

BRITISH PHILATELIC

The ROYAL MAIL magazine for stamp collectors

Volume 34 Number 3

NOVEMBER 1996 • 85P

Bulletin

Stamped to order stationery •
James Mackay interview



Forthcoming issues & withdrawals

11 November

Issue 1996 Cartoons greetings book reprint: stamps with 2 phosphor bands, amended text on covers

3 December

Issue 2nd class NVI stamp in sheets of 200, with extended phosphor bands

11 December

Withdrawal Walsall 4 x 2nd & Harrison 10 x 2nd books (issued December 1995)



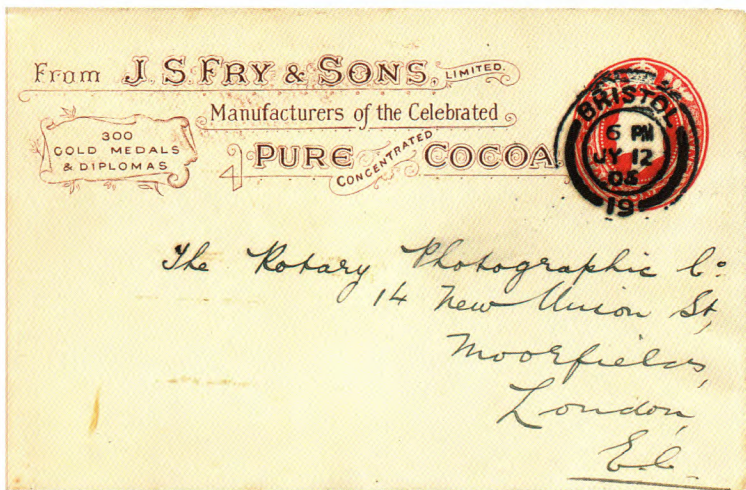
Issues Note some items are available only from the British Philatelic Bureau and Post Office Counters philatelic outlets at main post offices in Bath, Belfast, Birmingham Brighton, Bristol, Cambridge Canterbury, Cardiff, Chester Colchester, Coventry, Croydon Durham, Edinburgh, Exeter Glasgow, Gloucester,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

New from the National Postal Museum The Museum has recently produced a model Model 'T' Ford-type van which bears the NPM logo on each side and the caption THE POST OFFICE on the front headboard.

The van is available to callers at the Museum shop (open Monday to Friday, 0.930-16.30), or by post from: BFM Collectables, 'Nuthatches', Crown Gardens, Fleet GU13 9PD.

Telephone 01252 614367. Remittances payable to 'BFM Collectables'. Credit cards accepted. Price £7.95, postage and packing £1 •

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Private stationery stamped to order Colin Baker starts a new series looking at a once important and extensive method of mail prepayment ... each a tiny fragment of the history of the period **82**

The British Philatelic Bulletin is published monthly by Royal Mail, Royal London House, 22 Finsbury Square, London EC2A 1NL • **Editor** JR Holman • **Price** 85p single copies from Collections, philatelic counters, and National Postal Museum • **Annual subscriptions** UK and Europe £9.50, rest of the world £13.50. Subscriptions should be sent to British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, Edinburgh EH3 5TT • **Binders** to hold 24 issues, price £7. Available by post from British Philatelic Bureau (address above) • Royal Mail also publishes the fortnightly *British Postmark Bulletin*, giving details of forthcoming special handstamps and postmark slogans. Available on annual subscription from British Philatelic Bureau (address above) UK & Europe £10, rest of world £21.75 • **Copyright** Unless copyright attributed to specific authors, all articles and features may be reproduced without formal permission, but acknowledgement should be given to *British Philatelic Bulletin*. Requests to reproduce copyright articles should be sent to the Editor, 22 Finsbury Square, London EC2A 1NL • **Design** by Robert Maude • **Photography** Cover and back page by Geoff Dann • **Printed** in Great Britain by The White Dove Press • **ISSN** 0953 8119

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Royal Mail news

Greetings stamps • 1997

Definitives and Stamp Books • Greetings

Book reprint • Award for Christmas stamp

• NPM news • Angela Reeves heads west

1997 Greetings Stamps The ninth issue of Royal Mail greetings stamps will go on sale at post offices, retail and philatelic outlets on 6 January 1997. Ten stamps featuring flowers will be sold in a book, including 20 free Greetings labels, price £2.60.

Gentiana acaulis by Georg
Dionysius Ehret (1708-70)

Magnolia altissima (modern
name *Magnolia grandiflora*)
by Ehret

Camellia japonica variegata
by Alfred Chandler (1804-96)
a nurseryman from Vauxhall,
London

Tulipa by Ehret



*Le Perroquet rouge – Tulipa
gesneriana* by Ehret

Gazania splendens (modern
name *Guzmania splendens* x)
by Charlotte Caroline Sower-
by (1820-65)

Iris latifolia by Ehret

Amaryllis bresiliensis
(modern name *Hippeas-
trum rutilum*) by
Pierre-Joseph Redoute
(1759-1840)



The stamps, designed by Tutssels design group, show details of flower drawings by five eminent botanical illustrators.

Six of the illustrations are by Georg Dionysius Ehret (1708-70), one of the most talented of all botanical illustrators. Born in Heidelberg, he began his working life as a gardener, but decided to study the science of plants and came to England in 1735. He contributed to many botanical books including his own *Plantae et Papiliones Rariores* (1748-62) and was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1757. His work was prodigious, amounting to over 3000 illustrations.

FIRST DAY FACILITIES Unstamped Royal Mail first day cover envelopes will be available from main post offices, the British Philatelic Bureau and Post Office Counters philatelic outlets around a week before 6 January, price 25p.

The Bureau will provide a first day cover service – collectors may order the Royal Mail cover bearing the stamps, cancelled with a pictorial ‘first day of issue’ postmark of the Bureau or Kew, Richmond, Surrey, price £3.47 (including VAT) to UK addresses, £2.96 to overseas addresses (no VAT). Orders for first day covers must be received at the Bureau by 6 January 1997.

Collectors may send their own stamped covers on the day of issue, for these cancels, to: British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, Edinburgh

Fuchsia ‘Princess of Wales’

by Augusta Innes Withers (1792–1869) botanical artist to Queen Adelaide, wife of William IV

The greetings labels also include flower illustrations with messages such as Best Wishes, Thank You, Happy Birthday, With Love, Congratulations.

Technical details

Printers Walsall Security Printers Ltd

Process Offset lithography

Size 41 × 30mm

Perforation 15 × 14

Phosphor Two phosphor bands, blue fluor in phosphor

Paper OBA (Optical Brightening Agent) free

Gum PVA



Granadilla (modern name *Passiflora coerulea*) by Ehret

EH3 5TT, or Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, Mount Pleasant, London EC1A 1BB (for Kew postmark). The outer envelope should be endorsed ‘FD9701’ (Bureau), or ‘FD9702’ (Kew). First day posting boxes will be provided at most main post offices for collectors who wish to post covers to receive local (mostly non-pictorial) ‘first day of issue’ handstamps.

Details of other special handstamps, sponsored by Royal Mail, stamp dealers and others, will be found in the *British Postmark Bulletin* – the Royal Mail’s magazine for postmark collectors. It is available on subscription from the British Philatelic Bureau: £10 UK and Europe; £21.75 rest of world (airmail).

The front cover of the book features Ehret’s illustration of *Gentiana acaulis*. The names of the flowers, with acknowledgements to the source of the illustrations is given on the inside back cover. Information about greetings stamps and their use appears on the inside front cover. The back cover is given over to the barcode.



Presentation pack and stamp cards A presentation pack (reference G6, price £2.95) and stamp cards (25p each) will be available from the Bureau, Post Office Counters philatelic outlets, and main post offices. The pack reproduces the flower illustrations with a brief description of each subject, and biographical details of the botanical illustrators. A portrait of Ehret is reproduced. The text was written by Fay Sweet.

EARLIER FLOWER AND GREETINGS STAMPS Flowers have been depicted on many Royal Mail stamps, both definitives and special issues. Amongst the main flower stamps are: 1963 National Nature Week 3d, 1964 Botanical Congress, 1967 Wild Flowers, 1976 Roses, 1979 Spring Flowers, 1987 Flower Photographs, 1991 Roses, and 1993 Orchids.

Greetings stamps were introduced in 1989 with a set of five designs, one of which featured a rose. Flowers were shown on two of the 1992 Memorial issue.

Several earlier books of greetings stamps books are still available from the British Philatelic Bureau, also the 1995 and 1996 greetings packs and stamp cards. Details can be found in the Bureau's current stock list.

The 1990 greetings stamps won first prize in the Graphics section of the prestigious BBC Design Competition that year •

1996 Greetings Book reprint Readers are reminded that a reprint of the 1996 Cartoons book will be available from the Bureau and Post Office Counters philatelic outlets from 11 November. This will contain stamps with phosphor bands instead of a phosphor screen as in the original printing. The cover text has also been amended •

Definitive variation The 2nd class NV1 stamp in sheets will in future have extended phosphor bands. This printing will be available from the Bureau from 3 December •

Top award for 1995 Christmas stamp The 19p robin 1995 Christmas stamp was awarded the prestigious best environmental stamp in the 1996 Asiago Awards. Since the 1960s, Asiago, a beautiful Alpine centre in the vicinity of the Dolomites, has presented awards to postal administrations that have issued particularly meaningful stamps. The top award has earned the sobriquet 'the oscar of philately'.

A German miniature sheet commemorating the 50th anniversary of the liberation of prisoners from concentration camps won the 'oscar'. Norway received an award for the best stamp promoting tourism – a stamp promoting the Norwex '97 international stamp exhibition to be held in Oslo next year. The awards ceremony was the highlight of a traditional mid-summer stamp exhibition that has become a great cultural attraction of northern Italy •

1997 Definitives and Stamp Books The 10 × 1st book with ASDA promotion will be available from the Bureau and philatelic outlets from 13 January; it was available from ASDA stores from October. Revised NV1 books, without the Olympic/Paralympic logos on the covers, will be available from February, also books containing 4 × 37p and 4 × 63p stamps. Revised £1 and £2 machine books are expected during February.

On 21 April the 26p definitive and 1st class NV1 will be issued in gold in honour of the golden wedding anniversary of HM The Queen and HRH The Duke of Edinburgh. The date of issue coincides with The Queen's birthday. The 1st class stamp will be issued in sheet format as well as in books of ten. Further details will be published here nearer the time of issue •

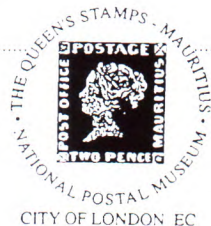
National Postal Museum news The exhibition of photographs of post offices, from a competition arranged between Royal Mail and *Practical Photography* magazine, continues at the Museum until 21 November.

On display in the temporary exhibition gallery on the ground floor, this exhibition comprises nearly 50 photographs entered by *Practical Photography* readers showing all types of offices – from inner-city, to rural and isolated, crown and sub offices, some in shops, private houses, historical buildings, one even in an old chapel. The office on Bressay, Shetland was photographed during snowy weather; some are famous buildings such as the northernmost office in the UK, at Haroldswick (also Shetland), and the medieval 'Old Post Office' at Tintagel, Cornwall. The exhibition will also be of interest to students of posting boxes, many different types (also post office signs) appearing in the photographs.

The winning entries were: Reeth PO, North Yorkshire (by Michael Tarn), Lyness, Orkney (Alex Howe), and Sconser, Isle of Skye (I Brodie). Winners of the under-16 category were Colwood Hospital School, Haywards Heath for photographs of Firle PO, Sussex.

The Museum will be displaying its important 'Genesis of the Machine' collection at the Stamp '96 exhibition in Newcastle upon Tyne (30 November-1 December). This will be of great interest to all collectors of the current definitive series •

The 19p robin stamp was voted the most popular stamp of the year by *Bulletin* readers in the 1995 stamp poll. The Christmas set was the most popular of the year and the 41p and 25p values were also amongst the favourite individual stamps.



On display until 13 December is the exhibition *The Queen's Stamps - Mauritius* including examples of the extremely rare 'Post Office Mauritius' stamps. The exhibition *Robert Burns: Man of Letters* continues until 31 December. The permanent displays include stamps from the R M Phillips Collection of Victorian stamps and from the Post Office's own collections of British and world stamps.

The Museum in King Edward Street, London EC1, is open Monday-Friday 09.30-16.30, admission free. Enquiries: 0171 600 8914

All enquiries about Friends membership, activities, and souvenir covers should be sent to Friends of the NPM, PO Box 40, Uckfield TN22 2SP, enclosing a stamped addressed envelope or international reply coupon.

Christmas Gift Package remittances should be sent to the address above.

Friends of the NPM The Association of Friends of the NPM will be holding its annual general meeting at the Staff Hall, Mount Pleasant, London EC1 on 23 November. Souvenir covers are being produced – details of these and membership of the Friends can be obtained from address opposite. The programme of events for 1997 includes a visit in May to Bletchley Park where the German codes were cracked using Enigma machines during the Second World War. Friends will be able to see memorabilia of Winston Churchill (a frequent wartime visitor), and the 1940s-style Bletchley Park Post Office, run by one of the members of the Association.

The Association offers its usual Christmas Gift Package of a special rate two-year subscription – an ideal gift for any philatelist or postal historian. The annual subscription for UK members normally costs £15, overseas £20. For the festive season only the two year subscription is just £25 UK, £35 overseas – a saving of £5. On joining the new Friend will receive material produced since 1 April 1996 – a bumper package of NPM postcards, Spring and Autumn issues of *Cross Post* magazine, and the Museum's Review for 1995. New material issued up to 31 March 1998 will be despatched as it becomes available. To ensure delivery of the bumper package by Christmas, ordering by the end of November is advised. Don't forget to clearly state the name and address of the person you are nominating ●

Angela Reeves heads west By the time this *Bulletin* is published Royal Mail will have lost the services of Angela Reeves who will be known to many in the philatelic community and to *Bulletin* readers through her articles on the background to the Jeffery Matthews definitive colour range published in January and February 1993.

Angela, who is taking up a new job in New York, joined The Post Office in 1981 working in the Design Division with responsibility for the design and content of presentation packs, first day covers and first day postmarks, Collectors Packs and the popular Royal Mail Yearbook introduced in 1984. She has over the years also worked on the definitive and special stamp issues, stamp book covers – indeed the entire range of philatelic products as well as stamps for postal use.

In recent times she has been heavily involved in the special displays in the National Postal Museum's temporary exhibition gallery; the development of a range of ceramic products featuring stamp designs; and, most importantly for philatelists, the initial planning of the Stamp Show 2000 international exhibition to be held at Earl's Court in May 2000. Liaison between Royal Mail and the philatelic community on this major exhibition will now fall to someone else who, hopefully, will quickly establish the rapport Angela had with philatelists. Although not a collector herself, she has a good appreciation of the interests, anxieties and foibles of us collectors.

On behalf of colleagues in Royal Mail, and I am sure many outside, I wish her well in her new job and life across the Atlantic. Hopefully when she receives letters from her many friends in the UK, the stamps will remind her of happy times at Royal Mail. JOHN HOLMAN, EDITOR ●

Robert Burns Exhibition The touring exhibition on the life of Robert Burns, sponsored by Royal Mail, can be seen during November at: Midlothian District Libraries, Loanhead (until 15 November); Leith Public Library (from 18 November); Wesley College, Cambridge (until 19 November); and Dunfermline Central Library (from 22 November) ●

Exhibition news Autumn Stampex awards

• Stamp '96 Autumn show • Newcastle '96 •
Thematics at Spring Stampex '97 • Italia
'98 international exhibition

British stamp books head Stampex awards A display entitled 'The Evolution of GB Stamp Booklets' by G B Horton won the top award, the *Prix D'Honneur*, Harmers Diamond Jubilee Trophy in the International Class at Autumn Stampex (18-22 September). Mr Horton also received the Great Britain Philatelic Society's Hassan Shaida Trophy. The R A G Lee International award went to Prof S Imperato for his exhibit 'Mail from the Old Italian States'. Both received gold medals, also awarded to J Beechy (Air-mail Flights of 'Faith in Australia'), and R C Stevenson (Moreton Bay and Queensland). *Bulletin* contributor Richard Beith received a small vermeil medal for his 'Italian South Atlantic Air Mail Service 1939-41'.

In the National Classes, the Stampex Silver Mailcoach and Royal Mail Trophy was awarded to A Moorcroft for 'King George V Profile Head Royal Cypher Issue'. The Revenue Society of GB award went to Dr R H Champion for 'GB Document Cypher stamps'.

In all some 85 medals were awarded, including nine gold and 12 large vermeil/silver gilt. The jury, chaired by Dr Alan Huggins, comprised: B Asquith, Dr C Graham, A Griffiths, C Holder, O Hornung, J M Jackson, J W Jackson, F Jones, Mrs A Lee, J Levett, M Moubray, Mrs J Moubray, R Payne, P Pearson, A Peel, and R West •

Stampex

Aristocratic opening for Stamp '96 Autumn Show

Lord Montagu of Beaulieu will open Stamp '96 Autumn Show at the National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham on 22 November. Lord Montagu, owner of the National Motor Museum, one of the finest motor museums in the world, will arrive in Birmingham by helicopter and make a dramatic entrance in a magnificent yellow 1911 Renault saloon car. He will make an important speech about the motor industry, then tour the show and meet standholders and visitors.

Carried on Lord Montagu's helicopter will be 200 numbered and autographed covers bearing Royal Mail's Classic Sports Cars stamps cancelled with the Stamp '96 handstamp. Some 175 of these covers will be sold at the Stanley Gibbons stand, price £15 each.

Lord Montagu said 'I am delighted to be coming to Birmingham to open Stamp '96 Autumn at the NEC. It is entirely suitable that there should be



The National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham The National Postal Museum will be showing the famous Freddie Mercury stamp collection at the Stamp '96 Autumn exhibition.



an issue of motoring stamps in this the centenary year of the British motor industry. I am very proud that the photographs used on the stamps have all been taken by the National Motor Museum photographer Simon Clay.'

CELEBRITIES AND OTHER ATTRACTIONS Celebrity guests will visit each day to meet visitors and sign autographs. A philatelic auction will be held on the opening day and various philatelic federations, societies and clubs will be holding meetings during the show.

Special themed stamp displays, on Cars, Cats, Railways, and Christmas, have links with other major events at the NEC – National Classic Motor Show; Supreme Cat Show; Toy & Train Collectors' Fair; Crime Prevention; and The Country

Style Festive Fair.

Popular features at Stamp '95 and Stamp '96 at Wembley will all be at the NEC – philatelic talks, displays and workshops, free prize draw, free gift for every visitor, goody bags, and supervised creche. A free Stamp '96 NEC show tabloid newspaper is to be published.

Exhibition opening times

22 November 11.00-19.00

23 November 10.00-19.00

24 November 10.00-17.00

Enquiries Stamp '96 Autumn

Show office, 01425 461353

GETTING TO THE SHOW The exhibition, open 22-24 November, has been organised by Tomorrows World Exhibitions & Conferences Ltd in association with Stanley Gibbons. Coaches will run from the Stanley Gibbons shop, 399 Strand, London WC2 to the exhibition each day. The NEC, opened by The Queen in 1976, is easily reached from all parts of the UK, by good motorway and intercity rail links. There is car parking for over 18,000 cars. Birmingham International rail station is a 90 minute journey from London Euston, and only 10 minutes from Birmingham city centre. The airport has daily flights from European and US cities ●



Newcastle '96 This new exhibition will be held at the Civic Centre, Newcastle upon Tyne, 30 November-1 December. It represents the start of a process by the Association of British Philatelic Societies to organise national philatelic events outside London. Local organisation of the event has been in the hands of the local federation, the North-East of England Philatelic Association (NEPA).

MAJOR EXHIBITS The display of material from the Royal Philatelic Collection will be an outstanding attraction. Some eight frames of early airmail material will be on display. This is the first time that items from the Collection have been on show in this way outside London, apart from appearances at international exhibitions overseas.

The National Postal Museum's exhibit *The Genesis of the Machine* will be on show – a fascinating outline of the creation of our current definitives.

The British Aerophilatelic Federation (BAEF) are mounting an exhibition as a Court of Honour. This will consist of competition entries together with three gold medal winning entries. A 'design an airmail stamp' competition is being arranged for young people in the North East.

Mike Oxley will provide an exhibit from his notable collection of the postal history of Newcastle.

INTERFEDERATION COMPETITIONS Entries, in Traditional, Postal History, and Thematic classes, have been received from 12 federations: Cornwall, East Midlands, Hampshire, Kent, Midlands, NEPA, North West, Scotland, Surrey, Sussex, Wessex, and Wiltshire. The Youth Interfederation Competition includes entries from Cornwall, NEPA, Scotland, Sussex, and Wessex.

STAMP FAIR AND PHILATELIC WORKSHOPS Some 34 stands will cater for a wide range of interests, with a certain emphasis on aerophilately. Workshops are being arranged on six topics, each lasting about one hour. The times of the workshops are given below. They will be chaired by leading collectors, including Dr Alan Huggins, Frank Jones, and Francis Kiddle. A number of national and specialist societies will be arranging meetings and publicity displays.

OPENING HOURS AND ADMISSION A civic reception will be held at the Civic Centre on 29 November for exhibitors, invited guests and the media. The Lord Mayor of Newcastle will be present. The exhibition opens to the public at 09.30 on 30 November. The programme is shown opposite.

Admission will be £1 adult, 50p under 16. This includes an exhibition handbook giving full information of the event and a numbered entry form for the prize draw. Any subsequent admission to the exhibition will be free on production of the handbook.

Enquiries: Pat Rothnie, Organising Secretary. Telephone 01670 512328.

COMMEMORATIVE COVER See *Commemorative Covers Review* for details ●

Thematics at Spring Stampex The British Thematic Association has been invited to stage an exhibition as part of Spring Stampex in January 1997. The BTA will work in cooperation with specialist thematic groups such as the Philatelic Music Circle, Scouts & Guides Society, Ship Stamp Society, and Meditheme Collectors. The Crown Agents Stamp Bureau will donate a trophy to the society that creates the most interesting display area. Visitors will act as the jury; this approach will hopefully encourage visitors to view the various stands, and get some ideas to broaden their own collecting areas. As well as stamps, there will be three-dimensional exhibits relating to the various themes – this follows the successful display, organised by the Society of Olympic Collectors, at Spring Stampex 1996 ●

Italia '98 international exhibition Italia '98, in Milan 23 October–1 November 1998, will be a world philatelic exhibition covering postal history, aerophilately, thematic philately, and philatelic literature. For a copy of the first Bulletin and an application form write to the GB Commissioner: Brian Sole, 3 Stockfield Road, Claygate, Esher, KT10 0QG, enclosing 75p in stamps for postage ●

30 November

- 09.30 Exhibition opens
- 10.30 Workshop: Researching and developing a philatelic collection
- 11.45 Workshop: Use of the computer as a philatelic tool
- 13.00 National/specialist society meetings (until 17.00)
- 14.00 Workshop: Developing a thematic collection
- 15.15 Workshop: Developing an aerophilatelic collection
- 16.30 Exhibition closes
- 19.00 Awards dinner (Imperial Swallow Hotel)

1 December

- 09.00 Society meetings (until 13.00)
- 09.30 Exhibition opens
- 11.15 Workshop: Judges' comments on Newcastle '96 competition entries
- 14.00 Workshop: Philatelic forum on future of philately in UK
- 16.00 Prize draw
- 16.30 Exhibition closes

Enquiries about the BTA exhibition should be addressed to: Franceska Rapkin, Eaglewood, Sheethanger Lane, Felden, Hemel Hempstead HP3 0GB.

Enquiries about Stampex to: Lindsay Towle, telephone 0171 490 1005. The exhibition will be at the Business Design Centre, London N1, 22–26 January.

Stamp scene Astro Space Stamp Society

• Philatelists honoured • Abram Games •

New Machin catalogue

Astro Space Stamp Society revise Checklist The Society has recently updated its World-wide Checklist of Space stamps, compiled by Harvey Duncan. This is available only to members. For details of this active society, send stamped addressed envelope or two international reply coupons to: Brian Lockyer, 21 Exford Close, Weston-super-Mare, BS23 4RE •



Pat Rothnie Active in organised philately for many years, Mr Rothnie is currently President of Newcastle upon Tyne Philatelic Society.

Philatelists honoured The Association of British Philatelic Societies has recently awarded the Congress Medal to Mr Pat Rothnie for his outstanding work for British philately at national level. Mr Rothnie has held leading positions with the Borders PS, Blyth PS, and BSS (Newcastle) PS, and has served the Association of Scottish Philatelic Societies, Germany & Colonies PS, and North of England Philatelic Association in various capacities. He is County Representative for Northumberland of the Royal Philatelic Society London, and has arranged seminars, workshops, conventions or exhibitions for many philatelic organisations, also the 74th Philatelic Congress at Newcastle in 1992, and the forthcoming Newcastle '96 exhibition. Awarded the MBE in 1995, he has received both the NEPA and BPF Award of Merit. Despite all his organisational work, Mr Rothnie still finds time to collect and study the stamps of Czechoslovakia, 1918-48; Danzig; and the German Third Reich period.

The ABPS's Award of Merit, for services to philately at local and regional level, was received by: Godfrey Astridge; Gordon Bittle-Britt; George Chesworth; John Clarke; Frank Drury; Ted Halliday; Joan Harper; Ray Harris; Stuart Henderson; David Herry; Arthur Hillman; John Jeffery; Jeffrey Smith; Donald Thompson; and Jean Wood •

Abram Games designed the 4d value of the Festival of Britain pair. This included his famous Festival symbol.



Obituary: Abram Games Abram Games (1914-96) was a gifted graphic designer, perhaps best remembered for his symbol for the Festival of Britain in 1951. After a brief attendance at the St Martin's School of Art he joined a commercial art studio and in 1936 won first prize in a poster competition to advertise London County Council evening classes. As a freelance he worked for London Transport, Shell, the Post Office and other major clients. He designed the 3d stamp in the 1948 Olympic Games set and later submitted designs for the Jersey regional stamp in 1958 and the Churchill memorial issue of 1965. Games was also an imaginative inventor; his works including the now classic portable model Cona coffee perculator •

New Machin specialised catalogue The popular *Specialised Machin Catalogue*, produced by Alan Wilson, is to be re-published by the Machin Collectors Club. Still in loose leaf A5 format, the new edition includes updated

listings to August 1996, more illustrations, extended introductory notes, and a new section written for the beginner in an easy to understand style. Much work has been undertaken by Club members and specialist dealers to ensure accuracy and completeness. Additional features include market prices (where known); check boxes to record items in your collection; an extended pre-decimal section covering paper and gum variations, perforations and head types, spare pages to enter new issues prior to the publication of supplements each August; and a discount voucher for collectors who wish to join the Club.

This new edition, to be launched at the Club's second fayre at Catthorpe Manor, Catthorpe, Leicestershire on 10 November, will be available from the Club, specialist dealers and local high street stamp shops. Price £15.95, postage £1 UK, £2 overseas •

For details of the Machin Collectors Club or to order the catalogue, write to Melvyn Phillpott, 8 Jannys Close, Alysham, Norwich NR11 6DL. Telephone 01263 733586.

Picture post Shown this month are four photographs sent in by readers



Left From Rev A Warrell of Hastings, the post office at East Yell in the remote Shetland Islands.

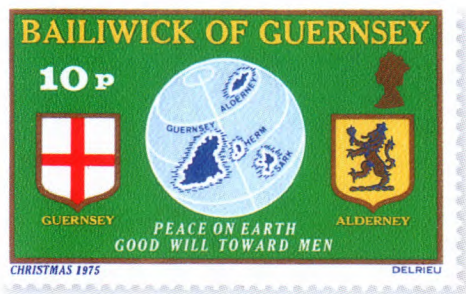
Below From Akira Koyama of Japan, the Globe Theatre, Tokyo. Mr Koyama submitted this after reading about the Shakespeare's Globe stamps issued last year.



Above From Dr James Mackay comes a photograph of another Scottish island office, this time at Broadford, Isle of Skye, with the new-style post office sign inscribed in Gaelic: Ofis A'Phuist (Post Office) An T-Ath Leathann (Broadford). Dr Mackay also submits an amusing road sign at Amulree, near Dunkeld in Perthshire. The sign indicates post office and refreshment facilities ahead as well as warning of rabbits on the road!

Handle carefully – this side up

An unusual postal incident, recalled by John Gatrell Peabod hit on a novel way to rejoin his wife and family in Alderney. He would ship himself as a parcel.



Map of the Channel Islands with Alderney crest (right) on Guernsey 1975 Christmas stamp

At the outbreak of the Second World War in September 1939, the tiny island of Alderney (the Channel Island nearest to England), was quiet and pastoral, awaiting, in common with the rest of the British Isles, an unknown future. No one could have foreseen that, a year later, German forces would occupy this tranquil island and establish slave labour camps on it.

Over the centuries, the islanders had become accustomed to a friendly garrison manned by units of the British Army, who make a significant contribution to the island's economy. But the increased military presence at the beginning of the war had a drawback in the view of the civilian population. In those days, Alderney's principal surface link with its parent island of Guernsey was the ss *Courier* – a sturdy but elegant 151 ton steamer which gave the Channel Islands loyal and efficient service for a long period until she was scrapped in 1947. The drawback lay in the fact that military personnel took up most of the available places on the steamer.

This was particularly irritating to one Alderney resident – Major Palmer, known locally as 'Peabod'. In February 1940, he found himself stranded in Guernsey for a fortnight – not because of fog or rough seas, but because all the steamer places had been booked for servicemen.

Peabod was a man of resource. After waiting with mounting frustration for a passage that was not forthcoming, he hit on a novel way to rejoin

his wife and family in Alderney. He would entrust his person to His Majesty's mail and ship himself to Alderney as a parcel. The gallant Major did his staff work and consulted the *Post Office Guide* as to the legality of this method of transmission. He found nothing to suggest that such a procedure would contravene the regulations. Reassured, Peabod presented himself to the Guernsey Post Office and waited patiently to be weighed, stamped and conveyed to the mail ship.

The startled Postmaster was nonplussed and, like any good civil servant, insisted on telephoning his superior in London for guidance. (Channel Island postal services were then the responsibility of the UK GPO). The hierarchy at Headquarters could find nothing in the rule book to suggest the business should be refused. Peabod might be a nuisance, but he was not a noxious or a prohibited material. Provided the formalities were observed and the human parcel was appropriately stamped, all would be in order.

We do not know what fare/postage Peabod was called upon to pay for his carriage to Alderney – nowadays the charge for air or sea journeys between Guernsey and Alderney works out at something approaching £1 per mile! Having been duly processed by the Guernsey Post Office – and carrying appropriate stamps – we are not told on what part of his person they were affixed or whether he winced when they applied the cancellation stamp – Peabod was escorted by Post-

man Jack Clark to the ss *Joybell III*, the duty mail ship. Here further complications arose. The Master of this Sark-based motor ship, Captain Ingrouille, knew his shipping regulations and in no way would he endanger the safety of his passengers and crew. After all, he had to maintain the good name of his ship and preserve his own Master's Certificate. *Joybell III* might spend most of her seafaring life on mundane inter-island voyages, but she had proudly witnessed the Jubilee and Coronation Naval Reviews at Spithead in 1935 and 1937 respectively.

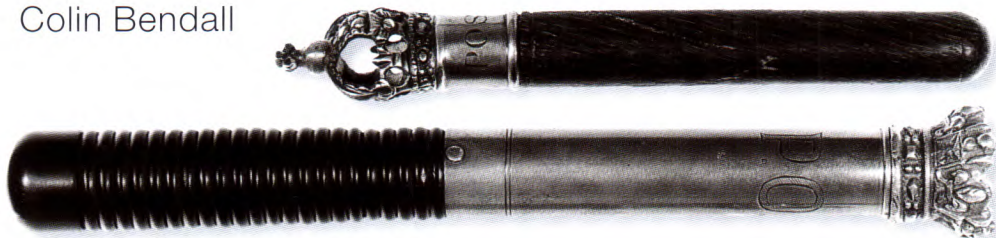
Captain Ingrouille was not concerned with what the *PO Guide* did not say. His bible was the Merchant Shipping Acts and this parcel was neither mail nor cargo in the sense of the terms as he understood them. Peabod was by no stretch of the imagination an inanimate object but a fully paid member of the human race and, as such, would have to be entered on the passenger list. But the good Captain already had 12 passengers booked to sail – the maximum his small vessel was permitted to carry. The dilemma was

solved when two of them failed to appear. The 'parcel' was accordingly allowed to proceed on board and was consigned to the hold with the rest of the mail and the cargo.

Meanwhile, Peabod's wife and daughter, overjoyed at the prospect of an early reunion with the head of the household, waited patiently for the 'parcel' to disembark at Alderney harbour. But there was to be no immediate tearful embrace. The proper GPO procedures had to be observed. Until it reached its proper destination, the 'parcel' remained the responsibility of the Post Office. On arrival at Alderney harbour, the 'parcel' was technically and legally still in transit to its destination. The stamped and parcelled Major found himself taken to the sorting office for proper disposal and formal delivery.

No doubt Peabod poured himself a large drink on eventually reaching his home and consoled himself with the reflection that his enterprise might have earned him a niche in Channel Island history. At least he could look forward to dining out on his story for months to come •

Out of the Arc Curiosities from the Post Office Archives, by Colin Bendall



Tipstaves: a symbol of Post Office authority Several hundred years ago, towns and cities issued special constables with emblems of authority, such as truncheons bearing coats of arms. These truncheons, or tipstaves, were also issued by the Post Office.

During the 1780 Gordon Riots, it was feared the rioters might raid the General Post Office in London, and 200 special constables were sworn in to protect the building. They were given miniature truncheons made of solid brass stamped with the letters GPO. The tops were in the shape of a Royal Crown, symbolising regal authority, and the handles were made of polished ivory. Tipstaves are also thought to have been issued to PO staff in Manchester during Chartist protests in 1848 •

Examples of tipstaves are on display in the Public Searchroom, Post Office Archives and Record Services, Freeing House, Mount Pleasant Complex (Phoenix Place entrance), London EC1A 1BB. The Searchroom is open from 9.00-16.15, Monday to Friday.

Olympophilex '96 Report from Atlanta by Franceska Rapkin



Between now and the time of the Olympic Winter Games in Nagano, Japan, in 1998, and certainly before the next Summer Games, scheduled for Sydney in 2000, the International Olympic Committee (IOC), the Organising Committee for the Olympic Games and the various postal authorities will need to get together to establish exactly who is allowed to use the Olympic rings and the Olympiad logo as a part of the stamp design. To get any information on this subject prior to the Olympic Games in Atlanta proved almost impossible, and much of the information was conflicting.

It was rumoured that the United States would be unable to issue stamps with either the rings or the Atlanta flame logo because the IOC had signed a world-wide agreement with UPS (United Parcel Service) for the carriage of mail. This, of course, could not be correct, since the United States Postal Service (USPS), like its British counterpart, has a monopoly within its own country for the carriage of letters. UPS are only allowed to carry parcels, packets and express mail so long as it is above the first class rate. Rumour had it that it was UPS who refused permission for the USPS to use either the Olympic rings or the Atlanta logo. Once in Atlanta, it became clear that the most likely culprit was ACOG (the Atlanta

Committee for the Olympic Games), who wanted to keep on the right side of UPS.

I am sure that many collectors were surprised that the USPS did not issue pre-Olympic stamps in 1994 and 1995, much as they had done prior to the 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles. At one time there was a distinct possibility that there would be no Olympic stamps from USPS, the first time that a host nation would not have issued stamps since 1920 in Antwerp. Eventually, two sheetlets were issued, each of 20 stamps with a decorative border. The first, showing 20 different sports, had the Olympic rings as a part of the design and the rings and the Atlanta logo in the upper border. The second sheetlet was issued on the opening day of Olympophilex '96, the stamp and memorabilia exhibition that was a part of the Olympic Arts Festival, and the first day of the Centennial Games. It shows Myron's Discobolus and is, in my opinion, one of the most beautiful stamps released by the United States in recent years.

Only the IOC is able to give permission for a company or organisation to use the Olympic rings. I understand that they have been far tougher in granting this permission to postal authorities than in recent years. Permission was only granted to those authorities that also had the

blessing of their own national Olympic Committees, and it was not granted to those countries that were not sending teams to Atlanta.

The philatelic passport made its appearance once again at Olymphilex, the first time that it appeared at an Olympic exhibition. Gibraltar was one of the countries with a page, but that had subsequently to be removed because permission to use the Olympic rings had not been granted since Gibraltar had no team on this occasion. The other country that was obliterated was Chinese Taipei. They appeared in the passport as 'Taiwan'. The Chinese objected to this, in spite of the fact that they did not have a booth themselves. One does sometimes have to ask oneself what has happened to the Olympic spirit.

There were very few stamp dealers at Olymphilex. Most of the trading booths belonged to postal administrations, who did not appear to be doing an enormous amount of business. It was a great shame that Olymphilex was not better attended. The organisers had hoped for some thousand visitors through the door each hour, but this was very far off the mark. The fault lay with ACOG, who insisted that all publicity and press releases came through their offices. Since they did not know anything about the philatelic press, and since they were not interested in Olymphilex in the first place and gave it the lowest priority, nothing got done. To get any information from Olymphilex for publicity purposes was almost impossible, and it was only when I arrived in Atlanta that I found out why.

Another reason for the lack of visitors was lack of a sign indicating that Olymphilex was being held at the Merchandise Mart, the venue for the exhibition. This oversight was corrected after a few days and it made a big difference to the number of visitors who came through the door.

The British Post Office were present, sharing their booth with the Portuguese PO and Canada Post. I believe that most of the business generated at the postal administration booths was the sale stamps for the philatelic passport.

Bureaucracy gone mad This was the first occasion since 1912 that special cancellations were

not available at the Olympic Stadium. In fact, the only place that any special cancellations that related to the Olympic Games were available was at Olymphilex. None of these had either the Olympic rings or the Centennial logo as a part of the design. I was unable to find a definitive reason for this, but believe that it was probably once again due to ACOG not wishing to offend UPS. Until a few days before the start of the Games, the USPS were not allowed to deliver mail into the Olympic Villages or other Olympic venues. I understand that any postal workers who wanted to enter the restricted areas first had to take off their uniform! This was clearly a nonsense and bureaucracy gone mad. One can only be grateful that this problem was overcome before the start of the Games.

Something died in Atlanta when the bomb went off in Centennial Park in the early hours of Saturday 27 July. Up till then, the atmosphere in the city was one of happy camaraderie. People of all nations spoke to each other, smiled and mingled together. Each evening Centennial Park was crowded with young people, listening to the free entertainment and watching the events on giant television screens. The atmosphere in the town centre was palpably different on the Saturday morning after the bombing. People were wary, shocked, less outgoing. I was no longer in Atlanta when Centennial Park re-opened but I understand that the easy going atmosphere was gone there too.

Nationalistic feelings Watching television it was sometimes hard to remember that the Olympic Games are an international event. Coverage targeted American teams, and if there were unlikely to be any US winners, the events were not televised. As one US visitor told me 'We're only interested in the home team'. That said it all, and it was a cause of much



★★★

**POSTAL
ADMINISTRATION
DAY**

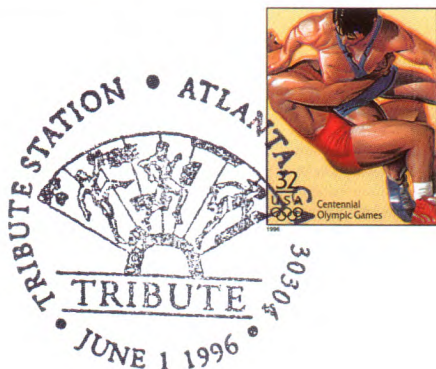


OLYMPHILEX '96 STATION

resentment to thousands of visitors from all over the world. Centennial Park was a perfect antidote to these strong nationalistic feelings. What a shame that the bombers had to choose the one spot where the Olympic spirit was truly visible for their cowardly act.

What a double shame that the bomb went off near the sculpture that is to be a permanent landmark in Centennial Park. The sculpture, entitled *Tribute*, was commissioned by the Greek American community as a special gift to the world and the state of Georgia. It was unveiled on 1 June by Archbishop Iakovos, the spiritual leader of the Greek Orthodox Church of North and South America. The 24 feet wide, 16 feet high sculpture is dedicated to the spirit of Olympism. The first figure, a naked male athlete, represents the Ancient Olympic Games; the second, wearing the long shorts of 1896, symbolises the revival of the Modern Olympic Games and the third, life-size figure shows a female runner of the late 20th century and symbolises the entry of the Olympic Games into the next millennium. A special postmark was used on 1 June to commemorate the unveiling of the sculpture. The base of the sculpture rests on ancient stones shipped from Greece – a gift from the city of Olympia.

There were only two British exhibitors at Olympihlex. Christine Earle was awarded a gold medal for her exhibit *The Grey Goose Wing* on archery, and John Murray from Glasgow received a silver bronze medal for his exhibit on the Uruguay and World Cup football ●



Private stationery stamped



The two series of articles published in the *Bulletin* from September 1994–April 1995 and September 1995–August 1996 described the development of postal stationery that was prepared and sold by the Post Office. This final series will deal with the alternative, but equally important facility, that allowed privately printed material to be stamped to order, so that commercial firms and other organisations could have their own stationery manufactured to their individual requirements.

When plans for the Uniform Penny Post were being drawn up in the late 1830s, it was the Government's intention not only to sell envelopes and lettersheets produced by the Post Office, but also to allow the stamping of similar items which had been privately manufactured.

However, when postal stationery was first introduced in 1840, normal PO envelopes and lettersheets were printed by De La Rue on silk thread paper supplied by John Dickinson, which the Victorians felt was an essential anti-forgery

to order part 1 Delayed start, by Colin Baker



measure. Of course this paper was not available to private manufacturers of envelopes and so for the first few years the PO decided not to allow the stamping of private items for fear of forgery and subsequent loss of revenue.

When the facility to allow the stamping of private stationery was eventually introduced in 1855 it quickly became very popular and was used extensively by many business for over a hundred years. By the middle of the 20th century, the alternative arrangements for the prepayment of postal charges, such as the business reply service, franking machines and bulk mailing arrangements, gradually took over. As a result, the demand from businesses for stamping private material almost completely disappeared and by 1973 the service was used mainly for philatelically inspired material. It was then that the PO decided to end stamping to order, so that after more than a century of use an important and extensive method of mail prepayment came to an end.

During the 118 years that stamping to order was available (1855-1973) almost every type of privately produced postal item had been submitted for stamping, many being elaborately illustrated and each a tiny fragment of the history of the period. Although De La Rue held the contract to print all PO stationery, the stamping of private material was carried out by the Stamping Branch of the Inland Revenue at Somerset House. The Regulations covering this service required a nominal fee to be paid above

Above left Window envelopes (top) were very popular as they saved the effort of re-writing the address. A registered envelope (below) prepared for foreign use (2d registration fee and 2½d basic postage).

Above Many private firms had their envelopes lavishly printed as a form of advertising material.

the total cost of the stamps impressed on private items and, in addition, the service was only available providing a minimum number of similar stamps were to be applied.

Private envelopes The facility to have private envelopes and lettersheets stamped to order was finally permitted in 1855 after the PO introduced yet another measure to prevent fraud and loss of revenue, which involved including printing dates within the stamp border. At the time the PO felt

some security measure was essential, so concerned were they at the possibility of forgery. By using interchangeable date plugs it was possible to include within the stamp the actual date when it was printed. This system was successfully used with revenue stamps, but as far as postage stamps were concerned, although this might have assisted checking procedures in the printing office, it gave little protection against forgery as the printing date bore no relation to the date the stamp was finally used. It was not until 1883 that the PO accepted this and began to abandon the idea, fill-



The rate reduction of 29 May 1922: the envelope has been stamped with a triangular inspector's mark to indicate a refund of ½ d had been made.

ing the three date holes with small florets.

To cater for the new stamping to order facility a series of dies for a variety of values was prepared, all based on the original engraving of Queen Victoria by William Wyon. Apart from the 1d and 2d dies which were already in use, all the dies initially prepared for private stamping had a different shaped border for each value to assist recognition in the post and were also printed in individual colours. As further values were added in succeeding years no new borders were prepared and, therefore, some duplication of the shape of stamps occurred, the PO then relying on colour differences alone to identify these extra values.

It was impossible for the authorities to prepare dies for every conceivable stamp value and many of the higher value envelopes required two or more impressions to make up the correct postage. It was common practice at Somerset House when applying more than one stamp to an envelope to impress the lowest value first on the right hand side and to add higher values in ascending order to the left. Although this rule was not rigidly adhered to, it can help in identifying material which may have been resubmitted for additional stamping at a later date.

Multiple stamping of Victorian envelopes incorporating up to seven impressions are known to exist, but these, and many of their counterparts with less stamps, were philatelically engineered by resubmitting material to Somerset House for additional stamping. It is difficult to envisage any envelope needing more than three impressions to make up normal postage rates; any other more unusual rates would normally have been achieved by the addition of adhesives stamps.

Window envelopes were first introduced at the turn of the century, saving a great deal of time for firms which mailed large numbers of letters

and invoices, since the delivery address was only required to be written or typed once. No specific regulations governed the use of these envelopes to inland addresses and so the facility to have them produced as postal stationery envelopes was quickly taken up, most being stamped at the basic printed paper rate applicable to the time they were used. No PO window envelopes were produced, but the privately printed versions were often lavishly illustrated with firms' logos and advertising material.

Basic postal rates go up The beginning of the 20th century saw Edward VII ascend the throne, but apart from a change in stamp design, the production of privately printed envelopes remained similar to those used in the Victorian period.

Edward VII's reign lasted just nine years, in 1910, George V became King. Although the start of his reign also saw little change to the use of postal stationery, the four years of war in Europe between 1914 and 1918 took their toll. Letter rates were raised twice in succession, to 1½d in 1918 and 2d in 1920, resulting in new values being impressed on private envelopes, while existing stocks were used up by the addition of adhesive stamps. Fortunately the 1½d and 2d dies for these new values were already available, having been previously used for other stamped to order material, and no delay occurred in stamping envelopes at the new rates.

In 1922 the basic postal rates were suddenly reduced to their 1918 levels, the letter rate becoming 1½d once again. Following this rate reduction many of the privately produced 2d envelopes were used to overseas destinations or for overweight letters within the British Isles, but some businesses took the opportunity of receiving a rebate on privately stamped material, the PO cancelling the envelope (rather than the stamp) with a triangular inspector's mark to show a ½d refund had been made on each item.

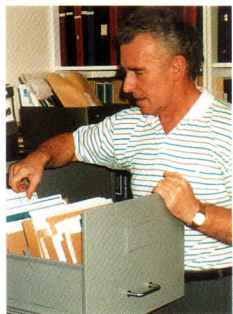
This reduced postal rate remained in force throughout the rest of George V's reign, continuing into the Edward VIII period. His reign was so short that there was no time to prepare any postal stationery stamps. The George V dies remained in use for 11 months until Edward's abdication in December 1936. When George VI became King the letter rate was still 1½d. Embossed stamps with the new King's head were ready by 1939 and used for stamping private material, but once again war intervened and in 1940 this forced yet another increase in postal charges, this time to 2½d for the basic rate. However, with this war set to continue for a further five years, no rate reduction was possible. In fact quite the opposite occurred, since postage rates continued to rise on a regular basis from the 1950s onwards which was reflected in the stamping of private material •



Two window envelopes resubmitted for additional stamps due to postage rate increases. Top, printed paper rate 1½d from 1 June 1951 Below, printed paper rate 1d from 1 May 1940.

The next article will deal with postcards and newspaper wrappers and how the PO had to rap the knuckles of the stationery trade to bring them back into line.

In my view... James Mackay interviewed by John Holman



Dr James Mackay, Britain's most prolific philatelic writer, celebrates his 60th birthday this month. During my Scottish holiday in August, I stopped off at Glasgow to talk to Jim about his collections, writing, and views on the hobby.

Jim and his wife Renate had only recently moved from a flat near the city centre to a large house in the suburbs where he has an office/library for his writing and a stamp room and attic to house his extensive collection. To describe this as extensive is nothing short of an understatement.

Jim started collecting at the age of five or six, encouraged by three aunts, one of whom gave him an XLCR stamp outfit (2s6d!) and a Spitfire album. Stamps were at first stuck in using fish glue which, says Jim, 'I can still smell to this day'. Billeted with one of the aunts were Canadian soldiers who saved the stamps from their mail, passing on to Jim supplies of Newfoundland 1, 3, 4 and 5 cents stamps. The design of the 5c value, depicting a caribou, made a lasting impression on him.

Jim believes most collectors get started as a result of family influences. He will always be grateful to his aunts for their help, although admits his parents thought stamp collecting rather a waste of time. He is delighted that his two grand-daughters (both aged 13) are keen collectors and fourth-generation collectors at that. Children, he believes, should always begin with a general collection, gradually choosing countries or themes that interest them more. He advises adults coming into the hobby should start on a theme associated with their work or other interest.

Jim began to specialise at age 14, advised to concentrate on one country by Harold Jarvie who examined Jim for the Scouts collector's badge and showed him his collection of Dominica. Jim decided to concentrate on Germany as

he had a German pen-pal – a useful source for stamps. Over the years he has also formed specialised collections of New Zealand, Irish, and Tristan da Cunha stamps as well as extensive specialised collections of postmarks and postal history. His favourite specialised stamp collection was of Germany which included locals, wartime occupations and post-war locals. The postal history collection majored on Scotland and its islands, but also included much English, Welsh, and Irish material. The Scottish islands collection was the basis for Jim's well-known *Islands Postal History* series of 13 books – the standard reference for collectors of this subject.

Jim says he prefers general collecting of all-world issues, to specialised collecting of particular countries. He sees a pitfall in over-specialisation – 'collectors can become obsessive on particular aspects, become boring on the subject and lose all interest in anything outside that area'. This he feels, and I agree with him, is a great pity.

A few years ago he sold his main Scottish postal history collection although he still has many duplicates which could form the nucleus of a second collection should he wish. In his attic, specially strengthened to house them, are numerous storage boxes of postal history material from around the world, carefully sorted and labelled: Military Mail, Railways, Ship Posts, Slogans, etc, etc. Jim estimates he has over ½ million such items – on cover or piece. Also stored in the attic is a vast accumulation (perhaps 1 million) of registration labels which, one day, he looks forward

to sorting and mounting. Jim has a soft spot for postal labels of all kinds and has a good mounted-up collection of British labels from Victorian times which he keeps up to date with all the latest priority service, airmail, customs and other labels produced by Royal Mail and Parcelforce. He wrote an important series of articles on these in *Gibbons Stamp Monthly*, 1985-91. Postal stationery is another favoured subject.

The All-World collection However his main collection today is of All-World stamps which he uses as his main source of reference for his writing – both books and articles. This collection is housed in four large four-drawer filing cabinets, the stamps mounted on SG Senator album pages. Mint and used are mounted on separate pages, mint stamps already hinged are remounted in this way, unmounted mint are either mounted with hinges in the stamp margin or with transparent mounts if non-marginal. Used stamps are all mounted with hinges. Jim believes he has stamps from every country listed in the SG catalogue – no mean achievement. In addition he has stamps from many countries not listed and has recently been adding issues from the many towns, cities and districts in the former USSR for which stamps have appeared. ‘Many’, he says, ‘will probably prove to be bogus, but form part of the interesting story of the break-up of the Soviet Union’. Some of these issues he obtained at a stamp fair in Paris.

As a noted philatelic journalist he receives press releases, photographs and stamps from many of the world’s 200 or so postal administrations. All these are used to compile new issue listings in *Stamp & Coin Mart*, then added to the All-World collection. Jim reckons to spend three or four hours each evening after his working day mounting up stamps in his collection. He admits that with the vast outpouring of new issues he is ‘hard-pressed’ to keep up to date.

Used stamps are obtained from various sources, including kiloware. Jim finds soaking off and sorting stamps ‘very therapeutic and relaxing’. Each item is carefully examined for interesting postmarks and might be transferred to the

Postal History rather than All-World collection.

Priority is given to mounting mint material, the used waiting until he has some time free from writing. Jim also enjoys buying ‘junk or job lots’ to find specimens he needs to complete sets. He has not only had a lot of fun doing this but has made many lucky finds. Recently he purchased an album, containing a school boy collection of the late 1930s, for £1 at a jumble sale. In it he found several ‘good stamps’ with a total catalogue value in excess of £1000. These good stamps are now mounted in the All-World collection. Jim believes that general collecting, if not on the scale he is able to do it, would be enjoyed by many adults. ‘It is’, he says, ‘not just for the kids’.

Jim’s stamp room contains shelving for about 250 albums as well as the four filing cabinets of World issues. These albums contain specialised or semi-specialised collections of particular countries, labels, and cinderella material. He is particularly proud of his collection of St Kilda, a remote island off the west coast of Scotland where he was based during army service in the late 1950s. It was the stories of how mail got to and from St Kilda that inspired Jim’s interest in postal history. His eight-volume St Kilda collection includes a near complete sheet of St Kilda registration labels and three of four known registered covers from the island as well as numerous newspaper cuttings, old photographs and other items relating to the postal service. He once owned one of the famous St Kilda mailboats. (For details of St Kilda postal services see November 1994 and February 1995 *Bulletin*.)

Literature It comes as no surprise that philatelic literature is of great importance to Jim Mackay. He maintains a good working library of about 2500 catalogues and books plus journals and journal cuttings. It is impossible to keep all journals but important articles are removed and filed. He is proud to own one of the earliest stamp catalogues published (*The Standard Guide to Postage Stamp Collecting Giving the Values and Degrees of Rarity*, 1865) and 12 volumes of the *Stamp Collectors Magazine*, 1863-74. He recommends more collectors to look at early literature which contain

much useful material. Jim feels that the general stamp magazines have suffered in recent times as more studious articles are now appearing in specialist society publications. *The London Philatelist*, in particular, he feels has been affected by this trend. He is saddened that so few collectors pay much attention to literature but cannot offer a solution to the problem. 'For over 30 years', he says, 'I have been advocating the benefits of reading about stamps, pointing out that knowledge pays off in collecting.' He advises collectors not to be afraid of philatelic literature, a visit to the National Philatelic Society library in London would show the wealth of books, at all levels, for collectors of all levels.

Jim has written over 100 books on stamps and postal history as well as several thousand articles. His books (philatelic and other subjects) have been listed in the *Philatelic Literature Review* (journal of the American Philatelic Research Library, 1994); he is preparing a listing of his articles which, including non-philatelic subjects, may amount to a staggering 10,000! In his dining room he has a bookcase containing copies of his books, including different editions and translations into foreign languages.

When asked which philatelic writers he admires, Jim singled out the late Maurice Williams as 'a major writer in his heyday', and James Negus for his work on estoric subjects such as the stamps of Ifni, Mongolia and Tuva and his magnum opus *Philatelic Literature* (reviewed here May 1991). Jim praises Negus's efforts in raising the standard of scholarship in philatelic writing.

Stamp clubs and societies Jim is not a great joiner of societies, although enjoys being a member of his local society in Glasgow, the Faroes Study Circle, British Postmark Society, and the Alba Stamp Group. Local clubs, he says, 'provide the social contact with fellow collectors, but the specialist society is essential for the development of the hobby in any specific area'. In his experience the organisation of the societies is very mixed, some well-run others less so. His local club is well-run and its weekly meetings well-attended. He thinks there will be fewer local

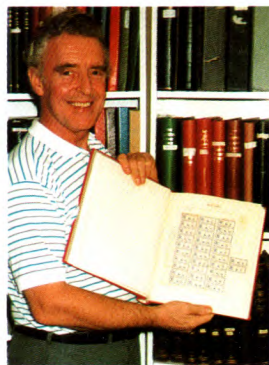
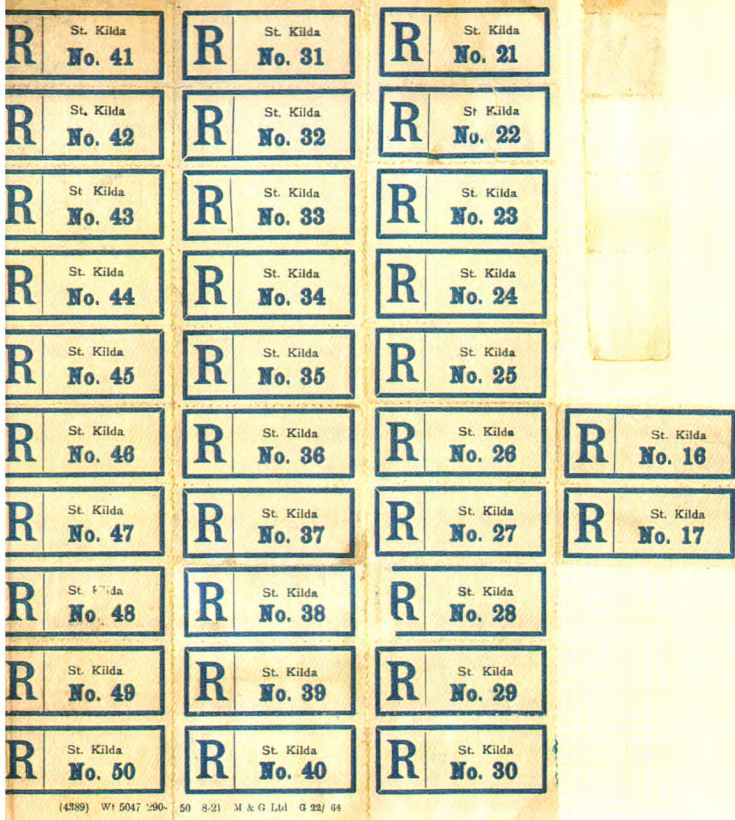
clubs in 10 years time, 'the tendency will be to more specialised societies as collectors' interests become much more focused'.

Jim was at one time a member of the Royal Philatelic Society but found it rather elitist and irrelevant to the ordinary collector. He was interested to read of the more friendly nature of that Society in the interview with Francis Kiddle in January's *Bulletin*. 'I didn't feel at home there when I was a member', he told me, 'I found the National Philatelic Society more congenial although I didn't actually join.' Similarly he did not greatly enjoy the Philatelic Congress although appreciates that some collectors find its social aspects convivial. Perhaps, like me he tends to prefer stamps to philatelists; he cited an eminent philatelist of the past telling him he enjoyed talking to fellow collectors individually or in small groups but found them less appealing in large numbers.

Jim thinks it a shame that so few collectors join any society, pointing out the small numbers of collectors in British societies compared to overseas; the American Philatelic Society, for example, has nearly 100,000 members. 'It is important' he says, 'to join a society you feel comfortable in; most collectors will gravitate towards a friendly neighbourhood society rather than a specialist or big national society'. 'Philately', he emphasised, 'is a broad church, catered for by clubs at all levels'.

He returned to the subject of over-specialisation, fearing that many collectors are now becoming 'rather constipated, concentrating on too narrow a subject'. He argues for what he calls 'concentric philately' with collectors studying a range of subjects around a 'central core specialised area'. For example 'one might specialise in French stamps but also form a thematic collection and one of the postal history of your home town or county. Thematic collecting is good in that it encourages collectors to compare the designs and printing of stamps of many countries.'

Exhibitions and museums The first exhibition Jim went to was in Aberdeen in 1950 – 'what sticks in my mind was a display of "Poached Eggs" on covers'. He has visited Stampex over the years



James Mackay proudly displays the unique almost complete sheets of St Kilda registration labels. Asked about his favourite item in his collection, Jim replied without hesitation the last sheet of registration labels used on St Kilda in 1930 at the evacuation of the island. Probably not the most valuable item in his collection, but one he is proud to own.

and welcomes the move to the Business Design Centre – ‘more convenient for me, travelling down from Scotland, and the venue is certainly better and more spacious’. However he is wary of the growing number of exhibitions which may ‘dissipate energies, certainly at a competitive level; but as a medium for bringing collectors and dealers together the more the merrier’.

He enjoyed the Alexandra Palace international exhibition in 1990: ‘more spacious than 1970 and 1980 which were rather crowded’. However he didn’t think 1990 really stood out as much different to previous internationals and would like to see more ‘three-dimensional exhibits in 2000, used to get publicity to attract more visitors’. He cited the Wharfedale printing press at the 1912 exhibition producing the ‘ideal stamp’ which even prompted George Bernard Shaw to write about it in *The Times*.

Jim also enjoys visiting the National Postal

Museum especially now, like other postal museums, it displays uniforms, vehicles and other artefacts as well as stamps. The philatelic displays he describes as ‘excellent’. His favourite postal museum is the new one at Fontvieille-les-Terrasses in Monaco, ‘the best and most up-to-date in the world’.

He is pleased to be a Trustee of the Sanquhar Post Office Trust, involved in the restoration of the oldest working post office in the world – see his article in the January 1994 *Bulletin*.

Royal Mail and philately Jim is well-known within Royal Mail and is a regular contributor to this magazine and the *British Postmark Bulletin*. He still collects British stamps and has a good Machin collection, including numerous cylinder blocks, that could form the basis of a specialised study. He feels that Royal Mail is a major force for the hobby in some respects but believes ‘the increase

in the number and face value of new issues must have a detrimental effect on the younger collectors'. He praises Royal Mail's involvement with the British Philatelic Trust, the Collectors Club and of course the Postal Museum. He would like to see an annual charity issue for Stamp Day with the premium going to the Trust, and the recruitment of philatelists into Royal Mail's philatelic departments. (There are at present none, save the Editor of this *Bulletin*.) He comments: 'It sometimes seems to me that there is little philatelic involvement or expertise evident in the choice of design and/or subject.' As regards the Trust he could not express an opinion as to its success, but asked whether he saw its main function as the support of organised philately and philatelic study, or an evangelising role in attracting newcomers to the hobby, Jim answered 'both are important, but the latter is vital and needs to be urgently addressed.'

Great philatelists and promoting the hobby Over the past 40 years Jim has met or come into contact with many of the top names in the philatelic world. I was intrigued to know who he held in highest esteem. 'A difficult question', he answered, 'how do you define top philatelists? There have been many who are or were outstanding in their particular field, but very few great "all-rounders". The ones who made the greatest impact on me personally were Maurice Williams (1905-76), Cyril Harmer (1903-86), Miroslaw Bojanowicz (1907-86), and Bruce Auckland who is happily still with us at the age of 101! Perhaps the greatest of all time was Maurice Burrus (1882-1959)'. Jim regards as his mentors the late James Douglas (1912-85) and Fred Dixon (1913-88), the latter doyen of Irish postal historians. He is also grateful to John (now Sir John) Marriott for impressing on him the importance of collecting stamps on cover to show different rates of postage.

He agreed with me that philately does not enjoy a good press but suggests this is 'a relatively recent manifestation – 20 or 30 years ago most newspapers had a regular column or featured philately frequently. If modern coverage were

more generous, philately might not be perceived as dull'. Jim continued, 'Stamps today are brighter and more imaginative than ever so greater media coverage should generate more interest'. He paused for a while, then added 'but with so many stamps these days, perhaps familiarity breeds contempt'.

He would like to see regular stamp programmes on TV similar to hobby programmes on wine, cars, or antiques. Although he did not suggest it, he might be the ideal presenter of a stamp programme. After all there can be few if any rivals to his wide-ranging philatelic interests and collection. He regrets there are so few propagandists for the hobby these days – 'we need someone like the legendary Fred Melville (1882-1940), probably the greatest propagandist the hobby has ever had, able to manipulate the media in its favour'.

I concluded the interview asking Jim about his other hobbies and interests. He has quite a collection of coins (and writes for numismatic journals), model postal vans, and antiques. He is interested in languages (currently learning Hebrew at evening classes), and enjoys playing jazz and Baroque music on the piano. Much of his time away from stamps is now spent writing biographies, with works on Robert Burns, William Wallace, Robert the Bruce, Michael Collins, Robert Service and Allan Pinkerton already published, and Alexander Graham Bell and Andrew Carnegie in progress. Sometimes writing as much as 9000 words in one day, Jim relaxes in the evening with his stamps. Receiving the Doctor of Letters degree from Glasgow University for his work on Burns was one of the most rewarding events in his literary career.

Asked what book and stamp he would like to have with him if marooned on a desert island, he chose the Michel Deutschland Specialised Catalogue and the \$500 Straits Settlement stamp (SG 169, catalogued £50,000). I am sure that if pen and paper were available on the island, it would not be too long before another Mackay book emerged. I wish Jim well on his 60th birthday and look forward to reading many more of his books and articles in the future. ●

Books *Royal Mail Special Stamps • Michael Collins: a Life • Association of British Philatelic Societies Yearbook*

Royal Mail Special Stamps: The stories behind the stamps This, the 13th Royal Mail Yearbook, provides an interesting account of the nine special issues of 1996 from Robert Burns to Christmas. The 44 stamps are included for mounting in the book if desired.

The chapters on each issue, written by Fay Sweet, contain much enjoyable reading based on interviews with the designers. The text is accompanied by fine illustrations of memorabilia, personalities, and the designers.

The Burns stamps were designed by Tayburn McIlroy Coates. Andrew Wolffe of this company was born in Dumfriesshire so 'the legend of Burns and his work played a powerful part in my upbringing... I learned the poetry at school, and at the Murray Arms Hotel in Gatehouse-of-Fleet, one of the hostleries Burns frequented, I tasted my first ale.' The Hotel claims that Burns wrote *Scots Wha Hae*, the song featured on the 41p stamp, under its roof. Amongst the memorabilia illustrated in this section is a Soviet stamp – the first to portray Burns.

Richard Webb of Moseley Webb, designers of the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust stamps, describes the drawings of Charles Tunnicliffe at the Anglesey Heritage Gallery, as 'a real find... aside from a small exhibition at the Royal academy in 1974, the work had rarely been seen in public'. Tunnicliffe drew and painted many of the species of birds that Sir Peter Scott, founder of the WWT, knew so well. Illustrations include both Tunnicliffe and Scott.

Ms Sweet writes of 'the magnitude of the design challenge' facing The Chase, a Manchester-based consultancy, in designing the Cinema stamps. Richard Scholey, of The Chase, worked with fellow designer and film buff Billy Harkcom, steeping themselves in magazines and books of classic film imagery, and using their spare time to watch films and visit cinemas. Attention to detail is shown on the 30p stamp featuring an admission ticket to The Picture Palace

– this is based on an original discovered in an enormous theatre and cinema memorabilia archive in south London.

The European Football Championships captured the public imagination and the Football Legends stamps, issued in May, paid tribute to some great players of the past. Needless to say there was controversy over the five chosen – an extremely difficult choice given the many talented and much-loved players worthy of commemoration. The stamps were the work of Howard Brown, winner of the R M Phillips medal for stamp design, and Liverpool-based Anton Morris whose reputation has been built on his exquisite photorealistic airbrush work. Using Howard's reference material and designs, Anton traced the outlines onto a series of boards. He asked friends and relatives to dress in copies of period strip as he 'needed to see this to get the folds of the cloth exactly right'. Howard devised the stamp values as large chunky numerals – in the style of those seen on players' shirts. A most poignant illustration is of the last telegram sent home by Duncan Edwards before his death in the Munich air crash.

For the Olympic stamps, Peter Rae of London-based Design House, chose 'a powerful photographic approach... a superb medium for portraying movement and the photographic immediacy looks contemporary'. He selected Nick Knight, a leading creative photographer, noted for lush and highly coloured work for *Vogue* magazine and fashion house Yamamoto. Nick used unique photographic techniques 'to get across ideas of energy, heat and concentration' as described in the Yearbook. This involved shooting subjects against a white background and wobbling the camera during the flash. Illustrations include Linford Christie and Jonathan Edwards, and Paralympic gold medallist Tanni Grey.

Women of Achievement turned out to be another controversial issue with much press com-

ment on the five ladies chosen, or rather on others who were not selected. But few seriously questioned the eminence in their fields of those depicted. Amongst other notable women shown in the Yearbook are singer Shirley Bassey, actress Dame Judi Dench, and TV news reporter Kate Adie. Future stamp subjects perhaps. This year's quintet were the work of Stephanie Nash, of Michael Nash Associates, who 'wanted the contemporary starkness of modern design. I didn't want the subjects to appear twee: they are modern women involved in serious pursuits'. The portrait of Marea Hartman 'was incredibly difficult to find. As a sports administrator rather than an athlete, she tended to stay out of the spotlight'.

With the wealth of fine children's TV programmes, the Big Stars of the Small Screen stamps also presented problems of selection. Glenn Tutssel of London-based Tutssels, was born in 1951 and 'adored *Muffin the Mule*'. He recalls a tin Muffin toy he wishes he had kept as 'it would probably be worth a small fortune now!' Glenn watched hours of archive recordings during his research and finding images to appear on the stamps took him all over Britain. Annette Mills's daughter had a wonderful collection of pictures of her mother with Muffin, and hours were spent with Matthew Corbett and Sooty looking at family albums. Others proved difficult to trace since many production companies don't keep extensive archives. The *Clangers* shot had to be produced on computer from various photographs to include all the characters.

The Classic Sports Cars issue, coinciding with the centenary of the British motor industry, features the work of Simon Clay, photographer at the National Motor Museum, Beaulieu. 'Finding the perfect cars was tough', says Simon, 'everything had to be accurate. It was unbelievably difficult to find the right MG. I'd thought this would be the easiest because so many were made'. Photographing the cars was far from easy, with Simon experimenting for hours with different lighting. Professional tricks were used to get the best shots: cola or paint thinners used to clean tyre rubber, then dusted with talcum powder to

emphasise the tread. Memorabilia featured includes old maps, advertisements, and an AA sign.

Laura Stoddart, designer of the Christmas stamps has always been fascinated by trees. Indeed it was her distinctive watercolours of trees at her degree show that led to the stamp commission. She 'particularly likes the gardens at Hampton Court' where, 'on autumnal days when the sun is low the trees cast such wonderful long shadows. They are glorious, so sculptural.' Laura chose to portray five essential stages of the Christmas story. Once the sketches were complete she worked in watercolours on paper measuring just 11 x 15cms. 'I've always been teased', she says, 'for working at the size of a postage stamp, and now here I am doing that for real'. She tried to keep the imagery as simple as possible and, like the weavers of French tapestries, 'set the characters against richly-coloured yet plain backgrounds'. The symbolic meanings of the apple, orange, and oak trees, portrayed on the stamps, are explained in the Yearbook.

The account of the designs and designers will be of greatest value to those, especially thematic collectors, who like to write-up their collections, but should also interest all who collect British special issues, and students of miniscule design.

52 pages, hardbound, supplied in slip-case. Price £23.50 (£75 leatherbound) from British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, Edinburgh EH3 5TT and selected postshops •

Michael Collins: A Life Following the success of his biographies of several eminent Scots, James Mackay turns his prolific pen to a study of Irish patriot Michael Collins, a film on whose life is soon to be released. Mackay wrote his Master's thesis on Collins, his boyhood hero; the biography results from 'a long-standing ambition to do justice to one of the great figures of the century.' Collins was born in Co Cork in 1890 and proved a brilliant if erratic schoolboy. At 14 he was weaned away from notions of an engineering career to be coached relentlessly for the Civil Service examination. This he passed with flying colours and was appointed to a clerkship in the Second Division at an annual salary of £35.



The Post Office Savings Bank, London One of the designs for early Irish stamps included Collins, but it was not until 1990 that the Irish PO finally issued a stamp in his honour (SG 779).

Offered work in several government departments, he chose the Post Office Savings Bank where his sister Hannie and second cousin Nancy also worked. In 1906 he left Ireland for the POSB in Blythe Road, Kensington, and for nearly 10 years lived at various addresses in West London; a plaque on one at Netherwood Road records his stay there. Chapter 2 chronicles his life in London and at the monolithic Savings Bank, founded in the city in 1861 (centenary stamps issued in 1961), and moved to Kensington in 1903. Collins and scores of other clerks laboured daily on some 10 million accounts and deposits totalling £200 million. Post Office Archives houses establishment records of Collins and his sister; Michael's entry stating '303099, Boy Clerk, SB, July 1906'.

'Edwardian London', says Mackay, 'was a melting-pot. Thousands of young men and women flocked into the world's largest city... a cultural, linguistic and racial maelstrom.' Collins wrote of 'the desparate loneliness of the stranger to a city', but later found companionship with other Irish boys employed as POSB clerks. For a

while his sister provided a powerful corrective to his more extreme Irish nationalism, but subsequently Collins joined the Volunteers and fought in the Easter Rising of 1916 (the relevant chapter naturally has numerous references to the Dublin GPO). He was elected a Sinn Féin MP and, as Minister of Finance and Director of Intelligence, effectively ran the republican government. When Arthur Griffiths died in August

1922 Collins, only 31 years old, became head of state as well as commander-in-chief of the army. Days later he was ambushed by the IRA and shot dead; had he lived Anglo-Irish history might have been very different.

This is a fascinating book about a remarkable man, the only British Post Office employee ever to lead a country. 320 pages, hardbound, with dust-jacket. Available from bookshops, price £17.50. Published by Mainstream Publishing, 7 Albany Street, Edinburgh EH1 3UG •

Association of British Philatelic Societies Yearbook & Societies Directory 1996

This new edition will be welcomed by serious collectors and officers of philatelic societies. The Yearbook section includes a review of 1995, the activities of the Association, the British Philatelic Trust, Stuart Rossiter Trust, and British Philatelic Centre, Stampex, Congress, the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists, the forthcoming Newcastle '96 exhibition, and youth philatelic matters. The lengthy listing of collectors willing to give talks and displays to philatelic societies alone makes this book indispensable to all philatelic society and stamp club secretaries. Details are given of ABPS workshops, seminars and information sheets.

A mine of information, worth delving into from time to time simply to learn that little bit more about the world of philately, discovering societies, publications, and services you might not previously have heard of. The substantial reduction in price from the 1995 edition should encourage more collectors to purchase a copy. 228 pages, card covers. Available from J N Hammonds, ABPS, 31 Wheatsheaf Close, Horsham, RH12 5TH. Price £10, postage 75p UK, £1.50 overseas •

Competition Win valuable classic stamps in this month's competition – sponsored by Omniphil



1st prize Canada 1897 \$5 olive-green Queen Victoria Jubilee issue, SG 140 fine colour part original gum example, beautifully centred, the scarce top value of this desirable set. SG cat £800. Classics without Tears retail price £290.

2nd prize GB 1840 1d grey-black (worn plate) letters D-I, fine 4 even margins example from scarcer plate 1a, SG 3, cancelled by upright almost complete well-positioned red brown Maltese Cross, a fine example. Cat £400, retail price £120.

3rd prize GB 1963 Red Cross set phosphor, unmounted mint. SG 642/4p, cat £65 always in demand. Retail price £40.

The winners of the August competition were

E Schillinger (1st prize); R Cocks, J McGregor and J Elley (2nd prizes); F Fischhaller, A E H Smith, H Thompson, Dr G Pegg, H Bagnall, W People, C Bielby, D Dollak, E Wilkes and D Anderson (3rd prizes).

The Answers 1. Harry Corbett; 2. Perth and Inverness; 3. Carl Diem; 4. Edinburgh; 5. 75th anniversary of BBC. Our thanks to all who entered.

Introducing Omniphil Your letter box opens; a selection of stamps drops through. Stamps upon approval is such an old concept that one would have thought it would have gone where all the garages with petrol pump attendants have! – not so, approvals are alive and kicking. Omniphil Approvals now boasts over 1000 regular approval client collectors. Perhaps this has something to do with the strong appeal of being able to select stamps you want, in the comfort of your own home.

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The concept is stunningly simple – for those collectors spending just £12 or more, their loyalty is rewarded not once – but many times over by allowing collectors to select 25% more value of stamps that they require. Stamps offered are already discounted off catalogue prices. This loyalty bonus program allows you to get *extra* stamps you want for your money – up to £200 worth to be precise and without time limit. Existing clients will receive this offer automatically. There is no need to re-apply.

In order to benefit from their offer, write now telling them all the countries/areas that you collect, and they will send you a suitable selection as available without obligation to purchase, plus your free professional tweezers, yours to keep whatever you decide. You can stop their service anytime. They supply stamps from most countries/areas of the world. State whether you require mint or used. Write to **Omniphil Philately, PO Box 99, Market Harborough LE16 8ZR.**

To enter the competition answer the questions below and send, with your name and address, on a postcard or back of an envelope to: November Bulletin Competition, Royal Mail, 22 Finsbury Square, London EC2A 1NL to arrive by 20 December. Each entry must be posted separately; multiple entries in one envelope will be disregarded.

- 1 Which botanical illustrator died in 1770?
- 2 Who was awarded the 1996 Congress Medal?
- 3 Who will open the Stamp '96 Autumn exhibition in Birmingham?
- 4 When was the stamped to order facility introduced?
- 5 What are the opening times of the National Postal Museum?



The answers will be found in this *Bulletin*. The competition is not open to employees, their families and agents, of Royal Mail or Omniphil •

Events

Now showing A new *Mail by Rail* exhibition at the National Railway Museum, York, sponsored by Royal Mail. Enquiries: Candace Brownlee 0171 320 7078

Until 21 November Sub-Post Offices exhibition in temporary exhibition gallery (ground floor) at National Postal Museum, King Edward Street, London EC1. Open Monday-Friday 09.30-16.30. Enquiries: 0171 600 8914

Until 13 December Display of stamps from the Royal Collection, Buckingham Palace (including famous 'Post Office Mauritius' stamps) at National Postal Museum

Until 31 December *Robert Burns: Man of Letters* exhibition at National Postal Museum

2-3 November Scotex at Hall 2, Scottish Exhibition & Conference Centre, Glasgow. Enquiries: Gordon Carroll 0141 333 9724

8-10 November Philatelic Writers Society Conference at Westone Hotel, Northampton. Speakers include George Henderson, David Glover, Norman Williams, Alex Newall. Enquiries: P Lindley, Paddock House, High Street, Yardley Hastings, Northampton NN7 1ER

9 November Display *Great Britain Private Posts* by Chris Harman FRPSL at National Philatelic Society, 107 Charterhouse Street, London EC1. Enquiries: NPS 0171 251 5040

10 November Northern Cinderpex (cinderella, revenue stamps, ephemera) at Pudsey Civic Centre, opens 10am. Two mins from New Pudsey rail station. Enquiries: T Williams, 01709 548187

16 November Camberley & District Stamp Club Stamp Fair & Three Counties Club Competition at Collingwood College, London Road, Camberley. Dealers, displays, etc. Enquiries: Harold Capsey, 01344 424984

16 November Redditch Phil Soc 25th Anniversary Stamp Fair at Abbey High School, Redditch, 10.00-16.30. Admission 50p (free ticket by sending SAE to address below). Midland Phil Fed and Three Counties Fed Autumn Conventions & Competitions; 24 dealers, refreshments, free parking. Five mins walk from Kingfisher Shopping Centre. Enquiries: R Richardson, 23 Milton Close, Headless Cross, Redditch, B97 5BQ

22-23 November Leeds Phil Soc Annual Exhibition & Fair at Pudsey Civic Hall, junction of Ring Road and Leeds to Bradford Road. Open 22nd 11.00-18.00; 23rd 10.00-17.00. Enquiries: R Shiers, 0113 2682370

22-24 November Stamp '96 Autumn at National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham. Open 22 Nov 11.00-19.00, 23 Nov 10.00-19.00, 24 Nov 10.00-17.00. Enquiries: Stamp '96 office, 01425 461353

23 November Maidstone & Mid Kent Phil Soc Stamp Fayre at Grove Green Community Centre, Maidstone (close to junction 7, M20), 10.00-16.00. Enquiries: B Stonestreet, 01622 675784

29-30 November Thematica II (British Thematic Autumn Stamp Show) at Carisbrooke Hall, 63 Seymour Street, London W2. Open 10.30-19.00 29th, 10.30-17.30 30th. Enquiries: Thematic Exhibitions, 0181 343 3234

30 November Lundy Collectors Club meeting at British Philatelic Centre, 107 Charterhouse Street, London EC1, 13.00-17.00. Dealers, displays, refreshments. Enquiries: R E Allen, 146 Headstone Lane, Harrow HA2 6JT

30 November-1 December Newcastle '96 at Civic Centre, Newcastle upon Tyne. A new national/provincial exhibition, promoted by Assn of British Phil Socs. Includes Eurapex '96 aerophilatelic exhibition, dealers, specialist society stands, philatelic workshops, etc. Enquiries: P Rothnie, 01670 512328 ●

ROYAL MAIL COLLECTOR PLATES AND MUGS

The late Tony Evans's endearing photographs of a kitten, rabbit, duckling, and puppy dog made the RSPCA stamps one of the most popular sets of 1990 with *Bulletin* readers. Now Royal Mail has reproduced the designs on 8" diameter fine bone china plates and coffee mugs.

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