

British Philatelic Bulletin

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Letter Box Book

The price of Martin Robinson's book *A Guide to Rare British Letter Boxes* (Second Edition), reviewed in the November *Bulletin* is £2.50 including inland postage.



The Staff of Royal Mail Stamps & Philately – in London and Edinburgh – wish all Bulletin readers a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Greetings Stamps

31 January 1989

DAVID DALE

Manager Definitive Stamps, Royal Mail Stamps & Philately

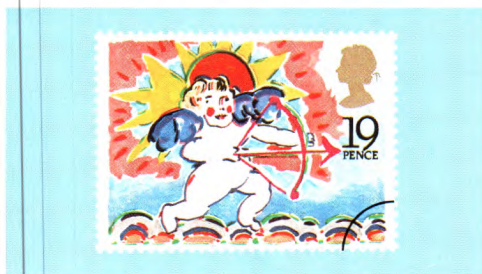
On Tuesday 31 January 1989 a new stamp issue will appear which arguably fits none of the accepted categories which exist at present. The stamps are the same size as a standard special issue (41 x 30mm or "gentleman" sized) but they will appear only in books, not in sheets, and they will be on long term sale. So these stamps will not be like any other special, definitive or book issue made by The Post Office.

The description which will appear on the book cover and which will be used by The Post Office in promoting the stamps is "Royal Mail



Greetings Stamps". Collectors will have to make their own decisions about how, where and whether they fit into their GB collections.

The basic idea of Greetings stamps is that they should complement the card or letter inside the envelope. People may often put considerable effort into writing a letter or choosing the right card and by using a Greetings stamp they can make the outside of the envelope into something special.



Nowadays we send more letters under the general heading of "social mail" than our Victorian or Edwardian ancestors in spite of the development of the telephone. However the general trend has been for letter writing to decrease and the sending of postcards and greetings cards to increase.

Greetings stamps are intended to complement and promote this important sector of mail traffic. The designs have been made reasonably general so they are not tied to specific occasions but they are intended to be suitable for birthdays and messages such as "Best Wishes" and "With Love".

The five designs are repeated twice to form a book of 10 stamps to sell at £1.90 with 12 greetings labels also included. For The Post Office, the extra cost of producing the books will be recovered if customers buy 10 stamps at a time rather than one or two. The customer can of course use the stamps for any purpose.

Full details of the issue including the book cover and greetings labels will be published in the January *Bulletin*.



Designing the Christmas Stamps

LYNN TRICKETT

of Trickett & Webb Design Group



If you were to do a survey of the “Graphic Designers Ultimate Job” I’m pretty sure that high on the list would be a small perforated square of gummed paper. Trickett & Webb have been fortunate enough to design two issues of postage stamps and we have an office joke that in all the years we have been in business, these are the only jobs our mums understand.

They explain what it is to be a graphic designer. That isn’t their only appeal. It’s not the subject matter, which is often difficult to grasp. It’s not the system, which operates as a limited, invited, paid for competition, where unfortunately you lose as often as you win. It’s not the fee, which is adequate but not handsome. It certainly has something to do with the history of British postage stamps and with the quality of stamps (and stamp designers) of the past. Most of all it is to do with the idea of these millions of tiny British Ambassadors landing on door mats all over the world. The quality of British stamps is recognised throughout the world and for that reason it is even more a treat to be represented in the year’s programme.

When The Post Office asked us to submit designs for Christmas we were especially pleased. As a design group we have always taken Christmas, if not seriously, at least enthusiastically. In our own Christmas cards we have created many traditions and recurring themes for ourselves so it would have felt almost self indulgent to use any of these on the stamps.

Luckily our “brief” was to produce a religious set (The Post Office alternates yearly between religious and secular). This meant that we had to look further than Christmas puddings and holly leaves. We had the idea of telling the Christmas story on a set of Christmas cards which we placed on a traditional marble mantelpiece. This combined the Christmas story with Christmas cards, which are, after all, what the Royal Mail is all about. Just to reinforce the whole idea of Christmas cards we designed the set of five stamps so that if you butt any of them together in a row they join up and form a complete mantelpiece of Christmas cards.

The idea was so simple that we couldn’t believe that no one had ever done it before. We anxiously waited for the verdict of the Post Office’s Stamp Advisory Committee. Once they approved the concept we had to make it work. Our first task was to decide who to add to our team within Trickett & Webb. We asked Andrew Davidson to illustrate the cards and Lucinda Lambton to photograph the cards on the marble mantelpiece. Our brief to Andrew was to produce a set of Christmas cards he would be happy to send (or receive) himself.

We then worked closely with The Post Office Design Division and Derrick Howlett at Harrisons, the printers, to find the best way to get our designs into production. We had to take into account the fact that the stamps are printed photogravure. This means that they are printed in up to seven colours on one machine in one continuous process and that the colours don’t separate in the way they do in four colour process. This was especially difficult for Andrew Davidson because it meant that his illustrations had to come out of a limited palette of three colours by the time other colours had been used for wallpaper, shadows, small cards and gold Queen’s profile and type. He coped admirably and with great enthusiasm.

At the end of the day that is probably why designing stamps is such an enjoyable experience. Not only are our clients at The Post Office knowledgeable, supportive and enthusiastic, but everyone in the team seems ready to put their very best into the process, often rescheduling other work to be able to take the job on and never stinting in any way. Miraculously this seems to apply equally at Harrisons, from the engravers through to the ladies who check every sheet of stamps for faults. Everyone seems to have the same motivation – pride in a well produced product.



Royal Mail Yearbook 1988

On 15 November, coinciding with the issue of the Christmas stamps, Volume 5 of the Royal Mail Special Stamps Yearbook was issued. This very interesting and beautifully illustrated book contains background information about the development and production of all the special stamps issued in 1988.

The book is hardbound with a matching slipcase and includes sets of the Linnean Society, Welsh Bible, Sport, Transport & Communications, Australian Bicentenary, Armada and Christmas stamps and the Edward Lear miniature sheet. It is available from the British Philatelic Bureau, philatelic counters, main post offices and some sub-offices.

The book costs £16.95 (the stamps have a face value of £8.92).

Royal Mail Stamps & Philately are proud to report that the Yearbook was awarded joint first prize in this year's "Print Buyers" competition. The awards are made on the basis of quality and originality; the competition is organised by *Print Buyer* magazine.

Collectors Pack 1988

The 1988 edition of the Collectors Pack was also issued on 15 November, priced at £9.50. It is available from the British Philatelic Bureau, philatelic counters, most main post offices and some sub-offices. The pack contains all 34 special stamps issued during 1988 but not the



Edward Lear miniature sheet; the stamps are mounted on a quality display board. In addition to the stamps, there is a colourful and informative brochure giving background details about each of the stamp subjects.

Bulletin Back Issues

We receive a fair number of requests for back numbers of the *Bulletin*. Back issues are kept for one year and are available from the British Philatelic Bureau in Edinburgh, price 40p each (no handling charge). Please note that the August 1988 issue is now out of print. Copies are also available for one year from the Sales Counter at the National Postal Museum.

For some years now Ms E M Parsons of Aberdeen has operated a non-profit making scheme for collectors to acquire and sell back numbers of the *Bulletin*. Ms Parsons has for sale reprints of Vols 1 and 2 bound together between a soft cover at £6 including inland postage. Photocopies can be supplied to order of issues from volumes 3 to 8. Original copies of most issues from Vol 9 onwards are available at 25p each plus postage. Ms Parsons is interested in acquiring issues from Vols 3-10 but has more than adequate stocks of later issues, up to Volume 23.

All orders/enquiries should be sent to Ms Parsons at 31 Redmoss Rd, Nigg, ABERDEEN AB11 4JD. A stamped, self-addressed envelope or international reply coupon should be enclosed with enquiries.

Mail to the Isle of Foula

CHRISTOPHER MYLNE

In these days of 14p post (which, don't forget is over 30 times the cost of the original penny post), it is tempting to think that letter post is expensive. One way of assessing the value of such a service is to think how much it would cost you to deliver a letter yourself. If you want a real bargain, think about the cost of sending a letter to Britain's remotest inhabited island, 18 miles off the west coast of Shetland, the Isle of Foula. Even mail to the mainland of Shetland, which is flown up via Aberdeen to Sumburgh Airport and then taken 25 miles by bus on twisting roads overlooking spectacular seascapes, must represent good value for the same price as a letter from Hampstead to Hounslow, or Margate to Ramsgate.

To Shetlanders, Foula is a world apart, a great dark shape on the Atlantic horizon that few of them have ever visited. It has an airstrip, carved out of an inhospitable landscape by two men and a tractor clearing boulders off a natural stretch of sea-turf near the south end. Loganair occasionally land there on charter trips but the islanders cannot afford that sort of luxury very

often. So the mails still go by sea, nearly three hours of open Atlantic in a boat that has to be small enough to be lifted out of the water by a crane in case of one of those all too frequent Atlantic gales. The harbour is tiny and the pier offers little protection from a south-east gale so that in the winter it is not enough just to lift the boat from the water; it has to be winched up a long slipway on a cradle out of reach of the breakers.

Life of Isolation and Remoteness

When I took the job of teacher to the five pupils in the Foula school way back in 1954, I knew I was opting for isolation and remoteness. That had to be half the attraction. The teeming birdlife and the challenge of fitting in to a community of 70 people living close to nature made up the rest of the appeal of the place. My first encounter was with the mail crew in the village of Walls, an hour's bus-ride across the mainland of Shetland from Lerwick. From Walls *The Island Lass*, a round-hulled five-ton, 30-foot boat, sailed – in theory – once a week,



on Mondays, with the mails. She was a sturdy vessel built locally by David Howarth of *Shetland Bus* fame in the Second World War; and she was designed like a round tub so that there was room in the hold for all the supplies needed by 70 people, including a new bull going in or a cow coming out perhaps, as well as the mailbags and all the boxes from the Walls store. There was a small shop on the island, I discovered, but it was only open three afternoons a week for a few hours, so most crofts sent a box with an order over to Walls. The mailboat was in fact a lifeline. I quickly learnt to bake my own bread but it certainly saved time to get loaves in instead, and as I ran the school, the church, the library and a sort of unofficial office for much of the island's links with bureaucracy, time was very soon at a premium. Like many others I came to value the mailboat – when it went.

Tiny Post Office

In the window of what was supposed to be the smallest post office in Britain was a notice saying “Collection – Mondays 10.20am”. The postmaster then was Harry Gear who had to climb over the counter to get behind it to serve you. Sunday night soon became letter-writing night and several times I sat up all night trying to catch up with all those letters. Often Monday dawned stormy and the boat never went after all! Anything could stop it. The weather most often, of course. But sickness among the crew of five, with only two or three others in the whole community (average age then was 60), who could stand in, often meant delays. With their well-known lack of immunity to infection, a rumour of a cold in Walls, or just one member of the crew having one, was enough to stop the boat for weeks. To bring a cold germ in from the mainland could quite literally spell the death of one of the older inhabitants, and ‘flu was treated like the plague. Another cause of delay was sometimes a funeral when all available able-bodied men would be required to help carry the coffin on their shoulders, perhaps three miles down the length of the island to the graveyard at the south end. Sometimes we seemed fated to have funerals on the only good day a week of gales. And one could well understand their reluctance to set out for Walls with a bad forecast, for at times the boat was storm-stayed over there for a fortnight or more, depriving four or five Foula crofts during all that time of perhaps the only able-bodied man they had to do the essential daily work with animals or crops.



But the winter of 1954/55 was the worst, the year of the long Northerly winds, of “Operation Snowdrop”, when I had to close the school for a week to enlist the help of the children to get supplies by sledge and wheelbarrow from the shop to some of the remoter crofts or the older people. By a strange piece of luck we had a mailrun on Christmas Eve, but because the mails had been held up into Shetland from the south, there was little Christmas mail on board.



Then came the snow and even Aberdeen was cut off. We were used to long spells without mail in the winter though by the end of January supplies in the shop were running low and the house looked bare without any cards or calendars. By mid-February we still had had no chance to get across with any likelihood of getting back on the same day, and then came the second big snowfall. The mailboat was stuck high up on the slipway with a 12-foot drift between her and the sea. One night we all set to and dug it out ready for the next morning, but it blew all night and at dawn the drift was 15-foot deep.

Food Supplies Dwindling

We still had the radio telephone however and when the shop was down to its last bag of flour and a few tins of Ovaltine (too expensive by far

for the crofters), and we had lived for over a month on tea without milk or sugar, and bread without butter or jam. So I felt it was time to put out a distress call. Official help came fairly quickly in that winter when the authorities seemed geared to a massive rescue operation all over Scotland. On 21 February the fishery cruiser *The Minna* arrived offshore early on a Sunday morning with six tons of supplies and about 30 mailbags. It was snowing and there was a stiff breeze but the islanders went out in the “flit boats” and brought in sacks of sugar, crates of fruit, dozens of loaves, flour, tinned meat and the mail. By mid-day it was all ashore (morning service in the church had been cancelled as a gesture of thanksgiving!) and we solemnly broached a box of oranges on the pier and celebrated in style. I took four bags of mail home that night and it took me four days to open it and read it all. By 25 February the house looked Christmasy at last.

So next time you begrudge a 14p stamp on a letter, remember that the same postage fee will carry some letters over those storm-tossed miles to Foula’s tiny harbour in the present mailboat *Westering Homewards* to Jim Gear the postmaster who I still like to remember as a 12-year old grinning all over his face as he sucked an orange on the pier that cold Sunday morning in 1955. A letter to Foula is a bargain at almost any price; especially when you know that *The Island Lass* now lies at the bottom of the sea somewhere off Orkney, victim of a vicious storm after a dramatic night-time rescue operation in which, luckily, no lives were lost. The Foula community is now down to about 50 and I often wonder how much longer it will be “Collection – Mondays 10.20am”.

Illustrations of the Foula handstamps are taken from James Mackay’s book Islands Postal History No 8 Shetland (1979), published by the author: 11 Newall Terrace, Dumfries, DG1 1LN.

James Sinclair Memorial

We are obliged to Mr E O Kirwan of Leicester for sending a photograph of a fine monument in the ruined churchyard on the Orkney island of Rousay. The inscription reads ERECTED TO THE MEMORY OF/JAMES SINCLAIR/OF NEWHOUSE-/WHO WAS DROWNED 11TH OCT 1893/WHILE CROSSING EYNHALLOW SOUND/WITH THE MAIL BOAT/AGED 75 YEARS/ALSO HIS WIFE MARY CRAIGIE/WHO DIED 7TH DEC. 1895/AGED 75 YEARS.

Eynhallow Sound, between the island of Rousay and Mainland Orkney, is a notoriously dangerous crossing.

James Mackay in his book *Islands Postal History No. 7 – Orkney & Stroma* (1979), states that there are few entries in the PO archives relating to Rousay. One such records that in 1893 the Rousay-Sourin Rural Post was transferred to Mr I M Craigie, presumably a relative of Mary Craigie mentioned on the memorial. Until 1969 Rousay had three post offices, now there is only one, situated in the township of Frotoft. Since 1978 a four-seater estate car has been in service as the island’s postbus.



1989 Prestige Book

The 1989 Prestige Book will be issued on 21 March and will contain Scottish Country stamps. Further details will be given in the *Bulletin* shortly.

London Chief Office Philatelic Counter

The hours of opening of the Philatelic Counter at the London Chief Office, King Edward Street, London EC1 are now: 10am to 4pm Monday to Friday.

Christmas, 1981

British Special Issues: No.151

FRANCIS KENNEDY

The designs of Britain's first Christmas stamps, issued in 1966 and consisting of 3d and 1s 6d stamps, were the work of two 6-year old children, the prizewinners among 4,484 entries submitted in a national competition organised through schools. Having rung all the possible changes in the meantime, the Post Office once again enlisted the help of children in 1981 when the children's *Blue Peter* TV programme co-operated in a competition which attracted 74,000 entries.

This mass of original artwork was graded according to the ages of the artists: a group for the under 7-year olds, one for the 8 to 10 year-olds and one covering 11 to 16 year-olds. From these entries a panel, on which the Post Office and the *Blue Peter* people were represented, chose the issued designs. These were: **11½p**, Father Christmas with sacks of toys, by Samantha Brown (age 5) of Rhose, Glamorgan; **14p**, a mosaic head of Jesus Christ, by Tracy Jenkins (14) of Luton, Bedfordshire; **18p**, Flying Angel, by Lucinda Blackmore (6); **22p**, Mary, on donkey, and Joseph arriving at Bethlehem, by Stephen Moore (16) of West Sussex and **25p**, the Three Kings, on camels, approaching Bethlehem, by Sophie Sharp (8) of Preston, Lancashire. Exceptionally, the names and age of the designer appears at the foot of each stamp. The five winners all received a prize of £20 and a special album containing all the British special and commemorative issues of 1977 to 1981. All five also visited Harrison's works to see their own stamps being printed. The design of the first day cover featured the Nativity as envisaged by 8-year old Sarah Kutkaitis of Pontllanfraith in Gwent.

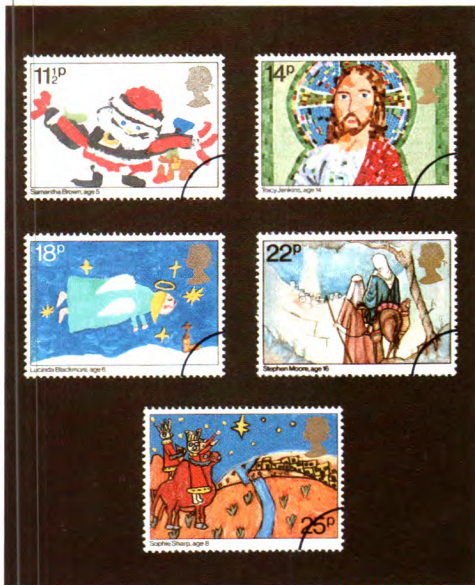
The normal postcards in the designs of the stamps were available as a presentation pack, to which the runner-up in the design competition, 6-year old Andrew Dunbar contributed some of the drawings. In addition there was a pictorial aerogramme, designed by Carol Walkin and printed by McCorquodale Printers Ltd. The designer used Dickensian characters to illustrate the Christmas theme, the 20p imprinted stamp featuring a stylised Christmas tree

with ribbons and a candle.

Finally, a Christmas Greetings gift booklet of ten 11½p and ten 14p definitive stamps, with a pictorial cover designed by Bill Sanderson was available at £2.55.

No major constant flaws on the stamps are recorded. This speaks well for the printers, Harrison & Sons Ltd, who produced the stamps by photogravure in sheets of 100 (two panes of 50, each 10 x 5), perf 15 x 14 on phosphor coated paper except for the 11½p which had one phosphor bar left of centre.

Sales up to the withdrawal date, 17 November 1982, were: **11½p**, 276,077,000 (this was the popular second class rate for most Christmas cards); **14p**, 144,621,000 (the basic inland first class rate); **18p**, 17,630,000; **22p**, 16,867,000; **25p**, 15,026,000.



The Duke of Edinburgh's Award, 1981 (August Bulletin)

A letter from Deborah F Dowdall, of The Duke of Edinburgh's Award, points out that, contrary to the statements in Francis Kennedy's article, there is no obligation on an entrant to start at the Bronze Award level although, as Deborah Dowdall admits "most entrants to the Award begin with the Bronze and work through the Silver Award to achieve their Gold". It is also stressed that all participants must take up some form of Community Service, must undertake an Expedition or Exploration and some form of non-physical skill or study such as philately.

National Postal Museum Events

A reception to mark the 25th anniversary of the British Philatelic Bulletin was held at the National Postal Museum on 16 September. Shown here, with the birthday cake, are, left to right, Keith Fisher, General Manager Royal Mail Stamps & Philately; Frank Langfield, founder Editor; John Holman, present Editor; Stan Goron, Manager of NPM; John Memmott, Editor 1980-3 and now Deputy Manager of NPM and Douglas Muir, Editor 1986-8 and now Curator Philately, NPM



Mr Christopher Chataway, famous athlete and former Minister of Posts & Telecommunications, at the opening of the "British Philately at the Olympic Games" exhibition at the Museum on 18 October. On his right is Keith Fisher, General Manager Royal Mail Stamps & Philately. The exhibition, in the Museum's Main Gallery, continues until 30 December.

NPM Olympics Exhibition

"British Philately at the Olympics" is an exhibition at the National Postal Museum held in conjunction with the British Olympic Association and the Society of Olympic Collectors. It was opened on 18 October by the Rt Hon Christopher Chataway PC (former world record-holder in the 5000 metres, British representative in the 1952 and 1956 Olympics and Minister of Posts & Telecommunications 1970-2) and will run until 30 December. The exhibition consists of artwork and essays for the 1948 GB stamps provided by the National Postal Museum together with artefacts and medals from various Olympic Games on loan from the British Olympic Association and a display by members of the Society of Olympic Collectors of postcards, postmarks and stamps mainly illustrating the 1908 and 1948 Games held in London.

The first eight frames show material supplied by the NPM. This consists of artwork and essays leading up to the issued stamps of various sports issues produced by the British Post Office. All the material has been newly researched and freshly mounted for this exhibition. Frames 2 to 5 show the work done in preparation for the issue of stamps for the 1948 Olympic Games held in London. All the artwork prepared for this issue and all the essays extant are on show. Some of this material has not been seen in public before. King George VI, like his father, was a keen philatelist and the essays that were submitted to him for his approval in February 1948 bear comments in his handwriting.

Frame 6 has artwork for a proposed Skiing issue of 1975. This never came to pass as it was decided to issue a set of Sailing stamps instead and these designs have not been shown before. In fact, they were not even shown to the Stamp Advisory Committee at the time. Frames 7 and 8 show more unadopted designs for Sports issues beginning with the stamps for the Empire & Commonwealth Games in 1958 up to some of the designs for the 1980 issue.

Frames 9 to 16 contain the display by the Society of Olympic Collectors from the collections of

Ken Cook and Bob Wilcock with additional items loaned by Franceska Rapkin, Alan Sabey and Bob Farley. The first three frames show postcards illustrating the 1908 London Olympics at the White City. These are followed by three frames on the 1948 London Olympics and finish up with two frames on the period 1959 to 1988.

Frames 9 and 10 comprise postcards of the 1908 Olympic Stadium and Olympic events, supported by postmarks from the Franco-British Exhibition for the principal Olympic dates. The stadium was part of the Exhibition site, and the Exhibition post offices served the Olympics.



A post office planned for the stadium itself was never opened. Frame 11 shows postcards telling the story of the Olympic marathon from Windsor to the White City Stadium including the dramatic finish.

Frames 12 to 14 give a comprehensive display of the stamps, postmarks and postal history of the 1948 Olympics at Wembley. The stamps are supported by presentation pack and card and varieties of the stamps and airletter. The ticket office postage meter and covers from the temporary and mobile post offices in the Olympic Village and at Olympic venues are also shown.

Frames 15 and 16 comprise virtually all the known British Olympic related postmarks and postal history of the last 30 years. The display commences with the postmark and meter from Olympex in Brighton in 1959, one of the earliest Olympic philatelic exhibitions in the world and includes the rare British Post Office backstamp for the 1980 Lake Placid Dog Sled run, and "looks forward" to Birmingham's unsuccessful bid for the 1992 Olympics.

Design Matters

2. Why we produce essays

BARRY ROBINSON

Design Adviser to The Post Office

It is essential to strike a balance between creative freedom and production requirements when considering the design of a stamp. The translation of the original artwork created by the designer into a stamp is a major transition. Although the creative treatment of the chosen subject matter is left largely in the hands of the designer, it is understood that the design must be one which will work at stamp size. One must always bear in mind that the original artwork is not an end in itself but merely a means to an end. Stamp artwork rarely sits comfortably displayed in an art gallery because it was never produced to be seen in that environment.

The designer has to be aware that a design which is too detailed or which has difficult colour combinations is going to cause major production problems. Consequently, it does help if the designer understands the basic constraints of the printing processes as well as Royal Mail operational requirements.

It is easy to appreciate how some designs are more straightforward to print than others. Nevertheless, an essay of the stamp will be produced regardless of whether the design is straightforward or not. The reason for this is to prove conclusively that the original artwork can be reproduced at stamp size. Another reason for producing essays is to test the stamp's suitability for automatic sorting equipment. It is also important to establish that, when a set of stamps is printed, one stamp can be easily distinguished from another in the set – this is essential to aid counter clerks in busy post offices.

We must bear in mind that the designer could well be working in a water based medium on an off white textured paper whilst the stamp printer will work with oil based inks on smooth high white paper. The designer has the whole spectrum of colours available on his palette when creating the original while the printer uses a maximum of seven or eight colours which he has to overprint in such a way as to reproduce all of the original colours and the subtleties of shade.

A simple example of this would be to imagine a landscape with grass and trees with

the sun in the sky. The designer would probably use a special blue for the sky, a yellow for the sun and a mixture of blue and yellow to create the green grass. A black – or “key” – would be used to define tones or darker areas of shadow.

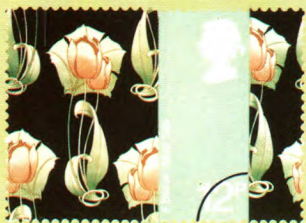
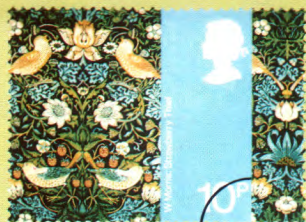
If, in the first essay, the grass does not appear to be the right colour, we would ask the printer to adjust the colour or strength of the yellow, blue or black – or a combination of all three that go to make up the grass colour but at the same time retaining the original quality of the yellow sun. The printer would re-essay until we were satisfied with the result.

Another major consideration is to assess how well the essay meets operational requirements. The Royal Mail's automatic sorting machinery is activated by phosphor which is contained in the smooth surface of the high-white coating of the stamp paper. Post Office chemists analyse the essay to see if the phosphor signal coming through the various coatings of ink is strong enough to activate the machinery. If it is not, changes have to be made to the colours – and sometimes to the design.

Some colours are worse than others for blocking the phosphor signal, with the yellow end of the spectrum being the chief offender. This knowledge should not deter designers from using yellows but they need to be careful in how they apply these colours.

There are, of course, ways round the problem caused by yellows. The design of any flora





1982 British Textiles issue – original designs and issued stamps. The original designs were “landscape” format with vertical bar containing the Queen’s portrait and value. This proved unsatisfactory in that there was insufficient width for sorting machinery to pick up an adequate phosphor signal. The horizontal bar on the “portrait” format issued stamps provided a considerably better phosphor signal as the stamps passed from left to right in front of the sensor.

or fauna subject will, of necessity, have a predominance of green, of which yellow is the principal constituent. Essays of Gordon Beningfield’s Butterflies in 1981 and Insects in 1985 as well as of Liz Butler’s British Gardens in 1982 proved that the yellows used to create the greens were obliterating the phosphor signal. The solution in all three cases was to increase the size of the white border surrounding the stamps thereby providing an extra area of blank paper to give the required phosphor signal.

As in all forms of printing, an essay or proof is invaluable for spotting problems which would not otherwise be apparent. Essays also give us the opportunity to explore a range of colours and to compare them with each other. For example, we are able to produce an infinite range of essays in different colours from one Machin definitive original. This enables us to assess how the chosen colours of new value additions will look alongside Machin definitives already in existence.

Essaying is the process of creating the best possible prototype of a single stamp image and are intended to be as much like the intended final stamps as possible. Once they are provisionally

approved by The Post Office and the Stamp Advisory Committee, they are submitted to HM The Queen for her approval. Only after Royal approval does the printer prepare the final cylinders or plates with multiple images for printing.

One final observation. Some readers might have seen items in auction catalogues described as “photographic essays” or “bromides”. These are stamp-size photographs of artwork produced to aid the Stamp Advisory Committee. Formerly they were black and white, now they are in colour. These items could not be described as essays and in my opinion have no more philatelic significance than a photograph of any issued stamp.

In the next article Mr Robinson explains how stamps are printed by the photogravure process.

In the first of Mr Robinson’s articles (October), the name of one of the members of the Stamp Advisory Committee was incorrectly given as Higgins. Readers will have realised that the person in question is Dr Alan Huggins to whom I extend my apologies. The letter i is alongside the letter u on the typesetting keyboard! Ed.

Stamp Bug at Autumn Stampex

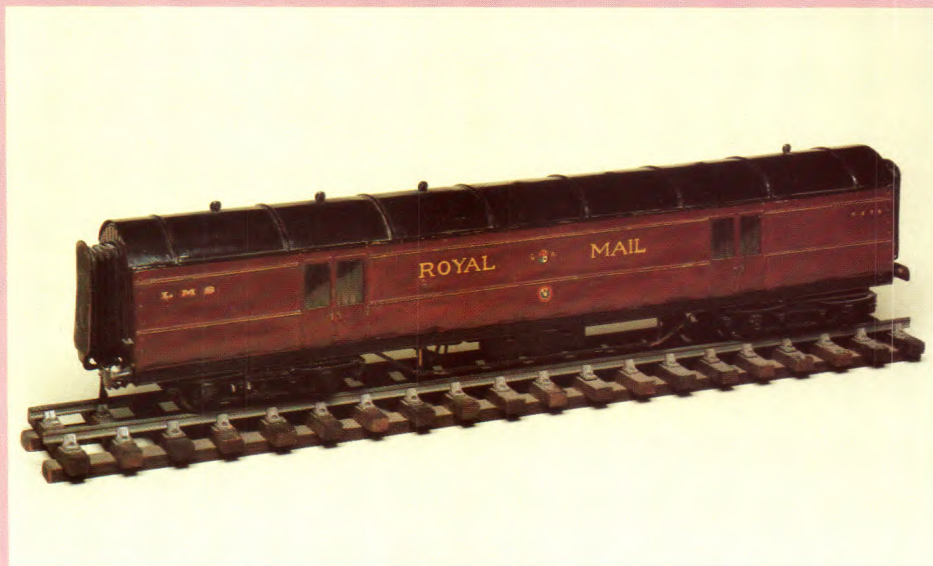


Barry Burke (with Stamp Bug glasses and non-regulation shorts) and Sue Tomkins of the Stamp Bug Club with the Bug himself at Autumn Stampex.



Adults as well as children enjoying the Stamp Bug Club area.

Railways and the Post



O-gauge model of a bag tender, c 1937 – one of the many exhibits in the “Railways and the Post” exhibition at the National Postal Museum until the end of December.

Posting Boxes

No.95 Illustrated this month are two pairs of boxes in use outside post offices in Essex. The first photograph shows the boxes outside Wivenhoe office – the “B” box was erected in August 1983 to replace the previous Ludlow box and the type “A” box was added in May 1984 because of the volume of mail being posted.

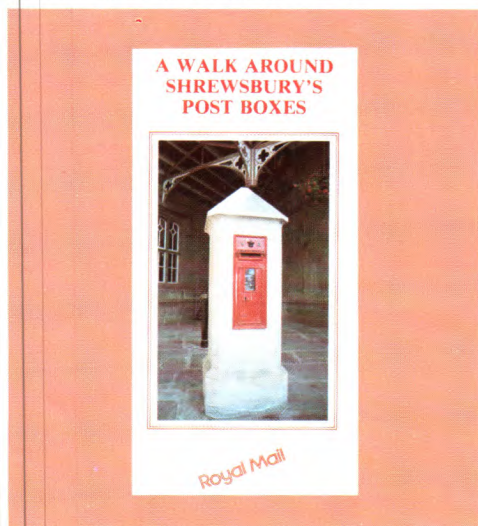


The second photograph shows West Mersea office. The E II R type “B” box was installed in December 1973; there is no record of the installation date of the other box – an “anonymous” cylindrical box of the period 1879-87.

We are obliged to Mr L J Griffiths of Colchester PO for supplying the illustrations and *Bulletin* reader G J Walton for informing us of the boxes at Wivenhoe.

Post Boxes leaflet

Shrewsbury District Head Post Office has produced a colourful and informative six-page leaflet describing 10 interesting post boxes in the town. The front cover shows the Victorian wall box installed in a white granite setting outside the recently restored 19th century railway station. Copies of the leaflet may be obtained by sending a large stamped, addressed envelope to: Public Relations Dept, Royal Mail, Shrewsbury District HPO, SHREWSBURY SY1 1AA.



New Railway Letter Stamp

The Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway in mid-Wales issued a new 20p stamp on 10 May; it features the railway's two oldest locomotives *The Earl* and *The Countess*. The stamp was printed in sheets of ten. Mint stamps are available at face value plus postage; details of covers are available on request. Orders/enquiries to: R H Brough, 13 Shrigley Road North, Higher Poynton, STOCKPORT, Cheshire, SK12 1TE.



1988 Definitives & Country Stamps

We set out below a listing of Definitive and Country stamps issued during 1988, including single stamps, booklet panes, complete booklets and collectors packs. Some of the single stamps are issued only in booklets and can only be bought from the Post Office in complete books. To help collectors we quote the relevant Philatelic Bureau order number (prefixed DB, DC, IS, etc). These numbers are given on the Bureau stock list/order form.

Notes

ACP = Advanced Coated Paper

* = exists with binding margin at left or right

26 January

50p Cricket book 4 – England Team Badge (DB 185)

50p Botanic Gardens book 4 – Kew Gardens (DB 186)

£1 Sherlock Holmes book 4 – The Final Problem (DB 187)

£1.30 book – Postcard Offer (DB 188/9)

£1.80 book – Postcard Offer (DB 190/1)

February

52p Window book Code 1E New Locking Tab (DW 011)

52p Window book Code 2F New Locking Tab (DW 012)

72p Window book Code 2B New Locking Tab (DW 013)

£1.04 Window book Code 1I New Locking Tab (DW 014)

£1.30 Window book Code 1G New Locking Tab (DW 015)

£1.30 Window book Code 2H New Locking Tab (DW 016)

£1.80 Window book Code 1C New Locking Tab (DW 017)

£1.80 Window book Code 2D New Locking Tab (DW 018)

9 February

13p litho centre band (ex £5 Financial Times book)

13p litho left band (ex £5 FT book)

13p litho right band (ex £5 FT book)

18p litho ACP (ex £5 FT book)

18p litho 2 bands (ex £5 FT book)

22p litho 2 bands (ex £5 FT book)

34p litho 2 bands (ex £5 FT book)

13p litho pane of 6 with surrounding selvage (ex £5 FT book)

18p litho pane of 6 with surrounding selvage (ex £5 FT book)

18p litho pane of 9 with surrounding selvage (ex £5 FT book)

13p/18p/22p/34p pane of 9 (ex £5 FT book)

£5 Financial Times book (DB 192)

23 February

2p litho, redrawn value, Jeffery Matthews colour (DS 025)

75p litho, redrawn value (DS 753)

29 March

18p Scotland, Henry & Leigh Slater paper (SS 181)

18p Wales, Henry & Leigh Slater paper (WS 181)

March

4p photogravure ACP (from 13p roll)

13p (1 x 1p, 3 x 4p) roll (Code MV710) (DC 828)

12 April

50p Zoo book (1 x 1p, 1 x 13p, 2 x 18p) (DB 193)

50p Zoo book 2 (1 x 1p, 2 x 5p, 3 x 13p) (DB 194)

£1 Zoo book 3 (DB 195)

£1.30 book – Recipe Cards (DB 196/7)*

£1.80 book – Recipe Cards (DB 198/9)*

3 May

18p vertical roll (Code NL) ACP (DC 029/DC 829)

5 July

50p Zoo book 4 (DB 200)

50p Marine Life book 1 (DB 201)

£1 Charles Dickens book 1 – Oliver Twist (DB 202)

£1.30 book – Party Pack (DB 203/4)*

£1.80 book – Party Pack (DB 205/6)*

26 July

2p photogravure Jeffery Matthews colour (green) ACP (DS 026)

4p photogravure Jeffery Matthews colour (deep turquoise) ACP (DS 043)

5p photogravure Jeffery Matthews colour (ash pink) ACP (DS 055)

75p photogravure Jeffery Matthews colour (dark grey) Non phosphor (DS 754)

1p vertical roll (Code QL) ACP (DC 830)

23 August

14p dark blue centre 4mm band (ex sheets) (DS 140)

14p dark blue centre 4½mm band (ex 56p & £1.40 window books) (DW 019/20, DW 025/26)

19p flame ACP (ex sheets, 76p & £1.90 window books) (DS 190, DW 921/22, DW 027/28)

20p sea green (DS 204)

23p light green (DS 230)

27p rust (ex sheets & £1.08 window books) (DS 270, DW 023/24)

28p sand (DS 282)

32p dark turquoise (DS 320)

35p dark brown (DS 350)

Definitives New Issue Pack (No 15) (£2.20) (DP 010)

14p pane of 4 with surrounding selvedge (ex 56p window book) (DW 019/20)

14p pane of 10 with surrounding selvedge (ex £1.40 window book) (DW 025/26)

19p pane of 4 with surrounding selvedge (ex 76p window book) (DW 021/22)

19p pane of 10 with surrounding selvedge (ex £1.90 window book) (DW 027/28)

27p pane of 4 with surrounding selvedge (ex £1.08 window book) (DW 023/24)

56p Window book Code O (DW 019)

56p Window book Code P (DW 020)

76p Window book Code K (DW 021)

76p Window book Code L (DW 022)

£1.08 Window book Code S (DW 023)

£1.08 Window book Code T (DW 024)

£1.40 Window book Code Q (DW 025)

£1.40 Window book Code R (DW 026)

£1.90 Window book Code M (DW 027)

£1.90 Window book Code N (DW 028)

5 September

2p green (old colour), redrawn value ACP (ex multi-value coil) (DC 033/DC 833)

14p dark blue, right band (ex 50p book) (DB 207)

14p dark blue, right band, straight edge at left (ex £1 book) (DB 208)

19p 2 bands (ex 50p book) (DB 207)

19p 2 bands, narrow band at right (ex 50p book) (DB 207)

19p 2 bands, straight edge at left (ex £1 book) (DB 208)

19p 2 bands, narrow band at right, straight edge at right (ex £1 book) (DB 208)

14p/19p pane of 4 (ex 50p Gilbert & Sullivan 1 book) (DB207)

2 x 14p/4 x 19p pane of 6 (ex £1 Charles Dickens 2 book) (DB 208)

14p pane of 10 without surrounding selvedge (ex £1.40 Pocket Planner book) (DB 209/210)

19p pane of 10 without surrounding selvedge (ex £1.90 Pocket Planner book) (DB 211/212)

50p Gilbert & Sullivan book 1 – Yeomen of the Guard (DB 207)



£1 Charles Dickens book 2 – Nicholas Nickleby (DB 208)

£1.40 book – Pocket Planner* (DB 209/210)

£1.90 book – Pocket Planner* (DB 211/212)

14p vertical roll (Code OL) (DC 032/DC 832)

14p horizontal roll (Code SD) (DC 035/DC 835)

19p vertical roll (Code PL) (DC 034/DC 834)

14p (1 x 2p, 3 x 4p) roll (Code MV) (DC 033/DC 833)

14p (1 x 2p, 3 x 4p) roll (Code MV) (DC 033/DC 833)

11 October

14p litho centre band (ex Type 2 & 3 window books) (DW 029/031, DW 042)

14p photogravure, straight edge at top (ex 56p & £1.40 Type 3 window books) (DW 037/040)

14p photogravure, straight edge at bottom (ex 56p & £1.40 Type 3 window books) (DW 037/040)

19p litho ACP (ex £1.90 Type 2 & 3 window books) (DW 030/032, DW 043)

19p photogravure, straight edge at top (ex 76p & £1.90 Type 3 window books) (DW 038/041)

19p photogravure, straight edge at bottom (ex 76p & £1.90 window books) (DW 038/041)

27p straight edge at top (ex £1.08 Type 3 window book) (DW 039)

27p straight edge at bottom (ex £1.08 window book) (DW 039)

- 14p litho, pane of 10, no surrounding selvage (ex £1.40 Type 2 & 3 window books) (DW 029/031, DW 042)
- 14p photo, pane of 4 with straight edges top & bottom (ex 56p Type 3 window book) (DW 037)
- 14p photo, pane of 10 with straight edges top & bottom (ex £1.40 Type 3 window book) (DW 040)
- 19p litho, pane of 10, no surrounding selvage (ex £1.90 Type 2 & 3 window books) (DW 030/032, DW 043)
- 19p photo, pane of 4 with straight edges at top & bottom (ex 76p Type 3 window book) (DW 038)
- 19p photo, pane of 10 with straight edges at top & bottom (ex £1.90 Type 3 window book) (DW 041)
- 27p pane of 4 with straight edges at top & bottom (ex £1.08 Type 3 window book) (DW 039)
- 56p Type 2 window book, stamps Harrison, covers Walsall Code O (DW 033)
- 56p Type 2 window book, stamps Harrison, covers Walsall Code P (DW 035)
- 56p Type 3 window book with straight edges (No 200095) (DW 037)
- 76p Type 2 window book, stamps Harrison, covers Walsall Code K (DW 034)
- 76p Type 2 window book, stamps Harrison, covers Walsall Code L (DW 036)
- 76p Type 3 window book with straight edges (No 200071) (DW 038)
- £1.08 Type 3 window book with straight edges (No 200118) (DW 039)
- £1.40 Type 2 window book, printed Questa Code Q (DW 029)
- £1.40 Type 2 window book, printed Questa Code R (DW 031)
- £1.40 Type 3 window book, printed Questa (No 100104) (DW 042)
- £1.40 Type 3 window book, printed Harrison (No 200101) (DW 040)
- £1.90 Type 2 window book, printed Questa Code M (DW 030)
- £1.90 Type 2 window book, printed Questa Code N (DW 032)
- £1.90 Type 3 window book, printed Questa (No 100081) (DW 043)
- £1.90 Type 3 window book, printed Harrison (No 200088) (DW 041)

18 October

- £1 Carrickfergus Castle (FS 011)
- £1.50 Caernarfon Castle (FS 151)



- £2 Edinburgh Castle (FS 021)
- £5 Windsor Castle (FS 051)
- High Values Collectors Pack (No 18) (£9.50) (FP 006)

8 November

- N. Ireland 14p single band (right of centre) (IS 140)
- N. Ireland 19p ACP (IS 190)
- N. Ireland 23p ACP (IS 230)
- N. Ireland 32p ACP (IS 320)
- Scotland 14p single band (right of centre) (SS 140)
- Scotland 19p ACP (SS 190)
- Scotland 23p ACP (SS 230)
- Scotland 32p ACP (SS 320)
- Wales 14p single band (right of centre) (WS 140)
- Wales 19p ACP (WS 190)
- Wales 23p ACP (WS 230)
- Wales 32p ACP (WS 320)
- Country Stamps Collectors Pack (No 17) (£2.85) (CP 007)

We should be interested to know if collectors find this list helpful and would like similar lists published annually or at six-monthly intervals. However we regret we cannot engage in correspondence about the contents of the listing.

Australian Bicentenary

Bulletin reader Peter Cooper of the Isle of Wight has written to point out that although the departure port for the first fleet is normally given as Portsmouth, the fleet in fact sailed from off the Isle of Wight. Convicts arrived in Portsmouth in chains and were ferried out to ships which had assembled at the Mother Bank, off Fishbourne.

Mr Cooper refers to a monument in McQuarie Place, Sydney which reads "This anchor belonged to HMS Sirius which conveyed the First Fleet, sailed from the Isle of Wight, 13th May, 1787..."

Greetings from Christmases Past

JEAN FARRUGIA
Post Office Archivist



Among the less formal archives of The Post Office can sometimes be found records that reveal much more about our past than an official document can ever hope to express.

This is particularly true of a carefully preserved album of Christmas greetings exchanged with the staff of London's Paddington District PO a century or so ago. A selection of these is shown here. All the cards have a postal theme and show a variety of artistic talents and originality. More important, I think, is how these simple messages of goodwill between postal colleagues, both here and overseas, reveal the closeness of the working ties even then between postal workers everywhere, regardless of nationality.



Gems of the R M Phillips Collection

159. 2d Blue Variety



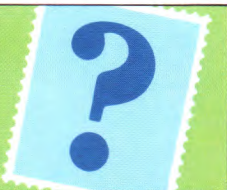
Page 10 of Volume 18 of the Phillips Collection contains examples of the 1841 2d blue

(with white lines) from plate 3. Included are examples with what are described as “corrosion blemishes”. Shown here is a single, lettered “LE” displaying an “exaggerated eyebrow” – a gash like mark running diagonally from the Queen’s forehead towards her ear.

Also to be seen on the same page are stamps with a “spot on cheek” (lettered “EA”) and a “faint smear from upper part of nose to eyelid” (“FA”).

These items can be seen at the National Postal Museum during normal hours: 9.30am to 4.30pm Monday to Thursday and 9.30am to 4pm Friday.

Competition



Enter this month’s competition and stand a chance of winning a *Royal Mail Album*. Answer the six questions printed below, the answers to which will be found in this month’s *Bulletin*, and send with your name and address on a postcard to: November Bulletin Competition, National Postal Museum, King Edward Street, LONDON EC1A 1LP to arrive by 29 January 1989.

The sender of the first all-correct entry drawn will be sent a *Royal Mail Stamp Album*, a luxury album designed to house all basic British decimal issues. Five runner-up prizes of first day covers and presentation packs of the Birds stamps will be awarded. Answers and winners’ names will be published in the March issue.

1. In what town is The Paper Tree?
2. On what day of the week is the mail collection made from the isle of Foula?
3. Who designed the 11½p 1981 Christmas stamp?
4. Who was the founder Editor of the *British Philatelic Bulletin*?

5. Who opened the National Postal Museum’s Olympics exhibition?

6. Which Post Office has produced a leaflet about post boxes in its town?

The competition is not open to staff of Royal Mail Stamps & Philately, the National Postal Museum, their agents and their families. No correspondence will be entered into; the Editor’s decision will be final.

September Competition Result

The winner of the special issues of 1963 (both plain and phosphor versions) and 1988 was Michael J Baldwin of Canada. Plain versions of the 1963 stamps and the 1988 issues were won by J A Paulson of Derbyshire, H Schwarzacher of Belfast, R Hughes of Devon and F W Allan of N Yorkshire. The 1988 issues were sent to the 20 runners-up: Rev P T Hanna, J Burden, D G Davies, N Ehlin, E Behrend, R Howse, R Hagenow, G A Ward, J V R Eccles, P J Dawling, J Capelle, B Costin, D Stone, J Skarott, M Walton, J P Stadhouders, A J Scales, N W Cursons, E Mortleman-Lewis and J H C Keens.

The answers to the questions were: 1. 12 (24 if counting plain and phosphor versions), 2. Peter Gault, 3. 7 May 1963 and 4. Bradbury Wilkinson.

Commemorative Covers

Birds. The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds has commissioned a first day cover for the Bird stamps to be issued on 17 January to commemorate its centenary. The cover features an original illustration by the bird artist Trevor Boyer showing an adult avocet and chicks with oyster catchers. The Society's logo is also shown on the cover. Covers bearing the four stamps cancelled with a "Action for Birds" special handstamp at Sandy, Beds will cost £5, signed by Magnus Magnusson (President), Ian Prestt (Director-General), Joanna Lumley, Frank Muir or Bill Oddie cost £7.50. Prices include UK postage, overseas add £1. Please allow up to 28 days for delivery after 17 January. Payments should be made to RSPB; orders/enquiries to: RSPB Covers, PO Box 713, LONDON SE19 2HH.



Birds. To coincide with the Bird stamps, to be issued on 17 January, G Eldridge has produced a cover commemorating the 90th anniversary of Queen Victoria's order prohibiting the wearing of Osprey plumes by her military. The cover will include an informative text about the famous Osprey hide at Loch Garten in Scotland where the public can see the breeding Osprey pairs. Covers bearing a Bird stamp with "special pictorial Scottish postmark" cost £1.70, four covers bearing one of each of the Bird stamps cost £6.20. A cover bearing all four stamps costs £3.50. Overseas orders add 75p for postage. Orders/enquiries to: G Eldridge, 177 Mousehole Lane, Bitterne, SOUTHAMPTON SO2 4TD.

Christmas. A special cover has been produced by the Guinea Pig Club, a registered charity for those badly burned in aircraft incidents. The cover features a Christmas scene showing the Queen Victoria Hospital, East Grinstead (a major burns/plastic surgery hospital) with a Lancaster, Spitfire and Hurricane overhead. The

cover will bear all five Christmas stamps cancelled with a Forces Postal Service No 2184 handstamp worded "Christmas Greetings from the Guinea Pig Club" and will be signed by Tom Gleave, CBE, the Chief Guinea Pig. Price £4.25. Orders/enquiries to: Grp Cap W S O Randle, 60 Shelters Way, TADWORTH, Surrey, KT20 8QF. Remittances payable to "Joint Services Philatelic Charities Fund".

Cartmel Priory. Cartmel Priory, in Cumbria, which is celebrating the 800th anniversary of its foundation, is producing an official first day cover for the Christmas stamps and sponsored a matching pictorial handstamp. The cover, produced in a limited edition of 800, in four colours, depicts the coat of arms of William Marshall who founded the Priory. Available, price £4.25 (full set) or £2 (single stamp) from: B E Perry, Priory Court, Cartmel, GRANGE OVER SANDS, Cumbria, LA11 6PN. Postage 25p UK, 75p overseas. All profits from the sale of these covers will go to the Cartmel Priory Heritage Appeal.

Postcards

Shown here is the latest postcard from Telecom Technology Showcase, issued on 15 November and captioned "A telephone nostalgia postcard from the Edwardian period". The cards are available, price 12p, from Telecom Technology Showcase, 135 Queen Victoria Street, LONDON EC4V 4AT. A special Telecom Christmas handstamp will be in use from 15 November to 14 December; items for reposting to: Special Postmark Duty, ECDO, King Edward Street, LONDON EC1A 1AA.



Royal Mail Stamp Products

Bulletin readers are reminded that Royal Mail Stamps & Philately sell albums for stamps, first day covers, presentation packs and postcards, also two sizes of stock book. Details of stock books were given in the August *Bulletin* (page 277) and of the *Royal Mail Stamp Album* in the September issue (page 39).

This month we feature albums for the storage and protection of first day covers (two sizes: full and half-size), presentation packs and postcards.

The album binders have a four ring arch mechanism (except the half-size FDC album); they are padded and are gold blocked on the front and spine. The album pages are made of an optically clear colourless material which offers protection for collections. Each album contains a fly leaf, two one-pocket pages and 15 two-pocket pages; except the half-size FDC album which has 20 pages (all the same) and fly leaf. The albums are priced at £11.95 each except for the half-size FDC album which is £8.25.

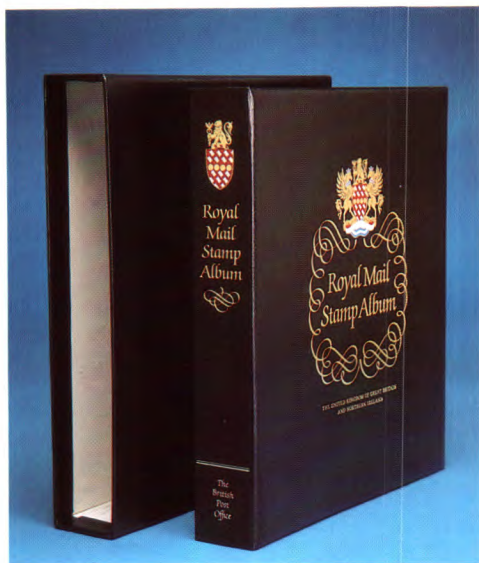


Additional pages for the albums can be supplied, price £3.50 per pack of 10 (£2.50 for the half-size FDC album). Pages for the FDC and presentation pack albums contain black card inserts.

All albums are available from the British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, EDINBURGH EH3 5TT and from philatelic counters. Large size Postcard albums (and additional pages) are also available at the National Postal Museum Sales Counter.

Readers are reminded that empty binders and blank pages are now available for the *Royal Mail Stamp Album* – details were given in the November *Bulletin* (page 88). The album and slipcase are illustrated this month.

Pages to hold the 1988 issues will be available from the Bureau and philatelic counters during December, price £7.50. Spaces will be provided

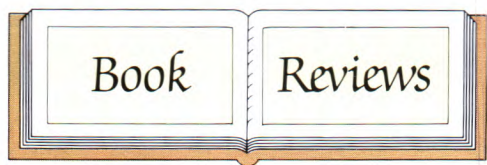


for all special issues, the Edward Lear miniature sheet, Country issues and the following Machin definitives – 5p ash pink (26 July), 13p litho centre band (9 February), 13p litho side band (9 February), 14p dark blue photogravure centre band (23 August), 14p dark blue photogravure side band (5 September), 14p dark blue litho centre band (11 October), 18p litho ACP (9 February), 18p litho 2 bands (9 February), 19p flame photogravure ACP (23 August), 19p flame photogravure 2 bands (5 September), 19p litho ACP (11 October), 20p sea green (23 August), 22p litho 2 bands (9 February), 23p light green (23 August), 27p (23 August), 28p sand (23 August), 32p (23 August), 34p litho 2 bands (9 February), 35p (23 August) and 75p photogravure (26 July).

Spaces are also provided for the £1.50 (September 1986) and £1.60 (September 1987) Machin High Values and the new Castle High Values (18 October 1988).

Window Book Cylinder Numbers

Details are now to hand of the cylinders used in the Harrison (photogravure) 56p Type 2 and 76p and £1.08 Type 3 window books issued on 11 October; the information was not available when the November *Bulletin* went to press. The numbers are: 56p B25; 76p B16 and £1.08 B2. The 27p stamps from cylinder B2 differ from those from cylinder B1 (August window books) in that the value is positioned slightly further to the right.



Stanley Gibbons Great Britain Specialised Stamp Catalogue. Vol. 5 Queen Elizabeth II Decimal Commemorative Issues. 1st Edition. Available from Stanley Gibbons Publications, Parkside, RINGWOOD, Hants, BH24 3SH. Price £14.95, postage £1.50.

This new volume covers the decimal special issues from 1971 up to the 1988 Transport & Communications set. The special issues have, in the past, been overshadowed by the complexities of the Machin definitives, but the evolution of their design and technical production over the past 17 years provides a fascinating study which appeals to many collectors. A number of previously unrecorded varieties and cylinder numbers are now included. Prices for errors continue to be buoyant and prices reflect the hardening of demand for a number of sets, particularly those with strong thematic appeal.



Stanley Gibbons Collect British Stamps. 40th Edition. 96pp, limp binding. Available from bookshops, Stanley Gibbons, the British Philatelic Bureau and philatelic counters. Price £2.50.

Collectors of British stamps will welcome this new edition of a popular publication listing all basic British stamps from the Penny Black to the 1988 Christmas issue. All stamps are illustrated in colour. Collect British Stamps will provide

the latest Gibbons prices until the publication of their 1989 *Concise* catalogue next Spring.

Stanley Gibbons Stamp Collectors Diary 1989. Available from bookshops and stationers or from Stanley Gibbons Publications, Parkside, RINGWOOD, Hants, BH24 3SH. Price £3.95, postage 50p.

The 1989 Diary, produced in conjunction with Charles Letts & Co, contains, in addition to normal diary features, much philatelic information covering stamp clubs and societies, philatelic museums, philatelic equipment and terms together with details of Stanley Gibbons services and a competition. There are also special articles on 1989 anniversaries, collecting first day covers, Swaziland stamp centenary, issues of the Channel Islands and Isle of Man, mutiny on the *Bounty*, errors and varieties and the 1839 Treasury Competition. The section on Post Office Philatelic services provides useful information.

Stanley Gibbons Stamps of the World Catalogue. 1989 Edition. Vols 1 (Countries A-J) and 2 (K-Z). Available from Stanley Gibbons Publications, Parkside, RINGWOOD, Hants, BH24 3SH, price £17.50 per volume, postage £1.50.

The two volumes combined now list over 270,100 stamps and have over 63,200 illustrations. More than 7,300 stamps are listed for the first time. In addition to carrying price alterations from recent volumes of the standard SG catalogue (Parts 1-22), *Stamps of the World* also provides many revised prices which have not previously appeared elsewhere. British issues are listed up to and including the 1988 Transport & Communications set.

The New Observer's Book of Stamp Collecting by Anthony New. 192pp, limp binding. Available from bookshops or Stanley Gibbons Publications, Parkside, RINGWOOD, Hants, BH24 3SH. Price £3.95, postage 75p.

This "New" book in a popular series provides a compact reference work that will be useful to collectors taking their interest in philately beyond the beginner stage. Arranged under nine headings: The Appeal of Stamps, The Appeal Widens, The Specialist's View, The Uses of Stamps, How Stamps are Printed, Ways to Collect, Values and Prices, Aids to Identification and Suggested Subjects and Miscellaneous Topics. Profusely illustrated, mostly in colour.

A worthwhile and inexpensive Christmas present.

December Digest

No items are being issued or withdrawn during December.

Withdrawal of High Values

The £1, £1.50, £1.60, £2 and £5 Machin High Values were withdrawn from general sale on 17 October 1988; they will remain on sale at the British Philatelic Bureau and philatelic counters for a further 12 months.

Window Books on sale in Northern Ireland

Window books have been on sale at all offices in the Belfast Counters District since 17 October 1988. Standard £1.40 and £1.90 books have now been withdrawn from sale at those offices. Window books have been on sale at offices in the Bristol, York, Nottingham and Preston areas since August 1987 and are, of course, available from the British Philatelic Bureau and philatelic counters.

Birds First Day Postmark

The Sandy, Bedfordshire pictorial First Day of Issue postmark for the Birds stamps (17 January) will be applied at Bedford, not Cambridge as stated in the November *Bulletin*. Covers/cards for postmarking should be sent to: Special Postmark Duty, Head Post Office, Ford End Road, BEDFORD, MK40 1AA.

Cylinder News

The cylinders used for the Christmas stamps were as follows:

- 14p 1A (gold) 1B (orange-yellow) 1C (bright mauve) 1D (bluish-violet) 1E (bright blue) 1F (grey-black) P90 (phosphor)
19p 1A (gold) 1B (yellow-orange) 1C (bright violet) 1D (ultramarine) 1E (rose-red) 1F (grey-black) 1G (bright blue)
27p 1A (gold) 1B (red) 1C (deep lavender) 1D (deep lilac) 1E (emerald) 1F (grey-black) 1G (bright blue)
32p 1A (gold) 1B (orange-yellow) 1C (bright rose) 2D (deep mauve) 1E (violet) 1F (grey-black) 2G (bright blue)
35p 1A (gold) 1B (green) 1C (reddish violet) 2D (bright blue) 1E (bright purple) 1F (grey-black)

Stamps in 1,000 shops



"A card and a pack of stamps please". The Paper Tree, in Newark, one of 1,000 shops to test stamp sales (window books) over their counters.

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