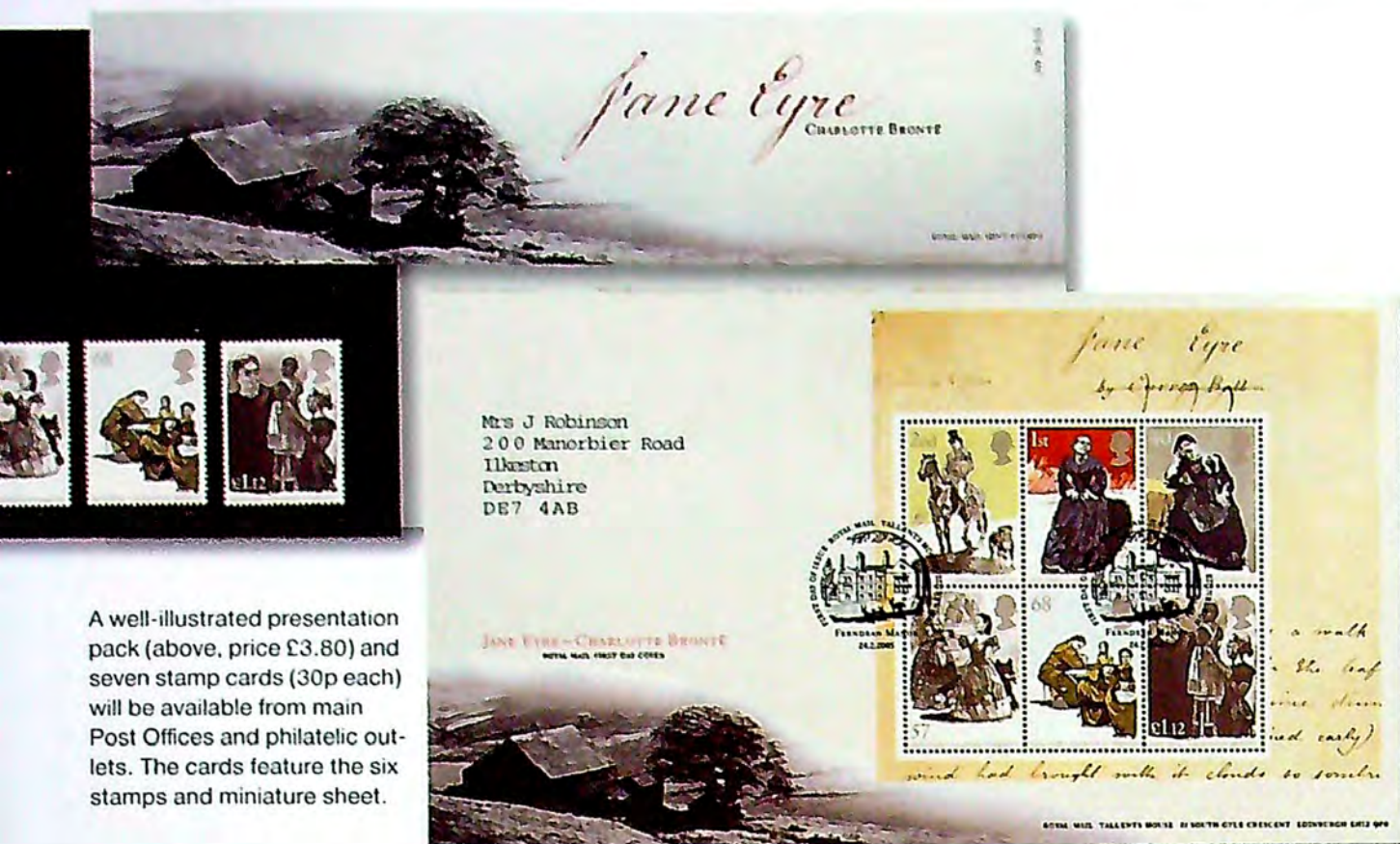
Miniature sheet size 120 × 115mm

Perforation 14 × 14.5

Phosphor One band 2nd class, two bands others

Gum PVA

Gutter pairs Horizontal



A well-illustrated presentation pack (above, price £3.80) and seven stamp cards (30p each) will be available from main Post Offices and philatelic outlets. The cards feature the six stamps and miniature sheet.

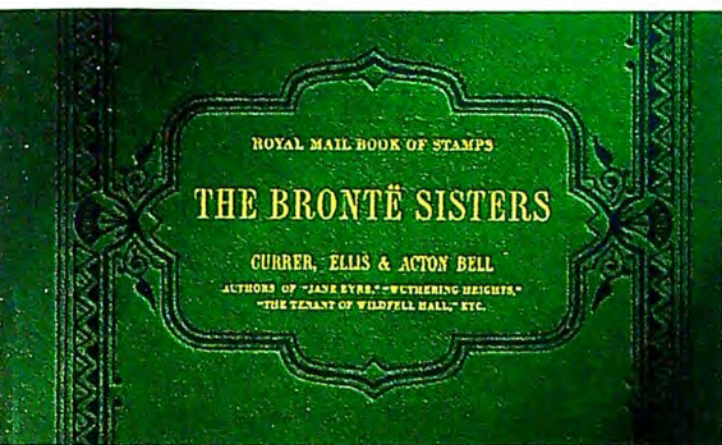
Details of sponsored hand-stamps will be announced in the *British Postmark Bulletin* – see page 111 for subscription details.

Collectors may send stamped covers on the day of issue to: Royal Mail Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB (Tallents House postmark), or to any of Royal Mail's Special Handstamp Centres (Haworth postmark), marking the outer envelope 'FD0505' or 'FD0506'. Covers can be posted or handed in at main Post Office branches for the Haworth postmark.

PRESTIGE BOOK The first of the 2005 prestige books, entitled *The Brontë Sisters*, will be available from 24 February, price £7.44. This contains four stamp panes as shown on the opposite page.

The book, written by Lucasta Miller and designed by Morgan Radcliffe, tells the story of the Brontë sisters, their novels, and the subsequent Brontë Cult. The novels – particularly *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights* (by Emily Brontë) – have inspired a huge range of response by poets and playwrights, artists and novelists, as well as biographers and critics. This ranges from bizarre films such as the Hollywood biopic *Devotion* (1940s), to more meaningful responses such as Jean Rhys's novel *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966). Written by three determined, ambitious and sophisticated women who were brave enough to challenge what was expected of Victorian female writers, the Brontës' novels, which so shocked their contemporaries, are today enshrined as some of the greatest works in English literature.

The book is being printed by Walsall; the panes of Machin and country stamps in gravure, and the panes of Jane Eyre stamps in litho. A first day cover will be offered bearing the Machin stamps pane with label. This can be ordered from Tallents House, price £3.31 UK/£2.82 overseas. Please state if Tallents House or Haworth postmark required •



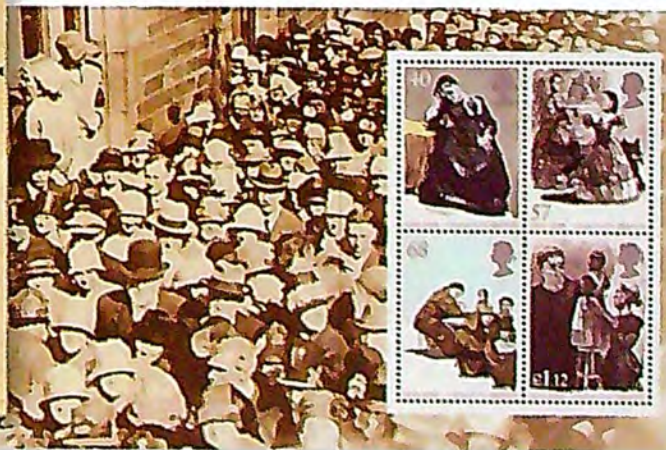
The Brontë Sisters The PSB contains four stamp panes

1 Machin definitives: top and bottom rows 2nd class, 42p, 2nd class; middle row 39p, label with Brontë Museum marking, 39p.

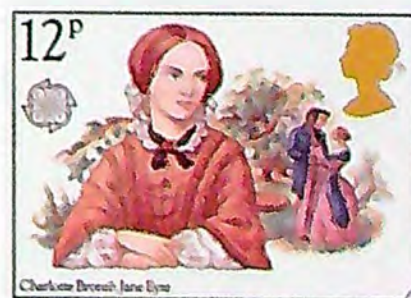
2 Country stamps: top row England 40p, 2nd class; middle row label showing Victorian characters; bottom row England 2nd, 40p.

3 Jane Eyre stamps: top row 1st, 2nd; bottom row 2nd, 1st.

4 Jane Eyre stamps: top row 40p, 57p; bottom row 68p and £1.12.



The Brontës These are not the first British stamps featuring the Brontës and their works. The 12p and 15p values of the Famous Authoresses set of 1980 depicted Charlotte and Emily with characters from *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*. The Keighley & Worth Valley Railway (which runs near their Haworth home) has issued two railway letter stamps with a Brontë connection. The first, in 1980, depicted their brother Branwell who for a while worked on the railway. In 1985 the Railway issued a stamp featuring the three sisters, Anne, Charlotte and Emily, with the front and nameplate of locomotive *The Brontës of Haworth*. An article on the Brontë sisters will be published in the February *Bulletin* •



Father Christmas From Saint to Santa – Dorothy M Martin



8.2. Father Christmas

To the Victorians, Father Christmas was very closely connected to St Nicholas and to the early 19th century Spirit of Christmas who was jolly and seldom appeared without a glass in his hand, as well as being a gift bearer to the children. Towards the end of the century he changed his appearance and became the rosy-faced Santa Claus with a long white beard and wearing a red cloak and hood.



For the children, Christmas Eve was a time of excited anticipation. They would write to Santa asking for their special gifts, and would hang up their stockings expecting them to be filled. They would eventually fall asleep and dream of Father Christmas arriving in his sleigh drawn by reindeer, and leaving all the toys and goodies they had requested.



Illustrated Postal Stationery card depicting Child sending letter to Father Christmas



BENHAM
HIGH STREET
HYTHE, KENT



Empty
Stockings.



Commission
Fulfilled.

on the evolution and changing fortunes of our annual visitor

FOR MOST PEOPLE the name 'Father Christmas', also known as Santa Claus, conjures up the whole spirit of Christmas. We think of him as a jolly, red-faced old chap with a long white beard, wearing a red cloak and hood trimmed with white fur, driving over the roof tops in a sleigh filled with toys and driven by reindeer, delivering his cargo by climbing down the chimneys and leaving his gifts for all the sleeping children.

But let us consider how this picture originated. The name 'Santa Claus' is a corruption of St Nicholas, who was Bishop of Myra in Asia Minor during the 4th century. He was renowned for his good deeds, helping the poor and needy, and protecting people in trouble, even criminals. According to one of many legends, he threw gold coins down a chimney to help a poor family, and they fell into some stockings left on the hearth to dry. This is thought to be the origin of children hanging up their stockings around the fireplace to receive their gifts from Santa.

Viking lore Another train of thought is that the origins of Father Christmas are steeped in Viking lore. Their god Odin, the father of the gods, had 12 characters, one for each month. During December it was believed that Odin would visit earth dressed in a blue hooded cloak joining groups of people, unbeknown to them, and listening to their conversations to hear about their well-being and progress. He would leave gifts of bread for poor families. Thus we see the similar customs associated with Father Christmas – the hooded person making secret visits and leaving gifts. The word Yuletide derives from Jultid another name for December.

Banned then re-appeared During the Reformation period Christmas was banned; therefore all celebrations ceased and Father Christmas disappeared but was certainly not forgotten. He came to symbolize what the people of Britain treasured most about the festive season. During the 18th century Father Christmas started to appear again, often in plays. Over the years his appearance has

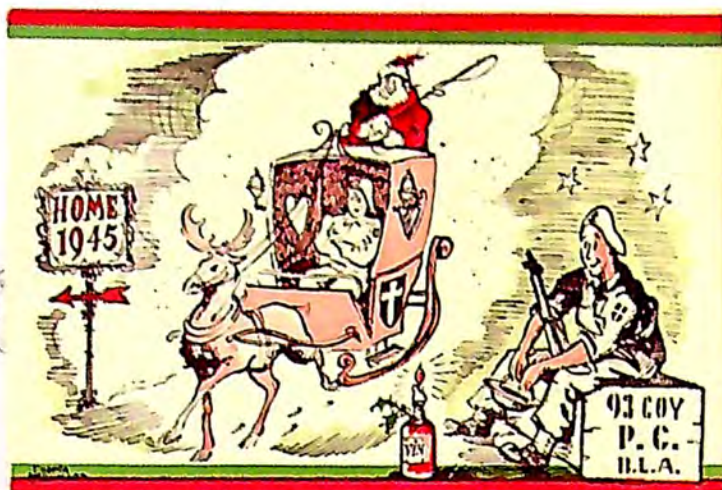
changed. He was originally depicted wearing a red robe, a Bishop's mitre, and carrying a staff; later he appeared wearing a wreath of holly and usually wearing a blue robe. He first came on the scene in 1863 as the chubby, smiling Santa wearing a bright red belted cloak with hood trimmed with white fur, and a long white beard, as we still know him today, when he was illustrated by a 23-year old artist named Thomas Nast, in *Harper's Weekly*, an American magazine. After the saintly figure was lost, he became the jovial, rosy-faced character synonymous with the goodwill and spirit of Christmas. Six years later a book was written entitled *Father Christmas and his Workshop*, that was the beginning of Santa's workshops being established.

The new image of Santa crossed the Atlantic and came to Britain during the 1870s. By the end of the century he had become an essential part of the Christmas celebrations, loved by children who awaited his arrival on Christmas Eve with great excitement and expectations. To the Victorians, Father Christmas was much more than just a gift-bearer, he was closely related to the early 'Spirit of Christmas' almost always depicted with a glass in his hand and a picture of merriment.

Father Christmas was and still is depicted on all types of Christmas cards, even including wartime and Prisoner of War cards, also those relating to Parliamentary events.

British children have for many years been delighted to visit Father Christmas in his magnificent grotto at local department stores, often to sit on his knee and ask for special presents.

Santa's transport Father Christmas has various methods of travelling, mainly according to the country concerned. The most popular is a sleigh drawn by reindeer whose names are: Rudolph, Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donner, and Blitzen. In this country children leave out mince pies to help Santa on his way; in Holland and Belgium they put hay in their shoes for the white horse which is said to carry their gift-bearer who exchanges the hay for sweets.



Sometime he arrives in a boat or by surf-board; he is even known to trudge through deep snow on foot. In more recent years he is expected to travel by air in an aeroplane, helicopter, or even a spacecraft.

There is a place in Indiana named Santa Claus where a giant statue was built in 1935. This town runs a training course lasting a week where prospective Santas attend; those who pass the exam receive a Diploma and are very much in demand for parties and other similar events. In 1975 Mr and Mrs Tom Vincent, America's self-styled King and Queen of Santas, arrived in London to teach British Santas how to behave as good Santas, the general opinion being that ours are too grumpy and shout at children if they pull their beards; and they don't even know the names of Rudolph and his companions! About 30 interested men turned up to take advantage of the opportunity.

Letters to Santa Years ago, youngsters wrote letters to Father Christmas asking for the presents they had long dreamed of, and they waited with great expectancy for Christmas morning to arrive when their hopes would be fulfilled. These letters were sent up the chimney. (In fact, I remember doing this myself in childhood days!) Since the 1950s youngsters have been able to write to Santa and post their requests to Santa's Workshops, which have been established in various

countries by the postal authorities who organise replies to be sent to these children. The replies are usually in the form of a colourful attractive card or letter to the great joy and delight of the recipients. The Scandinavian countries were the first to initiate these schemes; the earliest one I have in my collection is dated 1950 and is from Greenland. Finland, Denmark, Lapland, America, France, Austria and New Zealand have taken part in similar schemes. Great Britain introduced the Santa mail service in 1963, replies being sent from Santa's Grotto, Reindeerland. The Japanese postal authority introduced the service a few years ago.

Several countries now claim to be the home of Father Christmas, and offer various facilities such as reindeer sleigh rides and other tourist attractions. One of Santa's homes and Workshops is in a village which was established on 1 November 1991, on the Arctic Circle in Rovaniemi, Lapland. Its post office uses a special cancellation, and it has a Santa workshop, gift shop, residence and reindeer farm; there is also a restaurant, and even petrol pumps.

To bring Santa up to date, he can be contacted on internet web-sites, allowing him to keep in touch with children worldwide in the most modern manner, which proves he has also progressed as times have changed. One web-site address is: www.northpole.co.uk •

Philately on-line Ron Negus revisits Stanley Gibbons sites



IN JUNE 2003, I wrote in this column about the improvements that Stanley Gibbons had made in their allworldstamps.com site. This is devoted to providing on-line access to their standard catalogues, and to giving a facility for collectors to record details of their own holdings. Since then, the Gibbons team have been continuing to work on the internet pages for all their activities. In September of this year, a press release from the Company announced that the Stanleygibbons.com site – the main internet access point for their various businesses – had been relaunched. It stated that the new design provided ‘all Stanley Gibbons web services under one roof to create the web’s largest philatelic resource’.

When you call up the Stanleygibbons.com site the screen shown above appears. At the bottom of this original page, a ‘click here’ option takes you to the Welcome page. At the top of this, eight index tabs provide the means of viewing each of the sections under which the site is now organised. This initial page includes a keyword search facility, administrative details and a pop-up currency converter. The latter feature will be of assistance to users outside the UK and underlines the international nature of Gibbons’ business.

One of the problems with any catalogue is that it only covers stamps issued up to a few months prior to its publication date. Depending upon the particular catalogue, this might mean just a few issues are not listed. On the other hand, it might mean a gap in the listings of a number of years. Whilst the new issue sections in stamp magazines

www.stanleygibbons.com Another part of this redesigned Stanley Gibbons site is entitled Price Guide. This has a form that can be used to enter the name of a country, an issue year and/or an SG number to search for the particular page in their catalogue that contains matching details. A link to their All World Stamps site is also provided here.

usually provide the missing information, they are not always convenient for all collectors. Gibbons have recognised this problem and provide a New Issues and Topicals section on their site. This replaces what used to be called StampC@fe. Here users can search for new issues by country or by theme. The amount of information supplied depends upon the country, since Gibbons can only provide information they have been given by the issuing Post Offices. Collectors know this can vary from an announcement of the number of stamps and their face values, up to full printing information plus narratives about individual designs.

Another feature here is a listing of the Top 20 countries and themes that have been searched for. Also within this New Issues section there is a glossary of stamp terms and what is termed New Issues Chat. This is a moderated e-mail chat area provided to allow collectors to discuss topics of interest with each other. It can also be used by them as a forum for stamp exchange.

Another section, which will be of general interest, is headed News and Articles. This includes a full copy of the current *Gibbons Stamp Monthly* magazine as well as an archive of selected articles from previous issues. Of significance is the section here in which readers can request articles they would like to see produced on-line from any issue of the magazine from 1890 onwards. A listing of those already produced is shown under the heading ‘Requested Articles’.

Gibbons have done a good job with this restyling, and the site is highly recommended •

Autumn Stampex The Editor reports on some fine exhibits



Autumn Stampex at the Business Design Centre in London.

AS USUAL there were a number of excellent exhibits to interest collectors of GB stamps and postal history. 'GB The First Line Engraved Postage Stamps', entered by 'Mayflower', included Penny Black imprimaturs, notices to postmasters, multiples of the various shades of black, and examples of cancellation experiments. Covers included one for 6 May from wine merchants Sandeman, Forster & Co from Lombard Street to Norwich, a block of four on part cover from Trowbridge (23 May), and a block of six on cover from Chester to Manchester (9 May). An example of late use was two strips of five with black Maltese Cross on a cover from Stone to London in July 1841. There were more fine early line-engraved items in Lady Mairi Bury's exhibit, including a 6 May cover from Lombard Street to Bedale, Yorkshire with the date of arrival noted as 8 May, and a block of eight on cover from Cranbrook to Maidstone. Howard Hughes presented 'The Maltese Cross: its Working Life, Redundancy and Semi-retirement' which included a wrapper with Penny Black cancelled by black MX on 31 August 1840 – the first day of experimental use of black ink at the 2d Post Chief Office; and a cover with the first official use of black, 10 February 1841 together with late use of MX cancels in combination with numeral obliterations, 1844-46.

Charles Jolliffe displayed 'The 25p Rose Red "Elliptical Security Issue"' Machin – some 48 sheets covering all aspects of this stamp – differ-

ent printers, fluors, varieties, coil wrappers, booklet panes, and even some used perfin. The only thing that seemed missing was one used on a genuine commercial cover during its period as the basic 1st class UK letter rate.

Postal history H J Neumann's 'The Mail to the Continent' contained a number of 17th century letters including a letter from Dover to Antwerp via the Taxis post (1639), and one from London to Antwerp which took 14 days in 1656. Later items included a letter from Edinburgh to St Petersburg which took 17 days in 1856. P Bovington's 'The Postal History of the Highlands & Islands of Scotland' included a letter, probably delivered by Jacobite soldiers, from Thurso to Orkney in March 1746 during the Jacobite uprising – the letter refers to 150 men and officers being sent to Orkney 'to help with the task'. After the Battle of Culloden the following month, several landowners' houses in Orkney's northern isles were burned by the Hanoverian troops. Also shown were late use of a 2d Mulready wrapper from Halkirk, Caithness to Thurso (1844), an 1841 cover sent from Barrahead lighthouse to Robert Stevenson, Engineer for the Northern Lighthouses in Edinburgh, and examples of rare Scots local cancels. The 'Mayflower' display of 'The Development and Reuse of the Mulready Envelope and Letter Sheet Stationery' contained proofs, including one presented to Robert Wallace, proponent of postal reform, in March 1840; examples overprinted SPECIMEN by the Inland Revenue in 1858, probably for stock-taking purposes on Mulready envelopes not destroyed; a Mulready used on 10 May 1840; examples with red and black Maltese Cross cancels; and one uprated with a Penny Black (plate 1a) for weight to 1 ounce.

Geoffrey Hood's 'More than a Pretty Picture' on the subject of heraldry included a licence of 1916 to use armorial bearings, and made good use of stamps, postal stationery, postmarks, perfins and booklets to tell the story. Dieter Bortfeldt's 'Royal Cypher Labels 1701-1922' was well presented with illustrations of each monarch from

William & Mary to George V. He showed actual documents as well as stamps on piece, often identified by sheet position. The labels in Victoria's reign were printed in the same sheet size as the Penny Black and by the same printer, Perkins, Bacon & Petch.

Social philately Peter Wordie's 'Arctic Exploration 1822-1922' told an interesting story with letters, watercolour sketches, and maps; amongst the interesting items were balloon messages for Sir John Ross's relief expedition of 1850 and Spitzbergen tourist mail of the 1890s. Margaret Morris's exhibit was an excellent example of this relatively new class whereby philatelic and related material is used to tell a social story. Her subject was 'Astronomical Communication in the 19th Century'. A key item was a postcard sent in February 1877 with an eye-witness account of a lunar eclipse: 'I saw the Eclipse reach totality at 6.33 Till about 6.10 it was hidden by horizon mist and smoke. It is now (6.45) looking lurid. The totality will last till 8.9, the approximate diameter of the shadow being about three times that of the moon. The light will appear on the S.E. Side and we shall have good moonlight at 9, and at 10 it will have cleaned the penumbra!' Unfortunately the card, sent from Normanton to Brigg, was unsigned so the eye-witness remains unknown. Mrs Morris showed some of the correspondence of Dr John Lee (1783-1866), a well-known astronomer who had a superbly equipped private observatory near Aylesbury. In the part of her exhibit on the Royal Observatory in Edinburgh, she included the William Playfair aerogramme which shows the City Observatory on Calton Hill, which became the Royal Observatory after the visit of George IV.

The thematic category included interesting and enjoyable exhibits. In 'Airports', Thomas Fowler showed the 2002 Airliners miniature sheet which illustrated by a diagrammatic representation on the border and perforations an airliner crossing the threshold and landing on the runway – I wonder how many purchasers of the sheet realised that! William McKinlay's 'Gears' demonstrated the importance of these to industry with a good mix of stamps and other items, especially relevant post-

marks. Richard Wheeler's 'Masks, Myths and the Evolution of Puppets' included a number of GB items such as the 1964 Shakespeare airletter, 1996 Muffin the Mule and 2001 Punch & Judy stamps. I was curious as to how GB would be included in David Hunter's 'Sources and Uses of Sugar' – he featured a number of meter impressions from sugar refiners and importers and a pane from a prestige stamp book depicting William Wilberforce, campaigner against slavery (much used on sugar plantations), the 1967 1s penicillin stamp – sugar is used to grow penicillin – and the 1985 17p Lifeboat and 1970 5d Commonwealth Games stamps, the relevance being the use of sugar in survival kits and for energy for athletes.

The Youth exhibits were, as always, well worth looking at for the enthusiasm that the young collectors put into their displays. Gugandeep Dhalwal is to be congratulated on an interesting survey of 'The Royal Mail Network' showing not only definitive stamps, but Recorded and Special Delivery, and International Signed For service labels and covers, books, airletters, undelivered mail, certificates of posting, international reply coupons, customs declaration labels and the 'ambulance bags' used to deliver damaged mail – covering a whole range of services and items often overlooked by adult collectors! William Rookes's 'Posting a Letter' included early mail, and covered postal transport from mail coaches to postbuses and TPOs, as well as post boxes – a colourful and pleasing exhibit.

I spent about two hours on the Friday looking at the exhibits, and sadly found only a few others doing likewise. This is a pity as a lot of effort goes into putting together the exhibits and a lot can be learned from them – even exhibits not specifically on your particular collecting interests. I always come away with notes on items I hadn't seen before and which would fit into one of my collections, hopeful I might one day find and acquire them. I also pick up tips for improving the writing-up and presentation of my own material. The time spent looking at the exhibits is never wasted. I now look forward to the Society displays at Spring Stampex and the National Competitions next Autumn •

Mainly Machins D G A Myall looks at this year's Christmas



2004 1st class Christmas book, and the two 1966 designs. This year's Christmas products were reviewed in the *Bulletin* in September and October.

Christmas stamps This year's issue comprises six stamps with a value of £3.26. They were issued in sheets of 50 (matrix-stripped and rouletted to enable single stamps to be separated for sale over post office counters), books (z-folded sheetlets) of 12 × 1st and 24 × 2nd, Smilers generic sheets of 10 of each inland class and, for the first time, a miniature sheet of one of each stamp.

Cylinder books and sheets are surprisingly rare for one of Royal Mail's largest print orders of the year. At the time of writing the only ones known are all D1, plus D2 1st and 2nd class, the prefix indicating that the printer was De La Rue. There is none on the Smilers or miniature sheets. All the stamps are self-adhesives except for those on the miniature sheet. These are on OBA-free paper gummed PVA and APS-perforated 15. The sheet and book stamps have simulated die-cut perforations with the same gauge. None has ellipses. All are overprinted with blue fluor phosphor bars. The 2nd class stamp has a single 4.5mm bar centrally placed. The others have the standard 9mm bar at each side, the unusual width helping to ensure a good signal in the sorting machines in view of the strong colours of the stamps. These bars are vignettted to reduce the visual impact of the bars. These comprise a 6.5mm fine screen plus a 2.5mm coarse screen. The sequence on a single stamp is: 7.5 + 2.5 at the left and 2.5 + 6.5 at the right. The difference in the screens can be clearly seen with the aid of a ×10 glass.

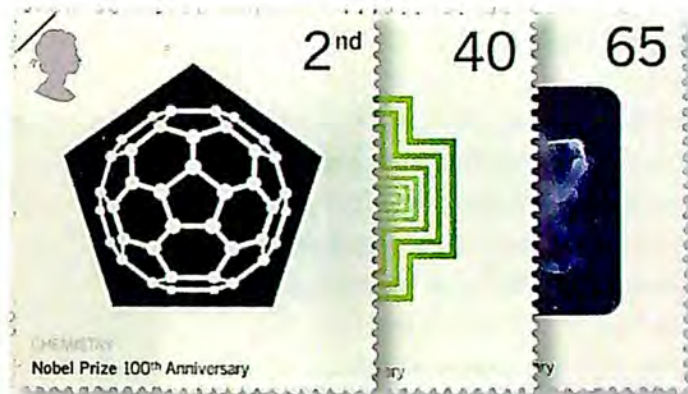
Our first Christmas stamps were issued in 1966. There were just two designs, a King of the Orient (3d) and a snowman (1s6d) designed by the £20 prizewinners of a children's competition in which there were 4500 entries. Since then there has been a special Christmas set every year. The themes have varied from secular to religious with, as one would expect in a Christian country, the religious predominating (I include designs based on carols in the religious group). The 35 years from 1966 produced eight secular designs, 26 religious and one mixed. That was in 1981 when Jesus Christ, an angel (not, apparently, Gabriel), Joseph and Mary, and the three kings, were joined by Father Christmas. The last four years' designs have been secular, so maybe next year will see a religious theme once again. Today's society is, of course, much more multicultural than before and there is scope for recognising important events on other dates in other faiths, such as, for example, Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism and Judaism.

Printing methods Collectors are always interested in the method used by printers to produce stamps and it is commonplace to treat as collectable the same design produced by more than one method. There are three basic methods, distinguished by whether the image is below, on, or above the surface of the material, called the substrate. The traditional methods are: intaglio and gravure, where the ink is below the surface, letterpress and lith-

stamps, novel printing techniques, and the 'Universal' books



Stamps from the *Profile on Print* prestige stamp book issued in 1999: examples of letterpress (left) and intaglio printing.



From the Nobel Prizes issue of 2001: stamps (from left) printed in thermochromic and odoriferous inks, and a holographic foil.

ography, where it is on the surface, and embossing where the image is often raised above it. All have been used on our stamps. Examples of four of them exist in the *Profile on Print* prestige book.

Advances in printing technology have led to new and remarkable methods being used today for special occasions or purposes. Some of these were used in the Nobel Prizes issue of 2 October 2001, including thermochromic and odoriferous (smelling of eucalyptus) inks, micro printing and holographic foils. In addition to these, we have had optically variable ink for The Queen's head on some of the Castles definitives. Then there is the Braille printing on the £10 Britannia stamp. What else might be in store for us? Well, Switzerland have issued stamps smelling of chocolate (this is not an April fool jape), one made of lace (not an image of lace) using a specially manufactured polyester thread and, last September, one made of wood. The latter is made of fir and is 0.7mm thick. It reveals the grain of the wood and in fact every stamp is different in this respect. Try getting a complete collection of them! A cancelling machine and ink had to be custom-made for this product. It is, of course, purely philatelic, but so are many of today's stamps, including prestige books and miniature sheets.

Issues like these from Switzerland are meant to promote products for which the country is particularly renowned. Other countries are similarly motivated in planning their stamp programme.

Another new technique was used for a stamp issued last September by Austria. The firm Swarovski is world-famous for its crystal ware which it has been creating for more than 100 years. The new stamp issue is a miniature sheet containing two stamps depicting a crystal and a swan respectively. The unique feature of the images is that each has highlights achieved by applying Swarovski crystals to the surface. The stamps, which are valid for postage, have a face value of 3.75 euro, and the sheet costs 7.50 euro, about £5.20. What next, I wonder?

What do you call them? A reader has chided me for calling the stamps with an airmail stripe at the right 'chevron' stamps. He is right (the images are half chevrons, although if you open out an airmail envelope you will see full chevrons). He has given me a problem; what to call the stamps? The three concerned are all airmail stamps, but so are many others, notably their value equivalents which do not have the airmail image. (See, for example, the Christmas stamps mentioned earlier.) Royal Mail call them Universal stamps but I do not find this wholly satisfactory; two are marked 'Worldwide' but one is 'Europe'; two pay more than one weight step, but one is for postcards. A short name is needed to distinguish these unique NVIs from stamps without airmail bars. If you have any suggestions you can e-mail them to me at: deegam@btopenworld.com •

Enjoyment in retirement Still enthusiastic at 90, Dorothy Martin offers an example to us all, suggests Richard West

WHAT IS THE BEST AGE at which to start stamp collecting? Does it have to be when you're young? Not necessarily, but it is always good to be young at heart – if you need proof, have a word with Dorothy Martin. Dorothy will be celebrating her goth birthday this Christmas, and is still as active as ever with the hobby. In fact, without it, she believes 'I would have been pushing up the daisies long ago'. It is only fairly recently that she gave up organising the annual North-East Philatelic Week-ends, but surprisingly she never collected as a child, and it was only when nearing retirement that she was introduced to stamps.



It all started with the England Winners stamp of 1966, and a sudden realisation of the existence of commemoratives. Might stamp collecting be a hobby in retirement? Still another two years would pass, then a visit to London suddenly prompted the purchase of a Windsor stamp album and a £20 packet of GB stamps, quite a hefty outlay for a total beginner. Even husband Bob was bitten by the bug, so while Dorothy collected GB, Bob focused on New Zealand. Sadly the New Zealand collection was stolen in a burglary, so a fresh start was made with Australia. Not that stamps were new to Bob: he had acquired his father's collection of Penny Blacks, but this was sold to finance the purchase of a cricket bat.

Acting on the persuasion of work colleagues, Dorothy, and Bob, joined the Newcastle upon Tyne Philatelic Society 'the best move I have ever made'. Meeting other collectors, buying through the exchange packet and discovering more thanks to the library all proved invaluable. She decided to collect Malta, inspired by the designs of E Cremona, and Ireland, although she did not persist with either for long. However, her quest to discover more led Dorothy to have a go at thematic collecting: but what theme should she choose? She tried several: birds, flowers, Christmas, art

and music. In the end she opted for Christmas, aiming to amass a complete collection: 'how wrong I was'.

Quickly realising that even non-Christian countries were not averse to issuing Christmas stamps, she decided to focus upon other aspects of the season, such as Christmas flights, Christmas cancellations, Christingle – in other words, anything associat-

ed with Christmas, other than just stamps. The art and music are still continued, and Dorothy has recently started collecting the theme of glass – not a large theme, but she enjoys the challenge of trying something different.

There is an item in the Christmas collection which is highly treasured. It is a cover, one of 40 carried on the first unofficial air mail, at Christmas 1937, from Kirkwell, Orkney to Fair Isle, for which the pilot, Captain J Annesley Hawkins, dressed as Santa Claus. It was sent to Dorothy from someone enquiring about one of her philatelic week-ends, who felt she would 'make better use of it'. This cover was shown in the *Bulletin* in December 1997.

In 1970 Dorothy became Secretary of the Society at Newcastle, and both she and Bob were anxious to attract the best speakers. Inspiration came when they attended one of the philatelic week-ends then held at Tring: not only for finding potential speakers, but also to hold a similar event in the North-east. As a result, Dorothy and Bob teamed up with Desmond Graham and Len Armstrong, and together they organised, and in fact sponsored, the first philatelic week-end held in Newcastle in 1975, and annually since.

The aim has always been to bring people together and provide distinguished speakers. Sadly both Bob and Len died about 15 years ago, but Dorothy and Desmond continued until they had clocked up 25 years. Thereafter the week-ends have been organised by Valerie Beeken and Cliff Garside. (*Richard writes about Cliff next month.* ED)

Over the years Dorothy has gladly acknowledged those who have helped and inspired her, such as Margaret Morris and the late Alfred Branston, Franceska Rapkin and Ken Seymour. She is still active in her interests, acquiring material from dealers and auctions, as well as the exchange packet, mounting her material on SG Senator Standard album leaves. Where a collection started as hand-written, she continues in the same style; for new collections the pages are computer generated. She is not only a member of Newcastle, but also of Gateshead, of the Philatelic Music Circle, the Guild of St Gabriel, and is a Fellow of The Royal Philatelic Society London. Thirteen years ago she established the North East Thematic Society, which is still going strong today and meeting monthly in Durham, on Saturday afternoons.

Still as vibrant and enthusiastic as ever, Dorothy is proof once again of how beneficial stamp collecting can be for those who have reached retirement age. For all that she has achieved in the hobby, she has received the North East Philatelic Association Award of Merit, and was nominated for a Rowland Hill Award •

DOROTHY MARTIN FACT FILE

Early days Dorothy was born in Cambridge, moved to the North-east in 1947, and married Bob in 1963.

Career Dorothy first worked as a seed analyst for the National Institute of Agricultural Botany, then became a representative for Horner's sweets, before moving on to the Union Match Company and Cremona Toffees. As a representative she was obliged to learn to drive.

Travel Since her husband Bob died she has not really taken any holidays, and one of Dorothy's regrets is that she has not travelled more.

Hobbies Apart from stamps, she enjoys watching tennis, and at one time played. Despite her fairly large garden, she finds gardening is a 'chore'.

Dislikes She does have a couple of 'pet hates'. One is those who talk during a presentation given by a speaker to a philatelic society, and the second is those giving the presentation who do not speak up.

Stamp collecting Dorothy can see a time when people will no longer collect, and cites the membership figures of philatelic societies, and the fact that fewer are joining the clubs. However, she does feel the hobby could be given a boost if more of the retired, or those whose children have now grown up and left home, were encouraged to collect.

Readers' reports



Mobile Post Offices May I update the information given in Martin Robinson's interesting article on Mobile Post Offices (June). The Cornwall and Devon MPO was transferred from Bere Alston PO, Devon in February of 2003. The Postmaster of Rilla Mill, Callington, Cornwall took over control. The villages served are as stated except that Egloskenny is visited on Tuesdays and there is no Wednesday run. The vehicle illustrated has been replaced by a newer one and the handstamp is as shown here. The Postmaster reports that the service is very well supported, with several hundred people using it every week.

Cumbria is the only other MPO now operating. That there are no others is surprising when so many rural POs are being closed down as uneconomic. G MAHONEY, PAIGNTON, DEVON •



Special Handstamp Centre I was sorry to read in the September *Bulletin* that the Special Handstamp Centre at Slough has now closed. Perhaps through your columns I could thank the staff at Slough (and those who were at Windsor before the move to Slough) for their efficient service to all the covers that I forwarded for handstamping over the past four decades. TONY RUSSELL, TONBRIDGE •

The Editor is always very pleased to receive contributions for Readers' Reports – adding information to that already published, so benefiting fellow philatelists. All letters are carefully read; matters relating to British stamp policy and design are referred to the relevant senior managers. The Editor regrets he is unable to reply personally to letters.

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



September identify The detail is from the 2004 2nd class Christmas stamp. The winner was E Schulze of Germany.

September knowledge The answers are: 1) Sally Stiff; 2) 1994; 3) Singapore. The winner was J Sparham of Kent.

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

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

- 1 Who designed the 1965 6d 700th Anniversary of Parliament stamp?
- 2 Which issue of the Millennium stamps features Gannets?
- 3 Who is Chairman of Royal Mail Group plc?

Send your answer (addressed to either December *Identify* competition or December *Knowledge* competition), name and address on a postcard or back of a sealed envelope to: British Philatelic Bulletin, Royal Mail, 148 Old Street, London EC1V 9HQ. The senders of the first cards drawn in each competition on 10 January will each receive £100. Ten runner-up prizes of presentation packs or first day covers will be awarded in each competition. These competitions are not open to Royal Mail employees •

Events

27 November Association of GB First Day Cover Collectors 'pub meeting' at Ship & Shovel, Craven Passage, London WC2, 15.00. Enquiries R Park, 2 Chaffinch Close, Horsham RH12 5HA.

27 November Phil Soc Annual Fair at Pudsey Civic Hall. Includes regional meeting of the GB Philatelic Society.

27 November Welsh Phil Soc meeting at Old Barn, Morriston, Swansea. Enquiries N Prior, 20 Heol Street, North Cornelly, Bridgend CF33 4EY.

3-5 December MonacoPhil 2004 exhibition of rare stamps. Dealers, etc, at Musee des Timbres et des Monnaies, Monaco, 10.00-18.00. Enquiries +377 93 15 41 50.

7 December Lecture 'The A-Z of Special Stamps' by Barry Robinson at Postal Heritage Trust, Phoenix Centre, Phoenix Place, London WC1, 19.00. Admission by free ticket. Enquiries 020 7239 2570, or e-mail heritage@royalmail.com

23-27 February Spring Stampex at Business Design Centre, London N1. Display by Postal Stationery Society and GB Philatelic Society. Enquiries Philatelic Traders' Society 01252 628006.

24-26 February Philatex. Royal Horticultural Society New Hall, Greycoat Street, London SW1. Enquiries C Rainey 01793 513431 or T Davis, 020 8946 4489, or see website www.stampshows.co.uk •

Late news



Royal Mail update Shown above is the joint cover with Raymond Briggs Christmas stamps for both Royal Mail and Isle of Man; it is available from Tallents House price £7.95 (order code XA034) •

The 2004 continuation pages for the Royal Mail Deluxe Album are now available from Tallents House, price £14.95. Continuation pages for the Royal Mail Smilers Album are also now available, priced at £5.99. For details and prices of our full range of albums and publications see the Tallents House stocklist. A new Royal Mail Stockbook is now available – see page 105 for details •

In October and November *Bulletins* we asked you to suggest subjects for future stamp issues, and to nominate subjects under consideration for 2007. Our Stamp Programme Manager, Russell Hawkins, is delighted by the response from nearly 200 *Bulletin* readers and thanks all who wrote in with some very interesting suggestions •

Royal Mail's SmartStamp received the Best Use of Technology Award at the National Business Awards on 8 November. We were up against tough competition from some excellent companies, including Royal Bank of Scotland, Barclaycard, GSH, and moneysupermarket.com •

Auctions Grosvenor's GB auction on 10 December will include a spectacular cover sent from Banff to Berlin via Hull in August 1841 bearing eight 2d Blues for the 1s4d rate for a private ship letter, and a marginal block of four of the 1913 Waterlow 10s Seahorse stamp. Enquiries: Grosvenor 020 7379 8789 •

People news Congratulations to Brian Warren, an occasional contributor to this magazine, on his success at Stampa (the Irish national stamp exhibition) in October. Brian was awarded a gold, EPA medal, David Feldman Trophy and Irish Security Stamp Printing Ltd Trophy for his exhibit 'The Gerl Definitives – Decimal Watermarked Issues' •

Literature The 2005 edition of Stanley Gibbons *Commonwealth & British Empire Stamps 1840-1952* is now available, priced £44.95. Prices have been extensively revised, mostly upwards. A further selection of watermark varieties and plate flaws have been added and many of those previously unpriced now have a quotation. The new *Collect Motor Vehicles on Stamps* (£22.95) lists cars, vans, trucks, buses, motorcycles and all other road vehicles, as well as vehicle manufacturers, roads, road safety campaigns, and other relevant subjects. Listings are by country, with prices for individual stamps or complete sets. Available from SG's Strand shop or from Stanley Gibbons Ltd, Parkside, Ringwood BH24 3SH. Mail order number: 0800 611622 (Mon-Fri 08.30-17.00) •

The Autumn issue of *Cross Post*, journal of the Friends of Postal Heritage, includes features on the 1974 Churchill stamps, Elizabethan Chancery Warrants, the Cash on Delivery service, philatelic research at the British Library, and on Epsom and Ashford (Middlesex) post offices. For details of the Friends contact Mrs A Harms, 13 Amethyst Ave, Davis Estate, Chatham ME5 9TX •

Bulletin back issues Graham More has vols 7-40 of the *Bulletin* free to anyone willing to collect – contact him on 020 8777 1155. Mr K Morris offers a run from 1975-2000 to anyone willing to collect – contact him on 01902 757028 •

Christmas post UK readers are reminded that the last posting dates for Christmas for standard (UK) parcels is 15 December, 2nd class letters 18 December, 1st class 21 December, and Special Delivery 22 December. Post early for Christmas •

Royal Mail albums Two great special offers



Deluxe Album
PA696 £34.95



**First Day Cover and
Presentation Pack Albums**
PA693 £38.00

Royal Mail's Deluxe Albums, which come complete with plastic mounts to secure your stamps safely, have been specially designed to carefully preserve your collection. As an exclusive offer to *Bulletin* readers, the Deluxe Album can now be bought for just £34.95, a saving of £5 on the normal price. Individual pages pre-printed with guides for each series are available separately.

In addition, First Day Covers and Presentation Pack collectors can buy Royal Mail's First Day Cover and Presentation Pack Albums with matching slipcases for a combined price of just £38 – a saving of £5. The First Day Cover Album comes with 15 leaves, holding up to 64 Covers, while the Presentation Pack Album is supplied with 16 leaves, accommodating 64 Presentation Packs. Extra leaves for both albums are available from Tallents House.

To order call 08457 641 641, quoting code PA696 for the Deluxe Album and PA693 for the double First Day Cover and Presentation Pack Albums offer. Orders must reach us by 31 December 2004.

Stop press The 2004 Deluxe Album continuation pages are now available from Tallents House.

Royal Mail

Tallents House, 21 South Gyle
Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB
Telephone orders: UK 08457
641 641; overseas +44 131 316
7483



5 014721 103112



Review

The information service *for*
collectors and cover producers

DECEMBER 2004

Special announcement to cover producers The number of requests for announcements in this Review has grown rapidly in recent months. Regrettably we must now restrict announcements to one cover per producer per month •

Mid-Suffolk Light Railway Museum had a special steaming weekend on 18/19 September to celebrate the centenary of the line opening for goods traffic. Covers were prepared showing Manning Wardle 0-6-0 saddle tank *Lady Stephenson*, the first loco to haul trains on the line. This cover bears two (of six) new MSLR 25p carriage labels tied by cachet and Royal Mail 28p Classic Locomotives stamp cancelled by a Bluebell Railway sponsored handstamp dated 20 September. Price £3.25. Four of the new labels show '00' gauge models of rolling stock, and two show actual stock. Labels cost £1.50 for block of six or £3 for A5 sheet (two blocks) or £5 A4 sheet (four blocks). Postage 50p UK/£1 overseas. Remittances payable to B R Reynolds •

MID-SUFFOLK LIGHT RAILWAY 19.09.2004

Celebrates the Centenary of the opening
of the line to goods traffic
20th September 1904

The line was far from complete at this time and *Lady Stephenson*, the contractors locomotive, hauled the trains until the Middy's locomotives were delivered from Hudswell Clarke, Leeds, at the beginning of November



Orders and enquiries B R Reynolds, 4 Chandlers Walk, Stowmarket IP14 2DT. Telephone 01449 613319.

A G Bradbury Royal Mail issued its first miniature sheet of Christmas stamps on 2 November. The six stamps contained in this sheet will be gummed, as distinct from those more commonly available, ie self-adhesives. The stamps feature brand new illustrations of Father Christmas by best-selling cartoonist and author Raymond Briggs. To coincide with this issue, Adrian Bradbury has produced a cover featuring a Victorian engraving by Thomas Nast: 'Twas the night before Christmas, and all through the house, Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse'. The picture shows a family of mice snug in bed on a book shelf with Father Christmas smiling down from a picture frame above. Each cover is individually numbered on the reverse in a limited edition of 500. Price £17.50 postpaid. Order online at www.bfde.co.uk – just type Christmas in the search box •



Orders and enquiries A G Bradbury, 3 Link Road, Leicester LE2 3RA. Telephone 0116 2705367.



Orders and enquiries Isle of Pabay, Broadford, Isle of Skye IV49 9BP. Website www.pabay.org

Isle of Pabay Four new island stamps (local carriage labels) were issued on 16 September, the day of issue of Royal Mail's Woodland Animals stamps. The Pabay stamps feature: 25p Otter, 50p Rabbit, 75p Shrew, and £1 Seal, printed as a block of four. Price £2.50 per set. FDCs were serviced with the Pabay stamps cancelled by the island's first day postmark, and a Royal Mail Woodland Animals stamp with Tallents House first day postmark, price £5. Postage £1 UK and Europe, £2.50 elsewhere •



Orders and enquiries GB Covers, 102 Regal Way, Kenton, Harrow HA3 0RY. E-mail waldo@metronet.co.uk

GB Covers Hand made, limited edition, full set official FDCs are produced by the founder and Life President of the GBFDC (Association of Collectors of GB First Day Covers) for Association members. The cover for the Crimea stamps is illustrated from a Barry Hawkins watercolour of HMS *Hecla* bombarding Bomersund Garrison in the Aland Islands on 21 June 1854, when Charles Davis Lucas won the first VC. A limited edition print and informative insert is included. Strictly limited to 70 signed and numbered, a few remain for sale at £22.50 postpaid •



Orders and enquiries Wildlife Habitat (Conservation Stamp) Trust, Marford Mill, Rossett, Wrexham LL12 0HL. Telephone 01244 573027 (orders) or 01244 573014 (information).

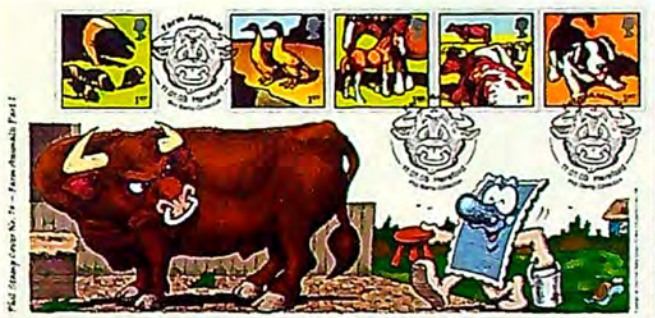
Wildlife Habitat Trust The Trust's 2004/5 Habitat Stamp (the 14th) was issued in July. It features a painting of a Snipe by Darren Rees. Stamps are available mint at £5 or in miniature sheet of six with decorative border at £30. First day covers were serviced bearing the stamp cancelled by a WHT datestamp and a Royal Mail 1st class definitive bearing a sponsored WHT Wrexham special handstamp dated 23 July 2004. Price £15. Postage 50p •



Orders and enquiries Nene Valley Railway (Stamps), Wansford Station, Stibington, Peterborough PE8 6LR. Telephone 01780 784444.

Nene Valley Railway A 25p railway letter stamp featuring the former station at Wansford was issued on 16 September. This new stamp is available at face value (£2.25 for a sheet of nine) plus postage. First day covers were serviced bearing the new stamp cancelled by a Nene Valley Railway Woodland Animals handstamp, and Royal Mail Woodland Animals stamp(s) cancelled by a Fox Green Birmingham special postmark. £3 with a single Royal Mail stamp, or £5 with the full set •

Phil Stamp Covers have produced two amusing cartoon covers for the Farm Animals issue on 11 January. The first cover, Farm Animals: Part 1, as shown here, features Phil Stamp innocently approaching an enraged bull for milking. The Part 2 cover shows Phil and his side-kick Snail Mail rounding up a bemused flock of sheep. The covers are cancelled with their official 'Hereford' and 'Woolley, Wakefield' handstamps. The limited edition covers, of only 100 numbered copies, are priced at £12.85 each, including postage to any destination. The complete collection of Phil Stamp Covers can be viewed and purchased online at www.philstampcovers.co.uk •



Orders and enquiries Phil Stamp Covers, PO Box 178, Dartford DA2 7YE. Telephone (Steve Oliver) 01322 278674. E-mail sales@philstampcovers.co.uk

Benham Royal Mail's 2004 Christmas stamps feature drawings of Father Christmas by Raymond Briggs, from his very popular Christmas book and film. In a sequence, they show Father Christmas on his journey delivering his precious load of gifts. First day covers are available with the six stamps cancelled by a pictorial postmark for Rudolf Road, London E13 and the miniature sheet for Yule Tide Close, London NW10. Price £9.95 each, postage and packing £1.95. When ordering please quote media and product codes: stamps cover BPB0412A/BLCS291A; miniature sheet BPB0412A/BLCS292B, and mention Philatelic Bulletin •



Orders and enquiries Benham House, Freepost DR175, Folkestone CT20 1BR. Telephone 01303 226777.

M Tanner has published this Woodland Animals colour first day cover limited to just 15 numbered copies. The cover photography features two pine martens in a territorial confrontation, a red squirrel, and a fox. The full set of 10 Royal Mail Woodland Animals stamps are cancelled in silver five times with the Stampex/Woodland animals pictorial handstamp of 16 September. Each cover comes with a colour filler postcard of the overall image. Price £16.99 UK/£17.99 overseas postpaid. Additional postcards are available at 60p each plus 60p UK/£1.20 overseas postage per order if ordered separately. Visa/Mastercard credit cards accepted with £1.50 handling charge per transaction. Some 'Owl' items are still available – send three 1st class stamps for photocopy or lists •



Orders and enquiries M Tanner, 180 Whitehorse Road, West Croydon CR0 2LA. Fax/answerphone 020 8684 9757 (credit card orders only).



Orders and enquiries Lundy (Stamps), Bideford, Devon
EX39 2LY. Telephone 01237 431831.

Lundy A miniature sheet containing four local stamps (local carriage labels) was issued on 1 November by Lundy, a small island in the Bristol Channel, to mark the 75th anniversary of its local postal service and stamp issues. The stamps feature the first two stamp issues of 1929, the then owner M C Harman, and F W Gade who was Lundy Agent and Postmaster for many years. The sheet costs £2.07 and is also available in a presentation pack and on FDC at £2.60 each. The cover shows the *Lerina*, the island mailboat 1921-50, and bears the sheet cancelled by a special postmark and a Lundy meter impression for the Royal Mail postage. Postage & handling £1 UK, £1.50 Europe, £2 worldwide •

Cover producers wishing to announce a **recent** or **forthcoming** cover should submit typed copy of up to 100 words. Please follow the style above: the text should give a brief description of the cover, state the stamps and postmarks it will bear and give retail price and address to which collectors should send orders or write for further information. Announcements are published on a first-come-first-served basis, and may be modified or shortened at the Editor's discretion. Copy for consideration for the February 2004 *Review* should be sent to The Editor, *British Philatelic Bulletin*, Royal Mail, 148 Old Street, London EC1V 9HQ by 5 December. Copy for March should arrive by 9 January. The Editor regrets he cannot enter into correspondence or telephone conversations with collectors or cover producers concerning covers announced in this *Review*.