

BRITISH PHILATELIC

The ROYAL MAIL magazine *for stamp collectors*

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Bulletin

Submarine stamps preview •
Manchester Postal Museum



The ever-changing weather features in a new set of four stamps: the perfect topic for polite conversation.

Forthcoming issues and withdrawals



Cover Four new stamps and a miniature sheet celebrating the weather are previewed this month. Photograph: Tek Image/Science Photo Library.

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

1 February	Withdrawal All 1999 Millennium stamps, presentation packs and stamp cards; 1999 Yearbook and Yearpack; 2000 Above & Beyond and Fire & Light stamps, presentation pack and stamp cards; and 1998 1st and 2nd self-adhesive stamps in rolls of 200.
6 February	Issue Occasions stamps (5 × 1st class).
6 February	Issue Cats & Dogs stamp cards.
13 February	Issue Cats & Dogs stamps sheetlet, presentation pack, and retail book containing the 10 Cats & Dogs stamps and two 1st class definitives.
13 February	Issue Occasions stamps presentation pack.
14 February	Withdrawal Stamp Show 2000 prestige books: 1999 <i>Profile on Print</i> and 2000 <i>Special by Design</i> ; 4 × E stamp book (issued 19 January 1999).
27 February	Issue Northern Ireland country stamp cards.
6 March	Issue Northern Ireland country stamps & presentation pack.
6 March	Issue Weather stamp cards (five cards showing four stamps and miniature sheet).
6 March	Withdrawal Millennium Water & Coast stamps, presentation pack and stamp cards.
13 March	Issue Weather stamps, miniature sheet, and presentation pack.
20 March	Withdrawal Postman Pat label book.

Contents



A museum in Manchester

In Wythenshawe Park, near Manchester, David Harrop has assembled an Aladdin's cave of Post Office artefacts, writes Richard West **176**

Above, a 1948 poster by Grace Golden, *A London Telegraph Messengers' Despatch Room*, from David Harrop's collection.

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Issues and withdrawals
February to March **162**

Stamp scene News of societies, publications and exhibitions **164**

Royal Mail news Self-adhesives; Submarines; Country stamps **167**



Occasions A new issue of five stamps **171**

Weather Stamps and a miniature sheet **172**

Special draw **175**

Smart mail trial Martin Robinson describes the trials at Loughborough University **176**



Early collectors T W Hall, by Ron Negus **180**

Post Office Heritage Collections John Knox remembered **182**

Glasgow 2000 Part 2 of the Editor's report **183**

Richard West's column
Dr Jean Alexander **184**

Philately on-line Ron Negus on a website for all collectors **186**

Prestige book labels
Northern Ireland, by Lionel Jones **187**

Postbag Letters to the Editor **188**

Posting boxes **189**

Competitions £200 to be won in two easy-to-enter competitions **190**

Events **190**

Late news **191**

Stamp scene Exhibitions • Books • Friends of the NPM • Exhibition Study Group

Stampex opening times

28 February	Noon-19.00
1-3 March	10.30-18.00
4 March	10.30-16.00



Spring Stampex will be held at the Business Design Centre, Upper Street, London N1, 28 February-4 March. It will include invited displays by the King George VI Study Group and the new 'Nations Cup' – a competitive event being held between groups of countries, the winners of each group moving on to compete at Continental and World levels. There will be over 200 frames containing two invited displays each from Belgium, France, GB and Portugal competing in four mandatory classes (Postal History, Thematics, Traditional, and Youth) and a choice of three other exhibits selected from the optional classes (Acrophilately, Astrophilately, Postal Stationery, Revenues and Maximaphily). Apart from the Thematic class and Youth the subject material will be from the competing country, thus Belgium with Belgian stamps, etc. The judges, who will not be from the competing countries, will send the winning country forward to the next stages of the competition at Continental and World level. The competition will be run by a joint ABPS/British Philatelic Trust working group; it will be very interesting to see the exhibits in this new style competitive exhibition.

The George VI Society display will be of over 100 frames. There will also be a small display of material from the Royal Collection featuring presentation folders of die proofs submitted by three printers – Bradbury Wilkinson, De La Rue, and Waterlow – of various options for the King's Head to be used on Commonwealth stamps. In the Gallery area, the Insurance and Banking Philatelic Society will show material culled from their membership who will be on hand to answer questions concerning the Society.

For the first time entry to Spring stampex will be entirely free. Every day 50 lucky visitors will find a £5 voucher in the customised wallet given to visitors with the show catalogue.



The NYSG stand at Autumn Stampex 2000. For details of the Group's activities contact Anne Dummer, 2A Bryant Rd, Kettering NN15 6JE.

Telephone 01536 519959.

The National Youth Stamp Group will, as usual, be taking part. They will be making a few changes in the activities for the young visitors – there will be activity sheets for the different age groups so hopefully it will be more challenging to complete the worksheet for the older child.

Several societies, including the Portuguese Philatelic Society, GBPS, and Concorde, Ceylon and Egypt study circles will hold meetings at the exhibition at the weekend. The National Philatelic Society will have an information stand inside the main doors.

There will be the usual range of dealers catering for all kinds of collector, from beginner to specialist. About one-fifth of dealers are from overseas. The Bath Postal Museum, Friends of the National Postal Museum and David Harrop of the Manchester Postal Museum will also have stands. David's display this time will be 'Carriage by Mailcoach'.

Royal Mail will offer its full range of stamps and philatelic products, including the latest Occasions and Cats & Dogs issues. A special postmark will be applied to mail posted at the stand at the exhibition. Collectors unable to visit Stampex can send covers, bearing at least 1st class postage, to: Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, Mount Pleasant, London EC1A 1BB requesting Stampex postmark and stating date(s) required. Covers must be received by the date of cancellation wanted.

Autumn Stampex, including the national philatelic competitions and Astro 2001 thematic exhibition, will be held at the Business Design Centre, 19-23 September. The Astro exhibition follows from earlier successful thematic shows – Birdpex '98, Trains 1999, and Ships 2000 •

Enquiries John Hammonds (Astro 2001 organiser for the Astro Space Stamp Club): 31 Wheatsheaf Close, Horsham RH12 5TH.

Thematica The summer Thematica exhibition will take place at the Carisbrooke Hall, Seymour Street, London W2 on 23-24 June. Admission as always will be free, with lucky draw prizes to be won. There will be the usual array of thematic dealers from many parts of the world, plus representatives from many of the UK's thematic societies. Thematica invites all thematic collectors to have a go at entering one of the competitions. For those who have never won a thematic competition at national or international level, there is the John Fosbery Thematic Trophy. All that is required are 16 pages on any theme of your choice. This competition is judged by the visiting public •

For details and entry forms (to be returned by 31 March), send a stamped addressed envelope to: Brian Sole, 3 Stockfield Road, Claygate, Esher KT10 0QG.

Friends of the National Postal Museum The Autumn 2000 issue of the Friends' journal *Cross Post* contains a number of features of interest to postal historians. Arnold Budds writes on the life and letters of Joseph Crisp Press, a Norfolk master mariner; he shows a number of covers and illustrations of sailing ships. Michael Bament provides an interesting feature on Social Philately with examples from the PO Heritage Collections. He looks at the use of envelopes. Prior to 1840 the envelope was rarely used in the UK due to the method of charging for postage. An envelope would be classed as a second letter sheet and would automatically double the cost of sending a single-sheet letter. Mr Bament notes that the few pre-1840 envelopes he has seen were almost without exception sent by Members of Parliament who had the privilege of sending mail free and thus had no need to restrict the number of sheets they wrote. The illustrations in his article include De La Rue and Waterlow envelope making machines. Alan Sabey records his views of the WIPA exhibition in Vienna, 30 May-4 June 2000, and there is an account of the work of 19th century PO Surveyor W J Golby.

Friends of the NPM Details from: Ray Pottle, PO Box 40, Uckfield TN22 2SP. Telephone 01825 766546.

In his Treasurer's Report, Ray Pottle writes: 'I believe these accounts show the Friends to be both strong and buoyant despite the fact that at the present time there is no National Postal Museum. Clearly, it is in everyone's best interests for a new museum to be opened as soon as possible, otherwise our *raison d'être* will diminish...' Despite the closure of the Museum, the membership of the Friends has not decreased dramatically, witness to the useful range of activities and services it offers its members •

Martin Evans 75 Fox Road,
Exeter EX4 8NB.

Orders and enquiries Stanley
Gibbons Publications, Park-
side, Ringwood BH24 3SH.
Telephone 01425 472363.

Peter Morgen enquiries Am
Kirchberg 10, 14476 Neu Fahr-
land, Germany.

Picture Postcard Annual

The Annual is well-produced,
96 pages. Available from post-
card dealers, fairs or shops,
price £3.95 or £4.95 postpaid
direct from the publisher:
Reflections of a Bygone Age,
15 Debdale Lane, Keyworth,
Nottingham NG12 5HT. Tele-
phone 0115 937 4079.

Exhibition Study Group The
annual subscription is £8 UK
and £13 overseas. Details and
application form: Alan Sabey,
46 Thorncliffe Road, Norwood
Green, Southall UB2 5RQ.
Telephone 020 8843 9920.

New books The East Anglian Postal History Society has published a detailed study by Martin B Evans – *The Postal History of the March and Chatteris Areas of Cambridgeshire*. The author lived in March until 1970 and began publishing articles on its postal history in 1971. His book covers the whole period from the 1770s to date, including the counter datestamps still used on Special Delivery mail and documentation. Ordinary mail from the area is now postmarked at Peterborough. The 15 chapters cover the two towns plus Benwick, Doddington, Manea, and Wimblington, with separate chapters on March Railway station, Parcel Post and registration labels. All are well-illustrated and dates are given of the earliest and latest recorded use of postmarks. A welcome addition to the growing body of work on local postal history. Price £15 plus £2 post and packing, from Martin Evans •

Stanley Gibbons has announced publication of the following catalogues: *Collect Ships on Stamps*, 3rd edition and *King George VI*, 7th edn (both 26 January), *Collect Channel Island & Isle of Man Stamps*, 2001 edn and *GB Specialised vol 1 Queen Victoria*, 12th edn (both 23 February), and *Part 6 France*, 5th edn (new A4 format) and *GB Concise*, 2001 edn (both April) •

In recent years bar codes have been included on many postal labels – special delivery, recorded, Swiftair, etc. Catalogues are being compiled by Peter Morgen. Two are now available. The first, *Great Britain, Barcodes in the Post Office*, comprises 58 pages listing all bar code labels used in connection with mail handling known to the author. Descriptions are given in English and German and it is easy to identify the different services by means of the two-letter prefix to the item number. Instructional labels and packs for particular services are also included. The catalogue is intended to be a working database and dictionary for collectors of postal automation and of registered mail. A4 size in plastic binder, price 38DM plus 12DM airmail postage. The second catalogue *Global Express Mail with Barcodes* comprises 135 pages, price 78DM, postage 12DM •

The 20001 edition of *Picture Postcard Annual* includes the usual reference features and well-illustrated articles. The reference section provides a comprehensive directory of dealers, a diary of 2001 fairs and auctions, list of fair organisers, postcard clubs, retail outlets, and auction houses, and an index of articles in *Picture Postcard Monthly* from 1978. Recent auction records are featured, along with a review of the past 12 months in the hobby. Feature articles include the cost of living in Edwardian Britain, illustrated with appropriate postcards, the English cards of French publisher LL, modern cards, and British battleships. An international section includes a list of major fairs worldwide in 2001, postcard news from a number of countries and references to dealers and clubs •

Exhibition Study Group This Group is open to anyone with an interest in the collecting and study of material relating to all types of exhibitions and Philatelic Congresses – badges, books, crested china, medals, postcards, paper ephemera, publicity labels, stamps and souvenirs of all kinds. Members receive a journal four times a year and a two-day annual convention is held each September. The 2001 convention will be in Glasgow •

Royal Mail news Country stamps • Proofs of Submarine stamps • Self-adhesive books

Northern Ireland Country stamps Four new country stamps will be available at post offices in Northern Ireland, the British Philatelic Bureau and philatelic outlets from 6 March. They feature well-known icons of Northern Ireland: 2nd class – the basalt columns of the Giant's Causeway, Co Antrim; 1st class – aerial view of patchwork fields; £ (European rate, currently 36p) – patterned linen; and 65p – detail of a 'Parian' china vase. These are the first new designs for Northern Ireland country stamps since 1971, bringing them into line with the new Scottish and Welsh issues of 1999.

The Giant's Causeway, recently awarded world heritage status, is one of the most important landforms in the world, a unique part of Northern Ireland's geological heritage. In the course of Tertiary igneous activity, the lowest layer of lava cooled slowly with a uniform pattern creating thousands of basalt hexagonal columns. Many myths have grown up about the origins of the causeway. One claims a giant, Finn McCool, built it to confront Benandonner, a bad tempered Scottish giant who spent a great deal of time intimidating the locals.

The Giant's Causeway was depicted on the 22p stamp in the 1981 National Trusts set; the design was reprinted, as a 35p value, on a stamped postcard in the 1994 Northern Ireland prestige book. It also featured on the front cover of the prestige book, and a map showing the location of the Causeway was reproduced on the covers of a 50p stamp book in 1995.

Northern Ireland is well known for the diversity of its landscape. We add marks to our landscape in the form of buildings and agricultural or industrial activity before passing the land on to future generations who, in turn will make their own contribution. As a result of this, field systems of one generation become superimposed on those of earlier generations. The land has long been a source of inspiration for our poets and painters. The patchwork fields of Northern Ireland have woven a distinctive feature into the countryside quite unlike anywhere else. Rural features have been depicted on previous stamps – the five-barred field gate supported by typical Ulster circular stone pillars was shown on the 133d regional stamp of 1958 and an Ulster thatched cottage on the 156d value of the 1970 British Architecture stamps.

Linen has a long and rich history in Northern Ireland and has been of great fundamental importance in the industrial and social history of the province. Northern Ireland linens have been known since the 16th century as supplier of fine linen yarns. Hand-loom weaving and well-mastered indigenous spinning skills, together with Huguenot influences from the latter 17th century, gave rise to a particularly active area of production in Lisburn. The application of water and steam power in the 18th and 19th centuries led to the further development of the industry. The flax plant featured on the 1958 regional stamps; on the 6d the Queen's head was set on a background representing linen woven with a diamond pattern.



Earlier N Ireland issues

Articles on 1958 pre-decimal regional stamps, by Jean Farugia and Brian Warren were published in the *Bulletins* of October 1978 and August 1998. Mr Warren continued the story, recording the decimal issues in articles here in April and May 1999 and September 2000.



NORTHERN IRELAND
ROYAL MAIL FIRST DAY COVER
DEFINITIVE STAMPS



Mrs J Robinson
200 Manorbie Road
Ilkeston
Derbyshire
DE7 4AB

Technical details

Printer Walsall Security
Printers

Process Lithography

Size 21 x 24mm

Sheets 200

Perforation 15 x 14

Phosphor One band 2nd
class, two bands others

Gum PVA

Every year thousands of tourists flock to Northern Ireland's Belleek factory to see unique intricate porcelain which has been created by skilled craftsmen for more than 135 years. The factory was strategically situated on the River Erne, 2½ miles downstream from Lough Erne and had in the surrounding land rich deposits of fine kaolin and feldspar, the raw materials required for porcelain production. The local people had a great talent for the fine skills required by the great perfectionists who ran Belleek in its formative years. The vase illustrated on the stamp, now preserved in the Ulster Museum in Belfast, was produced in c1945; it is one of the finest pieces of 'Parian' china known.

The four stamps include the silhouette head of HM The Queen, as used on special stamps, reversed out in white at top right. The service indicators/values, also in white, are positioned lower right.

DESIGNERS The stamps are the work of Rodney Miller Associates, a Belfast-based company, which has completed over 6000 design projects in local, national and international markets since it was established in 1979. Clients include the private companies, tourist and art organisations, local government and the European Commission. The principal members of the company are Rodney Miller, Anne Mitchell, and Chris Murphy. Mr Miller, the Northern Ireland Past-Chairman of the Chartered Society of Designers, has represented the professional needs of industry on course development panels at the University of Ulster.

The designs of the new stamps were developed in consultation with the Northern Ireland Post Office Board and the Northern Ireland Office as well as Royal Mail's Stamp Advisory Committee.

FIRST DAY FACILITIES Unstamped Royal Mail FDC envelopes will be available from main post offices in Northern Ireland and philatelic outlets about a week before 6 March, price 25p. Orders for FDCs with the stamps cancelled by a pictorial first day postmark of the Bureau or Belfast must reach the Bureau by the day of issue. Price £2.15 UK (including VAT) or £1.83 overseas (no VAT).

Collectors may send stamped covers on the day of issue to: Royal Mail, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB, or Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, 57 Queen Street, Glasgow G1 3AZ (Belfast postmark), marking the outer envelope 'FDO101 DEF' (Bureau), or 'FDO102 DEF' (Belfast). Covers can be posted or handed in at main post offices in Northern Ireland or at offices with philatelic outlets in the rest of the UK for the Belfast pictorial cancel. A non-pictorial Belfast postmark is also available from the Special Handstamp Centre, request 'FDO102 DEF NP'.

Details of sponsored handstamps for 6 March will be announced in the *British Postmark Bulletin* – available on subscription from the Bureau (£10 UK/Europe; £21.75 elsewhere). For a sample copy write to: The Editor, British Postmark Bulletin, Royal Mail, 2-14 Bunhill Row, London EC1Y 8HQ.

PHILATELIC PRODUCTS A presentation pack (£1.85) and stamp cards (25p each) will be available as usual •

New country stamps for England New country stamps for England – 2nd, 1st, E (European rate) and 65p – are scheduled for issue on 23 April and will be previewed here next month. These will be the first country stamps for England; country (regional) stamps for Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales have been on sale since 1958 •

Cats and Dogs issue As announced last month, the Cats and Dogs stamps will be available in retail book format (with two additional definitive stamps) as well as in sheetlets of 10. The overall size of the book when folded out will be 240 x 64mm. The book will be sold folded – the left and centre panels each containing four Cats and Dogs stamps and the right panel two Cats and Dogs and two 1st NVI definitives •



Submarine stamps Four stamps commemorating the centenary of the Royal Navy Submarine Service will be issued on 10 April. The designs are shown here at proof stage; a full description of the issue will be included in next month's



Retail books	Price	Printer
12 × 1st	£3.24	Questa and Walsall
12 × 2nd	£2.28	Questa
6 × 1st	£1.62	Walsall
6 × 1st (Queen Victoria label)	£1.62	Walsall
6 × 2nd	£1.14	Walsall
Vended books		
10 × 1st	£2.70	Questa
10 × 2nd	£1.90	Questa

Self-adhesive stamps Readers are reminded that new books containing self-adhesive stamps are available from the Bureau, philatelic outlets and 3000 post offices from 29 January. They will be available at other post offices and retail outlets as stocks of gummed stamp books are used up; any remaining stocks of such books will be withdrawn from sale at post offices at close of business on 31 March. The change to self-adhesive books will not affect the £1 and £2 vended

books, but new books are being produced for the limited number of vending machines dispensing books of 10 1st and 2nd class NVT stamps. Books containing self-adhesive E, 40p and 65p stamps will be issued later.

Also from 29 January sheets of 100 1st and 2nd class self-adhesive stamps will be available nationally after an extensive trial in certain areas. The new format is an easy to store flat 'z-fold' sheet, aimed primarily at small businesses. The sheets have been available from trial offices, the Bureau and philatelic outlets since September ●

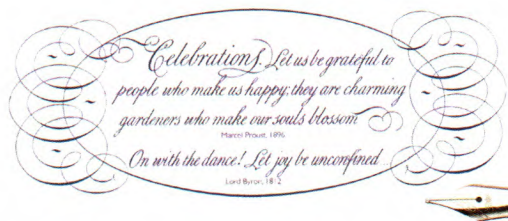
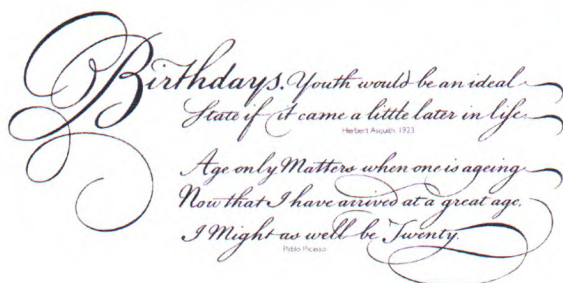
Going off sale Readers are reminded that the Stamp Show prestige books issued in 1999 (*Profile on Print*) and 2000 (*Special by Design*) will be withdrawn on 14 February. (The 1998 *Definitive Portrait* book is now sold out.) Both contain unique stamps – large size 1st class Machin NV1s in 1999, and 1st class Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales in 2000. The Northern Ireland stamp in this book is perf 14 as opposed to 15 × 14 on the sheet stamp issued later in the year. Price: 1999 book £7.83 (SB002), 2000 - £7.73 (SB003). The Millennium Water & Coast stamps, presentation pack and stamp cards will be withdrawn on 6 March, and the high value £1.50, £2, £3 and £5 printed by Enschedé on 10 April ●

Prize winners The winners of the £10 Britannia stamp pack draw in the November *Bulletin* were: Brian Lockier of Bristol; A Starkey, Rugby; Yann Morgan, Lille, France; I G Bendall, Chelmsford; P v d Wal, Maarssen, Netherlands; D Bowcock, Leeds; G E James, Newcastle, Staffs; Les Percy, Matlock; T Goodwin, Workington; and A Pollock, Trowbridge. The winners of the *Scotland's Posts* book draw, also November *Bulletin*, were: I C Allen of Lanark; Alan Jubb, Billericay; G Jones, Cardiff; and M G Garford, Tauranga, New Zealand ●

Occasions stamps

Shown here are the first day cover and presentation pack for the Occasions stamps. The stamps go on sale on 6 February, the pack will be available from 13 February.

See the supplement to the January *Bulletin* for further information •



The weather Stamps and a miniature sheet



The stamps and the miniature sheet will go on sale at post offices, the British Philatelic Bureau and philatelic outlets on 13 March.

FOUR NEW STAMPS feature aspects of the British weather. The colourful designs, placed together, form a barometer showing scenes of rain (19p), sunshine (27p), storms (45p), and very dry weather (65p). Users of the stamps will be intrigued by the creatures shown on three of the four stamps – cats and dogs on the 19p, a black-headed gull on the 45p and goldfinch and butterflies on the 65p. A tiny black Scottie dog also appears in the upper right sheet margin of the miniature sheet. The Queen's silhouette, printed in gold, is positioned top left on the 19p and 45p values and top right on the 27p and 65p. The four values cover the basic inland 2nd and 1st class rates and the two basic rates for overseas airmail letters.

The stamps will also be available in a miniature sheet (see following pages) price £1.56, with illustrations running into the sheet margins. There is an interesting technical development on the 27p stamp in both sheets of 100 and miniature sheet: thermochromic ink has been applied to the cloud – touch or rub the lower cloud for a few seconds and the heat of your finger will change the colour from reddish violet to light blue. On the examples examined by the Editor the phosphor band on the 19p sheet stamp falls short of the right-hand edge of the stamp whereas it runs into the left-hand band on the adjoining 27p stamp in the miniature sheet.

The stamps were designed by Howard Brown, designer of the 1991 Maps, 1993 Maritime Timekeepers (with David Penny), and 1996 Football Legends stamps. He was awarded the R M Phillips medal for stamp design in 1995. For the weather stamps Mr Brown used illustrations by Tony Meeuwissen who has designed covers for the *Radio Times* and illustrated articles for the *Sunday Times* magazine. His awards include the Italian Francobollo d'Oro for the world's best stamps for the Lucky Charms greetings stamps of 1991. His first book – *The Witch's Hat* (1975) – was nominated the most beautifully illustrated book of the year by *The Listener*. His work has been collected by the V&A Museum, London.

FIRST DAY FACILITIES Unstamped Royal Mail FDC envelopes will be available from main post offices and philatelic outlets about a week before 13 March, price 25p. Orders for FDCs with the four stamps or miniature sheet cancelled by a pictorial first day postmark of the Bureau or Fraserburgh must reach Royal Mail (address below) by the day of issue. Price £2.25 UK (including VAT) or £1.92 overseas (no VAT). Please state clearly whether stamps and/or miniature sheet FDC required when ordering.

Collectors may send stamped covers on the day of issue to: Royal Mail, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB (Bureau postmark), or Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, Queen Street, Glasgow G1 3AZ (Fraserburgh postmark), marking the outer envelope 'FDO107' (Bureau), or 'FDO108' (Fraserburgh). Covers can be posted or handed in at main post offices for the Fraserburgh postmark. A non-pictorial Fraserburgh postmark is also available from the Special Handstamp Centre, request 'FDO108 NP'. Fraserburgh is the windiest (low-lying) place in the UK.

celebrate the ever-changing British weather



Mrs J Robinson
200 Manorbie Road
Ilkeston
Derbyshire
DE7 4AB



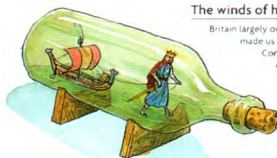
A well-illustrated presentation pack containing the individual stamps (below, price £1.95), and stamp cards (25p each) will be available at main post

offices and philatelic outlets. The pack has been written by the internationally recognised science writers John and Mary Gribbon. John trained as an

astronomer and is a member of the Royal Meteorological Society; Mary studied psychology and is a member of the Royal Geographical Society.

Sponsored handstamps for 13 March will be announced in the *British Postmark Bulletin*, available on subscription from the Bureau (£10 UK/Europe; £21.75 elsewhere).

For a sample copy write to: The Editor, British Postmark Bulletin, Royal Mail, 2-14 Bunhill Row, London EC1Y 8HQ.



The winds of history

Britain largely owes its political existence to the weather. The process that made us British began in 1066, with the invasion by William the Conqueror. In England, King Harold assembled an army powerful enough to easily defeat the Normans, but throughout the month of September William's ships were bottled up in Normandy by a northerly wind. The same wind brought another invasion from Scandinavia to northern England, and Harold had to rush to defeat this invasion. The wind changed. William slipped across the Channel while the English were otherwise occupied, and the rest is history.

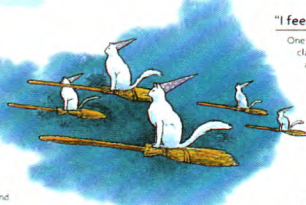


"I feel it in my bones"

One of the most dubious sounding claims of weather prediction is also one of the best-founded. Many people who suffer from arthritis will tell you that they feel a twinge in their bones several hours before rain starts to fall. These claims have been tested, and found to be true. It seems that a fall in atmospheric pressure ahead of the change in the weather causes the twinge, so that some people really can feel it in their bones when rain is approaching.

Raining cats and dogs

Our favourite expression for really heavy rain owes nothing to our four-footed friends, and everything to our Viking forebears. In Norse mythology, witches riding on storm clouds were thought to assume the form of cats while both the dog and the wolf were the attendants of Odin, the god of storms. Strong winds in Viking sagas were described as blowing from the mouth of a wolf. So the combination 'cats and dogs' came to mean downpours of rain associated with blasting gusts of wind.



Dog days of summer

Legend has it that late summer is hot because of the influence of Sirius, the Dog Star, which rises high in the sky in July and August. But this time, the legend is wrong. Late summer is hot, even though the nights start drawing in, because the ground has gained heat during the long sunny days of June, and in July and August it gives back some of this heat to the air, making for sticky, sleepless nights even though those nights are getting longer.



Clever cows?

When cows lie down it is said that rain must be on the way. Apparently cows – like many animals – can sense dampness in the air, and are making sure they have somewhere dry to rest themselves. This particular prediction proves as often wrong as right.



This old rhyme advises that if you are out in a storm, never shelter under a tall tree. Lightning seeks the easiest path to ground, and you would be far better off sheltering under a hedge or bush.

Beware the oak, the larch, the ash, the pine. Avoid the ash, it draws the flash. But under the thorn, you'll come to no harm.

Technical details

Printer De La Rue

Process Gravure (Jumelle press)

Stamp size 35mm square

Miniature sheet size 105mm square

Perforation 14.5

Phosphor 19p one band right, two bands others

Gum PVA

MINIATURE SHEET The sheet (opposite, at actual size) was printed in large sheets of 8 (2×4) guillotined into single sheets for sale. Printing, on De La Rue's Jumelle press, was from cylinders 1A black 1B greenish yellow 1C bright magenta 1D new blue 1E reddish violet 1F gold P1 phosphor. The numbers appeared in the left sheet margin (shown at actual size below left) and were trimmed off when the sheets were guillotined. They are recorded here for record purposes only ●

1A.
1B.
1C.
1D.
1E.
1F.

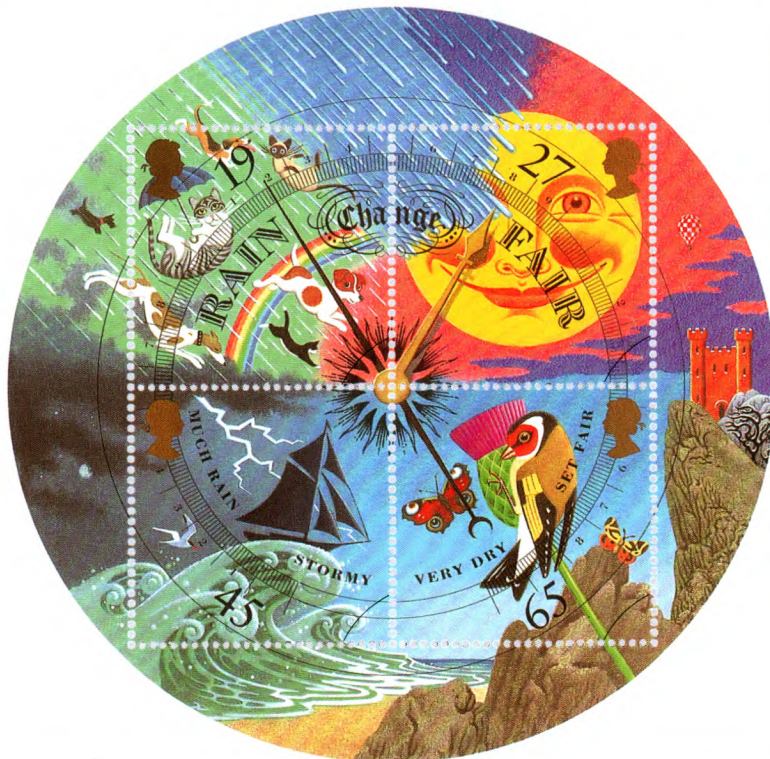
Cylinders and colours

19p 45p & 65p 1A black ● 1B greenish yellow ● 1C bright magenta ● 1D new blue ● 1E gold

27p 1A black ● 1B greenish yellow ● 1C bright magenta ● 1D new blue ● 1E reddish violet ● 1F gold

Phosphor cylinder P2 19p, P3 others





Special draw Machin high values to be won

WE HAVE 10 packs of the Machin high values to give away to the senders of the first 10 cards drawn on 2 March. Simply write your name and address on the back of a postcard and send it to: High Values Draw, British Philatelic Bulletin, Royal Mail, 2-14 Bunhill Row, London EC1Y 8HQ •



The Machin high values
£1.50, £2, £3 and £5

Loughborough University smart mail trial

At the end of September 1989 my youngest son went to Loughborough University for a degree course in Geography. Looking around the campus with him, we visited the Student's Union building, and in the entrance hall found a machine resembling a tabletop photocopier. It transpired that Loughborough was the site chosen for a trial of a new type of automatic postage dispenser.



THERE had been some publicity about the launch of the Midland Bank 'smart' debit card on one of the financial pages some months earlier but it hadn't rung a bell because using it to buy postage hadn't been specifically mentioned. It worked like this: if you were a student at Loughborough University, or worked there, and had a current

account at the Midland Bank's University branch, you could apply for a MeritCard. This looked much the same as any other bank card but incorporated a computer chip with a microprocessor and memory so as to provide a number of financial and information services. The MeritCard stored up to £20 in cash drawn from your current account at an MCash loading station, with a weekly limit of £100. With your card and PIN number you could then make purchases at a dozen outlets on the university campus – shops, bars and cafeterias – whilst larger purchases could be made via an MTill, using the card to debit your account, in the same way as you use a Switch card now. The card stored details of transactions, which could be viewed at one of the enquiry stations, and it could also be used to order foreign currency, travellers cheques and to access Prestel and the Thomas Cook Travel Information Bank. Using the MeritCard to buy postage seems to have been an afterthought as it is not mentioned in the information leaflet (left) accompanying the application form, which locates all the outlets, MTills, loading stations and enquiry stations.

The MeritCard was produced by GEC Card Technology and the automatic postage dispenser included as part of the trial was manufactured by Pitney Bowes, bearing machine number PBG 12187 (one of the 6900 Series of machines which could print slogans in colour). Before the trial ended on 30th August 1990 over 5000 items had been processed, including 2000 at Christmas 1989 when postage was discounted 50% to 10p first class and 7p second class from Monday 4th to Friday 8th December. A similar offer was available for Valentine's Day 1990. The trial was adjudged to have been technically a success but has never been extended, although smart card technology is widely used in other counties, such as France.

To use the postage dispenser you inserted your MeritCard into a slot and a display indicated that postage was automatically set at the inland first class rate. You could choose six pre-set rates by pressing keys, or press 'Other Rates' and use a keypad to set the desired value. Details of national and international rates and electronic scales were provided. You then pressed 'Enter' to confirm the set value and the amount was deducted from your card. Next, the envelope was inserted into a slot and printed with an undated green postage paid mark (see right). All letters thus processed had to be posted on the university campus (there was a posting box just in front of the Student's Union building) and the green postage paid mark was then overstruck by an ordinary first or second class machine cancellation at Loughborough sorting office ●

This article is expanded from items published in the Postal Mechanisation Study Circle's Newsletter, with additional information from Jack Peach and Glenn Morgan.

Details of the Study Circle's publications and activities are available from the Secretary: Ray Downing, 166 Mitcham Lane, London SE16 6NS.

A dispensing experiment, by Martin Robinson



The "MAILOMAT"

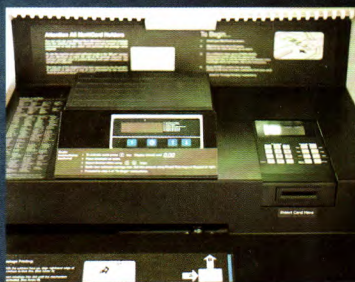
... is a coin-operated U. S. mailbox for people who have letters to mail—and no stamps. It is a "self-service postoffice" that mails your letters without need of adhesive stamps.

To mail a letter you (1) drop money in coin slot (2) dial correct postage denomination (3) insert letter in letter slot. The machine does the rest; automatically takes your letter, prints postage and postmark on it, and holds it for collection. . . . provides postage from 1c to 33c, including Air Mail, Special Delivery, etc., with no premium for postage. Metered mail needs less postoffice handling, often catches earlier trains and planes, starts on its way sooner.

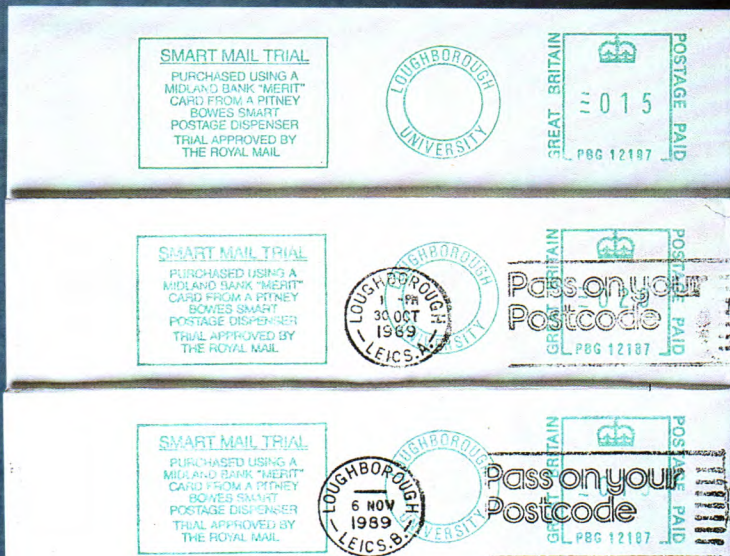
The "Mailomat" is a pre-war invention of Pitney-Bowes Postage Meter Co., Stamford, Conn., now converted to war production; was developed in cooperation with the U. S. Post Office Dept. to facilitate public use of the mails in post office lobbies, railway terminals, etc. Manufacturing will begin when the war is won. Try this new "stampless" postal service now. Use this card to say "hello" to that boy in Service. And when using the mails these days, at home or office, remember to mail early and often . . . to help clear the track for war mail . . . and to help the Post Office help you!



Postmark collectors may be aware of the US Pitney Bowes 'Mailomat' of Second World War vintage (left), or the 19 Wilkinson penny-in-the-slot postage paid machine, both coin operated machines which printed postage and postmark but few people will know of Smart Mail Trial of 1989-90



The smart postage dispenser was installed as a table-top version in June 1989 (far left). This was available 24 hour day but as it was not far from the Student's Union bar, liable to vandalism, so in early October it was replaced by more secure model (left) in cabinet near the Midland Bank branch counter, which could be locked outside bank opening hours.



Envelopes were printed with green postage paid mark, with the LOUGHBOROUGH UNIVERSITY and a box at left stating postage was paid with Midland Bank MeritCard from a Pitney Bowes Smart Postage Dispenser, in a trial approved by Royal Mail.

Manchester Postal Museum Richard West takes a look at David Harrop's ambitious enterprise in Wythenshawe Park



Top, the 'post office' within Wythenshawe Park, which houses the Manchester Postal Museum. Above, some of the many artefacts crammed into the Manchester Postal Museum.

WYTHENSHAW PARK lies just outside Manchester. Apart from the 270 acres of parkland, it houses Wythenshawe Hall, originally built in 1540, sports facilities, a community farm – a horticultural centre. This latter may seem unlikely, but is the setting for the Manchester Postal Museum, housed among a group of cottages in a village setting. This museum has been developed by David Harrop who, over a number of years, has been acquiring a vast array of memorabilia linked with the Post Office.

David is like most of us – a hoarder. At one time he collected New Zealand, but then started delving into artefacts and general postal ephemera. He worked for some 35 years for the Post Office, and during that time began to broaden his collecting interests by buying a number of redundant post boxes, particularly the type that are affixed to walls and poles.

His father was no less an enthusiast, in the realms of steam trains and traction. David, sharing a love of history, in 1986 saw a television programme about the Dorset Steam Fair. Enthralled by what he saw, the following year he went along in person. Conversations during that weekend persuaded David that he should return the next year, but this time with a display of his post boxes. The visiting public immediately took a keen interest in what they saw: David was encouraged to show his items to a larger audience, and began visiting other steam fairs, and also included toy fairs in his itinerary. The collection began to grow, spreading to other items, often rescuing artefacts which were able to go for scrap.

On show at stamp exhibitions He attributes the success of his venture to two organisations: The Post Office, which readily provided transport so that these bulky items could be taken to shows around the country, and the Philatelic Traders' Society. The PTS, of course, annually organises the two Stampex exhibitions in London. In 1991 he approached the organisers of Stampex, who

willingly provided him with an area in which to show some of his memorabilia. David's displays have since been a feature of each Stampex, and of the 'Stamp' events staged by Stanley Gibbons at Wembley. But for David the true accolade came in 2000 when he was invited to show at The Stamp Show 2000.

David prides himself that whatever theme exhibition organisers choose for their events, he can offer a complementary display. He is frequently asked to loan material for display in museums and libraries, and has accepted invitations as far afield as Lincolnshire, Norfolk, Llandudno and Blackpool.

A permanent home All this time, the collection was being 'stored' in David's own home in Stockport, clearly putting great pressure on the space available, and domestic bliss! The Park Manager of Wythenshawe Park had approached the Post Office to see if a redundant pillar box could be acquired. Within the park is a row of cottages, one of which has a former 'Post Office' sign on the front, to resemble a village post office. The pillar box would sit outside this cottage.

A colleague of David's, working for the Post Office, knew of this approach from the Park, and suggested that the cottage would be an ideal setting for David's collection. So, in May 1998, an approach was made to the Park Manager, who greeted the idea with enthusiasm. So extensive has the collection become that the cottage is crammed full of artefacts, and indeed there is a great deal of overspill.

An open-fronted area houses many of the larger three-dimensional items, including pillar boxes, bicycles, and so on. While this area is on view whenever the Park is open (daily from 10am to 4pm) it can only be viewed from behind gates. Someone rather took a fancy to some of the items on show and felt they would be better in new surroundings!

David is still acquiring items, often buying at auction, but has to be cautious, as he finances all the acquisitions. Fortunately the Park provides the facilities free of charge, but equally there is no admission charge to either the Park or Museum.

The collection is, to say the least, extensive. It covers a vast array of memorabilia, including uniforms, posters, scales, bicycles, trolleys, a sorting frame, medals and badges, franking machines, datestamps and ink wells, a mail pouch and ties. There are many Post Office related toys including models of mail vans, jig-saws, pillar box money boxes and dolls. There is correspondence, examples of Manchester postal history, postcards (many Manchester-related), telegrams and postal orders. There is also a good selection of reference works for those who wish to delve further.

When you visit, don't expect a well-ordered museum: this is more like an Aladdin's Cave, crammed full of goodies. But David, having now retired from the Post Office, is working hard gradually to put everything in order. Even so, those who visit the Museum today are enthralled by all they see.

David plans to open the Museum each Wednesday and Sunday (from 11am to 3.45pm). However, if you are planning a visit, it would be as well to telephone in advance. Be prepared to be amazed: and don't be frightened to ask David to tell you more about the exhibits. He has a fascinating tale to tell, and will be only too pleased to unearth a few more items from the concealed recesses to amaze you.

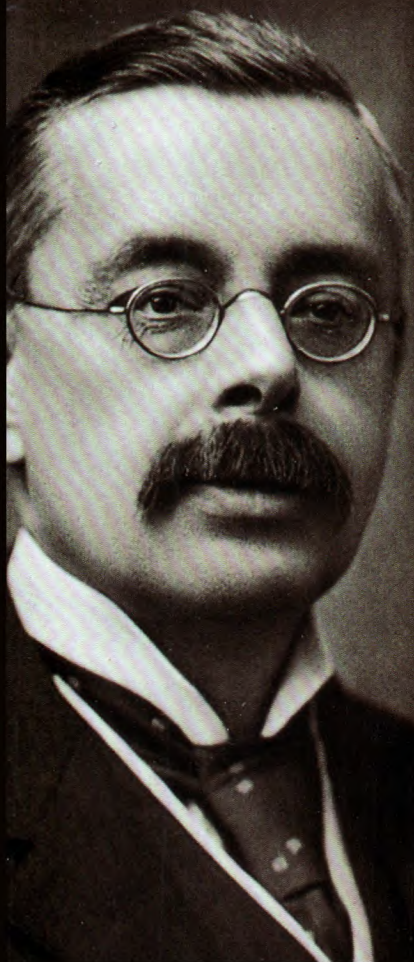
Rowland Hill Award For all his efforts in bringing all these items together, for being so willing to show them to a wider audience by visiting exhibitions and loaning to other museums, and for his initiative in creating this unique museum in Manchester, David earned a Rowland Hill Award early in 2000.

So next time you visit Stampex, or Manchester, make sure you stop to see just what an amazing array of goodies have been accumulated by David Harrop to create his Manchester Postal Museum ●

Manchester Postal Museum If planning a visit, telephone in advance: 0161 998 2117.

Wythenshawe Park can be reached by buses 41, 99, 101, 108, 109 or 110 from Manchester, or routes 370 and 371 from Stockport and Altrincham.

ninent early collectors T W Hall, by Ron Negus FRPSL



'T W Hall can never be replaced. The man cannot be replaced, for they do not make men in his mould nowadays. The philatelist cannot be replaced, for the present generation has not grown up with the hobby as he did, and book learning and study can never serve as substitutes for the day-to-day experience of the pioneers. The lover of stamps cannot be replaced, for the shallow enthusiasms of most of us today are not to be compared with the steady flame that devotes time and energy and fortune to the building of a world famous collection such as his.' GIBBONS STAMP MONTHLY OBITUARY

'Possibly one of his greatest contributions to philately was that he helped to make collecting a more friendly hobby. In the old days the meetings of the Royal Philatelic Society were pretty cold parties. There were a few giants and most of the others attending were rather placed in the pigmy class. Hall's occupation of the chair greatly encouraged the newcomer and improved the camaraderie. He was prepared to learn from anyone whereas some of his predecessors did not appreciate having their views criticised.' SIR JOHN WILSON, KEEPER OF THE ROYAL COLLECTION 1938-1969

THE COMBINATION of poor eyesight and colour blindness did not prevent Thomas W Hall from becoming a leading philatelic figure from the end of the 19th century until his death in 1937. He was born in 1861 in Lincolnshire where his father was a headmaster. After completing his education, he became articled to a solicitor in Sheffield and remained there until he was 20. He then travelled to London and joined the practice of a Mr Beckford whilst completing legal studies. By 1883 he had qualified, and became Beckford's managing clerk initially, then joined him as a partner. When the elder man retired in 1895, Hall took over.

During his early years in practice, Hall undertook a number of cases involving philately and this renewed his boyhood interest in the hobby. When he became sole owner, his enthusiasm for stamps had grown and in June 1895 he joined the (later Royal) Philatelic Society, London. His professional services were soon appreciated within that body and he began assisting with their legal affairs, often providing his advice free of charge.

His achievement within the Society was outstanding. He was invited to join the Council within three years of becoming a member, and served on it with distinction for most of the next 40 years. In 1906 he joined the Expert Committee, becoming Chairman in 1926 upon the resignation of Sir Edward Bacon. In 1917 he succeeded M P Castle as editor of the *London Philatelist*, and occupied that role until he died. He was elected Vice-President of the Society in 1918, and then served two terms as its President from 1923 to 1929 inclusive.

One of Thomas Hall's accomplishments that became noteworthy was the worldwide scope of his collections. He collected specimens of any country of which he was ignorant if a paper about it was presented at the Society. In this way, he claimed to be able to discover what another collector had found interesting in that subject. It also enabled him to act as a convivial weekend host to many of his philatelic friends at his home, where he was nearly always able to produce some material that his visitor collected. This method made him particularly knowledgeable about many stamp subjects and the owner of a very large general collection.

One of Hall's collecting peculiarities, noted in the Society's centenary history, was that he never re-hinged stamps. It explains: '...there were sometimes as many as five or six old hinges on the backs of some of the stamps, and they would frequently come off the pages because the hinges had passed their prime. Occasionally he lost stamps which would turn up on his carpets...'

From his earliest days as a collector, Hall had always liked the stamps of South and Central America, and was amassing these for research when they were not popular on this side of the Atlantic. His best countries were reckoned to be Peru, Colombia and States, Uruguay, Argentine, Venezuela, Mexico and Chile. Much of this came when he bought the extensive collections of L L R Hausburg upon the latter's death in 1917. He sold the Victoria portion of Hausburg's collection to King George V, but later regained his interest in the Australian States and built them up anew.

He exhibited portions of these collections at various International Exhibitions and won gold medals and other awards at many of them. He was also willing to contribute the results of his research and wrote many articles in the philatelic press throughout his life. He also was frequently invited to be a member of the jury at exhibitions throughout the world, and accepted when his professional life permitted.

His work for the hobby was recognised with many honours. The Royal Philatelic Society awarded him both their Tilleard Medal (1923) and the Tapling Medal (1932). He was invited to sign the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists in its inaugural year (1921), and was a recipient of the prestigious Lindenberg Medal in 1934.

Outside philately, T W Hall was active in many fields. He was a churchwarden for over 25 years, Treasurer, and later President, of the South London Entomological Society, and held a high rank in freemasonry. He was also prominent in the corporate life of the City of London and a member of the Worshipful Company of Innholders, becoming Master from 1918 to 1920.

His death in June 1937, at the age of 76, was unexpected, although he had been in poor health for some months ●

Post Office Heritage Collections



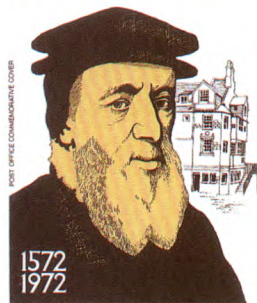
John Knox, in front of John Knox House in Edinburgh, by J Rankin. The portrait is based on a woodcut believed to be the only authentic likeness of him. The design was featured in the Post Office Heritage display at the Glasgow 2000 exhibition last November.

In the meantime Stuart Rose, design Director of the PO, had commissioned designs to be ready for whatever decision might be made. Clive Abbott, Rosalind Dease and J Rankin submitted designs featuring Knox. None of the designs was essayed. *Douglas Muir, Curator Philately, Post Office Heritage* ●

Post Office Heritage Collections can be seen by appointment at Freeling House, Phoenix Place, London WC1X 0DL. Telephone 020 7239 2570.

Although John Knox was not honoured by a stamp, he was commemorated by a special PO cover and postmark. The cover was designed by Clive Abbott and announced in the October 1972 *Bulletin*. It was available from the Philatelic Bureau, all Head Post Offices in Scotland, John Knox House in Edinburgh, and the Church of Scotland office. The John Knox postmark was in use at the Bureau from 28 August to 25 November 1972. John Knox House featured on a Scottish aërogramme issued in 1975.

JOHN KNOX



Mr. P. McGowan,
34 Broughton Road,
Edinburgh EH7 4EB.

Glasgow 2000 Exhibition report, continued from January



Willie Fowler and Jackie Moore of the Glasgow Special Handstamp Centre busy stamping covers with the Glasgow 2000 postmark.

INVITED DISPLAYS, under the headings 'Aspects of Philately' and 'The Broad Spectrum of Philately', included Dennis Collins's 'Court Post – Queen Victoria to Queen Elizabeth II', Dr Bruce Irving's 'Machin Definitives of Scotland 1971-80', Alan Watson's colourful and informative 'Heraldry', Patricia Scott's 'South Australia – a Society of Pioneers', David Watson's 'Australian Postage Dues 1910-13', Charles Reid's 'British Stamp Booklets 1904-36' and Joan Trew's 'Romantic Movement in Music'. There were displays here to appeal to the specialist and newcomer alike.

A number of seminars/workshops were held during the exhibition. I went along to Patricia Scott's well-attended 'Social Philately' to learn more about this new collecting area. Mrs Scott is perhaps the leading proponent of this new idea which aims to link social and economic history to philately so displays can include items that might not be permitted elsewhere so long as they are relevant to the story being told. Here is the main difference to traditional philatelic displays – in Social Philately it is essential to tell a story, to entertain and instruct the viewer rather than simply to display the stamps/postmarks in one's collection.

She illustrated her points by showing pages from two of her collections – 'South Australia –

a Society of Pioneers' (on show in the Broad Spectrum displays) and 'Lives of Victorian Ladies and Gentlemen'. Her interest in South Australia started from genealogical research. She chose to form the collection from covers and letters rather than stamps although said that a Social Philately subject could be presented using stamps. (In that case one wonders where the dividing line comes between a Social Philately and a thematic display.) The key to what to include, said Pat, was relevance – even good philatelic items should not be included unless they are relevant to the story. When writing-up, one should not think in philatelic terms, rather look at each item as a piece of social history, considering the 'social interaction', and how the postal service is relevant to the study. Her pages relating to Victorian ladies and gentlemen, included items relating to their education (ladies by governesses, gentlemen at public schools) and leisure activities, the clubs they joined, their servants, household belongings, politics, and professions. The material used included letters, books, engravings, pens, seals, writing papers and bookplates. It was a fascinating display even if some found the philatelic links somewhat tenuous, and I noted that few displays in the Social Philately class were as adventurous or avant garde as that of Mrs Scott.

Social Philately, clearly an interesting concept, will need refining in the years ahead but if, as Mrs Scott hopes, it serves to broaden the appeal of philately and bring new people into the wider hobby it will be a useful addition to the philatelic scene.

Glasgow 2000 also included a competition between 14 philatelic federations, the overall winner being the Cornwall Federation which exhibited Uganda 1896-1902, 'A Whale's Tale', and the short history of the New York, Rio and Buenos Aires airline. The Youth Inter-Federation Competition was won by the Association of Scottish Philatelic Societies. Delightful 18th-20th century items of writing equipment, model letter boxes and stamp boxes (from the collection of Dr Fiona McEwan) were shown in display cases.

The 70 dealers stands, offering everything from cheap packets of stamps and album pages to rare stamps and postal history, were quite busy and most provided chairs for customers to use whilst examining stock. The British Philatelic Bureau was present and staff from the Special Handstamp Centre in Glasgow were kept busy handstamping mail with the exhibition postmarks. For those needing a break from looking at exhibits or dealers' wares, there was a good tea/coffee/drinks bar and a shop at the Exhibition Centre. Getting to the Centre was relatively easy by a direct local train from the city centre ●



The clock of RMS Columba, on display at Glasgow 2000.

James Mackay

Born to stamps Richard West, *Stamp Magazine's* Editor at Large, talks to Dr Jean Alexander about her philatelic life



BORN with stamps in her veins, throughout her life Jean Alexander has been surrounded by stamps. Not surprising, given the fact that her father had collected from school days. His days at sea meant he could acquire stamps from around the world.

There was no place in the Alexander home in Glasgow for encyclopaedias or atlases: if you needed to know anything, then simply consult the stamp catalogues. The (then) three Gibbons volumes in red, green and blue were heavily thumbed. Many who came to the house were collectors. Most notable was the wife of Captain Philip Durand, the first exponent in Scotland of thematic collecting. All were enthralled by his new approach to the hobby, and his various col-

lections were greatly admired. Saturday mornings for Jean were spent at the local YMCA, where a number of stamp dealers would gather. Stamps became a way of life. In addition to his own collections, Jean's father prepared a collection both for his wife, and for Jean, although she was not to enjoy it until later.

With so many stamps around, Jean did not actively collect, but she did accumulate. Unusually for the time, but understandable, when about 11, she thought about collecting by theme, initially birds and flowers, but then opting for Waterfalls. Mind you, not much was being issued on the subject back in the 1960s, so her 'accumulation' progressed slowly. When Jean was 16 her father died: she acquired his collections.

Philatelic spouse She went to university to read Food Science. It was there she met her future husband, Crawford, undertaking a similar course. Crawford had been a schoolboy collector. Indeed, the first that her future mother-in-law knew about Jean was that she was a stamp collector. Crawford still collects, having achieved success with his Philatelic Alphabet.

While at university Jean started to consider what she might collect seriously: France was quickly rejected. Instead, inspired by looking

through her father's collections, she opted for the Great Britain Postal Union Congress series of 1929. She decided to undertake a plating study, which she found great fun, also studying the King George V definitive K29 and L29 controls (also of 1929). At this stage, the Waterfalls were put to one side, but were later developed into a multi-volume collection. A useful source of information for Jean has always been Post Office Archives (now part of Heritage Services) at Freeling House, part of the Mount Pleasant complex in London. She recommends this as a fantastic basis for research.

Post-related material Jean has not often exhibited, although did win the Post Office Trophy at Stampex in 1970 for her PUG study (which she also showed at the London 'internationals' in 1980 and 1990), but has frequently given displays to societies. A popular subject with audiences is her 'odds and ends'. Some years ago she became fascinated by such items as on-pack offers which provide first day covers, stamp booklets, and such like. Visits to the local supermarket have a different meaning for Jean, as she searches the shelves for the latest 'post-related' offers. Her determination to acquire such material saw her, with Crawford, travelling far to find a branch of Boots selling greetings cards, so that she could have one of the 'Boots' labels used on the first day of use. Despite many attempts, she has consistently failed to be put on a mailing list from Reader's Digest, having had to rely on friends to provide her with the various coil strips, and so on. She finds it a great challenge to acquire these items, often ignored by others, and yet they need not cost much.

Her Waterfalls have been seen publicly: at Wembley when a number of distinguished lady collectors were invited to display, and as part of a British Thematic Association display at Stampex. Today, she has become fascinated by pictorial postal stationery, which she feels offers great potential for thematic collectors.

After achieving her PhD, Jean went to work for the food industry, as did Crawford. Both have been active with their local stamp clubs, and together they wrote a series of articles called 'Heads and Tails' for the weekly magazine *Stamp*

Collecting in the late 1970s. Jean was co-author with Len Newbery of a series on Great Britain Stamp Booklets, published by the Great Britain Philatelic Society, and has indexed various other philatelic works. Jean is a Fellow of The Royal Philatelic Society London, and a member of the National Philatelic Society, Great Britain Philatelic Society and Glasgow Philatelic Society, although many years ago they moved south. In 1984 she signed the Roll of Scottish Philatelists.

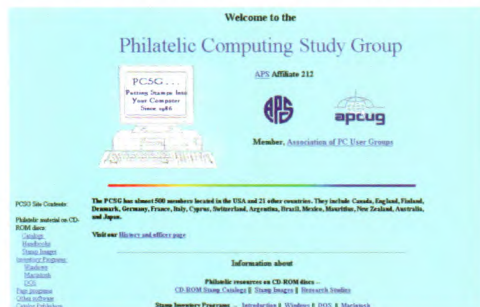
However, as Jean freely admits, her first priority has always been her family (her daughter Victoria did collect for a short time). Thus she has always avoided becoming too involved with 'organised' philately. However, she was part of the team (with Brian Sole and Sheila Foster) which put together the Thematic display which formed part of the Collector and Information Centre at The Stamp Show 2000. One task to which Dr Jean Alexander devotes herself, and for which her name will be familiar, is as a member of the Royal Mail Stamp Advisory Committee.

Jean, and Crawford, are delightfully enthusiastic about their hobby. Their pursuit for the unusual continues. The chance to have customised stamps for Christmas was not missed – but for Jean not with a self-portrait. She decided to combine her interests – her customised stamps (be- low) feature Swallow Falls in Wales! ●

In addition to all her many activities Jean finds time to compile our annual Bulletin index. ED



Philately on-line A site for all internet users, by Ron Negus



Membership of the Philatelic Computing Study Group is open to all. For UK collectors the annual subscription fee is \$15. This covers receipt, by air mail, of the next four issues of *The Computelists*, but back numbers can be purchased separately. Other rates apply to other parts of the world.

Left, author Ron Negus.

I HAVE MENTIONED previously the site operated by the Philatelic Computing Study Group at www.pcsq.org. This body, which is an affiliated specialist group of the American Philatelic Society, has encouraged the idea of philatelic computing since 1984. The group's purpose is to share knowledge of the use of computers in philately amongst its members, and to show non-members how the equipment might be employed to enhance their collecting pleasure. The website forms a major part of this education process.

This online information is supplemented by the publication of a quarterly printed magazine called *The Computelists*, that appears in January, April, July and October. The contents lists from each of the issues produced so far, plus reprints of some selected articles, are given on the website. Most articles in the magazine give reviews of new philatelic software and are written by members. Because of this, they are very useful as they look at any problems from the point of view of an ordinary collector. They are not based on manufacturer's handouts which are the origin of so many reviews in normal computer industry magazines.

The site itself is divided into a number of separate categories, allowing the user to compare related entries on the same topic by a simple click on the main group heading. Repetition of these headings as a navigation bar on the left of every page displayed makes for easy access to any required detailed entry. The groupings used include software divided between Inventory, Page Layout, and Other programs, plus listings of cata-

logues, handbooks and stamp images available on CD-ROM. A useful feature is that the listings of software include programs written for Macintosh as well as for the more common IBM-compatible machines.

An interesting few pages have been included on the site entitled 'A Few Sources of Other Information' which can be of assistance to collectors. Example entries are links to the CIA World Factbook, to Currency Exchange Rates and a Universal Currency Converter, to information on Philatelic Libraries and Museums plus sections discussing the use of scanners, and some facts about viruses.

The full listings of the winning sites in the FIP competitions for 1999 and 2000 are given as well. Bob de Violini, the secretary of the Study Group was a member of the judging panel for the current year's awards.

There is a separate section that details major country catalogue publishers and quotes their website, e-mail and postal addresses and a brief summary of their major publications. The information given for Stanley Gibbons will have to be amended shortly as a recent press release from the company (November 2000) announced plans to make all their existing catalogues available online, and this pioneering development will obviously be of great interest to collectors at all levels. I shall report on progress as soon as the site becomes fully operational, but, in the meantime, readers can examine the latest situation at all-worldstamps.com ●

Prestige book labels Northern Ireland, by Lionel Jones



THE NORTHERN IRELAND prestige book, issued on 26 July 1994, contained four panes of interest to collectors of country, definitive and special stamps. Pane 1 contained four of the 30p Prince of Wales stamps reproducing his painting of Mourne Mountains, Co Down, Northern Ireland. In the pane margin, to the left of the stamps is a large label showing the Dolmen of the Giant's Ring – a 200-yard diameter bronze age burial site situated south of Belfast. Pane 2 contains 6p, 19p and four 25p definitives printed in litho by Questa. This was the only source of the 6p stamp – now catalogued by Stanley Gibbons at £10. In the pane margin are four labels showing respectively: Yellow Man and dulse, an edible seaweed, sold at the Oul' Lammass Fair in Ballycastle; a fishing fly, symbolising Northern Ireland's popularity with anglers; a golf ball, the province having many seaside links and parkland courses; and different types of delicious home-baked bread. Pane 3 was the mixed value pane used on the Royal Mail first day cover. It contains two 19p, four 25p, and one each of 30p and 41p

Northern Ireland country stamps with a central label showing a shamrock leaf. In the pane border is a large label showing glass blowing at Tyrone Crystal, one of Northern Ireland's successful craft industries. The fourth pane bears one each of the four 11 country stamps but there are no labels. In the pane border are reproduced designs for the first Northern Ireland 'regional' stamps of 1958.

All the artwork for the book, except the postage stamps, was by the design company of Carroll, Dempsey & Thirkell Ltd. The pane of Prince of Wales stamps, including the Dolmen label, were printed in photogravure by Harrisons, the remainder of the book in litho by Questa. Perforation of the labels ranges between 13.25 and 14.75. The book was sold at £6.04, now catalogued by Gibbons at £23. Apart from the labels, another interesting feature was the inclusion of two postcards showing the Giant's Causeway. One of the cards carried an imprint of the Giant's Causeway stamp of 1991 revalued at 35p – the then overseas postcard rate ●

Postbag Letters to the Editor

Queen Mother stamps I was interested in the letter in November's *Bulletin* re stamps from Queen Mother sheet and booklets not being used postally. I always thought the odds were against the public buying and using them on mail but it does happen, if very rarely. My daughter-in-law collects envelopes for me where she works and I send the stamps I don't want to charities. In the latest batch was the Queen Mother sheet from a parcel with a perfect large circular Milton Keynes postmark and also, from Shropshire, was the Queen Victoria and Elizabeth II 1st class NVI black from the *Special by Design* booklet. So it is possible, and I have been lucky and keep looking. I have a subscription for the *Bulletin* and I enjoy it and find it most interesting. JACK RUSHTON, BRADFORD, WEST YORKSHIRE ●

2001 issues The four Future stamps featuring children are a real delight – a good ending to the Millennium series. However the designs of some of the Cats and Dogs stamps, shown on the 2001 Royal Mail stamp calendar, look rather gloomy. I hope the remaining issues of the year will be as colourful as the children stamps. PAT KEETCH, GREAT YARMOUTH ●

Parcel post postmarks For more years than I care to recall I have been buying kiloware and obtaining examples of British stamps genuinely used with steel handstamps or machine postmarks from letters and with the rectangular handstamps used on parcels. I have examples of all the George VI and Elizabeth II Wilding stamps with such postmarks and a good selection of the Machin £sd and early decimal issues. However, I have come across hardly any of the more recent Machins with parcel post postmarks. Are they not used anymore, or do the public no longer send parcels using stamps? Most I have seen the other side of the counter at post offices seem to bear some type of pre-paid label, as do those I receive at home. The parcel post postmarks were an interesting sideline to my collecting. L P LYALL, WESTON-SUPER-MARE ●

Buses stamps I am intrigued to hear that Royal Mail will issue stamps showing buses. As one who has, in the past, travelled most of the country by bus and coach, I look forward to seeing these stamps. I hope they will feature some of the famous companies and liveries of the past – a far cry from the modern de-regulated world when bus services seem to be dominated by a few large companies. Local bus companies and their colourful liveries were one of the joys of travelling around Britain in the 1950s and 60s. PETER J BARBER, CARDIFF ●

The Buses stamps (15 May) will indeed feature vehicles of some former operators, including Southdown Motor Services, Cheltenham District Traction Co, and Manchester City Transport. The stamps will be shown here next month. ED

Quick delivery I was most pleasantly surprised to receive my prize in the 1992 Yearbook Draw, having received no mail for nearly a week because gales prevented the ferries from sailing to the island (not a bit like summer). Looking at the postmark the package only took 2½ days to reach here from London, which must have included a night in Corfu. Once again thank you very much and I look forward each month to the arrival of the *Bulletin*. A PARKER, GAIOS, PAXOS, GREECE ●

Sound and Vision Has anyone else noticed that on the first class stamp of the new Sound and Vision series the reflection in the eye is the Starship *Enterprise*? MARY SMITHERS, CHEAM ●

Collectors of yesteryear I have enjoyed reading Ron Negus's articles 'Early Collectors'. I hope the series hasn't come to an end. Hopefully he could include a few more recent collectors such as Ron Lee, H R Holmes, and Adrian Hopkins, whose names featured in the philatelic press not so long ago. I am always interested to read how famous collectors got interested in stamps in the first place. B WILLIAMS, TONBRIDGE, KENT ●

Mr Negus continues the series with 'T W Hall' this month. ED

Maintaining the Stamp Show momentum As your various correspondents have pointed out, the Stamp Show exhibition at Earl's Court was a great success and a real fillip for British philately — which had been rather in the doldrums in recent years. If we have to wait 10 years for the next international exhibition here in the UK, what can be done meanwhile to try to maintain some of the momentum generated by Stamp Show? Perhaps we could have some sort of mini-international after five years or an exhibition of Elizabeth II stamps next year to mark The Queen's golden jubilee. The Stanley Gibbons Catalogue Centenary exhibition in 1965 and Festival of Stamps in 1975 (both at the Royal Festival Hall) served to stimulate interest between the internationals in 1960, 1970 and 1980. The opening of a new Postal Museum would also help in promoting the hobby, but it would need to be rather bigger and more exciting than the former Museum which closed two years ago. P F WARD, COLCHESTER ●

Presentation packs I believe the first presentation pack contained the Shakespeare stamps of 1964 but a friend tells me there were earlier ones. Is this so? JOYCE MILLER, LONDON SW12 ●

The Shakespeare pack was the first as we now know them, but there were forerunners in 1960 containing sets of definitive low value and high value stamps. These were on a card inside a window envelope with details of the contents printed on the front. Details are given in vol 3 of the Stanley Gibbons Great Britain Specialised Stamp Catalogue. ED

Sport stamps I believe you have just issued the 80th stamp on sport or sport-related activities. Can we have a break now? I was delighted to see my local church on the October *Bulletin* cover. MRS A J OWEN, BOVINGDON, HERTS ●

The Editor is always pleased to receive contributions for 'Postbag', especially letters adding information to that already published, so benefiting fellow philatelists. All letters to the Editor are carefully read; matters of general interest will be dealt with in 'Postbag'. The Editor regrets that he is unable to reply personally to letters ●

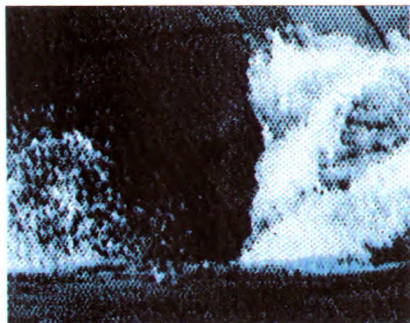
Posting boxes 202

WE BEGIN this month with a Penfold box opposite the railway station in Sheringham, Norfolk. Our correspondent, Mr F Wright, notes that the collection number tag is now of yellow plastic. The next two photos, submitted by Mr J Gore, are of a new box outside the Towers Business Park, Wilmslow Road, Didsbury, Manchester and a Cyprus box outside the post office, Pano Platres, 7km from Troodos. Painted yellow, this box is still in use. Finally we have a box photographed by Mr M C Fish in Hong Kong. He writes: 'After handing over the Colony to the Chinese it is nice to see they still find it useful to use our old posting boxes albeit giving them a coat of green paint but the patriotic red still can be seen.' ●



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

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



November identify The detail is from the Sound and Vision 45p Millennium stamp. The winner was F P Sellick, of Bristol.

November knowledge The answers: 1) Tony Evans; 2) Entertainers' Tale; 3) James Mackay. The winner was Capt P Nielsen of Canary Islands.

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 February *Identify* Competition. Secondly, test your philatelic knowledge by answering the questions below. Send your answer to February *Knowledge* Competition.

- 1 Who designed the first Greetings stamps (1989)?
- 2 Which set of Millennium stamps features a water tap?
- 3 In which year did Mole and Toad appear on a stamp?

Send your answer (addressed to either February *Identify* competition or February *Knowledge* competition), name and address on a postcard or back of a sealed envelope to: British Philatelic Bulletin, Royal Mail, 2-14 Bunhill Row, London EC1Y 3HQ. The senders of the first cards drawn in each competition on 16 March will each receive £100. Ten runner-up prizes of presentation packs or FDCs will be awarded in each competition.

The Competitions are not open to Royal Mail employees •

Events

Until further notice Postal Memorabilia displays at Museum of Lincolnshire Life, Burton Road, Lincoln and Manchester Postal Museum, Wythenshaw Park, Manchester (open 10.00-16.00). **Enquiries** D Harrop, 15 Hawthorn Road, Stockport SK4 3DQ.

1-5 February Hong Kong 2001 exhibition at Hong Kong Convention & Exhibition Centre. The exhibition will be on the theme of Nature; the venue will be divided into special zones featuring, Plants, Animals and Landscapes. **Enquiries** Hong Kong 2001, Hong-kong Post. Fax (852) 2530 2618.

17 February GB Philatelic Society and Cinderella Stamp Club joint meeting at International Students' House, Great Portland Street, London, 11.00. Displays of GB cinderellas, dealers. **Enquiries** A Lajer, 0118 934 4151.

28 February-4 March Spring Stampex at Business Design Centre, London N1. Displays by King George VI Collectors Society, FIP Nations Cup competition, dealers, etc. **Enquiries** 020 7490 1005.

3 March GB Philatelic Society meeting at Stampex 14.30. Scottish Postal History display. **Enquiries** A Lajer, 0118 934 4151.

17 March GB Philatelic Society meeting at British Philatelic Centre, 107 Charterhouse Street, London EC1, 11.00. Displays – Norfolk Postal History (P Pearson), and Booklet Production & Distribution (I Harvey). Dealers. **Enquiries** A Lajer, 0118 934 4151.

24-25 March Scottish Philatelic Congress, New Town Hall, Falkirk •

Late news

New name for The Post Office One of the provisions of the Postal Services Act 2000 is the change in Post Office status to a PLC (Public Limited Company) owned by the government. This will take effect from 26 March when The Post Office will be renamed Consignia PLC. The trading names Royal Mail and Parcelforce Worldwide will not be affected, and post offices will continue to operate under that name •

Auction news Cavendish Auctions celebrate their 50th anniversary this year. Their 9 March auction includes international gold medal winning collections of Western Australia, Tasmania, New South Wales etc. The successful December auction included a marginal mint pair of plate 225 1d red which realised £1610. A first day cover bearing 5d and 1d postage dues, from the Bob Murton collection, made £1035. Enquiries: Cavendish Philatelic Auctions Ltd, 153-157 London Road, Derby DE1 2SY.

Spink's 6 December auction of GB stamps, including the 'Peak' Collection of Elizabeth II (see article in December *Bulletin*), realised some £442,745. A block of four 1961 CEPT 2d stamps, two with orange omitted, made £8050 and a block of six 1962 NPY 3d, two with Queen's head omitted, others with mis-placed head went for £977. A possibly unique cylinder block 24 dot of the 2½d Wilding St Edward Crown watermark realised £805 against an estimate of £250-300. A 1990 Seahorses miniature sheet with recess printing inverted and photogravure printing displaced made £5750 (est £3500-4000). For details of future GB sales contact Spink on +44 (0)20 7563 4000 •

Collectors Club The January edition of *Stamp!*, the magazine of the Royal Mail Collectors Club, includes features on The Future, Occasions and Cats & Dogs stamps (16 January, 6 and 13 February), information about face painting, the cartoon adventures of Sammy the Stamp Bug, jokes, and a competition to win Australian space stamps. The Collectors Club is the only one aimed solely

at young collectors up to age 14. Members receive a fun starter pack, membership card and the bi-monthly magazine. UK membership is £5 for two years, £9.50 Overseas. For an application form write to: Collectors Club, Freepost NEA 1431, Sunderland SR9 9XN •

Surcharge fee From 2 January Royal Mail raised the surcharge fee applied for handling insufficiently paid or unpaid post, from 20p to 50p per item, plus deficient 2nd class postage (for items up to 750g) or 1st class postage (over 750g) •

Correction The text of the Posting Boxes feature in the December *Bulletin* refers to Edward VII boxes – this should have been Edward VIII. Our thanks to David MacDougall for bringing this to our attention and so allowing us to set the record straight. Please note that the stamps in the Jeffery Matthews miniature sheet are as listed in the first column on page 153 of the January *Bulletin*. The information in the second column on that page omits the 64p value and includes a 2p in error. We regret any confusion caused. The sheet is illustrated on page 152 •

Self-adhesive stamp books The books of 10 1st and 2nd class are printed from cylinders Q1 colour Q1 phosphor. The books are by Questa only, not Questa/Walsall as indicated in last month's Forthcoming issues and withdrawals •

Obituary William Gardner, designer of the 3d, 4d, and 5d Jersey regional stamps of 1958-69 died in December, aged 86. He designed the reverses of the 1953 3d piece, English and Scottish shillings and the current 20p coin. He designed and engraved coinages for several countries. Lord Spens, who died in January, aged 58, was a noted collector of GB Elizabeth II Castle high values. In 1990, with the late Gerald Bater, he published *The Queen Elizabeth II Waterlow 'Castle' High Values, 1955-1958*. His *Telegraph* obituary described him as 'a City maverick, an outspoken, ebullient, cigar-smoking merchant banker' •

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