

British Philatelic Bulletin

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Welsh Prestige Stamp Book

The contents of the Welsh Prestige Stamp Book, scheduled for issue on 25 February 1992, have been changed since the September *Bulletin* went to press. The contents will now be:

- Pane 1* – 4 x 39p Winterime stamps (Sheep)
 - Pane 2* – 6 x 18p Welsh Country stamps
 - Pane 3* – 2 x 24p, 2 x 18p Welsh Country stamps;
2 x 33p definitive, 1 x 1st class NVI, 1 x 2nd
class NVI and 1 label
 - Pane 4* – 6 x 24p Welsh Country stamps
- The total value of stamps will be £6.

Obituary – Leon Rapkin

Leon Rapkin who died on 23 September was a well-known and well-liked figure in many British philatelic organisations. He built up important collections of German stamps, particularly the first issues of the German Empire and Colonies and Post Offices abroad. Amongst the many offices he held were President of the Germany and Colonies Philatelic Society, President of the British Philatelic Federation and Vice-President of the Royal Philatelic Society. He will be best remembered as Chief Steward of "London 1980" and as Chief Executive of "Stamp World London 90". The outstanding success of the Alexandra Palace exhibition will be his lasting memorial. Hard work and efficiency were the hallmarks of all Leon's many philatelic activities; his services to the hobby were duly recognised by the award of the highest honours one can achieve in the philatelic world – election to fellowship of "the Royal" in 1977 and signing the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists in 1984.

Leon's enthusiasm for stamps and philatelic work was shared by his wife Franceska who is our leading exponent of thematic stamp collecting. They worked very much as a team in the Stamp World office and made many friends in all areas of the philatelic community. Their thoughts will be with Franceska and their children, Simon and Sarah.

John Holman

Definitive Update

The 18p stamp has been printed from cylinder 5 as well as 4 and 7 recorded in September. New plates/cylinders for stamp books are as follows: 10 x 1st class Questa (issued 6 August 1991) – Q2Q2 and Q3Q3; 50p machine book (10 September) – B34 (1p) B2 (24p); 4 x 33p (16 September) – W1W1W1; 4 x 39p (16 September) – W1W1W1W1.

50p and £1 machine books with corrected postal rate information have been produced and should now be available from most outlets; there was no specific first day of availability.

Swiftpacks

Collectors of postal stationery may be interested to know that Swiftpacks have been redesigned; the new packs may be on sale by the time this *Bulletin* is published. Collectors should enquire at main post offices; Swiftpacks are not available from the British Philatelic Bureau.

Country Stamps

3 December 1991

New 18p, 24p, 28p and 39p Country stamps for Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales will be issued on 3 December. They will be on sale at post offices in the respective countries and at the British Philatelic Bureau, Collections, and philatelic counters. The designs will be the same as previous issues, the colours of the new stamps being as the national definitives: 18p light green, 24p rust, 28p slate blue and 39p rhododendron. These values cover the basic second class inland rate; the basic inland first class and EEC countries rate; the non-EEC European rate; and the rate for basic weight airmail letters to the rest of the world.

Country stamps, then referred to as "Regional Issues" made their debut in 1958 with 3d stamps for Guernsey, Jersey and the Isle of Man and 3d, 6d and 1s3d stamps for Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Various additions to the range of values followed - 2½d stamps (postcard rate) for the three islands in 1964, 4d and 5d stamps for each region in 1966 and 1968 respectively and 9d and 1s6d stamps for the three main regions in 1967. The stamps for Guernsey and Jersey were taken off sale when the islands became "postally independent" in 1969.

New decimal stamps for the remaining four regions were issued in July 1971. The Isle of Man also became postally independent in 1973 since when the stamps for Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales have been referred to as "Country" issues. Numerous new values have resulted from postal rates increases and the stamps enjoy popularity with many collectors who have built up specialised collections.

The background story to the introduction of the "Regionals" was given by Jean Ferrugia in a series of articles in the *Bulletin*: August 1978 (Scotland), September 1978 (Wales), October 1978 (N Ireland), November 1978 (Isle of Man), January 1979 (Jersey) and February, 1979 (Guernsey).

Technical Details

The 12 stamps have been printed in offset-lithography by The House of Questa Ltd in



sheets of 200. The 18p stamp is printed on fluorescent paper with a single phosphor band; the other values are on Phosphor Coated Paper. Perforation is 15 x 14 and the gum PVA.

First Day Facilities

First day cover envelopes, price 21p each, will be available from the Bureau, Collections, philatelic counters and main post offices in the respective countries. Pictorial "First Day of Issue" postmarks will be available at the Bureau and for the three country capitals: Belfast, Edinburgh and Cardiff. First day covers will be provided in sets of three - one set with the Bureau postmark, the other with the postmarks for the three capitals. Application forms, available from the Bureau, Collections, and philatelic counters, should be returned by 3 December.

Collectors preparing their own covers may send them for the pictorial postmarks to: British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, EDIN-

BURGH EH3 5TT (Bureau postmark); Scotland & N Ireland Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail Glasgow, George Square, GLASGOW G2 1AA (Edinburgh and Belfast postmarks - state clearly which is required) or Wales & The West Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail Cardiff, Penarth Road, CARDIFF CF1 1AA (Cardiff postmark).

First day posting boxes will be available at all offices which normally provide them in each of the three countries and at all Collections and philatelic counter offices in England. Covers posted in these boxes will receive the standard, non-pictorial "First Day of Issue" handstamps.

Presentation Pack

A "New Issue" Pack containing all 12 stamps will be available from the Bureau, Collections, philatelic counters and main post offices in the respective countries from 3 December, price £3.60.



New Printer for 18p Definitive

18p stamps printed by the Dutch firm of Joh. Enschedé en Zonen will go on sale at the British Philatelic Bureau, Collections and philatelic counters on 19 November. The stamp will be issued to post offices as required in conjunction with the Harrison-printed stock. No distinction will be made between the two printings for operational purposes.

The Enschedé stamp, like the Harrison equivalent, will be printed in photogravure in sheets of 200 and will have a central phosphor band. Perforation will be 15 x 14 and the gum PVA. The paper, supplied by Coated Papers



Enschedé imprint on trial sheet of unissued 15p stamps Ltd, contains a low level of Optical Brightening Agent (OBA). As with the new High Value stamps (March 1992), fluor has been added as a security measure.

Enschedé printed supplies of the 8p stamp (then basic second class rate) in 1979; this went on philatelic sale on 12 December 1979 and attracted a good deal of interest amongst collectors as the first British stamp printed overseas. There were subtle differences between the Enschedé 8p and its Harrison equivalent but these are insufficient to warrant separate listing in the main catalogues. It is, however, listed in the Gibbons *GB Specialised* catalogue.

In 1990 Enschedé made trial printings for Royal Mail of the 15p and 20p definitives but the stamps were not put into production. Trial sheets have been deposited in the National Postal Museum and can be seen by prior appointment.

Collectors are advised that whilst the 18p Enschedé printing will be available from 19 November, it is not regarded by Royal Mail as a

new stamp and no first day of issue facilities will be available.

Joh. Enschedé en Zonen

This family-owned company has over nearly 300 years built a high reputation for reliability, service and quality; the company has been involved in stamp production for over 100 years. It has facilities for photogravure, offset-litho and intaglio (recess) printing. In addition to sheet stamps, Enschedé also prints stamps in rolls (coils) and books. Enschedé has developed a low-cost technique for producing books which combines cover printing, inserting the stamps, cutting and folding using only one pass through the machine. Enschedé studio staff are experienced in undertaking the whole or individual parts of the design work for any printing process. The company employs 1,000 staff. In addition to stamp printing, Enschedé undertakes banknote production for the Netherlands Bank, security printing such as cheques and share certificates, and general printing jobs such as annual reports, calendars and books. In recent years Enschedé has developed anti-forgery devices for use in plastic identity and credit cards.

Enschedé have printed most Dutch stamps since 1866; the first Netherlands stamps printed in photogravure appeared in 1924, ten years after the world's first photogravure stamps were issued by Bavaria. The first British photogravure stamps, printed by Harrisons, made their debut in 1934.



Goebel photogravure press at Enschedé printing works, Haarlem

Enschedé have produced stamps for many countries including Australia, Iceland, Isle of Man, Netherlands Antilles, New Zealand, Qatar (including aerogrammes), Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Surinam, Sweden, Thailand, Tokelau, and Tristan da Cunha.

Further details of Enschedé and the printing of the 18p stamp will be published shortly.

Christmas Aerogrammes

In response to requests from some readers we are pleased to provide a listing of Christmas aerogrammes from 1965 to date.

The title Aerogramme was introduced on 1 February 1982, previous issues were referred to as Air Letters.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Price (postage value)</i>	<i>Main Design</i>
1 Nov 65	10d (6d)	Snowflakes
1 Nov 65	10d (6d)	Nativity
1 Nov 66	10d (9d)	Santa in Reindeerland
1 Nov 67	10d (9d)	Partridge & Pear Tree
1 Nov 67	10d (9d)	Three Wise Men
1 Nov 68	10d (9d)	Angel
1 Nov 68	10d (9d)	Santa in Airship
29 Oct 69	10d (9d)	Nativity Scenes
28 Oct 70	10d (9d)	Nativity Scenes
13 Oct 71	6p (5p)	Doves
18 Oct 72	6p (5p)	Decorations
21 Nov 73	7p (6p)	Traditional Ornaments
27 Nov 74	7p (6p)	Partridge & Shepherds
26 Nov 75	12p (10½p)	Christmas Story
17 Nov 76	12p (10½p)	Victorian Christmas Scenes
16 Nov 77	12p (10½p)	Christmas Tree
22 Nov 78	12p (10½p)	Snow Scenes
21 Nov 79	14p (12p)	Christmas Decorations
19 Nov 80	16½p (14½p)	Nativity Story
18 Nov 81	23p (20p)	Dickensian Characters
17 Nov 82	27½p (24p)	Angels & Carol Singers
16 Nov 83	30p (26p)	Christmas Flora
20 Nov 84	30p (26p)	Victorian Mail Coaches
19 Nov 85	30p (26p)	Pantomime
18 Nov 86	30p (26p)	Decorating for Christmas
17 Nov 87	30p (26p)	A Child's View of Christmas
15 Nov 88	32p (27p)	Hark the Herald Angel Sing
14 Nov 89	40p (30p)	Ely Cathedral
13 Nov 90	42p (32p)	Children's Christmas Activities
8 Oct 91	44p (34p)	Christmas Angels



Imprinted stamps from 1978, 1972 and 1975 Christmas aerogrammes

Six Month Digest

Listed below are the issues of the past six months and the proposed dates of issue for stamps until April 1992. Any change in these dates will be notified in the Bulletin. British Philatelic Bureau order codes are quoted where known.

14 May	Definitives Pack No. 24 (DR001)
14 May	NPM Stamping Mail cards (NQ908)
14 May	Scotland 22p CPL paper (SS224)
14 May	Scotland 26p CPL paper (SS263)
14 May	Scotland 37p CPL paper (SS371)
14 May	Wales 22p CPL paper (WS223)
28 May	Sport stamp cards (AQ162)
11 Jun	Sport stamps (AS457)
11 Jun	Sport pack (AP096)
25 Jun	50p book (Aero 4) (TB007)
25 Jun	£1 book (Mills 4) (TB008)
2 Jul	Roses stamp cards (AQ167)
16 Jul	Roses stamps (AS462)
16 Jul	Roses pack (AP097)
23 Jul	Gaidhealach Aerogramme (QS028)
30 Jul	DL stamped env. 1st class (RX001)
30 Jul	DL stamped env. 2nd class (RX002)
30 Jul	C4 stamped env. 1st class (RZ001)
30 Jul	C4 stamped env. 2nd class (RZ002)
30 Jul	C5 stamped env. 1st class (RY001)
30 Jul	C5 stamped env. 2nd class (RY002)
6 Aug	Dinosaur stamp cards (AQ173)
6 Aug	4 x 2nd class book/W (UB035)
6 Aug	4 x 1st class book/W (UB036)
6 Aug	10 x 2nd class book/W (UB037)
6 Aug	10 x 1st class book/W (UB038)
6 Aug	10 x 1st class book/H (UB039)
6 Aug	10 x 2nd class book/Q (UN040)
6 Aug	10 x 1st class book/Q (UB041)
20 Aug	Dinosaurs stamps (AS468)
20 Aug	Dinosaurs pack (AP098)
3 Sep	Maps stamp cards (AQ179)
10 Sep	6p Def. — lime green (DS060)
10 Sep	18p Def. — light green (DS182)
10 Sep	24p Def. — rust (DS242)
10 Sep	28p Def. — slate blue (DS283)
10 Sep	34p Def. — purple (DS344)
10 Sep	35p Def. — old gold (DS351)
10 Sep	39p Def. — rhododendron (DS390)
10 Sep	50p book (1p/24p stamps) (TB009)
10 Sep	£1 book (2p/24p stamps) (TB010)
10 Sep	New Defs. Pack (DP014)
16 Sep	£1.32 book (33p stamps) (UB043)
16 Sep	£1.56 book (39p stamps) (UB044)
16 Sep	18p Coil (XL-500) (DC851/DC051)
16 Sep	24p Coil (YL-500) (DC852/DC052)
17 Sep	Maps stamps (AS474)

17 Sep
17 Sep
2 Oct
8 Oct
29 Oct
Oct

Maps pack (AP099)
NPM Maps cards (NQ909)
Mixed Value Coil (DC855/DC055)
Christmas aerogramme (QX013)
Christmas stamp cards (AQ184)
"Our World" Vol. 3



Forthcoming

12 Nov	Christmas stamps (AS479)
12 Nov	Christmas pack (AT100)
12 Nov	Christmas stamp book (UB045)
12 Nov	1991 Collectors' Pack (DS183)
12 Nov	1991 Yearbook (AR023)
12 Nov	NPM "Old Christmas" cards
19 Nov	Enschedé 18p (DS183)
3 Dec	18p, 24p, 28p, 39p Country stamps
31 Dec	Wintertime stamp cards

1992

Early	Revised High Values
14 Jan	Wintertime stamps and pack
28 Jan	Greetings stamp book and pack
Jan	Happy and Glorious stamp cards
6 Feb	Happy and Glorious stamps and pack
25 Feb	Prestige Stamp Book (Wales)
Feb	Tennyson stamp cards
10 Mar	Tennyson stamps and pack
Mar	Europa stamp cards
7 Apr	Europa stamps and pack

Notes:

1. Stamped envelopes available only from British Philatelic Bureau, Collections and philatelic counters.
2. The 2nd class books (6 August) have NVI stamps in bright blue. The 1st class books (6 August) have NVI stamps in flame (as previous issue) but with new Freepost address in London (previously Newcastle upon Tyne) printed on book cover. H = Harrison; Q = Quеста; W = Walsall.
3. Date of issue of the revised Castles High Values, previewed in October 1991 Bulletin, to be announced.

National Philatelic Organisations in Britain

6: The British Philatelic Trust

JAMES NEGUS, FRPSL

The British Philatelic Trust, set up in April 1981, was the final realisation of hopes expressed by generations of philatelists.

The Trust's objectives are the long-term development of philately, admirably summarised by itself as "financial assistance to philatelic initiative".

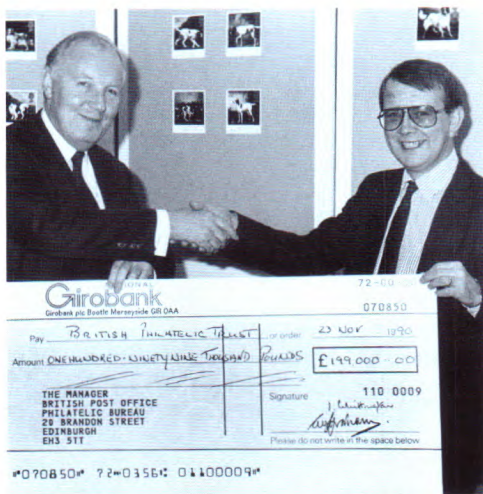
This series of articles will have given some indication of how widespread is organised philately in Britain; the work of the national bodies in co-ordinating and encouraging largely voluntary activity has been described at length. But over and above all this effort there had long been a need for an organisation to map out a sound strategy and to have adequate funding to carry it out.

The breakthrough finally came with The Post Office's historic decision to issue miniature sheets in 1978, 1979 and 1980 in direct support of the 1980 International Stamp Exhibition in London. Each sheet carried a premium; after balancing the Exhibition's books when the show was concluded, a surplus of about £1 million remained. The Post Office donated this capital as a Trust Fund for the benefit of philately.

The Post Office commitment was further demonstrated with a second series of miniature sheets in 1988, 1989 and 1990. Once again the premiums helped finance the Stamp World London 90 Exhibition but they also provided a further donation of £199,000 presented to the British Philatelic Trust after the Exhibition closed.

However, the Trust is not part of The Post Office. It is managed by an independent Board of Trustees on which The Post Office has two nominees. The remaining Trustees comprise four philatelists and a commercial expert, with the Trust's Secretary drawn from Chartered Accountancy. Of great financial importance has been achievement of charitable status in 1983.

Among the Trust's early objectives was setting up a British Philatelic Centre, a national focal point for organised philately. Nearly £600,000 was expended in purchasing a suitable building in Charterhouse Street, close by Smithfield Market in the City of London, and



Dr Alan Huggins, Chairman of the BPT, receives a cheque for £199,000 from Keith Fisher, General Manager of Royal Mail Stamps, November 1990.

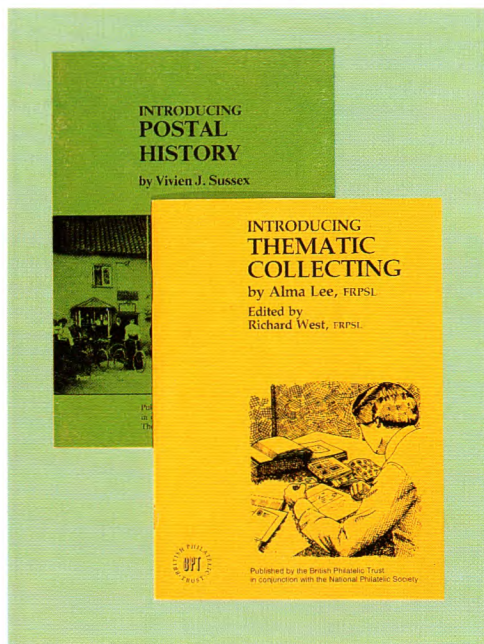
refurbishing it for use. It was duly declared open on 27 February 1987 by the then Chairman of the Post Office, Sir Ron Dearing. Since July 1990 the Centre has been administered by the British Philatelic Federation.

Its meeting room has proved particularly successful, already over-subscribed by the numerous societies wishing to use it for their activities. The Centre also provides office accommodation for the Trust itself and the national bodies, the British Philatelic Federation, the Stamp Publicity Board and the National Philatelic Society with its Library. Stamp World Exhibitions were also located at the Centre as the administrative base of the Alexandra Palace 1990 International Exhibition.

The Trustees have set their sights firmly on growth for the rest of the decade. They recognise that it will not be right to remain content with the considerable achievement of establishing the British Philatelic Centre, but that larger premises are going to be needed long term. They also aim to have management of the Centre less reliant on its present voluntary effort and to staff it with paid professionals.

This pursuit of growth implies expanding current programmes of support to British philately. Some of the ways in which the Trust does this are notable. It donates philatelic handbooks to public libraries and provides gift packs of philatelic accessories to school stamp clubs. It provides frames for national and regional exhibitions. It underwrites the costs of seminars on judging, exhibiting and philatelic writing.

The Trust supports particular regional federation and society events, like exhibitions and conventions, and has a scheme for contributing to the expenses of visiting speakers for local societies. It has published guideline book-



lets on exhibiting, thematics, postal history and judging; it has met production costs of books by individual authors and has begun publishing some specialised works itself. It has given financial help to the Bath Postal Museum and the NPS Library.

There has been a continuing interest in major stamp exhibitions. Grants and loans from the Trust have ensured British representation at overseas Internationals; finance was forthcoming during the long organisational run-up to Stamp World London 90; the competitive side at Stampex is assisted, including the Melville National Youth Stamp Competition.

Significant funding for the Stamp Publicity Board has allowed the important touring exhibi-

tion, Stampway to the World, to be mounted in Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle, London and Glasgow. The Trust is especially concerned also to develop educational videos to promote interest in philately.

A great deal has been achieved in its relatively short life and collectors are indeed fortunate that the British Philatelic Trust's policies are so firmly forward-looking. Organised British philately has been placed on a much sounder basis as a consequence, promising well for the future of the hobby.

Address for information: The Secretary, The British Philatelic Trust, British Philatelic Centre, 107 Charterhouse Street, LONDON EC1M 6PT. Tel: 071-251 5040.

Collect First Day Covers Catalogue

Benham (A Buckingham) Ltd announce the publication of the 1992 edition of their *Collect First Day Covers* catalogue. This 20th edition of a popular work lists all GB First Day Covers; Benham covers can now be found in a separate catalogue. Hundreds of additions have been made. A lot of work has been done in the tidying up of the booklet section, in particular 1971 First Decimals. Prices have changed dramatically in some cases, reflecting the very short supply of very good quality covers. A glossary of terms has been included for the first time. The price of the catalogue has been kept to £4.50 for the second year running. Available from W H Smith, Post Office Collections shops, good stamp shops and from: Benham (A Buckingham) Ltd, The Bayle, FOLKESTONE, Kent, CT20 1SD. Postage 50p extra; orders from Benham includes a free one year subscription to their lists.

Postal History Societies in Worthing

Worthing is the home of two postal history societies, the Worthing Society of Postal Historians (founded 1970) which caters for all world postal history and the Sussex Postal History Society (founded 1991) which caters only for the towns and villages of Sussex. New members are always welcome as this helps to expand the scope of countries or towns available for study. Details of both societies may be obtained from: John E O Hobbs, FRPSL, 12 Orphir Road, WORTHING, W Sussex BN11 2SR.

Postbag

JOHN HOLMAN

An interesting letter concerning British definitive stamps was recently received from Mr Larry Rosenblum of California, USA. This was passed to David Dale, Manager Definitive Stamps at Royal Mail Stamps Headquarters. I think Mr Rosenblum's letter and Mr Dale's reply will be of interest to readers.

Mr Rosenblum wrote:

No doubt you are aware of speculation in the philatelic press that the British Post Office is thinking about changes in the definitive range of stamps. Whether or not that is true, I thought I would take this opportunity to give you my thoughts regarding the future of GB stamps. I hope you will be able to pass along my comments to someone who is involved with planning future stamps.

By way of introduction, I will mention that I have been actively collecting British stamps for over 15 years, with extensive specialisation in the Machins. I write a quarterly column about the Machins for the *Great Britain Collectors Club Chronicle*, the journal of the American study group for British stamps. I also write articles for other publications, and I often give help to other collectors who are learning the intricacies of Machin collecting.



Machins - now approaching their silver jubilee

I am, therefore, an ardent admirer of the Machin series, and I believe it is the most beautiful and fascinating set of stamps ever issued. However, all good things must come to an end; at most, the Machins can only survive as long as Queen Elizabeth is on the throne. I am not opposed to the replacement of the Machins

with a new series of definitives; the Machins' place in philately and in history is already assured, and after 25 years, perhaps it is time for something new.

I am dismayed at the suggestion of pictorial definitives. The tradition of simply featuring the British monarch is a strong one, starting with the famous Penny Black. I believe this legacy should be continued. In addition, there is the practical problem of designing a small stamp to contain a picture, the Queen's head, and the denomination. All three of the design elements might suffer in the process. The British monarch remains the most well-known in the world, and her presence on the definitives makes them very special. Now that most of the Commonwealth has departed from using the British ruler as the predominant theme of their stamps, it is important that Great Britain keeps up the tradition. A set of pictorial stamps, no matter how well done, will put GB in the me-too ranks of philately, which it has managed to avoid for 150 years.



Turning to the high values, I have never been happy with the current series of Castles. Indeed, it is hard to look good following the large Machins, especially the recess-printed ones, but that is not the problem. The style of engraving used for the Castles is extremely poor, giving a washed-out appearance. In addition, The Queen's head is in the same style and colour, and therefore not separated from the rest of the design. To me, it has always seemed that The Queen is floating on top of the castles, especially on the £1.50. It was a good idea that failed during execution. In this case, it is definitely time for something new, the sooner the better.

I think a small format £1 stamp is inevitable, although a sad commentary on our collective way of life. Similarly for a £10 stamp, although as a stamp collector I would hope that it could be avoided for as long as possible.

On any new set of definitives, it would be fine to remove the unnecessary 'p', as has been done with most special stamps. I strongly urge you not to follow in the footsteps of the United States Postal Service in putting a zero in front of denominations under 10p, creating stamps with values such as 05. It amazes me that the USPS



believes that its customers and employees cannot distinguish between a stamp marked with a 2 and a stamp marked \$2. (I did, however, see a cover franked with a 25c stamp and two \$2 stamps, where the writer presumably thought the \$2 stamps were worth 2c each to make the 29c rate.) It is hardly appropriate to make stamps that look absolutely foolish because there are a few people who don't or won't look twice at them.

David Dale replied:

You make some cogent points with which I personally agree and I have taken care to circulate your letter to several other managers here who are involved in planning future stamps.

I cannot give you any major news of developments in the Machin arena, but I can say that we have no plans to introduce a new portrait of Queen Elizabeth.

You should look out for news of an amendment to the design of the current Castles series which particularly involves The Queen's head. I hope that it meets with your approval.

The news concerning the changes to the High Values, mentioned by Mr Dale, was announced in last month's Bulletin. Modified Castle stamps will be issued early in 1992 – date to be announced. Ed.

Demise of “Double Heads”

The 15p, 29p, 34p and 37p Penny Black Anniversary definitives were withdrawn from sale at the Bureau, Collections and philatelic counters on 14 September 1991. The final value — 20p — will be withdrawn on 31 December.

Posting Boxes

125. New “Royal Mail” Boxes

Pillarboxes are now being manufactured with the words “Royal Mail” moulded on the front instead of “Post Office”. The Royal Mail pillarboxes are the traditional “A” type with a cylindrical lid that were introduced last century. Geoff Roach, who heads the Royal Mail's Network Operations' delivery and collections, “We feel the words Royal Mail are a better reflection of the business's separate identity.”



Geoff Roach with one of the first pillarboxes to bear the Royal Mail identity

The first areas to get the new pillarboxes will be Liverpool, Birmingham, Basingstoke and some parts of London. They are being manufactured at two foundries, initially at the rate of 15 per week. The cast-iron pillarboxes — each weighing some half a ton — will be available to district head postmasters, who need new pillarboxes for their district — both as replacements and for new areas. Mr Roach said: “Until recently the demand for new pillarboxes has been outstripping the availability but now we are overcoming this problem. Existing suppliers have been pressed to increase their production and we have also introduced a new foundry — the first for many years.”

Article and photograph reproduced by permission of the Editor of “Courier” — Royal Mail staff newspaper.



The 1991 Royal Mail Yearbook

Royal Mail Yearbook 1991

On 12 November, coinciding with the issue of the Christmas stamps, Volume 8 of the Royal Mail Special Stamps Yearbook will be published. This very interesting and beautifully illustrated book contains background information about the development and production of all the special stamps issued in 1991.

The book is hardbound with a matching slipcase and includes sets of the Dogs, Scientific Achievements, Europe in Space, Sport '91, Roses, Dinosaurs, Maps, and Christmas stamps. It is available from the British Philatelic Bureau, Collections, philatelic counters, and most main post offices, price £19.50. The book has been designed by Carroll, Dempsey and Thirkell with text by Tim Shackleton.

Collectors' Pack 1991

The 1991 edition of the Collectors' Pack will go on sale on 12 November, price £11.50. It will be available from the Bureau, Collections, philatelic counters, and most main post offices. It contains all special stamps issued during 1991 mounted on a quality display board. A colourful and informative folder gives background details, written by Mike Barden, about each of the stamp subjects. The Pack has been designed by Williams and Phoa.

Our World: Images of Nature

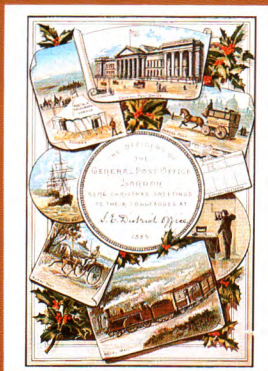
Volume 3 in this popular series of books has recently been published. A joint production by six postal administrations, the book contains the Royal Mail's five Roses stamps (16 July 1991), Australia's four Waterbird stamps (14 February 1991), Canada's Heritage Rivers se-tenant strip of five (20 August 1991), Sweden's Meteorology set of four (6 October 1990), United Nations' Conservation se-tenant block of four (15 March 1991), and United States' Marine Mammals se-tenant block of four (3 October 1990). This handsome 16-page book, with many fine colour illustrations, is available from the Bureau, Collections, philatelic counters, and postshops, price £7.50. It is available with Vols 1 and 2 (published 1989 and 1990) for the special price of £18 (not £15 as stated in October).

Withdrawal of 1990 Yearbook & Collectors' Pack

Any remaining stocks of the 1990 Collectors' Pack and Yearbook will be withdrawn from sale at the British Philatelic Bureau, Collections and philatelic counters on 12 and 13 November respectively. Price £18.50 Yearbook (Bureau order code AY020), £10.50 Collectors' Pack (AR020).

NPM Christmas Postcards

On 12 November the National Postal Museum will issue four post cards reproducing Post Office christmas cards of the 1880s and 1890s. Three postcards of vertical format feature Christmas cards sent by Officers of the GPO London: NPM91/14 reproduces the card of 1885 showing the old GPO (now demolished) and postal transport including a mail ship, parcel post cart and mail train; 91/15 features the card of 1887/88 depicting allegorical statues of the five continents (America, Australasia, Africa, Asia and Europe); 91/16 reproduces the card of 1888/89 showing Queen Victoria and classical/allegorical design. The fourth postcard, of horizontal format, 91/17, features the Christmas card produced by Liverpool Postal Staff for Christmas 1892/New Year 1893; the design includes the Royal and Liverpool city coats of arms. The four cards will cost 20p each and can be ordered from: National Postal Museum (Mail Order), King Edward Street, LONDON EC1A 1LP. A handling charge of 24p should be added on orders below £24; £2.14 on orders over £24 (sent by registered post). Minimum order 80p.



A special handstamp will be used on 12 November in addition to the Museum's regular Maltese Cross handstamp. Cards/covers for these handstamps should be sent to: London North Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail City & International, King Edward Street, LONDON EC1A 1AA. To receive the 12 November date, cards/covers must be posted to the Handstamp Centre no later than 12 November and should bear at least the 1st class postage rate (24p). Please state clearly which handstamp is required.

Gems from the R M Phillips Collection

190. 2d Bright Blue

This month we feature an attractive block of eight of the 1840 2d from a page in the Phillips Collection headed "2d Shades of Bright Blue". This particular block, lettered FA-GD, is captioned as a darker shade of bright blue and has the F of the letters FB and FC doubled. The left hand sheet margin



contains part of the instruction "In wetting the Back be careful not to remove the Cement". The page also includes a fine block of four, lettered FH-GI. These two blocks can be seen on page 5 of Volume 7 of the Phillips Collection in the National Postal Museum.

The Museum, in London's Chief Post Office, King Edward Street, EC1, is open Monday-Thursday 9.30am to 4.30pm; Friday 9.30am to 4pm. Admission free. King Edward Street is a few minutes walk from St Paul's Cathedral and the Museum of London. The nearest underground station is St Paul's on the Central Line.

Two important special exhibitions are currently on display at the Museum: "Maps and the Post Office" (until March 1992) and "Stamping the Mail" (until April 1992).

Articles connected with these exhibitions, by Tony Gammons and Douglas N Muir of the NPM, are published in this Bulletin. A report on the "Stamping the Mail" exhibition was published here in August (page 281).

Stamping the Mail

Part 1 – The Early Days

TONY GAMMONS

Exhibitions Officer, National Postal Museum

Addressing and sending a letter today is a relatively simple process. Houses are numbered, streets are named and the use of postcodes help to mechanically sort the mail. This has not always been the case as later as the introduction of Uniform Penny Postage in 1840 street numbering was in its infancy. Many streets would have the same number repeated throughout its length. People would take their house number with them when they moved making letter delivery a nightmare. Going back further in time to 1617 we find letters addressed as vaguely as “to the worthy his lovinge friende Captain Matthew Parker att his house at Canterburye give haist and speed”. Many letters for delivery in London would give a well known landmark as reference for example “Mr Smith’s house at the end of Cheapside in the shadow of



Fig.2 Henry Bishop (1611-91)

the beginnings of complaints regarding delays in delivering the mail! While many of these complaints were of a “political” nature, one Thomas Ibsen petitioning the Council in 1661 for a writ of inquiry to be issued into “dangerous abuses in the Post Office under Colonel Bishop, pretended Postmaster General”, there is no doubt that the service was not as good as it could have been. To try and overcome the charges of delay in the delivery of letters Bishop introduced the now famous “Bishop Mark” (Fig. 2). Henry Bishop wrote, “a stamp is invented that is putt upon every letter shewing the day of the moneth that every letter comes to the office, so that no letter carryer may dare to detain a letter from post to post, which before was usual”. The stamp was in the form of a circle divided horizontally in half with the month (abbreviated) in the top and the day in the lower segment. The earliest versions were 13mm in diameter and were impressed in black (Fig. 3).

The second type of Bishop Mark, introduced in 1673, had sans serif lettering. Later types ranged from 14mm to 20mm and had the month and day transposed. Edinburgh’s Bishop Mark was oval in shape and was struck in red.

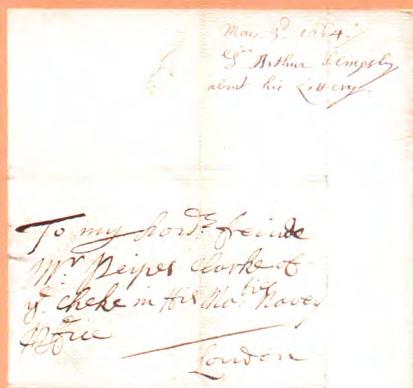


Fig.1 Letter to Samuel Pepys, May 1664

St. Pauls. Figure 1 shows a letter addressed to Samuel Pepys at his office at the Navy Office dated 3 March 1664. Postage charges would be applied in manuscript and material carried by the “Merchant” posts would also bear the marks of the various Merchant’s Guilds.

With the opening of the Royal Posts to the public in 1635 we see not only a considerable increase in the number of letters carried but also

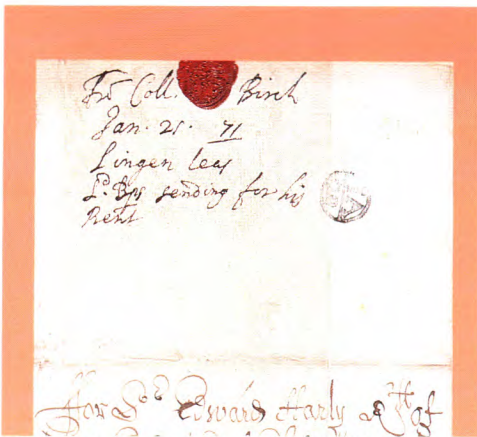


Fig. 3 Earliest version of "Bishop Mark"

Dublin's mark was in use from c.1672 to 1796. Charge marks were still applied in manuscript. From the late 1760s General Post Receiving Houses, the equivalent of present day Sub Offices, began using small stamps incorporating the Receiver's initials and with more and more provincial towns being brought into the postal system straight line and curved "town stamps" appeared. The spelling of some town names would seem odd today, for example Gloucester appearing as Gloster.

The Bishop Mark was replaced, at the London Chief Office, in 1787 by a double ring mark with the month and year (both abbreviated) in the outer ring with the day in the centre. Small diamonds were placed in the outer ring between the month and date (Fig. 4). From 1791 the code

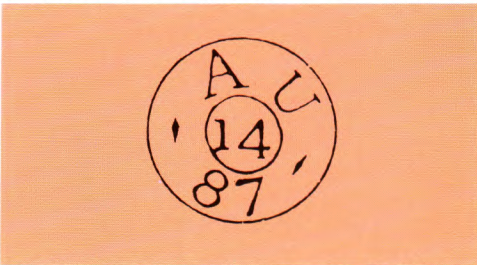


Fig. 4 London Chief Office Bishop Mark, 1787

letter of the stamp was incorporated into the outer ring in place of the left hand diamond. Stamps used during the morning duty had a single outer ring while those used in the evening had a double outer ring. This enabled the Post Office to tell which duty, or officer, had applied the mark. In January 1798 the code letter was placed outside the outer ring of the morning duty stamps. In 1800 the year in the evening

stamps was denoted by the last three, instead of two, digits and after 1823 the year was given in full. With postal rates being calculated on distance the letter was carried towns were issued with "mileage mark" stamps showing the distance from London, and in Irish miles from Dublin.

In the next article we will look at the further development of General Post handstamps and the various marks used by "local" posts.

The "Stamping the Mail" exhibition can be seen at the National Postal Museum until April 1992. The NPM is located in London's Chief Post Office, King Edward Street, EC1 – a few minutes walk from St Paul's Cathedral or the Museum of London. The nearest underground station is St Paul's (Central Line). The Museum is open Monday-Thursday 9.30am to 4.30pm, Friday 9.30am to 4pm. Admission free.

L F Newbery Collection

Len Newbery, who died in April, was well-known for his writings on British stamp books. Up until the day of his death he was working on his collection of NVI stamp books and his close friend and philatelic colleague Douglas Myall has recently completed the mounting of this collection which has been presented, as Len wished, to the National Postal Museum. The collection comprises a very specialised study of stamp books from August 1989 to April 1991, including the Penny Black Anniversary issue, Greetings stamps and the 1990 Christmas book. The collection can be seen by appointment.



Douglas Myall (left) and NPM Manager Stan Goron with one of the albums in the L F Newbery Collection (Photo: John Holman)

Production of the Map Stamps

DOUGLAS N MUIR

Curator, Philately, National Postal Museum

On 17 September an exhibition opened at the National Postal Museum entitled "Maps and the Post Office". This was to coincide with the issue of the Map stamps featuring Ordnance Survey maps of Hamstreet (or Ham Street) down the ages. The exhibition concentrates on older maps from the 19th century and the designing and production of the Hamstreet stamps. Presentation visuals of unadopted designs and the various processes involved in producing the actual stamps are all on show until 17 January 1992.

The production and printing of the map stamps was most interesting, especially that of the 24p value. Unusually, two printers were used and two printing processes. Three stamps were printed offset litho (two by The House of Questa and one by Harrison & Sons Ltd). The method here was conventional. But the 24p value was printed by Harrisons in a combination of recess (or intaglio) and offset litho, necessitating sheets being passed through two different machines. This was chosen specifically to emulate, as closely as possible, the look and feel of the 1816 map, part of which the 24p design reproduced.

An actual-size photograph of the required section of the map was given to Chris Matthews, engraver of the current Castles high values. He made a tracing in red on gelatine film of the lines required. The image was transferred on to a steel die covered with a wax ground, the wax being acid resistant. Then Chris scribed through the wax, etched the image and finally engraved the die by hand. By him was a photograph of the map, four times up, as an additional guide.

This master die, showing the map only and not the value or The Queen's head, though with space cleared for these, had the image in reverse. It was now necessary to transfer the design to a multi-image plate which would then print the stamps.

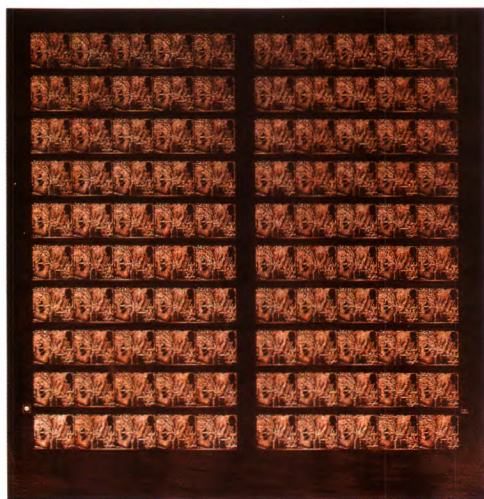
In the traditional recess process this was done by creating a molette, or roller die, with the engraving right-reading and standing proud of the surface. The molette was then rocked on to the plate (or cylinder) as often as was required.

However, this is time-consuming and costly

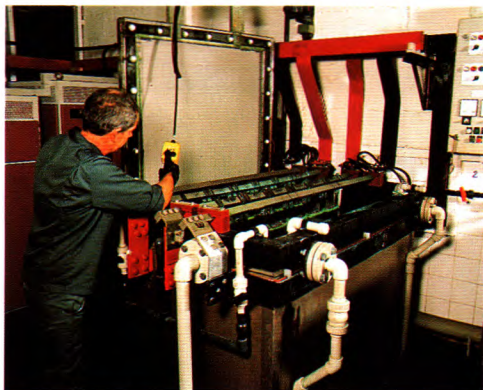
and a different method was employed with the map stamp to produce the printing plate. First, the image was transferred from the die by a Krona-conversion whereby a piece of special type of ink bubble film was placed over the die and ball bearings were then vibrated over the film to create a positive image on the film (similar to taking a brass rubbing). As might be imagined this "conversion" is extremely noisy. It was also used in the preparations for the Penny Black printed in the Stamp World London 90 miniature sheet.

From the Krona conversion a negative was produced for retouching and from this a positive was taken and passed to the production studio. The process is now similar to the photographic aspects of offset litho or gravure printing in that a negative is generated and the negative film is put through a step and repeat camera to produce a stepped positive film of the entire plate of 100 images. From this a contact negative is made and the stepped image is etched into a flat, solid, copper plate, rather as in gravure. Here the image is recessed and reversed.

A nickel alto (again solid and flat) is grown from the copper plate in the nickel bath by



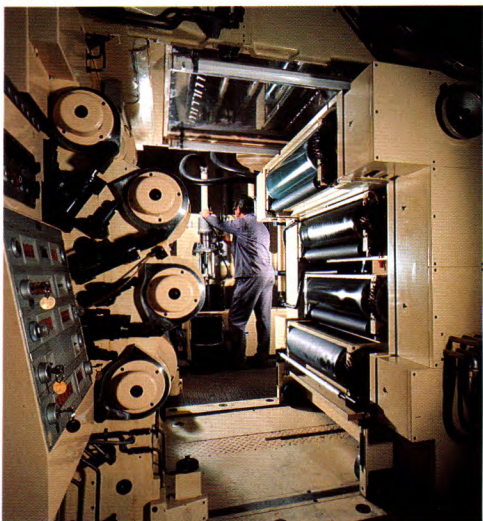
The copper plate from which the nickel alto was made.



The nickel alto being grown by electrolysis in the nickel bath. (courtesy Harrisons)

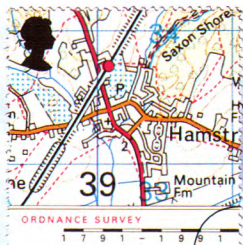
electrolysis. The nickel alto has a right-reading image which is raised above the surface. From this master the final plate which is to be used on the printing machine is grown in the nickel bath, again by electrolysis. This, therefore, has a wrong-reading image recessed below the surface. The nickel plate is relatively thin and clips round the printing cylinder on the I 8 (Intaglio-colour) printing machine normally used for banknotes.

Printing of the offset litho part of the design took place first on a four-colour, sheet-fed Roland Favorit machine often used for printing stamps of overseas countries but here printing GB stamps for the first time. The printed sheets were then transferred to the intaglio machine and overprinted with the recess section.



The I 8 intaglio machine (courtesy Harrisons)

Given the many stages from die to printing plate, and the photographic processes, the question arises as to why a simple line drawing was not used initially rather than an engraved die. The answer is that a softer feel to the lines can be given by engraving and although some of this is lost in subsequent processes, enough remains. As Chris Matthews said, if the fine detail is not there to begin with it will not be there in the finished product.



Hamstreet, Kent

The production of the map stamps, and Hamstreet itself, feature in the last part of the NPM exhibition. All the presentation visuals including the accepted designs will be on show together with items explaining the production of the stamps, such as the master die and illustrations of the various processes.

Also on show will be examples of the various maps from which the details came with some illustrations of what Hamstreet and the surrounding area looked like in the past.

The Maps exhibition, which opened on 17 September, runs until the end of March 1992 in the National Postal Museum, King Edward Building, King Edward Street, LONDON EC1A 1LP. Opening hours are: Monday to Thursday - 9.30am to 4.30pm; Friday - 9.30am to 4pm. Admission is free.

Europa 1984

British Special Issues No.169

FRANCIS KENNEDY

Although from 1974, each country supporting the Annual Europa/CEPT issue had been free to design its own stamps within a theme common to all, 1984 was considered a special year on the 25th anniversary of the series which began in 1959. Accordingly, all countries were asked to use the design by Jacky Larrivière, a Monegasque artist and engraver who was the winner of an international competition to find a suitable anniversary design.

Great Britain used the Larrivière work for two stamps (16p and 20½p) and added two other stamps in a design by the experienced Fritz Wegner, a lecturer and teacher at the St Martin's School of Art in London. His stamps were also a 16p and 20½p. The two 16p stamps were printed se-tenant as were the two 20½p stamps.

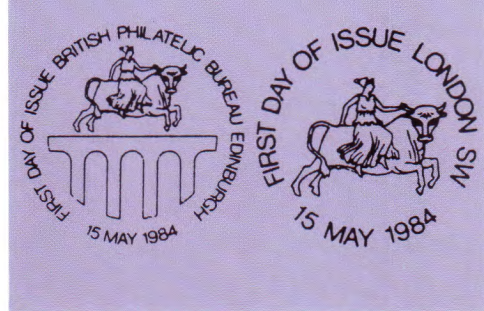
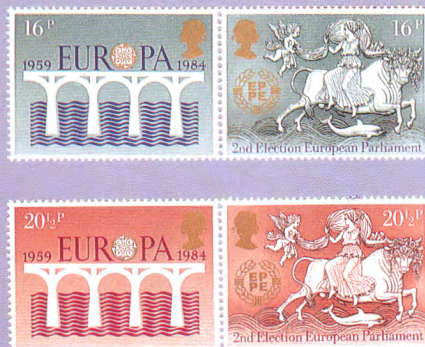
Larrivière used a stylised bridge surmounted by the inscription "1959 EUROPA 1984", the "O" being the CEPT symbol within a circle. The bridge, said the designer, represented "a clean manifestation of Man's desire to span natural boundaries." It also symbolised freedom of communication across land and water between the CEPT members. Incidentally, the use of the word "EUROPA" recalled the issues of the early years before the CEPT symbol was adopted in its stead.

Wegner turned to mythology to express graphically the Second Election of the European Parliament. The god Zeus, in the form of a bull is shown abducting Europa, daughter of King Agenor of Tyre. Zeus took Europa overseas to Crete (hence the fish and the waves below the bull). On arrival in Crete, Zeus resumed his human form. In due course, Europa gave birth to a son, Minos, who is reputed to have been the founder of Cretan culture, styled Minoan, which is generally acknowledged to have been the beginning of European culture as a whole. The design incorporates the logo of the European Parliament/Parlement Européen, "EP/PE" within a laurel wreath.

Printing was by Harrison and Sons Ltd in photogravure, the counter sheets consisting of 100 stamps, that is, 50 se-tenant pairs, the

appropriate logos and The Queens head being in gold.

Both values have been found in imperforate pairs — a major error; the imperf pair of the 16p stamps is catalogued by Stanley Gibbons at £1,300 in their 1992 *Part 1 Catalogue*. No major constant varieties are recorded in the Gibbons *Great Britain Specialised Stamp Catalogue* (Vol. 5



Queen Elizabeth II Decimal Special Issue). However, there were a few minor varieties: 16p - white specks after "4" of "1984" (row 1, stamp 1); 16p - dot on "T" of "CEPT" (row 1, stamp 5); 20½p - dot on "T" of "CEPT" (row 1, stamp 5). All are on Larrivière stamps.

The Post Office used two attractive cancellations for first day covers. The postmark used at London SW had as its central feature the EP/PE logo as on the stamp design; the British Philatelic Bureau Edinburgh postmark incorporated the CEPT logo in the same way.

Sales on withdrawal, on 15 May 1985, were: 16p x 2 — 45,236,300; 20½p x 2 — 10,679,200. The four PHQ postcards accompanying the issue were numbered 75A-D; 168,000 sets were produced.

Dinosaurs Cylinder Numbers

The 26p Dinosaurs stamp has been reported from cylinders 1A1B1C1D1E1F1G; this is in addition to 2A1B1C2D2E1F2G reported in August.

Dinosaurs Book

The price of *Dinosaur Stamps of the World* by Stuart Baldwin and Beverly Halstead, reviewed in August, is £10, postage £1.50 UK, £2 overseas. Orders to: Baldwin's Books, Fossil Hall, Boars Tye Road, Silver End, WITHAM, Essex, CM8 3QA.

Maps Cylinder & Plate Numbers

The cylinders/plates and colours used were as follows:

24p — 1A (black) 1B (magenta) 1C (cream) 2D (black), also 1A1B1C3D. The 2D/3D plate applied the black colour in intaglio (recess).

28p — 1A (black) 1B (bright yellow green) 1C (new blue) 1D (reddish orange) 1E (magenta) 1F (olive-sepia) 1G (cream)

33p — 1A (dull blue-green) 1A (orange brown) 1A (magenta) 1A (olive-grey) 1A (greenish yellow) 1A (vermilion) 1A (greenish grey) 1A (pale blue) 1A (blue) 1A (dull orange) 1A (apple green) 1A (black)

39p — 1A (black) 1A (magenta) 1A (greenish yellow) 1A (new blue).

Post Office Archives

Post Office Archives have now moved into their new home and will open to the public on 5 November. The new address is: Post Office Archives, Freeling House, Phoenix Place, LONDON EC1A 1BB. Tel. 071-239 2570. Hours of opening remain: Monday-Friday 9.00-16.15. Visitors will note improved facilities at Phoenix Place. Guides to the Archives will be on sale, also the two series of postcards so far issued (illustrated here in October 1990 and September 1991).

Cardiff Collections

The Monday-Friday hours of opening of the Cardiff Collections (Hill Street, CARDIFF CF1 2ST) are: 9.00-17.30 *not* 10.00-16.30 as stated here in May 1991. The Saturday hours were correct: 9.00-12.30.

National Postal Museum Pearson Hill Replica Stamp Cancelling Machine



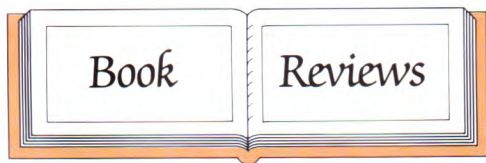
Shown here is Tony Gammons, NPM Exhibitions Officer, in Victorian engineer's costume, working the replica Pearson Hill stamp cancelling machine at a press reception on 30 August. The machine is currently on display in the Museum's ground floor gallery, as part of the "Stamping the Mail" exhibition

Best Music Stamps of 1990

Every year the Philatelic Music Circle awards the Robert Stolz Trophy for Music Philately for the "best" Music stamp of the previous year. The trophy is donated by Einzi Stolz in memory of her husband, Robert Stolz (1880-1975), composer of operettas, songs and light music.

The 1991 trophy has been awarded to Desiré Rougiest, designer of the Belgian stamp (issued 6 October 1990) showing Beethoven. Second place went to the USSR stamp (24 April 1990) celebrating the 150th anniversary of the birth of Tchaikovsky, and third place to the British 26p Christmas stamp (13 November 1990) featuring carol singers. This is the second time a British stamp has been 'placed'; the previous one being the 13½p value in the 1980 London Landmarks set showing a drawing by Sir Hugh Casson of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden.

Details of the Philatelic Music Circle can be obtained from: Mrs Irene Lawford, 22 Bouverie Gardens, KENTON, Middx, HA3 0RQ, or Mrs C Osborne, PO Box 1781, Sequim, Washington 98382, USA.



The National Portrait Gallery in London recently announced a large find of negatives hitherto believed lost when Dorothy Wilding's photographic studio was destroyed in the 1940 Blitz. The Gallery has subsequently mounted the first major exhibition of her work and its curator of photography, Terence Pepper has produced a handsome catalogue titled **Dorothy Wilding: The Pursuit of Perfection**.

The book contains many full-page portraits of the Society and theatrical celebrities that brought fame to Wilding during her busy career in Britain and America from 1915 to 1958. The useful biographical introduction notes her enthusiastic personality and gives an outline of the techniques of lighting and retouching which were the hallmarks of her studio's style. So successful did she become that she eventually employed a large staff.

Though this book has only a passing reference to stamps, the biography is valuable background information. Stamp catalogues carefully record designers' names where known, but it is so often difficult to gain a rounded appreciation by learning anything of the life and work of the people concerned. Wilding herself had written an autobiography when she retired but Pepper remarks that her death in 1976 "passed unnoticed in both the national and photographic press, and to all but a few her name and work has been more or less forgotten". Happily, philatelists (and the British Royal Portraits Study Group) must rank as an exception!

The "Wildings" are, of course, the familiar title for the present reign's first definitives, whose portrait of Queen Elizabeth II was also a standard component of all British commemoratives from 1957 through to 1966. More Wilding photographs featured in the attractive designs for the 1937 Coronation and 1948 Silver Wedding, while numerous Commonwealth issues make use of her work. In looking at Pepper's catalogue many collectors will gain pleasure in instantly recognising several portraits so familiar from their stamps.

The book contains a helpful bibliography plus a catalogue of the National Portrait Gal-

lery's holdings of photographs from the Wilding studio that will assist philatelic students. The list of the 76 plates in the book shows the Gallery's accession numbers for the relevant photographs and the book is indexed. 120 pages, card covers. Available from the National Portrait Gallery, St Martin's Place, LONDON WC2H 0HE, price £14.95.

James Negus

The 1992 (11th) edition of **Collecting British First Day Covers** by N C Porter, designed and edited by cover producer A G Bradbury is now available. The listings are arranged in two sections: Commemoratives (including Greetings stamps) and Definitives, with useful introductory notes on handstamps and slogans. The helpful information on Philatelic Counter and tourist handstamps has been updated. The listings of covers are complete to the Roses issue of 16 July (commemoratives) and the Country stamps on CPL paper issued on 14 May (definitives). Special handstamps are illustrated - no fewer than 19 for the Scientific Achievements stamps of 5 March 1991 - as are relevant slogans and some operational datestamps. Prices are given for "ordinary" and "official" pictorial covers for commemorative stamps since July 1967. "Official" covers are those produced by the sponsors of special handstamps (other than Post Office), and are more highly valued than "ordinary". Covers with certain operational datestamps are often highly priced, for example 1981 Royal Wedding covers with Buckingham Palace or Windsor Castle circular datestamps are priced at £130 and £140 respectively! 396 pages; hundreds of black & white illustrations of covers and postmarks. Available from Stanley Gibbons Strand shop, through stamp dealers, or by post from: A G Bradbury, 3 Link Road, LEICESTER LE2 3RA. Price £9.95, postage £2.05.

The 1992 (94th) edition of the **Stanley Gibbons Stamp Catalogue Part 1— British Commonwealth** was published on 30 August. This impressive tome now comprises some 1304 pages, of which the Great Britain section (including Guernsey, Jersey and Isle of Man) amounts to 99 pages. The listings end with the Roses set of 16 July 1991. The prices of some mint Edward VII stamps have been marked down since the *GB Concise* catalogue was published in May; however some George V prices, particularly used, are increased. The Elizabeth II

St Edwards Crown watermark set is increased by £10 to £120; the 9d stamp going from £12 to £19. There are a number of increases in the prices of mint Postage Due stamps but the main increases are in the 'Used Abroad' section. The 1862 1s. used in Buenos Ayres is increased from by £70 to £130, the 1873 1s. used in Bahia (Brazil) is doubled to £50. Mint prices of the 1988 and 1989 Lear and Industrial Archaeology miniature sheets have been increased to £12 and £10, from £10 and £6 in the *Concise*. Part 1 is available from the Stanley Gibbons Strand shop, good stamp and book shops and by post from Stanley Gibbons Publications, Parkside, RINGWOOD, Hants, BH24 3SH, price £30, postage £2.75 UK, £5 overseas.

Forthcoming

The 43rd edition of Stanley Gibbons **Collect British Stamps** colour checklist will be published on 29 November, price £3.25. It will be available from the British Philatelic Bureau and the National Postal Museum as well as through stamp dealers and book sellers.

Royal Mail Stamps Waives Handstamping Fee

From 16 September, Royal Mail Stamps abolished the special handstamping fee (4p) chargeable on covers and cards. This means collectors will no longer have to affix additional postage stamps to covers or cards submitted for special handstamping beyond the current first class rate.

All items to receive special handstamps must bear valid British postage stamps to the value of at least the current first class postage rate — with the exception of the first day of issue of a second class value stamp, in which circumstances, the new second class stamp affixed to a cover in isolation will be acceptable. If addressed to a destination outside the United Kingdom, each item must bear stamps of at least the current minimum airmail postage rate to the destination indicated by the address on the cover or card.

Details of special handstamps and postmark slogans are announced in the *British Postmark Bulletin*, the Royal Mail's magazine for postmark collectors. Published fortnightly, this Bulletin is available on subscription from the British Philatelic Bureau: UK £9.35, Europe £11.50, Rest of World (Airmail) £20.75.

Competition



Win £75 worth of British stamps

Enter this month's competition and stand a chance of winning £75 worth of current British philatelic products of your choice — stamps, stamp books, postcards, albums, etc. Answer the questions below, the answers will be found in this month's *Bulletin*, and send with your name and address on a postcard to: November Bulletin Competition, National Postal Museum, King Edward Street, LONDON EC1A 1LP to arrive by 31 December.

The sender of the first all-correct entry drawn will be invited to order £75 of philatelic products; five runners-up will be sent presentation packs of the Wintertime stamps. Answers and winners' names will be published in the February *Bulletin*.

1. What is the total face value of the Country stamps issued on 3 December 1991?
2. In which year were the first British Christmas aerogrammes issued?
3. Who opened the British Philatelic Centre in February 1987?
4. In which year did Dorothy Wilding die?
5. Which company publishes *Collect First Day Covers*?

The competition is not open to staff (and their families) of Royal Mail Stamps and its agents. No correspondence will be entered into; the Editor's decision will be final.

The winners of the August competition were: K Macleans of Oxfordshire (£50 worth of Royal Mail products); A Abbott of Canada; S Klar of London; Miss A Swan of Derbyshire; Y Chin of Singapore; and D Ceconi of Italy (Maps presentation packs).

The answers were: 1. Royal Military Canal, 2. Albert H Harris, 3. Lionel Jones, 4. National Portrait Gallery, 5. 5 February 1991.

Our thanks to all who entered.

Commemorative Covers

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

Lindisfarne Gospels. An attractive cover featuring the opening page of the Lindisfarne Gospels (now in the British Library) features on a cover produced for the Christmas stamps by S Muscroft. The illustration shows Mark, the Gospel writer, with his traditional symbol of the lion. Covers bear the five Christmas stamps showing illuminated manuscripts in the Bodleian Library, cancelled by either a special Lindisfarne (Holy Island) handstamp showing Matthew writing his gospel, or the Holy Island operational datestamp of 12 November. Price £5.25 each. Orders/enquiries: S Muscroft, 43 Farndale Drive, GUISBOROUGH, Cleveland, TS14 8JJ.

London-Brighton Railway. Two full-colour commemorative covers has been produced to mark the 150th anniversary of the opening of the London to Brighton railway. A few years after the opening, Rowland Hill as Chairman of the Railway, introduced cheap excursion trains which revolutionised travel for ordinary people. The two covers, illustrating Brighton and London Bridge stations in c. 1842, bear railway stamps postmarked with "appropriate 23 September 1991 anniversary pictorial handstamps". Price £4.60 per pair or £5.80 with genuine Victorian stamp tied by a pictorial "Life and Times of Queen Victoria" cachet. Overseas customers please add 70p postage. Orders/enquiries: G Eldridge, 177 Mousehole Lane, Bitterne, SOUTHAMPTON SO2 4TD.

ICA Conference. 1991 heralds the bicentenary of the Ordnance Survey. A limited edition commemorative cover was produced for the International Cartographic Association's 15th conference and 9th general assembly at Bournemouth International Centre from 23 September to 1 October 1991. The cover features the Old Series One-Inch Ordnance Survey map of Romney Marsh showing Hamstreet which featured on the Royal Mail Map stamps issued on 17 September. The 24p stamp representing the Old Series is placed on the map in the correct position; the other three stamps follow in a direct line to the right. The envelope design

faithfully follows that of the original OS map and imparts a distinct feeling of the era. Price £4.50, postage 50p UK, £1 overseas. Orders/enquiries: J & M Arlington Ltd, 45 Lakenheath, LONDON N14 4RL.

Christmas. This year's Christmas stamps feature illuminated manuscripts from the Bodleian Library. To coincide with this issue, the first day cover in A G Bradbury's "Victorian Prints" series features a design from *St. Athelwold's Benedictional*. The cover, number 63 in the series, is being produced in a limited edition of 175. It bears the five Christmas stamps cancelled with a special Bethlehem, Dyfed handstamp. Price £6, overseas customers add £1 postage. Orders/enquiries: A G Bradbury, 3 Link Road, LEICESTER LE2 3RA.



Asian Festival of Lights. Royal Mail Leicester are sponsoring a first day cover for Diwali – "The Asian festival of lights" – on 5 November 1991. Leicester, as a City, has one of the largest Asian populations in Europe and it is hoped the covers, priced at £2 each, will prove an excellent souvenir of the special occasion. An insert in the cover explains the story of Diwali in English, Punjabi and Gujarati. The stamp will be a 24p definitive cancelled with a special handstamp. Orders/enquiries: Special Diwali Cover, Customer Care, Royal Mail, 1 St George's Way, LEICESTER LE1 1AA.

Christmas Gift Suggestion

If you are in need of a good idea for an appropriate Christmas gift for a stamp collector relative or friend, you might well consider a Gift Package offered by the Association of Friends of

the National Postal Museum. This includes a two year subscription to the Association, a Christmas wrapped gift pack containing one mint copy of each Museum postcard issued during our current year, two issues of *Cross Post*, the Friends' own magazine, a copy of the NPM's annual report (*The Philatelic Year 1990*) and a set of Post Office Archives postcards with special cachet. Normally this would all cost £24 but for the Christmas season only is offered for £20. The recipient will receive future postcards and publications until March 1994. The *Philatelic Year* gives details of Museum research, publications and other activities. The *Cross Post* magazine contains a good mix of articles of interest to philatelists and postal historians.

To order the package send cheque or postal order payable to "Friends of the National Postal Museum" and the name and address of your nominee, plus any gift message, to: Ray Pottle, Hon. Secretary, Friends of the NPM, National Postal Museum, King Edward Street, LONDON EC1A 1LP. To ensure delivery by Christmas, please send orders to arrive not later than 9 December.

BPF Congress 1991

The British Philatelic Federation 73rd Congress was held at The Park Hotel, Cardiff from 19-22 September 1991. The Chairman of Congress was Brian Cripps, President of the South Wales Federation. Four well-known philatelists signed the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists — Alma Lee (GB), Robert P Odenweller and Charles J Peterson (USA) and Harry Sutherland (Canada). The Congress Medal was awarded to Richard Payne, well-known as British commissioner for international exhibitions.

As always a useful *Congress Handbook* was produced which contains biographies of the new RDPs and the texts of the papers presented at Congress by John Sussex and Christian Sundman. Mr Sussex's paper, entitled "1992 and all that", discusses "British philatelic contact with Europe". Amongst the topics considered is the proposed European International exhibition, similar to those already staged in the Far East and South America. Mr Sundman looks at "FEPA - its ideals and intentions", FEPA being the Federation of European Philatelic Associations which was formed at Sofia in 1989 (see September 1989 *Bulletin*, page 13). Copies of the Handbook are available from: British Philatelic Federation, 107 Charterhouse Street, LONDON EC1M 6PT, price £1.

Railway Letter Stamps

The North Yorkshire Moors Railway will issue a new stamp on 7 December 1991. This comprises the 20p value showing locomotive "Mirvale" (issued 2 February 1989, illustrated here March 1989) surcharged 25p to cover the current railway letter fee. The stamp will be available singly, in sheets of 10 or on first day cover. The cover marks the 15th anniversary of the NYMR's popular "Santa Special" trains. A third 25p stamp in the current definitive series is scheduled for 6 February 1992, day of issue of the Royal Mail "Happy and Glorious" stamps marking the 40th anniversary of The Queen's accession. In June 1991 (page 240) we reviewed *An illustrated history of the NYMR and its railway letter service*, published by the NYMR to commemorate the 10th anniversary of its railway letter service and stamps. The 52-page book contains 13 different NYMR stamps, in singles, pairs, blocks and full sheets. The NYMR advises that very few (less than 50) of these books are still available, early ordering is advised. All orders/enquiries to: Mrs M Atkins, 5 Tiber View, Brinsworth, ROTHERHAM, S Yorkshire, S60 5EA.



Shown here is the Mid-Hants Railway stamp issued on 15 September 1991 — the second in their "Locomotives" series. The first was issued in March (illustrated in August *Bulletin*). Further stamps in this series will be issued in March and September 1992. All orders/enquiries re MHR stamps to: Postal Co-ordinator, Mid-Hants Railway, ALRESFORD, Hants, SO24 9JG. Payments may be made by Mastercard and Visa credit cards.

November Digest

Issued in November/early December

12 November: 1991 Christmas stamps — 18p, 24p, 28p, 33p, 39p.

Designer: David Driver.

Printing: Harrison & Sons Limited, photogravure, 41 x 30mm, perf. 15 x 14, sheets of 100, PVA Dextrin gum. 18p on fluorescent coated paper with one phosphor band, 24p-39p on phosphor coated paper.

Pictorial First Day of Issue postmarks: British Philatelic Bureau and Bethlehem, Llandeilo, Dyfed.

Presentation Pack: No. 222, price £1.75.

12 November: Christmas stamp book containing 20 x 18p Christmas stamps. Price £3.60.

Printing: Harrison & Sons Ltd. Pane of stamps has margin at top and bottom (similar to Greetings stamp books).

Note: Any unsold stocks of this book will be withdrawn from general sale at post offices on 24 December; it will remain on philatelic sale at the Bureau, Collections and philatelic counters.

12 November: 1991 Royal Mail Special Stamp Year, price £19.50. Contains all special issues of 1991. Available from Bureau, Collections, philatelic counters and main post offices.

12 November: 1991 Collectors' Pack, price £11.50. Contains all special issues of 1991. Available from Bureau, Collections, philatelic counters and main post offices.

12 November: National Postal Museum postcards - 4 designs featuring old Christmas cards. Price 20p each. Available from Bureau, National Postal Museum and Collections.

13 November: Christmas souvenir cover. Price 21p. Available from Collections and philatelic counters.

19 November: 18p definitive, light green.

Printing: Joh. Enschedé en Zonen, Netherlands, photogravure, sheets of 200, PVA Dextrin gum, perf. 15 x 14, one phosphor band.

Note: Available from Bureau, Collections and philatelic counters; stocks will go on sale at post offices as required. No first day of issue facilities.

3 December: 18p, 24p, 28p and 39p Country stamps for Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Colours as national definitives: 18p light green, 24p rust, 28p slate blue, 39p rhododendron.

Printing: The House of Questa, offset-lithography; 18p fluorescent coated paper with one phosphor band, 24p-39p phosphor coated paper. Sheets of 200, PVA gum, perf. 15 x 14.

Pictorial First Day of Issue postmarks: British Philatelic Bureau, Belfast, Cardiff, and Edinburgh.

Presentation Pack: Contains stamps for all three countries. Price £3.60.

Withdrawn in November

12 November: 1990 Christmas stamps, presentation pack, stamp cards, £3.40 stamp book, aerogramme, souvenir cover, and 1990 Collectors' Pack.

13 November: 1990 Royal Mail Special Stamp Yearbook.

Christmas Stamps

The decorative initial letters shown on the 18p and 33p Christmas stamps are P and Q, and not as stated last month (page 27). Any confusion is regretted.

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