

BRITISH PHILATELIC

The ROYAL MAIL magazine *for stamp collectors*

Volume 44 Number 2

OCTOBER 2006 £1.20

Bulletin

Beatles stamps • Fiction as a theme • Sounds of Britain



The Sounds of Britain issue: on sale from 3 October



Forthcoming issues and withdrawals



Cover The Blues guitarist as shown on the 72p Sounds of Britain stamp. Photograph by Paul Smith, reproduced here courtesy of CDT design.

Time lapse We regret last month's Bulletin was wrongly dated 2005 on the front cover.

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

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

26 September	Issue Sounds of Britain stamp cards.
29 September	Withdrawal Pillar to Post stamp ingot covers (five).
2 October	Issue 6 x 1st stamp book (PIP definitives) with Stamp Collecting label on inside front cover.
3 October	Issue Sounds of Britain stamps and presentation pack; rolls of 1000 of 1st and 2nd class standard size definitives in revised (PIP) design.
5 October	Withdrawal The Ashes miniature sheet and presentation pack.
17 October	Issue Smilers stamps – new designs, definitive size. Book of six, Generic sheet and stamp cards.
17 October	Withdrawal Trafalgar stamps, miniature sheet, pack and stamp cards (prestige book, coin, ingot & cachet covers to remain on sale).
24 October	Issue Stamp ingot – Edward VIII 1d stamp.
31 October	Issue 2006 Christmas stamp cards (six stamps and miniature sheet).
31 October	Withdrawal 2005 Christmas stamps, miniature sheet, presentation pack, stamp cards, stamp books, Generic sheet • 2004 Christmas airletters.
7 November	Issue 2006 Christmas stamps, miniature sheet, presentation pack, Generic sheet, Smilers sheets (two), stamp books and airletters (national & Welsh).
9 November	Issue Lest We Forget miniature sheet, presentation pack and Generic Sheet • Northern Ireland country definitives printed in gravure (previously litho) • 2006 Yearbook (standard & de luxe) and Yearpack.
14 November	Issue Belgica Generic sheet (Hello stamp).
30 November	Issue 'Celebrating Scotland' miniature sheet and presentation pack • 2006 Miniature Sheet Pack • 2006 Presentation Pack Collection.

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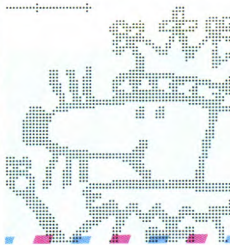
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SHERLOCK HOLMES & MORIARTY
"THE FINAL PROBLEM"

A fiction addiction Karen Foy on the appeal of 'fiction' as a thematic collection: the first of two articles 45

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The Beatles A preview of the first special issue of 2007 48

Sounds of Britain Dave Warriner examines the background behind this month's special issue 50



Stamp scene News and upcoming events:

Glenn Morgan keeps you posted



Glenn Morgan

Exponet To quote the organisers: Exponet is a place you may use to present your virtual postal history and philatelic collection. It is intended as a public display of high quality exhibits of all philatelic areas and time periods in English, French, German, Spanish or other languages. The aim of the organisers of Exponet is to provide a permanent presentation of high quality stamp and philatelic exhibits so as to facilitate online study for visitors throughout the world. They do not intend to compete with classical exhibits, but rather to enable online viewing for everybody, regardless of distance, and thus take part in the support and propagation of philately.

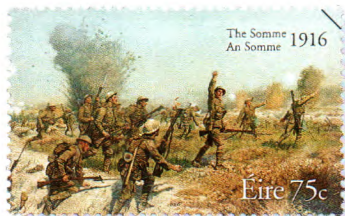
Noble aims indeed that the site well lives up to. There is only one entry from a British collector at my last viewing, and that was from Otto Hornung with his four-frame Carpatho-Ukraine postal history exhibit, where some wonderful material is on display. Most philatelic disciplines are covered with some fascinating displays, many in English, but of course even when the language is not one with which you are familiar the many postal items make understanding easy.

One exhibit that is specifically relevant to collectors of British material is from US resident Richard Frajola with his Great Britain Imperforate Line Engraved – the Vanity and the Insanity, which is a one-frame exhibit of stamps from position RF in the sheet – the owner's initials.

For the opportunity of viewing at least 103 stamp exhibits, comprising 9009 album pages within 712 exhibition frames (plus 6 literature entries) 24/7 from any internet-enabled computer worldwide, go to www.japhila.cz/hof/index.htm and be sure to return frequently, because there are regular updates. Indeed, why not consider entering your own exhibit for other collectors to see and enjoy?

This method of displaying collections is seen by some as the way forward for future exhibitions, where the cost of staging competitive entries is becoming beyond the means of many organisers. Indeed, the collector is paying out more and more in entry fees to share his displays with the invariably indifferent visitors who prefer spending money with the dealers and postal administrations rather than learning from the exhibits ●

Paris Autumn show The 60th Salon Philatélique d'Automne will be held from 8 to 11 November 2006. It will be held at the Espace Champerret site on Metro line three, where visitors should alight at Porte de Champerret in the 17th district. Entry is free and the hours of opening are 10 until 6 all days, with a 9pm extended closing time on the 9th. There will be 70 dealers in attendance, first day ceremonies, 10 European postal authorities, an exclusive LISA machine label and CNEP souvenir block, plus attendance by stamp designers. With an early start, a late return and the ability to get to and from the Eurostar terminal, it is quite possible to attend this show in a single day, as a few French collectors regularly do for our own Stampex ●



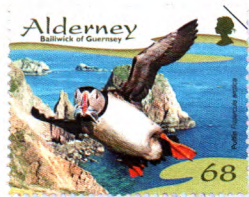
Ireland issues An Post, the Irish Post Office, issued two stamps on 20 June to mark the centenary of the Rosslare/Fishguard ferry service. Towards the end of the 19th century a ferry service linked New Milford, in the Milford Haven estuary, and Waterford. The engineer, Marc Brunel, envisaged a port on the west coast of Wales which would be able to handle transatlantic liners, and a rail connection to London. The Fishguard & Rosslare Railways and Harbour Company, which was taken over jointly by the GWR and their Irish partners the Great Southern & Western Railway of Ireland, undertook to build a railway from Waterford to Rosslare. Linking New Milford to the rail network presented major engineering difficulties, so the alternative port of Fishguard was chosen for its sheltered deep water and the shorter crossing to Ireland. Work began in 1899 and was completed in 1906, when service started – the first westbound sailing of the *Saint David* carried 231 passengers. The service has operated since without interruption, even during the two World Wars. The ferry established strong connections between the communities in Fishguard and Rosslare, which are maintained today – the service remains a vital link between Ireland and Britain for trade and tourism. The two 48c stamps feature a current ferry and one from the early years.

On 26 June a 75c value (letter rate from Ireland to the UK) was issued to commemorate the 90th anniversary of the Battle of the Somme. The design is based on a painting by J P Beadle. The battle, which lasted from July to November 1916, claimed an estimated 420,000 British and Irish casualties, no fewer than 19,000 on the first day alone •

New issues for the centenary of the Rosslare/Fishguard ferry (20 June), and the 90th anniversary of the Battle of the Somme (26 June).

Island issues Amongst new issues from the Bailiwick of Guernsey is an attractive set of six bird stamps from Alderney, featuring Fulmar, Gannet, Lesser black-Backed Gull, Storm Petrel, Kittiwake and Puffin. The stamps, issued on 27 July, were designed by Andrew Robinson. Enquiries to Guernsey Philatelic Bureau – telephone +44 (0)1481 716486, or see www.guernseypost.com •

A new Isle of Man issue features portraits from the National Portrait Gallery with a Manx connection: Sir Hall Caine, Dame Agatha Christie, Ewan Christian, Capt William Bligh, Lady Maria Calcott, John Martin, Sir John Betjeman, and Sir Edward Elgar. Another set features Peel cars, built on the island in the 1950s and 60s. Enquiries: Isle of Man Stamps, +44 (0)1624 698430, or see www.iompost.com •



New stamps from Isle of Man and Guernsey (shown at 83% actual size).

Schedule of stamp shows Upcoming shows for the remainder of this year.

5-8 October Fall Mega Event, Jacob Javits Convention Center, New York, USA. www.asdaonline.com

7-13 October España 06, Malaga, Spain. <http://personal.telefonica.terra.es/web2/958251679/espaa%F1a06/>

16-20 November Belgica 06, Brussels Convention Centre, Brussels, Belgium. info@belgica2006.be

18-19 November Thematica, Carisbrooke Hall, London, UK. Thematic Exhibitions, PO Box 8843, London N3 1HL.

24-25 November ABPS National Philatelic Exhibition, Riviera Centre, Torquay, Devon, UK. Torquay 2006, 29 Bowhay Lane, Exeter EX4 1PE. www.torquay2006.org.uk

Post-Expo enquiries www.postexpo.com

Post-Expo 2006 The annual exhibition for decision-makers in the postal services industry takes place at the RAI Centre in Amsterdam from 10-12 October. The event usually yields a few souvenirs for those interested in postal technology and automation, although this is a trade show not open to philatelists. It includes a World Postal Business Forum and Technology Workshops by industry experts. The show prospectus states that 'the postal sector is changing as never before. Greater customer choice, innovative products and services and increasing quality of service are consequences of market opening, postal reform, the advent of competition and the availability of new technologies.' The postal world is going through a new '1840' all over again – an exciting time for collectors who record the immense changes underway, especially as many services (such as Automated Postal Kiosks) never go beyond trial stage, so becoming the rarities of tomorrow ●



Overprints Rushstamps PO Box 1, Lyndhurst SO43 7PP. Telephone 023 8028 2044.

Washington 2006 The website (www.washington-2006.org) will remain online until January 2007. Do take a look at the News Articles/Articles About Us section, where viewers will find many new items added in the past few weeks. Those who attended the exhibition, or wished they had, can relive the extravaganza at <http://w2006.myphotoalbum.com> where over 1000 photos and video clips are now online. The organisers welcome all such digital images taken by show-goers to become part of their Washington 2006 Image Archive, some of which will be posted on the website. Send an email to info@washington-2006.org for details, or send your disc(s) directly to: w2006 Image Archive, 28 Amberwood Place, Rochester, NY 14626-4166 USA.

To mark the Washington exhibition, Rushstamps produced overprints on covers of the Brunel prestige book (500 produced) and the 2005 Smilers book (750 with large overprint, 250 with smaller overprint). They are priced £17.50 (Brunel book) and £6.75 and £7.50 (large and smaller Smilers) ●

Grinnell stamps book £18.50 softback or £24.50 hardback, plus postage and packing of £4.50 for either edition mailed to UK addresses. Credit card payment (without surcharge) is accepted.

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

New publication *The Grinnell Hawaiian Missionary Stamps* has recently been published by RPSL Ltd, the Expert Committee of the Royal Philatelic Society London. Comprising 96 pages, plus a 16-page introduction, it is perfect-bound and illustrated in colour throughout. The book comprises 10 chapters, and details the thorough examination that was made of 55 Grinnell Hawaiian Missionary stamps by RPSL Ltd and is stated to be 'the most complete report of philatelic expert examination extant, and particularly so on such a high-profile subject'. The Grinnell stamps were deemed to be forgeries by the Committee ●

Society news The GB Philatelic Society's July/August *GB Journal* includes features on Returned Letter wrappers, a George VI 256d Arms re-entry, early York Registered handstamp, and a major review of the Prince Consort essay. Despatched with the *Journal* is the 300th edition of the Society's *Newsletter* with reports of GBPS activities, and a number of interesting notes and articles from members. The new Society President, James Grimwood-Taylor, introduces himself, not that he really needs to, as he is one of the UK's best-known postal historians and Chairman of Cavendish Philatelic Auctions. This anniversary *Newsletter* is a 28-page colour production edited by Tony Walker, a member of Royal Mail's Stamp Advisory Committee. For details of the GBPS, contact the Membership Secretary, Peter Tanner: telephone 01753 887755 or email Peter@Tanner.freemove.co.uk ●



Modern British Philatelic Circle The recently formed MBPC maintains low rates of membership: UK £8.00; rest of the world £12.00 airmail or £8.00 surface mail. Details of recent issues and 'finds' are posted to the website www.mbp-circle.co.uk ●

MBPC Write to Tony Wilkins, 3 Buttermere Close, Brierley Hill DY5 3SD, or e-mail him at: tony.wilkins@mbp-circle.co.uk

Society publications The Concorde Study Circle's *CSC Newsletter* never seems short of interesting features, despite Concorde's retirement. The latest June issue is accompanied by a fascinating 24-page colour booklet entitled *Discover Museums and Concorde by Satellite*. It is full of photographs (over 140) and was generously funded by the author, Jean-François Bô, and shows where all remaining Concorde's are located, based on the Google Earth software (see below). The booklet includes all co-ordinates required, so for example, latitude 51.4745 N, longitude -0.4375 W reveals the location of Concorde 208 BOAB at Heathrow Airport's Terminal Four!

Concorde Study Circle brian@asquithbl.freemove.co.uk or write to the Editor, Brian L Asquith, 'Alandale', Radcliffe Gardens, Carshalton Beeches SM5 4PQ.

For Google Earth, go to www.earth.google.com and download the free software that will enable you to see 3D overviews of major cities, mountains, and other terrain, as well as local businesses and information, driving directions, and maps. Prepare to be amazed ●

Stamps in Schools Visits to Schools is a project set up by Erene Grieve in 1997. She is a retired teacher and a collector, so was therefore eminently qualified to relate to the children and explain to them the joy of stamp collecting. A winner of two Rowland Hill awards, a guest on BBC radio programmes and regularly featured in national and local newspapers, Erene's Stamp Days are well received by teachers and pupils alike.

The BPMA now sponsors the project, and events are free to schools. They include an exhibition of stamps appealing to children, a presentation about the Penny Black, information and advice on starting a stamp collection and stamp-themed activities, so if you have any connection with schools as a parent, pupil, teacher, etc, why not arrange a visit to your school?

Separately to this project, visit www.planetstamp.co.uk and see lots of information for children about stamp collecting, and for adults about running a stamp club. There is information about new issues, quizzes, games and details of Stamp Active competitions with advice for entrants ●

Visits to Schools enquiries Mrs Erene Grieve, The Dees, Neyland Vale, Milford Haven, SA73 1QP. Telephone 01646 601490 or email erenegrieve@f2s.com

Last post A final press release been issued by the Philatelic Music Circle. It announced that the group was folding due to 'finding it increasingly difficult to maintain our membership AND – vitally important, to encourage members to take over the work of the committee.' How depressing that one of the earliest and largest major thematic societies should find itself in this position after 37 years service to collectors, especially as they have enjoyed a worldwide membership of between 300 and 500 collectors of music-related philately. The group has recommended that its members consider membership of the German Motivgruppe Musik, whose journal appears in German, English and French. Its remaining funds have been distributed among several allied philatelic and music organisations. Irene Lawford, the co-founder (with the late Sylvester Peat), President and for 27 years the Editor of *The Baton*, journal of the PMC, must be especially saddened. It shows that even an apparently strong society is only as good as its volunteer helpers, so members of other societies reading this should take heed of requests for help so that their group does not suffer a similar fate to the PMC. Volunteer – you might actually enjoy it! ●

Harmers Auctions Telephone
020 8747 6100

Auctions Harmers' all world sale on 26 July included several interesting British lots, with two being essays for the 1889 Tender. Lot 1292 was for the ½d, 1½d and 2d values in a Perkins Bacon composite sheet of 24 (estimate £850), while lot 1293 was a selection of 23 perforated and 9 imperforate essays (estimate £1000). Both lots surprisingly remained unsold. Lot 1379 related to the 1939-48 2s6d brown, 2s6d green and 5s values, all in corner pairs signed (across the stamps or in the margins) by the designer Edmund Dulac; the 10s dark blue, 10s ultramarine and £1 were similarly signed by the designer G R (Sir George) Bellew. Described as 'an extremely rare set', they were estimated at £1000 and realised £1882.

In the Elizabethan section, Lot 1396 was for a Machin one centre band 11½p drab imperforate pair (£259, estimate £140). The 1972 Ralph Vaughan Williams 9p with brown (facial features omitted) error (lot 1399) realised £647 (est £450). The Robin in post-box (three copies) and Christmas Cracker Smilers, both with Post Office imprint (lot 1407), bore an estimate of £100 and realised £259 against a catalogue value of £800.

Royal Household official stamps have always fascinated me, and there were two lots in this sale. Lot 1427 comprised the ½d and 1d in unmounted blocks of four (est £1500, unsold), while lot 1428 was for a study collection of 13 × ½d and 18 × 1d, each used with various cancellations, together with collateral material such as postcards (estimate £1500, realised £1647) ●

Spink Telephone 020 7563
4000

Spink will hold a GB sale on 25-26 October, with British Empire stamps and covers and the Peter Jaffe Barbados collection on 8-9 November ●

ABPS awards In July we recorded the recipients of the awards based on a press release from the ABPS. This stated that Lynn and Malcolm Roberts were members of Enfield Philatelic Society. This is not so; they are both members of the Rayleigh and Hullbridge societies but have never been members of Enfield ps. We are pleased to set the record straight ●

In the news In 2005 Royal Mail issued stamps featuring World Heritage Sites of the UK and Australia. Other sites had featured on earlier stamps – see *Bulletin* February 2005, pp178-79. In July UNESCO announced that the mining landscape of Cornwall and west Devon has been granted this prestigious status. The Wheal Coates tin mine at St Agnes was shown on stamps in 1989 (*Industrial Archaeology* 27p) and 2005 (South West England 1st).

Contestants on the BBC TV programme *University Challenge – The Professionals* on 31 July were asked to identify the designs of some of the Brunel stamps – they correctly identified the bridges but thought Box Tunnel (40p stamp) was the Severn Tunnel •

...and finally Thanks to readers who sent their best wishes to me following my emergency eye surgery in Paris. If you are short-sighted and see flashing lights, shadows at the periphery of your vision and/or spots – even fleetingly – go immediately to casualty, as your retina may have become detached. If you ignore the symptoms, you may lose your sight •

Royal Mail news New issues and products

Definitive news New stamp rolls (coils) of 1000 of the revised 2nd and 1st class standard-size stamps will be available from Tallents House from 3 October. The revised design is in connection with the recently introduced Pricing in Proportion rates.

A new printing of the 6 × 1st stamp book, with an inside front cover label promoting stamp collecting, will go on philatelic sale on 2 October and will be available from major retail outlets as stocks of earlier books are exhausted. It contains six 1st class PIP definitives. The label features a Queen's 80th birthday stamp (right, at 86% actual size).

A new book of six new 1st class 'Smilers' definitives, to replace that issued in October 2005, will go on sale on 17 October. New Generic and Smilers sheets will be available with the new stamps. The stamps, designed by NB Studio, London, are: 'Celebration' (champagne), 'Best Wishes', 'Thank You', 'New Baby' (text), 'Big Bang' (fireworks) and 'Balloons' (right, at 86% actual size). The book is being printed in gravure by Walsall, the Generic and Smilers sheets in litho by Cartor. The sheets were designed by Webb & Webb, London. The six stamps will be available on FDC with Tallents House or Grinshill, Shrewsbury postmark. Price £2.73 UK customers, £2.33 overseas. Orders must be received at Tallents House by date of issue. ►

don't just send a stamp

keep a stamp

give a stamp

love a stamp



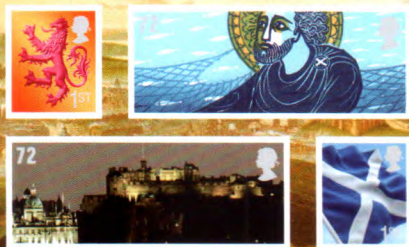
Discover Royal Mail Special Stamps
at royalmail.com/loveastamp



The Northern Ireland country stamps will in future be printed in gravure rather than litho, to conform to the printing technique used for the England, Scotland, and Wales stamps. The reprinted Northern Ireland stamps will go on philatelic sale on 9 November and be available at Post Office branches in the Province as supplies of the litho stamps are used up. There will be no first day facilities for the new printings.

Generic and Smilers sheets next March will contain 20 1st class Wales country stamps on self-adhesive paper. On the Generic sheet the stamps will be adjoined by labels depicting Welsh scenes and symbols. Customers can have their own images printed on the labels on the Smilers sheet •

CELEBRATING SCOTLAND



Scotland miniature sheet A new miniature sheet entitled 'Celebrating Scotland' will go on sale on St Andrew's Day, 30 November – the first in a series of 'The Four Countries' sheets. The sheet bears the current 1st class Scottish country stamp (Lion Rampant), and a second 1st class showing a new-design Saltire flag image (both at definitive stamp size) and two special stamp-size 72p stamps, featuring a graphic representation of St Andrew and a night view of Edinburgh Castle. The sheet will be priced £2.08. A first day cover envelope will be available (30p) and serviced cov-

ers with Tallents House or St Andrews first day postmark will cost £2.92 (UK customers), £2.49 overseas. Orders for serviced FDCs must be received at Tallents House by the day of issue. Further details next month •

2007 issues Dates of issue were given in last month's *Bulletin*. The first issue, The Beatles (9 January), is previewed in this *Bulletin* (p48-49).

The Sea Life set (1 February, brought forward from April as originally announced) will feature Moon Jellyfish, Common Starfish, Sea Anemone, Bass, Thornback Ray, Octopus, Mussel, Grey Seal, Shore Crab, and Common Sun Star. It will be previewed here next month. The Sky at Night set (13 February) features Nebulae – clouds of gas and dust, sometimes glowing and sometimes appearing as a dark silhouette against other glowing matter. Those featured are: Saturn Nebula c55, Eskimo Nebula c39, Cat's Eye Nebula c6, Helix Nebula c63, Flaming Star Nebula c31, and The Spindle c53. The names are from Sir Patrick Moore's classification system. The stamps will be self-adhesive and have text on the reverse. The World of Invention (1 March) will also be self-adhesive with printing on the reverse. Using comic designs, they feature: bridges, railway locomotive, telephone, television, the internet, and space travel. The issue to commemorate the Abolition of the Slave Trade portrays individuals connected with the campaign: William Wilberforce, Olaudah Equiano, Granville Sharp, Thomas Clarkson, Hannah More, and Ignatius Sancho.

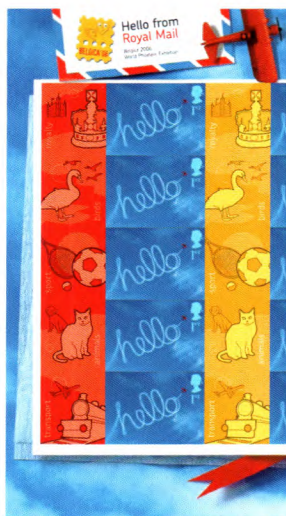
Further details of these and subsequent issues will be published here nearer the time of issue •



Generic/Smilers sheets Shown above is the Christmas Generic sheet to be issued on 7 November, price £6. The sheet was designed by Rose Design, using illustrations by Tatsuro Kiuchi, and printed by Cartor. Customers can order Smilers sheets with personalised images on the adjoining labels. Single sheets of 20 1st class stamps cost £14.95, and sheets of 20 2nd class stamps £9.95. Two-four sheets cost £13.95 each (1st class) or £9.25 each (2nd). The price is reduced to £11.95 each (1st class) for five to nine sheets, or to £8.50 each (2nd class).

A new Generic sheet for the Belgica stamp exhibition in Brussels will be available from 14 November. It contains 20 1st class Hello stamps, the labels featuring images of thematic subjects: animals, birds, heritage, transport, and sport. The Belgica exhibition logo appears in the sheet margin. The sheet was designed by Frontmedia and printed by Cartor. Price £6.95.

All orders for Smilers sheets should be sent to Royal Mail Tallents House or phone the Smilers helpline on 0845 074 2000 or visit www.royalmail.com/smilers •



Generic sheets for Christmas (7 November) and Belgica (14 November).

Stamp ingots Ingots featuring stamps of the reigns of Victoria, Edward VII and George V proved popular, and we are continuing the series with six ingots reproducing Edward VIII and George VI stamps. The first of these, featuring the Edward VIII 1d stamp, will be available from 24 October, price £27.95. The insert tells the interesting story behind the short-lived Edward VIII stamps.

The six Victorian ingots (Penny Black, Embossed Green Shilling, Half-penny Red, Penny Lilac, £5 Orange, and Jubilee Shilling) are all still available, priced £26.95 each or £161.70 for the set including storage box. The Edward VII/George V ingots are also available (Edward VII Penny and Pound, George V Mackennal Penny, Seahorse Ten Shillings, Empire Exhibition, and Postal Union Congress £1) at the same prices •

Ingot orders and enquiries

Royal Mail Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB. Order line: 08457 641 641 (UK), +44 131 316 7483 (overseas).

Ingots handling charge: £1.45 UK, £1.55 Europe, £2.15 Rest of World.



Year collections The 2006 Yearbook and Yearpack, containing all the year's special stamps, will go on sale on 9 November and will remain available until the end of 2008. Both contain all the special stamps issued in 2006, and the Lest We Forget miniature sheet. The standard version of the Yearbook costs £44.95 or £75 for the de-luxe, leather-bound version. The colourful Yearpack, price £39.55 (front cover shown at left), includes concise background information on each of the special issues, with technical details of the stamps and illustrations of alternative 'First Day' postmarks for each issue.

A 2006 Miniature Sheet Year Pack and Presentation Pack Collection will both be available from 30 November, priced at £24.50 and £49.95 respectively.

The 2004 Yearbook and Yearpack will be withdrawn from sale on 27 December – order now if you still need these for your collection. The 2005 book and pack will remain on sale, unless sold out earlier, until December 2007 •

Coming off sale Remaining stock of the Trafalgar stamps, miniature sheet, pack, and stamp cards will come off sale on 17 October. The 2005 Christmas stamps and related products will be withdrawn on 31 October •

Christmas airletters There will be a new airletter (aerogramme) this year featuring Father Christmas in a sleigh drawn from reindeers and snow-scenes, designed by Tatsuro Kiuchi. Designed by Rose and printed by Mail Solutions Limited, it will be available from Post Office branches, and Tallents House from 7 November; a bilingual version will be available from Post Office branches in Wales, and from Tallents House. Price 58p each. The airletters bear the usual 'stamp' comprising the Machin head of The Queen and 'Great Britain Postage Paid' indicator and thus do not qualify for 'First Day of Issue' postmarking. Christmas airletters were first issued in 1965, one year before the first Christmas stamps appeared •

British Postal Museum & Archive Readers are reminded that in addition to its regular opening times (Monday to Wednesday and Friday 10.00-17.00, Thursday 10.00-19.00), the BPMA is also open on Saturdays on 14 October and 9 December, 10.00-17.00. Archive Tours are held at 14.00 on the last Thursday of each month until November, and Museum Store Tours at 14.00 on the second Wednesday of each month until October. Details of exhibitions, lectures and film shows are given in our Events listing. For further information contact the BPMA on 020 7239 2570 or see website www.postalheritage.org.uk •

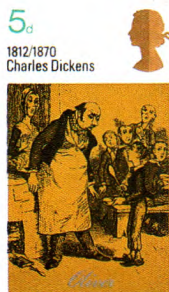
A fiction addiction Read all about it! In the first of two articles, Karen Foy looks at the novel idea of 'fiction' as a subject with which to start a thematic collection

FOR CENTURIES reading has been an important part of everyday life. From hieroglyphics and cave drawings to modern thrillers and e-books, reading has been encouraged not only as a source of learning, but as an excellent form of relaxation in our increasingly stressful lives.

With what seems like an endless variety of thematic stamps to choose from, it's easy to miss the subject of 'fiction' as a topic for a collection, but on further investigation there's more to this area of philately than meets the eye.

In the beginning The first of Royal Mail's first day covers was issued in 1964, celebrating the 400th anniversary of the birth of one of Britain's most influential authors, William Shakespeare. His intricately plotted tales were performed as dramatic plays, and have stood the test of time, proving to be as admired today as they were at their inception. Considered by many to be the *crème de la crème* of literary fiction, Shakespeare's unique mix of tragedy and comedy ensured that some of his best known works are featured on this set of five commemorative stamps: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Twelfth Night*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Henry V* and *Hamlet*.

Please sir, can I have some more Six years later, the spotlight fell on another genius of the written word – Charles Dickens. Born in Portsea, Hampshire on 7 February 1812, it was not until after Dickens' 21st birthday that his short stories and essays began to appear in the widely read periodicals of the day. At first his novels were produced as serials, leaving readers eager for the next gripping instalment, and it was these enduring tales which were chosen to appear on the 1970 celebratory stamps. Illustrated with a black engraving complemented by a single brightly coloured



Left: Dickens' *Oliver Twist* from the Literary Anniversaries issue of 1970. Above: Sir Walter Scott, Literary Anniversaries 1971 and *Romeo and Juliet*, 1964 Shakespeare Festival.

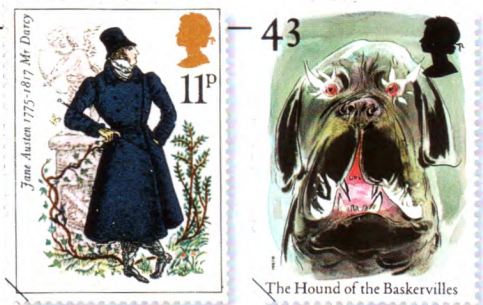
background, characters from the *Pickwick Papers*, *David Copperfield* and *Oliver Twist* are portrayed in all their finery, but the images also hint at the darker side of Victorian life that Dickens' novels describe so well. With all four stamps priced at 5d, a single stamp commemorating poet William Wordsworth's home in Grasmere completes the Literary Anniversaries set.

North of the border 1971 was the bicentenary of the birth of one of Scotland's greatest authors – Sir Walter Scott. Included in this three stamp set alongside poets John Keats and Thomas Gray, Scott was one of the first authors to have an international readership. Known for historical fiction, he wrote his 1814 classic *Waverley* – a tale of the 1745 Jacobite uprising – which led to a series of novels using the *Waverley* title. By 1819, he had moved away from these Scottish themed stories with the introduction of *Ivanhoe*, a 12th century romantic epic which proved a runaway success. At a low point in his career, Scott attempted to write his way out of debt as a bankruptcy order was filed against his ailing company. Sadly, the strain and pressure became too much and he died in 1832 but, in a twist of fate, the success of his novels paid off his debts posthumously. ►

The Classics In 1975, the stamp world focused on Jane Austen, when four caricatured scenes of her novels were issued in her 200th anniversary year. The daughter of a Reverend, Jane began her first tale at the age of 14 and never looked back. Each novel was published anonymously, and although she was never married, the romantic elements in her books were well received, with the subjects of friendship and respect easy to relate to for legions of female readers. The 10p stamp shows Catherine Morland from the novel *Northanger Abbey*. Although written in 1798, this was not published until after Jane's death in 1817. Possibly the most famous of her works was *Pride and Prejudice*. With Mr Darcy the standoffish romantic lead, his popularity is as strong as ever two centuries after his first creation.

These classics have seen a revival recently, with TV and film adaptations. Lavish costume dramas have graced our screens, with *Jane Eyre*, *North and South* and *Wuthering Heights* becoming staple family viewing. These three novels, accompanied by George Eliot's *Mill on the Floss* were represented on a set of four stamps honouring the work of famous authoresses in July 1980.

The dawn of a new age Towards the latter part of the 19th century, writing styles changed dramatically. The reading public wanted more than the trials and tribulations of a complicated romance; they were eager for mystery, suspense and murder! Arthur Conan Doyle met the demand with the introduction of his world renowned detective Sherlock Holmes. Born in Edinburgh on 22 May 1859, Doyle's writing success flourished with the publication of *A Study in Scarlet* and led to numerous adventures for the detective and his staunch companion Dr Watson. Intense, thought-provoking and loaded with tension, Holmes appeared in 60 stories published between 1887 and 1927. His multi-faceted character appealed to the masses that endeavoured to solve his literary cases and see him foil his arch enemy – Moriarty. In 1893, Doyle decided to 'kill off' his hero in *The Final Problem* – and as Holmes plunged to his death at the Reichenbach Falls, his fans mourned his sad demise. But... as with any good twist-in-the-tail



escapade, Holmes lived to fight another day, and he went on to solve many more intriguing cases. Without his return we wouldn't have enjoyed the unforgettable novel *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, portrayed on one of the 1993 stamps celebrating the centenary of publication of *The Final Problem*. All five stamps were issued with a face value of 24p and the main characters of Holmes, Watson, Inspector Lestrade, Mycroft and Moriarty were incorporated to make the set complete.

Back to the future Passing exams in biology and physics, Herbert George Wells was fascinated by science and time travel. As a writer, he produced some of the most thought-provoking and inspiring stories of his day, his forte being the creation of futuristic novels described as Science Fiction. His books have been adapted for TV and film on several occasions, with *The Invisible Man* becoming a catalyst for frequent stories using a similar theme. The set of four stamps issued in 1995 used modern artistry to portray four of his novels. *The Time Machine* is featured on the 25p stamp, while his epic *War of the Worlds* – which describes the invasion of the Earth with aliens from Mars – is portrayed on the 35p stamp.

Folklore and legend From light-hearted historical romance to spine tingling chillers, Royal Mail has given us a complete overview of the world of adult fiction. In 1997 they ensured that every conceivable genre had been covered when they issued a set of stamps based on some of the most memorable horror stories of all time. Featuring Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Bram Stoker's *Dracula* and the split personalities of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde, their contemporary designs make a great addition to your collection.



Stamps from left: bicentenary of Jane Austen's birth 1975, Tales of Terror 1997, Famous Authoresses 1980, Ngaio Marsh (New Zealand) 1989, and Georges Simenon (joint issue by Belgium France and Switzerland) 1994.

Sherlock Holmes
Royal Mail First Day Cover



First day cover for Sherlock Holmes issue (1993), and the Science Fiction presentation pack (1995).



It's easy to create a gallery of mini masterpieces in tribute to your favourite authors, and the sky really is the limit with regard to expanding your collection to the fiction related stamps issued by other countries worldwide. Our own Queen of Crime – Agatha Christie – was commemorated with a special prestige stamp booklet in 1991. But why not look out for the 1994 joint issue tribute (Belgium, France and Switzerland) to Georges Simenon, the creator of the detective Maigret, or New Zealand's 1989 homage to Ngaio Marsh, author of the Inspector Alleyn mysteries. Amassing a fiction thematic can be an engrossing hobby especially if you aim to read the novels featured on the stamps, so why not sit back and relax and indulge in your very own fiction addiction?

Further information Take a look at website www.trussell.com/detfic/detect.htm (see Philately online, p56) for inspiration on worldwide detective fiction stamps, for a theme within a theme.

The auction site www.ebay.com is a great place to start your collection, where stamp sets can be purchased for a few pounds – it is ideal for viewing what thematics are available.

Add interest to your collection by looking out for special issue prestige booklets, presentation packs – which explain the novels featured on the stamps in more detail – and also unusually illustrated first day covers •

Next month Karen Foy looks at stamp issues featuring children's literature.

The Beatles A tribute to a pop phenomenon



Technical details

Designer Johnson Banks
Photography Kevin Summers
Printer Walsall Security Printers
Process Gravure
Stamp size 35 x 33mm
Sheets PO branches will hold sheets of 30. Sheets of 60, with gutter margin, available from Tallents House and from selected PO philatelic outlets
Perforation 14.5 die-cut
Phosphor Two bands
Gum Self-adhesive
Gutter pairs Vertical
Miniature sheet size 115 x 89mm
Miniature sheet perforation 14.5 x 14

Cylinders and colours

All values W1 silver (except 72p) ● W1 yellow ● W1 magenta ● W1 cyan (blue) ● W1 black ● W1 phosphor

THE FIRST special issue of 2007 features perhaps the most famous music group of all time, The Beatles. The set commemorates the first meeting of the young Paul McCartney and John Lennon 50 years ago in 1957. The six stamps and miniature sheet go on sale at Post Office branches, Tallents House and Post Office philatelic outlets on 9 January, brought forward from 16 January as originally announced. The stamps are self-adhesive and printed in horizontal se-tenant pairs, within sheets of each value: 2 x 1st class, 2 x 64p, and 2 x 72p. Each features a Beatles LP sleeve – *With The Beatles* and *Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* (1st class), *Help!* and *Abbey Road* (64p), and *Revolver* and *Let It Be* (72p). The stamps are of 'free-form' design, the top record sleeve overlapping others beneath.

The miniature sheet comprises four different gummed 1st class stamps, thus giving 10 Beatles stamps in total. The miniature sheet stamps feature Beatles memorabilia: a guitar, a Yellow Submarine lunch-box and set of key-rings, *Love Me Do* 45rpm record, the 'Fab Four' on a tea-tray, and badges. The sheet margin includes images of other memorabilia.

FIRST DAY FACILITIES 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 their nearest Royal Mail Special Handstamp Centre (Liverpool postmark), marking the outer envelope 'FD0701' or 'FD0702'. Orders for serviced FDCs must reach Tallents House by the date of issue.

For details of sponsored handstamps and addresses of the Handstamp Centres see the *British Postmark Bulletin* – available on subscription from Tallents House. For a sample copy write to: The Editor, British Postmark Bulletin, Royal Mail, 148 Old Street, London EC1V 9HQ.

THE BEATLES Royal Mail First Day Cover

Mrs J Robinson
200 Manorbier Road
Ilkeston
Derbyshire
DE7 4AB



The FDC, left, designed by Johnson Banks, features Beatles memorabilia: record sleeves, the box of a jigsaw puzzle and a lunch-box. The back of the FDC features the reverse of the record sleeves shown on the stamps. The filler card illustrates the vinyl records from the sleeves shown on the stamps.

THE BEATLES Royal Mail Mint Stamps



PRESENTATION PACK The colourful pack, containing the six stamps and the miniature sheet, is written by Phil Alexander and gives a concise account of the career of The Beatles and their impact on modern culture. He writes: 'It is impossible to imagine the modern world without The Beatles.' The many illustrations chosen by Johnson Banks for the pack will be pure nostalgia for all Beatles fans, featuring books and other memorabilia as well as record sleeves and the street sign for Abbey Road NW8, where the group recorded much of its music. Phil Alexander is Editor of *Mojo*, one of the premier music magazines, and a broadcaster on Mojo Radio, a digital station.

The Beatles prices

Set of stamps	£3.36
Miniature sheet	£1.28
Presentation pack (stamps & sheet)	£5.15
FDC envelope	£0.30
Serviced FDC stamps (UK)	£4.42
Serviced FDC stamps (overseas)	£3.77
Serviced FDC mini sheet (UK)	£1.98
Serviced FDC mini sheet (overseas)	£1.69
Stamp cards set (11 cards)	£3.30

THE BEATLES ON STAMPS This is the first Royal Mail issue devoted to The Beatles, although a small image of John Lennon featured on a 34p Australian Bicentenary stamp in 1988. The Beatles, particularly John Lennon, have been depicted on numerous overseas stamps, including issues from Antigua, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Burundi, Ghana, Germany, Gibraltar, Guyana, Malagasy Republic, Maldives, Mali, Nicaragua, Palau, and St Vincent. Sir Paul McCartney designed a set of flower stamps issued by the Isle of Man in July 2002. John Lennon was a stamp collector in his school-boy days, and his stamp album (with his signature on the inside cover) is now in the National Postal Museum in Washington DC; it was exhibited at the Washington stamp exhibition earlier this year •



Sounds of Britain Dave Warriner examines this month's new issue of special stamps

The theme of this year's Europa stamps is cultural integration – a pretty large concept when you think about it. The challenge of how to present the theme was handed to the London-based design group CDT, a company that had previously worked on the Royal Mail Millennium programme and on the Pricing in Proportion stamps.

CDT's early ideas focussed around using different types of ethnic pattern-making, and objects like headdresses and jewellery. Work progressed as far as initial photography, where the graphic quality of these objects was emphasised by shooting them in silhouette, an idea which was to bear fruit later.

Although some interesting visual material was emerging, something still seemed to be lacking, until CDT Director Mike Dempsey had a brainwave. 'It came to me suddenly that music crosses all boundaries, not just between cultures, but also between young and old. It was just perfect for the stamps.' As a music fan, it was also perfect for Dempsey as he set about researching the subject.

It was important that the stamps represented the different musical strands at work in Britain today, and to help identify these CDT worked closely with the World Music Department of BBC Radio 3. It wasn't long before the core musical genres began to emerge, and work on visuals could begin. To retain the spontaneity of live music, a photographic approach was decided upon and the idea of the silhouette, which had worked so well with the initial concepts, helped to get around the issue of having identifiable individuals featured as the hero image on the stamps.

For the shoot, fashion photographer Paul Smith was selected and over a weekend a stream of choreographers, dancers and musicians performed what was in effect a miniature version of the WOMAD (World of Music, Arts and Dance) Festival for the camera. The outline of the performers together with their instruments created the distinctive silhouette shapes, which were counter-pointed with an area of intense colour that was highlighted by using a snoot spotlight (looking just like an inverted ice cream cone, the snoot concentrates a tiny beam of light on the subject). The images were then cropped, combined and framed digitally before adding the type.

The first of the stamps, with sitar player and dancer (1st class), features music of Indian origin. Bollywood, the world's largest film industry, helped thousands of British Asians enjoy the comforts of familiar song and dance, initially through Indian cinemas, but more recently through video and DVD. Singers and dancers from Bollywood movies have become huge stars, including Asha Bhosle (recently celebrated by the British Asian band Cornershop with the song *Brimful of Asha*). Bhosle is generally thought to be the most recorded artist of all time, with a back catalogue of at least 12,000 songs and 925 films. While traditional Indian music has been an influence on many British artists from the Beatles onwards, British Asians have taken the traditional Punjabi harvest songs, known as Bhangra, added extra percussion and imported elements of reggae, rap, raga and jungle to create Bhangra Beat, a sound that is so infectious and popular that British artists like Juggsy D are today exporting it back to India. ►



Early designs concentrated on textile patterns (centre, top). A development of this concept combined textiles with body silhouettes (centre). The first 'music' designs (left) depicted only one figure each. Top left and above: sketches for final designs for the 72p and 42p stamps – the Caribbean steel drummer was later replaced by an African djembe player. Top right: at the photo shoot.



Music from the Caribbean and Africa features on the 42p stamp with the bass player and drummer. Reggae grew out of ska, which itself evolved from Jamaican mento, Trinidadian calypso and American jazz and rhythm and blues. Ska arrived in Britain with the Caribbean immigrants of the 1950s and 60s. With its catchy rhythm typified by accented guitar and piano on the upbeat, it soon found favour outside the Caribbean community. In Jamaica artists like Bob Marley and Peter Tosh slowed the rhythm, pumped up the bass and added often political lyrics to create Roots Reggae. Championed in the UK by the likes of John Peel, reggae soon entered the mainstream, with artists from Eric Clapton to the Clash adding reggae numbers to their repertoire and homegrown acts like UB40 topping the charts.



The song *Tom Hark* will have been many people's first exposure to African music; in the 1950s even The Queen and Prince Philip had bopped to the contagious kwela tune covered by the Ted Heath Orchestra. Recently the music of sub-Saharan Africa has found a new audience in the UK thanks to musicians like Peter Gabriel and DJs Andy Kershaw and Charlie Gillett.



The fiddle and harp (50p) represent the sound of Britain's Celtic fringe. Traditional Celtic music is still heard at pubs and dances all over Scotland and Ireland, but it isn't just the preserve of bearded men in chunky sweaters; traditional instruments like the fiddle and bagpipes have been bolstered by the electric guitar and bass together with unexpected imports like the Greek Bouzouki as the music continues to evolve. Celtic music has influenced artists like Kate Bush, Elvis Costello and U2, while bands like the Pogues draw a capacity audience. Meanwhile, contemporary artists like the Afro-Celtic Sound System are producing some of the most innovative sounds around.



Jazz and Blues, represented by the sax player and the guitarist (72p) have probably had more influence on the UK sound scene than any other kind of music. Asking where jazz comes from is a big question. Musicologists say it has roots in the spirituals, blues and ragtime music of the USA, which was itself rooted in the music of western Africa, mixed up with holy songs, hill-billy tunes and a little military band music. Constantly evolving, jazz spread across the USA to become the soundtrack for the first half of the 20th century, thanks to musicians like Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington. In the UK, a long line of distinguished artists, from Humphrey Littleton and Ronnie Scott to Jamiroquai and Courtney Pine, continue the legacy of UK jazz.



Growing out of field hollers, spirituals and praise songs of former slaves, the Blues, with its characteristic twelve-bar progression and its lyrics of lost love, oppression and poverty, was the springboard for American Rock 'n' Roll in the 1950s. While the Beatles were selling Rock 'n' Roll back to the States in the 1960s, British Bluesmen like John Mayall and Alexis Korner were nurturing the talents of Eric Clapton, Peter Green and Jimmy Page. As the 1960s turned into the 1970s, British Blues was to mutate into Heavy Rock as British bands like Cream and Led Zeppelin conquered the world.

The last stamp (£1.19) represents the sensual rhythms of South America. With thousands of Londoners turning out to enjoy the Latino beat of the eighth Carnival Del Pueblo in August, a maraca player and a pair of Salsa dancers represent the latest musical sensation to sweep the country •

Treasures of the BPMA Martin Robinson visits the BPMA exhibition 'Moving the Mail' at Coventry's Transport Museum



Left: GPO 2, the Post Office's second mobile post office, on display in Coventry.

The illustration on p35 is from a 1937 GPO leaflet advertising the new 'Mobile Post Office'.

Moving the Mail... By Road, Julian Stray's book written to accompany the exhibition, is available from the BPMA at £5.99 plus £1.00 P&P. Write to Freeling House, Phoenix Place, London WC1X 0DL, telephone 020 7239 5125, or see www.postalheritage.org.uk/shop

ON 4 August some 20 guests, including members of the Association of Friends of the BPMA, and staff of the British Postal Museum and Archive, headed by Chief Executive Tony Conder, attended a reception for the official opening of the BPMA exhibition 'Moving the Mail: Horses to Horsepower' at the Coventry Transport Museum. The museum houses the world's largest collection of British road transport, and has recently undergone a £6.9 million redevelopment. It is situated in Hales Street in the centre of Coventry, next to Pool Meadow bus station and a large car park. The exhibition is open until 24 October from 10.00 to 17.00 daily and admission is free.

The BPMA exhibit is in a spacious glass-fronted entrance area, and consists of 13 Post Office vehicles from an 1850s mail coach (which I last saw on another Friends' visit to coachman John Parker's stable near Diss) to a modern Landrover post-bus, loaned by its restorer David Cott. Royal Mail videos played on overhead screens, and copious notes were available on information boards with each exhibit, and in leaflet form.

BPMA curator Julian Stray spoke about the history of Royal Mail's road transport, and in particular about the representative vehicles on show. He has written a book, *Moving the Mail... By Road*, to accompany the exhibition, a handsome paperback volume with chapters about horse-drawn

vehicles, cycles, motorcycles, motor vehicles and specialised vehicles like postbuses and mobile post offices. It is informative and profusely illustrated and well worth adding to your philatelic library.

The undoubted star of the show is GPO 2, the Post Office's second mobile post office, originally built in 1937 and now restored by S Cartwright & Sons of Altrincham. This superb vehicle, with its trailer and Seddon tractor unit, was used to offer a full post office service at shows, race meetings and other grand days out. Only the exterior has been restored, but it is hoped some time to return the interior to its full glory. The other vehicles on display are a 1940s horse-drawn van, a replica 1910 Dennis van, 1935 and 1961 Morris Minors, a 1956 Morris Commercial, a 1973 BSA Bantam motorcycle, a replica 1883 centre cycle (also known as the Hen and Chickens) and bicycles of 1956, 1980 and 2000 vintage.

I must admit that although I live locally, the last time I went to the Coventry Transport Museum was in 1985, for an earlier display of Royal Mail's vehicles. One of my sons won a competition and has a certificate to attest to the fact that his prize was a day 'carrying out the duties of Head Postmaster, Coventry'. The BPMA exhibit, the Transport Museum and the city of Coventry in general are very well worth a visit, so do go along to support the BPMA's laudable outreach programme ●

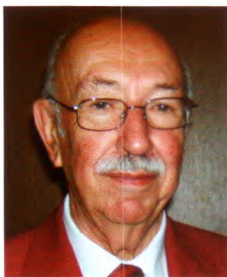
Richard Beith Richard West meets a collector who pursues his interests through his collections, writings and displays

RICHARD Beith was destined to take a serious interest in philately – if for no other reason than that his father was a keen collector who specialised in Australia, and was past President of Hull Philatelic Society. By the age of 13, already enthusiastic about the hobby, Richard had joined the Hull Society. Like most young collectors, his interests at first were fairly broad, but he soon became fascinated by the North Sea air mail service run by KLM, linking Amsterdam with Hull or Doncaster and Liverpool. This service ran in summer only, from 1934 to 1939, and made a ‘nice little story’ that Richard still owns.

Richard’s father, Stuart, sadly died in 1958 and his mother died two years earlier. The Yorkshire Philatelic Association’s annual award for Commonwealth material is the Stuart and Mary Beith Cup, initially donated by Stuart when Mary died. Before his death, Stuart had formed a collection of Hull and East Yorkshire postal history, which Richard inherited, finding Hull Ship Letters of particular fascination.

Work has required Richard to move home on several occasions, leaving Hull for Basingstoke, and then Scotland, where he lived in Dunblane, and joined both Stirling and District Philatelic Society, of which he is a Life Member, and the Caledonian Philatelic Society (which celebrates its centenary this year). Fortunately, he bought a large air mail collection containing much Scottish air mail material, and so decided to develop a display on the theme, ideal for showing to local philatelic societies. He also wrote the definitive monograph on the subject, covering the period from 1919 to 1979.

It was decision time in 1982 when the company for whom he worked offered the ultimatum: take a promotion and move to Chester, or leave. He chose to move. In Chester he again joined the local societies, as his interest in airmails expanded. It came about from the purchase of a cover



sent from the Cape Verde Islands to Hamburg in 1941, ‘via Italia’. Thus started an interest in the air mails of the Second World War, studying in particular the Italian South Atlantic air mail service, LATI, that operated from December 1939 to December 1941 – an interest which resulted in another monograph.

In 1991 Richard was made redundant – and has lived happily ever since. Retirement has meant he and his wife have been able to pursue a common interest in classical music, particularly the works of the Czech composers. There have been several outcomes of this: visits to Czechoslovakia (and later the Czech and Slovak Republics), membership of the Czechoslovak Philatelic Society of Great Britain (of which Richard is currently Chairman), and collections of Czechoslovak air mails, a thematic on Czech and Slovak music, and a study of the postal history of Free Czechoslovak Forces in Great Britain during the Second World War (the subject of another monograph).

In fact, Richard’s writings have been extensive, with two other monographs apart from the three mentioned – on Yorkshire Air Mails and British South American Airways from 1946 to 1949. He has written several articles for this *Bulletin*, plus for others including *Aero Field*, *Air Mail News*, *Air Post Journal*, *Cross Post*, *Stamp Collecting*, *Stamps* (he was Consultant Editor, 1991-92), and *Czech Music*, journal of the Dvorak Society of Great Britain. He has also been editor of the BAeF (the British Aerophilatelic Federation) *Bulletin*.

There is no doubt that, whatever he studies, Richard Beith ensures it is in depth – and once complete, is happy to move on. So when invited to talk on the importance of air mail in the development of civil aviation in Scotland at the recent Philatelic Congress of Great Britain in Renfrew, he could do so with ease, even though the collection had long since been sold ●

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P.T.O.

Publicity for the opening of KLM's 1934 North Sea air service: a rare piece of ephemera from Richard Beith's early collection.

A few more questions we put to Richard Beith

Where do you obtain the material for your collection? It is mainly by auction, not only in the UK but also in the Czech Republic. I had one very lucky purchase, namely a collection of Czech forces, that I obtained from Corbitt's, based in Newcastle.

Do you keep material in albums? No. I mount my material on Clarendon sheets enclosed in conservation quality protectors, and then stored upright in boxes. I word-process my write-up on labels that I affix to the sheets.

Who influenced your early collecting, besides your father? I was very pleased to meet Francis J Field during my early collecting days, while James (Jim) Merrylees was also very helpful to me when I was living in the Stirling area. I also admired Tony Torrance because of his superb knowledge, especially of civil censorship.

Do you have a personal philosophy about collecting? I feel it is important never to be reluctant to acknowledge that a collection might be as complete as feasible, and not to be afraid to sell and move on to something new. Also, never to be worried about allowing oneself to be side-tracked, as there is so much to discover.

You mentioned your wife. Do you have any other family? We have two sons and a daughter, who have presented us with five grandsons and a granddaughter. I have recently

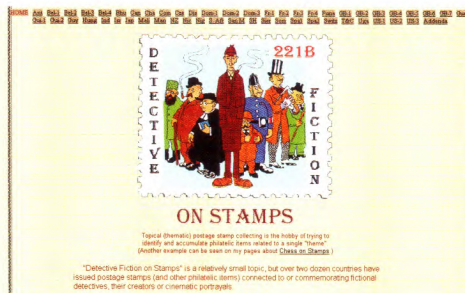
introduced two of my grandsons to stamp collecting, while at the 2006 Scottish Congress in Perth, and I am pleased to say with positive results. They each won a voucher worth £20 to spend with the dealers, who were very encouraging and helpful.

Besides collecting and music, do you have other interests? I should mention that my wife used to collect, and was a member of the Germany and Colonies Philatelic Society, but she felt that one serious collector in the family was sufficient. We also share an interest in politics, and are very active with the Liberal Democrats.

Have you travelled much? Apart from stamp exhibitions, Canada in 1996, Italy in 1998, and of course the Czech and Slovak Republics. We have travelled in Europe, and we like the south-west USA, notably Arizona and New Mexico.

And finally, how do you see the future of the hobby? It is of course of concern that the average age of collectors seems to be increasing, but it is also good to note how the specialist societies are flourishing, albeit sadly seemingly to the detriment of local societies. However, I enjoy giving displays to societies, both local and specialist. The week-ends staged by many specialist societies are particularly enjoyable. I believe the growth of interest in social philately is a hopeful sign, although I wonder whether something as traditional as philately will survive in this frantic world.

Philately online A detective fiction website, by Ron Negus



A VISIT TO a public library will show that one of the most popular types of book that is borrowed is listed under the category of 'Detective Fiction'. It is not surprising to find, therefore, that this subject has been researched by some philatelists, and a small thematic collection can be put together now from stamps connected with, or commemorating, fictional detectives, their creators or cinematic portrayals of them. Anybody who wishes to pursue this topic should consult a site that has been set up by the collector, and book specialist, Steve Trussel (address above).

Its opening page is headed with the amusing cartoon 'stamp' shown above, featuring drawings of famous fictional detectives, including Father Brown, Hercule Poirot, etc. At the bottom of the same page, the identity of each of these characters is given for the benefit of those who could not identify them. The remainder of this home page is taken up with a brief overview of the subject. This explains the types of philatelic items that have been issued to date.

Two indexes are provided to assist navigation. The first is arranged by country, and shows that no fewer than 31 different countries have issued material that can be included in this theme. The entry for Great Britain offers Inspector Clouseau (1985), Sherlock Holmes (1987, 1993 and 1997), Inspector Morse (2005) and Agatha Christie (1990 and 1991). Selecting an entry here takes the user to a written-up album page, on which the stamps and associated material from that country are displayed.

The alternative index allows access by both the name of the detective and the author. This sec-

www.trussel.com/detfic/detect.htm The first part of this web address is Steve Trussel's main site, which is concerned with books in general. This contains a mine of information, which, although non-philatelic, is well worth a visit.

tion is cross-referred to the countries which have issued stamps for that particular detective or the author concerned. Here again, the selection of any entry reveals the written-up and illustrated album page. It is good to see that some of these pages include a warning note to explain when the designs pictured come from countries, particularly some small Caribbean islands, that issue material intended for philatelists only which have no postal use or validity.

The album pages that are included in the site are of a high standard. The resolution of the images of the stamps and other philatelic material used is very good, and they are illustrated in full colour. The presentation is clear and writing-up is sufficient to convey the salient facts regarding the detective being covered. Where background philatelic information is deemed to be relevant, it is also included on the pages. When there were appropriate illustrated commercial first day covers and special postmarks were produced in connection with the stamp issues being described, these have been included on the album pages.

Because Sherlock Holmes is usually considered the doyen of fictional detectives, the site is linked to a separate section titled 'The Philatelic Sherlock Holmes'. This contains material with stamps, covers, postmarks, philatelic reference works and Cinderella issues relating to Holmes, all of which are fully written-up and illustrated.

There are also links to four other topical sites prepared by Steve Trussel. These cover 'Chess on Stamps', 'Robert Louis Stevenson on Stamps' and 'Anti-Smoking Stamps'. The fourth site is called 'Antoine de Saint-Exupéry' and provides details about the philatelic items that have appeared in respect of this French poet-pilot, who was killed in 1944. It is different in style to the other pages reviewed above, but all of the sites are excellent examples of how well suited the internet is for treating thematic subjects ●

Mainly Machins Specialist collectors report by D G A Myall



The Three Kings miniature sheet, which was issued on 31 August. Above: Douglas Glas Myall.

Three Kings A miniature sheet was issued on 31 August, marking the 70th anniversary of the year 1936, when three different Kings ruled the UK. It is not usual to recognise a 70th anniversary with a stamp product, but 1936 was an unusual year. King George V died on 20 January. He was succeeded by his eldest son Edward VIII, who abdicated on 10 December, uncrowned. The next day he was succeeded by his brother Albert who chose the name George VI. The sheet, printed by De La Rue, includes a penny red definitive stamp from each reign. It is interesting to note their differing styles and to compare them to the Machin stamp alongside them. The George V stamp was the first 1d printed in photogravure, and the King's head is well framed. In case you didn't know what its value was, the numeral was printed twice and the value was also shown in words, together with the traditional 'Postage' and 'Revenue'. Of the three, I prefer the Edwardian stamp; it is simple, with no decorative border, while the George VI stamp seems particularly fussy with the floral emblems of the four countries, lessening the impact of the monarch's head. The Edward VIII stamp was designed by a 17-year-old schoolboy!

The stamp is a £3 Machin, printed in gravure and with a pearlescent ink printed over the background. I expect this value was chosen to make the venture financially viable although the figure three seems only a tenuous link to the subject of

the sheet. Although the stamp must have been printed from a special cylinder it is a good match to the version issued in sheets of 200. The miniature sheet stamp would have looked nice if it had been printed in red!

Victoria Cross PSB This lovely prestige book was issued on 21 September, the 150th anniversary of the inauguration of the nation's highest award. The VC is the most democratic of all medals, open to private soldier and field marshal alike. We are told that 1355 medals have been awarded since the decoration was established in 1856. This figure includes three awarded to people who won it twice (VC and bar), one to the American unknown soldier of the First World War, and one which was laid by Queen Victoria in the foundations of Netley Hospital. This medal was recovered when the hospital was demolished in 1966, and is now displayed in the Army Medical Services Museum near Aldershot. The VC has not yet been awarded to a woman, although the current rules do not preclude the possibility. It is said that the bronze for the medals comes from guns captured at Sevastopol in 1856, but metal from other guns has been used at times. Every medal has been made by Hancocks of London, who were established in 1849 and are still going strong. Their business letterhead is shown on the inside front cover of the book. ►



Left: definitive stamps pane from the Victoria Cross PSB, and the medal as shown on one of the pages in the book.

Below: De La Rue's new 2nd class PIP definitives, with coil leader.

The medal cannot be forfeited, no matter what the recipient does in later life. King George V was strongly of the opinion that even if the recipient were to be convicted of a capital crime he should be allowed to wear his medal on the gallows. This never happened, of course. The requirement that the action leading to the award should take place 'in the face of the enemy' was added in 1888; this makes it really special, as every recipient earned his medal while someone was trying to kill him. Actions by military personnel not in combat can earn the George Cross, the nation's second highest honour, and not merely a civilian award.

Just six recipients were chosen for featuring on the special stamps, and a short citation for each of them is given in the text of the book. Three of the six stamps appear on each of two panes, and the black and white photographs do much to give realism to a sombre subject. There is a se-tenant pane of eight definitives around a label depicting the medal. The fourth pane contains four of the 20p stamp from the Gallantry set of September 1990 showing the medal in colour; bronze with a crimson ribbon. Unusually, the stamp panes are not separated by interleaves but are all together at the back. The panes were printed by Enschedé; those with special stamps in lithography, and the pane with definitives by gravure.

The se-tenant pane has four 50p stamps and four of the new PIP NVIs for letters. They have two blue fluor phosphor bars from 9mm bands. These are so arranged that none encroaches onto the central label if printed in correct register. It is more than 10 years since the last Enschedé 50p

was issued. The new stamps can be distinguished from them by the width of the bands; the earlier sheet stamps had two bars from 9.5mm bands. On a single stamp it is probably easier to measure the gap between bars, although the blue fluor is not always easy to see on Enschedé stamps. I am not a great lover of shades, as it is difficult to describe them in words accurately enough so that others can identify them by a description alone, but the booklet 50p stamps are much darker than their sheet versions. Perhaps this has something to do with the use of the new RMS paper for the book stamps.

The pane is notable for providing the first se-tenant pairs with a Pricing in Proportion (PIP) stamp. If you include the label as part of a pair, you will need four panes to complete a set of eight as the label appears on two of the four horizontal pairs and on two of the four vertical pairs.

More PIP stamps The 2nd class NVI in the PIP design for standard letters was issued in rolls of 500 on 15 August. They were printed by De La Rue, and are an excellent match to their sheet stamps. You can tell if a single stamp comes from this source, because the perforation tips will be torn on the short edges and cut straight on the long ones. The leader is identical to the one used for the pre-PIP stamp issued on 28 May 2003 and does not make any reference to the fact that the stamps are in the PIP design. This does not matter, as they are for the same service and have the same value. Coil leaders no longer have roll numbers. This is because the stamps are printed from

cylinders made by a computer-controlled diamond stylus, a method known to collectors as EME. This does not create any flaws which might need retouching, and in consequence a guide to their location on the cylinder is no longer needed.

Books of 6 × 1st, 12 × 1st and 12 × 2nd standard PIP stamps were scheduled to be issued on 12 September. A reprint of the book of six, available from 2 October, will have a label promoting stamp collecting. Business sheets of 100 × 1st and 2nd class PIP standard NVIS were also scheduled to be released from 12 September. I will report further on all of these issues in my next article. I expect that the booklet covers will have the usual number of notches to indicate the class of contents to sight-impaired people, and that these will be the normal length of 4mm. The much longer length of the notches in the two books of four mentioned last time are, of course, to indicate that the stamps inside are the large versions.

Coming soon Designs in the book of six 1st class Smilers stamps have been changed, although I do not yet know what images have been chosen. The expected date of issue is 17 October.

The September *Bulletin* carried news of some new issues to be released next month. The four Northern Ireland country pictorial definitives – 44p, 72p, 1st and 2nd – are currently printed by De La Rue in lithography. This method was said to achieve the best result for the designs involved. Now they are being reprinted in gravure, like the stamps from the other three countries and will be issued on 9 November. This may result in the disappearance of the micro printing which I wrote about in a previous article. On the same day, the first in a series of three annual miniature sheets called 'Lest We Forget' will be issued to commemorate the 90th anniversary (another unusual period) of events from World War 1. This will contain the four 72p country stamps, as well as a special 1st class pictorial stamp picturing Flanders poppies; all will be printed in gravure. The first sheet commemorates the Battle of the Somme, while the following two will commemorate the Battle of Passchendaele and the Armistice. I will have more to say about them in my next article ●

Posting boxes



David Lamming's photograph of a box at Edwardstone Hall, Suffolk.

Letter Box Study Group

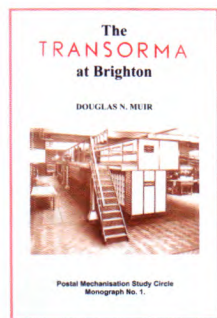
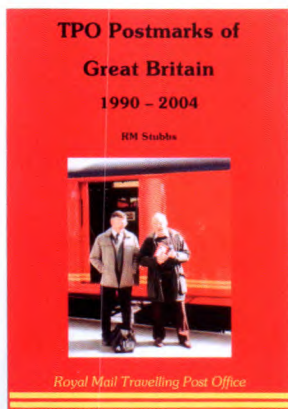
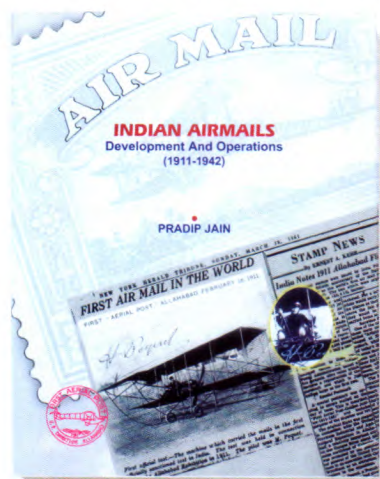
For information on activities and publications write to Mrs V Scott, 38 Leopold Avenue, Handsworth Wood, Birmingham B20 1ES.

THIS MONTH'S photograph, submitted by David Lamming, is of a Victorian box built into the wall of the imposing entrance gatehouse to Edwardstone Hall, Edwardstone, Suffolk. Mr Lamming observes that many layers of red paint have been applied over the years, the thickness of which is such that one can now only just make out the embossed words POST OFFICE on the angled hood above the slot for letters, with the words LETTER BOX just slightly more legible ●

Prize draw A collection of all the current definitive issues

FOLLOWING the popularity of the draw in July, we again offer the prize of the Definitive Stamps Collection, containing the current range of definitive and country stamps in presentation packs, to the sender of the first card drawn on 1 November. The Collection costs £28.95. Five runners-up will receive the empty Collection folder, to house their own packs (the folder sells at £6.99). To enter, simply write your name and address on the back of a postcard and send it to: Definitives Draw, British Philatelic Bulletin, Royal Mail, 148 Old Street, London EC1V 9HQ ●

Books Indian airmail, postmarks of the TPO, and Transorma



New books by (left to right)
Pradip Jain, R M Stubbs, and
Douglas Muir.

Indian Airmails Development and Operations This well-produced and illustrated full-colour volume is inscribed: 'First Edition: 500 Connoisseur's deluxe copies'. Author Pradip Jain is a well-known aerophilatelist and international exhibitor. Modern specialist literature of Indian aerophilately is hard to find, apart from the useful works of Jeffrey Brown published here in the UK; this volume therefore demands careful attention.

Approximately 70 pages consist of background material, maps, illustrations of cancellations and ephemera. The remaining pages, the majority of the book, appear to be reproductions of individual sheets from the author's Large Gold Medal collection, with the captions reset for this volume.

The 'Pioneer Period' (1911-1920) is dominated by the First Aerial Post in India at Allahabad in February 1911, with cards shown to a variety of foreign destinations. Also included are the first Cairo-Delhi flight of November 1918 and the first through flight from the UK to India a month later. Four different Ross Smith covers from 1919 are shown along with the first internal airmail: Karachi-Bombay and return of 1920.

Covers shown from the 'Growth and Development Period' (1921-1928), include references to many well-known pioneer aviators and administrators: Alan Cobham, Sir Sefton Brancker, de

Pinedo, Costes, Sir Samuel Hoare, Geysendorffer and Hinkler. The story continues with 'Operational Beginnings' (1929-1938) including an RAF evacuation flight from Afghanistan in 1929, the arrival of Imperial Airways, the Bertram Atlantis Expedition of 1932, Mount Everest Flights and Air France survey flights. A brief look at the early Second World War is followed by airmail postal stationery, original artwork for unissued airmail stamps, crash mails and even Indian mails carried by the Graf Zeppelin, though not from India! There is a short but incomplete bibliography; the names of publishers and dates of publications are not given.

As the reader will see, this is not a comprehensive catalogue and guide to Indian airmails, more a fascinating look at one philatelist's superb collection containing countless rarities.

This 210-page hardback book, supplied in a slip case, is available from Pradip Jain, Post Box 128, Mithapur, Patna-800 001, India. Price £50 (deluxe edition, signed by author). Airmail postage quoted as US\$7.50. *Richard Beith* ●

TPO Postmarks of Great Britain 1990-2004 In 1991, the TPO & Seapost Society published *TPO Postmarks of Great Britain 1962-1990*, and 15 years later this present volume, by R M Stubbs, brings

the TPO story to its conclusion with the postmarks of the final years leading up to the withdrawal of the last TPOs in 2004.

After a short introduction we move straight into the stories of the remaining TPOs and their handstamps, up to and including those used on the last night of operation and the facsimiles which were made available to collectors via the reposting service. Inevitably these include some surprises, for example two previously unknown Midland TPO South No 2 Side handstamps, which are illustrated in enlarged detail. Following this are chapters devoted to TPO Section and other miscellaneous handstamps, and to Christmas Bag Tenders and Datapost.

This book contains a wealth of colour illustrations of TPOs, their staff, and telling details which lovingly recapture the atmosphere of the closing days of the service, none more so than the sorter cancelling covers on the Bristol-Penzance TPO on the last night, 10 January 2004, with his tongue sticking out in concentration.

TPO Postmarks of Great Britain 1990-2004 by R M Stubbs is an A4 soft-back book of 48 pages, profusely illustrated with colour photographs and postmarks in black & white. Available priced £14 post paid (£16 overseas) from the TPO & Seapost Society, 1 St Mary's Drive, Fairford GL7 4LQ. *Martin Robinson* ●

The Transorma at Brighton Douglas Muir's new book (Postal Mechanisation Study Circle Monograph No 1) is the history of the world's first successful sorting machine and its 33-year career at Brighton. The British Post Office needed to find ways of mechanising ever-increasing amounts of mail, but despaired of finding any viable home-grown inventions, so was driven to purchase two Dutch Transorma sorting machines, a prototype of which was demonstrated in 1927.

Brighton was selected as a suitable site for the installation, because of space available (fittings for stand-by arrangements would have to remain in situ), quantity and type of mail handled, and the availability of young sorting clerks and postmen suitable for training. This began in 1934 and the machines themselves were installed the fol-

lowing year, with the official first day of operation on 7 October, although test mail is known from September. Remarkably, they continued in use until June 1968, including all through the war, when they were scrapped and the office reverted to manual sorting until the new codesort technology was introduced in 1972.

Transorma machines were used at several sorting offices in the Netherlands, and exported to ten other countries, including Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Germany, Sweden, the USA and Venezuela, so there is plenty of material to collect, and although its purely mechanical operation was not the way forward, it paved the way for today's code-sorting.

What makes the Transorma of particular interest to the postal historian is that letters which passed through it were printed with a (usually) red letter or number to identify the operator in case of missorting, and these identification marks or 'idents' have been extensively studied.

Douglas Muir's book has been well produced, and is profusely illustrated with photographs of the machine, its workings and its operators, and good-quality scans of mail items. There are sections on the acquisition and construction of the machines, operator training, the codes they had to memorise, the working of the keyboards and letter carriers, missorts, ident keys and the financial pros and cons. Appendices list the operators and inward and outward sorting plans, and there are exhaustive lists of idents and dates recorded, including those struck in red/black during 1945-46 and in black in 1947.

However thorough and well-informed a writer may be (and Douglas Muir certainly is) he will not be surprised to find new information emerging immediately after publication. The July edition of the British Postmark Society's *Bulletin* records two red/black Transorma idents of December 1935.

The Transorma at Brighton is an A5 softback book of 84 pages with 28 colour and 19 black & white illustrations, and is available priced £11 (including postage) from Bob de Vekey, 215 Hempstead Road, Watford WD17 3HH. *Martin Robinson* ●

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



July identify The detail was from the Westminster Abbey stamp of 1966. The winner was R Walker, Isle of Wight.

July knowledge Answers: 1) Barnett Freedman; 2) Business Design Centre, Islington; 3) 1969. The winner was T Hindson of Sussex.

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 October *Identify* Competition. Secondly, test your philatelic knowledge by answering the questions below. Send your answer to October *Knowledge* Competition. The competitions are not open to Royal Mail employees

- 1 Who designed the 1992 Civil War stamps?
- 2 Which was the first commemorative (special) stamp printed in two colours?
- 3 Where is a major European stamp exhibition being held next month?

Send your answer (addressed to either October *Identify* competition or October *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 November will each receive £100. Ten runner-up prizes of presentation packs or first day covers will be awarded in each competition. Competitions are not open to Royal Mail employees •

Events

Until 24 October Moving the Mail: Horses to Horsepower BPMA exhibition, Coventry Transport Museum. **Enquiries** +44 (0)24 7623 4270.

30 September Portadown Stampex & Collectors Fair at Portadown Town Hall. **Enquiries** 028 406 22022.

3 October BPMA Lecture: Andrew Davidson, Stamp Designer, at BPMA. **Enquiries** 020 7239 2570.

7 October Thatcham & District PS Stamp Fair, Thatcham. **Enquiries** 01635 866942.

7-13 October España 06 international exhibition, Malaga. UK Commissioner R Pizer, 01452 713958.

11-14 October The Picture Postcard Show, Royal Horticultural Society, London SW1.

13-15 October Stampa (Irish National Stamp Exhibition), Dublin. **Enquiries** Stampa, PO Box 2723, Cardiff Lane, Dublin 2, Fax ++353 1 4546675.

14 October Kent Federation of PSs Autumn Rally at Langley Park School for Boys, Beckenham. Hosted by Bromley & Beckenham PS.

14-15 October Scotex at Dewar's Centre, Perth.

24 October BPMA Big Draw Family Event: 1930s Animation at BPMA. **Enquiries** 020 7239 2570.

26-28 October Philatex at RHS Lawrence Hall, Greycoat Street, London SW1.

28 October North West Federation Convention & Stamp Fair, Bolton. **Enquiries** 01204 307252 •

Late news

Royal Mail updates Contrary to the announcement here in September, there will be only six stamp cards issued for the Smilers issue on 17 October. These will feature the six new stamps. The new Smilers stamps are printed in litho by Cartor (Generic and Smilers sheets) and gravure by Walsall (stamp book).

In January we will be issuing a Valentine's Day six 1st class stamps retail book which will contain five gold definitives and one 'Love' Smilers stamp (in top right position in book). The Love stamp will have elliptical perfs, and solid as opposed to vignettied phosphor bands, thus conforming to the other stamps in the book. The date of issue is to be announced shortly.

The cylinders used for the Christmas stamp books (1st & 2nd class) are: D1 magenta D1 yellow D1 cyan (blue) D1 black D1 pearlescence and D1 phosphor •

Prize winners The winners of our Artwork draw in June were: Mrs N Jansen, Channel Islands (1st prize); F Pieren, Belgium; Miss L Webb, Worcestershire; Miss B Credland, London; B Corrin, Sunderland; and G Franklin, Germany. Winners of the Definitive Stamps Collection draw (July) were: B Sharrocks, Somerset (1st prize); P Kearsley, Greater Manchester; E Harris, New Zealand; F McVitie, Swansea; Mr & Mrs R Maisey, Wiltshire; and G Prince, Staffordshire •

Two major finds at auction Spink will auction two major finds in its 26 October sale. These comprise complete blocks of 40 of the 3d on 3d and 6d on 6d surcharges of 1883. Both blocks have corner letters 1K/K1 to LT/TL. The block of 6d includes the one dot below d variety on one of the stamps. The blocks, estimated at £15,000-20,000 and £16,000-22,000 respectively, are the largest possible multiples of these stamps, as the sheets were split into blocks of 40 by the Post Office before distribution. The sale will also include much good Irish postal history, such as a Newry Ship Letter, an 1863 cover with Missent from Belfast to Duncannon marking, and a 1908 cover from

Dublin to San Francisco with tete-beche pair of the Sinn Fein 'harp-player' propaganda labels as well as Edward VII definitives, two affixed upside down, probably to show disrespect to the British state. This rare cover is estimated at £500-600. Enquiries: Spink, 020 7563 4000 or see website www.spink.com •

New catalogues The new edition of the *Stoneham Great Britain Stamp Catalogue* (reviewed in the July *Bulletin*, page 349) is now available from Tallents House in Edinburgh, price £15.95 plus handling charge: £2.95 UK, £5 Europe, £14 rest of world. The order code is PB393.

The 2007 edition of Stanley Gibbons' *Commonwealth & British Empire Stamps 1840-1952* is now available, priced at £44.95. Other new catalogues include the 6th edition of Part 6 France (£34.95) and 4th edition of Part 16 Central Asia (£27.50), and one-country catalogues for Ireland (£9.95) and New Zealand (£14.95). To order, or for further information, contact: Stanley Gibbons Publications, 01425 472363 •

Congress handbook A handsomely produced 40-page handbook was available to those attending the Philatelic Congress at Renfrew in July. Copies are still available, price £2.50 including UK postage, from: A G Blakeley, 7 Albany Drive, Burnside, Glasgow G73 3QN. Remittances should be made payable to Caledonian PS (PCGB 2006). The book includes features on the Caledonian Society, Renfrewshire and the Post, Laurel & Hardy, Philately in Edwardian times, Philatelic history, early Iceland mail, airmails in the development of civil aviation, and the postcard artist's view of postmen, as well as a record of the Congress and biographies of the new signatories to the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists •

Bulletin back issues Steve Harris offers a nearly complete run of the *Bulletin*, Vols 5-25 and Nos 1-5 of Vol 26, to anyone who might be interested and willing to collect or pay postage. Contact him on 07785 341165 •

New Royal Mail prestige stamp books album



Now available is this smart new album to house your collection of prestige stamp books. The album has 10 leaves in which to slot the prestige books so that the front and back covers can be easily examined. Slots at the top and bottom of the border of each leaf allow you to add notes about the books – date of issue, contents, catalogue number etc.

Price £15.50, plus handling charge: £2.95 UK, £5 Europe, £14 rest of world. Order code PA707.

Additional leaves available in packs of 10, price £4.50 plus handling charge: £1.45 UK, £1.55 Europe, £2.15 rest of world. Order code PA708.

The new Victoria Cross prestige stamp book (21 September 2006) is priced £7.44 (YB028). Also still available are: Battle of Trafalgar (£7.44, YB026) and Brunel (£7.50, YB027).

Order from Royal Mail as shown at right, or see www.royalmail.com/stamps

Royal Mail

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



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