

British Philatelic Bulletin

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Obituary – L F Newbery

The name L F Newbery is almost synonymous with British stamp books. Len collected stamp books for over 50 years and was still talking about them to fellow collectors to within hours of his death on 20 April. One has lost count of his writings on the subject; for many years he wrote for the much-missed *Stamp Collecting* magazine and he was a regular contributor to this *Bulletin*. The first part of his final article appears in this issue, with the second part following in August. Len also wrote extensively about postal stationery, post buses and recently

about the Recorded Delivery service and its labels in *Cross Post*, journal of the Friends of the National Postal Museum. Len was as enthusiastic supporter of the Friends, serving on the Council, and, as a Friend, came in to the Museum once a week to assist with the mounting up of the Universal Postal Union collection.



Just before Christmas Len learned that he had cancer but instead of becoming depressed threw himself with even greater energy into his philatelic activities. When I visited him in hospital he spent just a few minutes telling me of his progress and then opened his bedside locker, produced handfuls of window books and spent the next 1½ hours showing me the various differences. His enthusiasm for stamp books was infectious, his knowledge probably unrivalled and he will be greatly missed by members of the various philatelic organisations he belonged to. His name will live on in his published works – his numerous articles and the *British Stamp Booklets* monograph co-authored with Dr Jean Alexander.

His friends in Royal Mail Stamps and the National Postal Museum had been looking forward to celebrating with Len his 80th birthday this month; sadly this was not to be. To mark his birthday he had been invited to suggest a theme for stamp book cover designs and had chosen Archaeology which will be used on a new series of £1 books starting later in the year. This invitation gave him great pleasure and the series will now be a fitting memorial to his philatelic work.

John Holman

Len's daughter Maureen and her family wish to express through the *Bulletin* their thanks to all Len's friends in the philatelic world who sent them messages of sympathy. Their kind words are greatly appreciated.

Roses

16 July 1991



Five stamps will be issued on 16 July featuring Roses; those chosen illustrate the wide range of form and colour the flowers have as ornamental plants and act as a reminder that the ninth World Congress of Roses is being held in Belfast in 1991.

The **22p** stamp (inland first class and EEC basic rate) features “Silver Jubilee” – a hybrid tea rose raised by the noted Scottish rose breeder Alexander Cocker and named in honour of HM The Queen’s silver jubilee in 1977. This rose has been awarded the President’s International Trophy by the Royal National Rose Society. It is a popular garden plant with a bushy shape and attractively coloured leaves. Hybrids of the tea rose from China are successful and much-loved garden shrubs; the name tea rose arises from the fact that their scent is reminiscent of a freshly opened packet of tea.

The “Mme Alfred Carrière” rose is depicted on the **26p** value (basic rate to non-EEC countries). This is a well-known climbing rose, with a pleasing balance of flower and foliage and a distinctive fragrance. A member of the noisette group of roses, it was raised by Joseph Schwartz of Lyon in 1879 and named after the wife of a noted French amateur rose grower.

The **31p** stamp (Worldwide postcard rate) shows the *Rosa moyesii*, found towards the end of the 19th century in the mountains on the border between China and Tibet. It was discovered by a British naturalist, A E Pratt, who travelled extensively in the Far East. Although he may have introduced this rose to England, it made little impact until reintroduced by Ernest Wilson in 1903, naming it *moyesii* after the Rev. J Moyes of the China Inland Mission who acted as Wilson’s host on his travels in Tibet. The rose



is noted both for its sumptuous single flowers and bottle-shaped scarlet hips.

The subject for the **33p** denomination (inland first class, second rate step) is the "Harvest Fayre" rose, a new breed by Colin Dickson who comes from a long line of Northern Irish rose growers. It was introduced in 1990 and won the Rose Growers' Association "Rose of the Year" award. This floribunda rose is apricot orange in colour, has bushy growth and is slightly scented. Its resistance to disease is another factor adding to its popularity.

The top value, **37p** (airmail outside Europe basic rate) features *Rosa* "Mutabilis", considered to be a form of the China rose, *Rosa chinensis*. Its flowers change colour through yellow to pink and red as they age. It received its present name in 1934 from a Swiss botanist Henri Correvon who had been given it by Prince Gilberto Borromeo from his Italian garden. However it is an old rose, having been painted by Pierre Joseph Redouté as 'Tipo Ideale', possibly from a plant in the garden of the Empress Joséphine.

Roses are amongst our most loved plants. The Chinese cultivated them some 4,000 years ago and the ancient Minoans painted a rose on the walls of the palace at Knossos in Crete. Held in high regard by the Greeks and Romans, roses were used as emblems during the Middle Ages, for example the so-called "Wars of the Roses". The Tudor Rose, which combines the White Rose of York with the Red Rose of Lancaster, became England's national emblem, signifying unity after those Wars.

Technical Details

The stamps were designed by Yvonne Skargon and printed by The House of Questa Limited in offset-lithography on phosphor-coated paper. They are of "almost square" format, 35 x 37mm, printed in sheets of 100 with PVA Dextrin gum. Perforation measures 14 x 14½.

Presentation Pack

The pack (No. 219) will cost £1.80. Designed by Dick Davis, with text by Patrick Roper, it was printed by Raithby, Lawrence. Each pack will contain a free entry ticket to the Royal National Rose Society gardens at St Albans worth £2.50.

Royal Mail Stamp Cards

Cards, featuring enlargements of the stamp designs, will be available approximately two weeks before the stamp issue, price 19p each. They are numbered 136A-E

First Day Cover

The Royal Mail first day cover will be available from the British Philatelic Bureau, "Collections", philatelic counters and main post offices approximately two weeks before 16 July, price 19p. Two pictorial postmarks will be used for the first day cover service — one for the Bureau, the other for Belfast.

A first day cover service will be provided by the Bureau with the official Royal Mail cover addressed to the destination required with the stamps cancelled with the requested postmark. Application forms, available from the Bureau and main post offices, should be returned not later than 16 July.

Collectors may send their own cards/covers for the pictorial postmarks; these should be sent on the first day of issue in a stamped outer envelope endorsed "Pictorial First Day of Issue Postmark" to: British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, EDINBURGH EH3 5TT (Bureau postmark) or Scotland and Northern Ireland Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail Glasgow, George Square, GLASGOW G2 1AA (Belfast postmark). Collectors wanting their cards/covers returned under cover should enclose a suitable addressed envelope. This need not bear additional postage stamps, the postage being already paid by the stamps affixed to the covers for postmarking.

First Day Posting Boxes will be provided at most main post offices for those collectors who wish to post covers to receive the standard, non-pictorial "First Day of Issue" handstamps. In addition, pictorial "First Day of Issue" postmarks will be used at City of London EC (shows City coat of arms), and Durham (Cathedral). Reposting addresses: London North Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail City and International, King Edward Street, LONDON EC1A 1AA and Northern England Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail Newcastle, Forth Street, NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE NE1 1AA.

A number of special handstamps sponsored by stamp dealers and others, will be used on 16 July — details of these will be found in the *British Postmark Bulletin*, available on subscription from the British Philatelic Bureau.

Souvenir Cover

A souvenir cover, of similar design to the first day cover, will be available from "Collections" and philatelic counters from 17 July, price 19p. This will be on sale for one year.

ROSES

ROYAL MAIL MINT STAMPS



ROSES

ROYAL MAIL FIRST DAY COVER

Mrs J Robinson
200 Manorbier Road
ILKESTON
Derbyshire
DE7 4AB



Agatha Christie and the Post Office

JEAN MATHESON

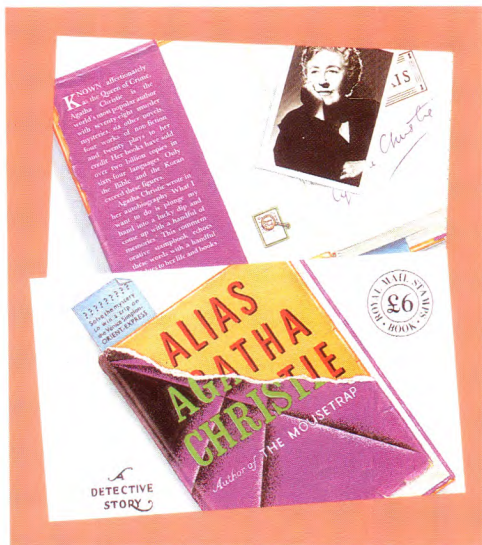
"Hercule Poirot entered the Post Office... The right hand side was given to the business of His Majesty's mails, the left hand side displayed a rich assortment of varied merchandise, comprising sweets, toys, hardware, stationery, birthday cards, knitting wool and children's underclothes."

While such post offices may still, be found, much has changed since Agatha Christie's little Belgian detective – who has figured on a Nicaraguan stamp (S.G. 1837) – found in the early 1950s that the old charwoman, Mrs McGinty, had bought a bottle of ink at the Post Office. "Mrs McGinty hardly ever wrote letters... the postmistress was thoroughly cognisant of that fact", but preferred the telephone which was then still under the umbrella of the General Post Office.

"If she'd anything to let me know, she'd usually ring up the chemist next door, and he'd send a message in' her niece explained. 'We're in the area, so it only costs two pence'. Poirot nodded. He appreciated the fact that two pence was better than twopence ha'penny." Mrs McGinty who could not afford a telephone at home would walk to a call box to save the halfpenny on a stamp. So why had she written a letter, and to whom? These questions set Poirot once again on the trail of a killer. (*Mrs McGinty's Dead*. 1952).

The long-lost telegrams, too, in their yellow envelopes were a GPO service, and as essential a part of British life as FAX is coming to be. "Tuppence" in the early 1920s, for example, "splashed" nine pence on a telegram to get an urgent message to Tommy Beresford, thus enabling him to save five shillings. (*The Secret Adversary*. 1922).

After the Funeral (1953) found Poirot impatiently awaiting confirmation of his suspicious... "The telegram came about six o'clock that evening... as specially requested, it was delivered by hand, not telephoned... it consisted of three words... Poirot gave vent to an enormous sign of relief...; Telegrams were, however, only for really urgent messages, as letters were usually delivered the day after despatch. Poirot



Front cover (inner and outer) of Agatha Christie £6 prestige stamp book

in the 1920s, could open his post at 10.00am and tell his secretary "Type this letter, please, and if it is posted at once, it should get to Charman's Green tonight." (*How Does Your Garden Grow?*).

In *After the Funeral*, the Post Office unwittingly played another minor part. "The local post van driver is strongly of the belief... that he did not deliver that parcel of wedding cake in the usual way... so the parcel was left by hand... and we must take particular notice of those people who were actually on the spot and in a position to put the parcel where it was subsequently found." The culprit had re-used old wrapping paper with cancelled stamps so that the poisoned cake had the innocent appearance of coming from friends in a distant town. A similar trick was used in *Peril at End House* (1932), in the reign of George V, when poisoned chocolates were delivered by post.

In *Taken at the Flood* (1948), the GPO's post-war telephone services were still erratic, so Lynn suspected nothing when a call from London was apparently cut off. Toll calls, like many others at

that time, were made through an operator, who would verify the number before putting the call through. “But how could you be in Warmley Vale at ten o’clock and telephone to me from London at eleven?” Lynn asks a suspect later. Poirot’s ingenious solution breaks this “telephone alibi” and wraps up the case. (His own telephone number – TRAFalgar 8137 recalls the days when each London area was named – e.g. FLAMan, GERrard, UPLands – and the prosaic 071 and 081 were undreamt of.)

The Moving Finger, although published in 1943, was obviously set in the 1930s, the decade of three kings and the introduction – for Edward VIII’s stamps – of the Sovereign’s head reproduced directly from a photograph. Anonymous letters have been plaguing the hamlet of Lymstock, and “most of them have been posted locally, or put in the box of a house by hand. It is therefore evident that they are of local provenance” the police inspector explains. This narrows the suspects to half a dozen, but it is Miss Marple, the elderly, seemingly vague, gentlewoman, who finds the truth when tragedy follows a letter which “must have come by the afternoon post”.

“The little maid, Agnes... stood at the pantry window all afternoon and – quite literally – she saw *Nothing*. That is, *no one* came to the house at all, not the postman, nor anybody else. It would take her some time, being slow, to realise that that was very odd.”

1971 saw the change to decimal coinage, which necessitated new stamps, and brought the publication of *Nemesis*. Here, Miss Marple is seeking incriminating items “that should not be hidden locally or kept among a person’s own belongings. They must be got out of the way as soon as could be. And really there is only one way of successfully disposing of something. That is through the general post... All I had to do was to find out the address where it had been sent.”

“And you *asked* them that at the Post Office?” the Home Secretary protested – shocked, until Miss Marple describes how she duped the Postmistress by appearing “rather muddle-headed, elderly and very worried” about the parcel described as her own – “quite untrue – but Post Offices are careful”.

The £6 Royal Mail Stamp Book commemorating her life and work (issued 19 March 1991) includes various names Christie used, yet (mysteriously) omits “Mrs Ariadne Oliver” – her fictional *persona*. This apple-munching, ab-



22p stamp with label from mixed value pane with sponsored “Styles” handstamp. Interleaving pane from prestige book – chapter 1 of “*The Mysterious Affair at Styles*”

sent-minded writer of crime stories played major parts in *Dead Man’s Folly* (1956) where she organised a game of “Murder” which became too real, and in *The Pale Horse* (1961) where she explained the guiding principles of her stories:

“I only write very plain murders... It’s safer, I think, to stick to what you know... people on cruises, and in hostels, and what goes on in hospitals, and on parish councils – and sales of work – and music festivals, and girls in shops, and committees and daily women, and young men and girls who hike round the world in the interests of science, and shop assistants—”

“Give us more. Can’t have too much of it.” “Bless you! You’re wonderful” Mrs Oliver is told. Her millions of devotees felt the same about Agatha Christie.

Mark III and IV Window Books

A Detailed Description of 1989/90 Issues – Part 1

L F NEWBERY

In this article I deal with the first NVI books (August 1989), Penny Black Anniversary books (January/June 1990) and the Worldwide Postcard book containing 29p stamps (1989/90). A second article will deal with the second NVI books (August 1990). Details are given of the contents of each book, the perforation characteristics, cylinder or plate numbers and a description of the covers. The information printed on the covers is proving of considerable interest to specialist stamp book collectors although I appreciate will be of more limited interest to stamp collectors. Nevertheless the details are worthy of record.

Firstly some general information about the production of the stamps and covers.

The stamps in the books produced by **Harrison** are printed continuously in four columns of ten book panes. Cylinder numbers are positioned in half boxes opposite the upper row of the pane on every fifth pane and in each column (in all eight to every primary sheet). The stamps for affixing in book covers produced by Walsall were printed continuously in a special "sideways laydown" on the Chambon press in one column with six rows of three panes; cylinder numbers were not included in the finished books. Harrison books are produced on the Libra book making machine with the panes in a continuous roll and covers in gangs of six in a continuous flow. The binding is moistened and affixed to the covers which are then cut into single books and folded. The books were sealed by two upright oblong latex gum closures on both covers. The clasp comprises a semi-circular cut with a crease from the inside extension on either side. The hinge of the book is creased from the inside.

The stamps for **Questa** books are sheet fed printed in either three columns of four or four columns of four panes. Plate numbers are not printed on the sheets and so do not appear in the issued books. The books are produced machine assembled in singles with the pane being affixed to the cover by two spots of gum either close to or wide apart. The books are sealed by two small round gum closures on both covers; the

clasp comprises a semi-circular cut and the book hinge is creased from the outside.

Stamps for the **Walsall** books are sheet fed printed in eight columns of nine book panes of four or in four columns of nine book panes of ten. Plate numbers are printed in 15 positions on each sheet; one of these positions includes a short horizontal marker bar. Plate and cylinder number collectors generally collect three books: (1) plate number book, (2) plate number book with marker bar; (3) plate number book with lower edge completely imperforate. Each primary sheet yields 12 plate number books with normal perforation, two plate number books with imperf lower edge, one plate number book with marker bar and six plain books with imperf lower edge and 51 plain books with normal perfs. (*The marker bar was illustrated in Mr Newbery's article in the December 1990 Bulletin, page 78. Ed.*) The books are made up from gangs of three with the binding margin moistened and affixed to the cover. Sealing is by one irregular gum closure; occasionally so strong that on opening the book a large patch of the coating of the opposite cover is ripped off. Sealing was improved in later issues. The clasp consists of a semi-circular cut with a cut extension on either side.

For illustrations of the adhesive sealings, see my article in the August 1989 *Bulletin*, page 299.

1. Mark III Books of Ten 1st and 2nd class NVI stamps

22 August 1989 – Printed by Harrison

Contents: 10 x 1st NVI black, Advanced Coated Paper; 10 x 2nd NVI bright blue, one centre phosphor band.

Perforation: Straight upper and lower edges of pane, except for one extension hole at end of each vertical row.

Cylinders: 1st – B3; 2nd – B1 Phosphor B84.

Front Cover: Type A. The imperforate 1st and 2nd "stamps" with their white diagonal security lines are in black and bright blue respectively. They measure 23 x 19mm. There is often considerable variation in colour, especially with



Front Covers

A



B



C

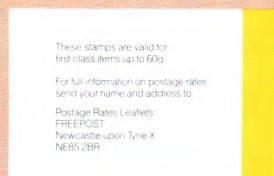


Back Covers

A



B



Rates Panels

A

UK letters and cards		Airmail-Europe letters and cards	
50g	100g 150g 200g	up to 20g	
1st class	20p 30p 37p 45p	EEC countries	20p
2nd class	15p 24p 28p 34p	Non-EEC countries	24p
Worldwide Postcards Aerogrammes			
	29p		
Airmail-Rest of the World		up to 10g Each extra 10g	
Zone A (N Africa, Middle East)	30p	14p	
Zone B (Americas, Africa, India, SE Asia)	34p	16p	
Zone C (Australia, Japan, China)	37p	18p	

B

Airmail-Europe letters and cards		UK letters and cards	
	up to 20g		up to 60g
EEC countries	20p	First Class	20p
Non-EEC countries	24p	Second Class	15p
Airmail-Rest of the World		up to 10g Each extra 10g	
Zone A (N Africa, Middle East)	30p	11p	
Zone B (Americas, Africa, India, SE Asia)	34p	16p	
Zone C (Australia, Japan, China)	37p	18p	
Worldwide Postcards		29p	
Please use airmail labels on all airmail items			

C

the blue. The St Edward Crown in the logo has been reduced in size from earlier books. The overall length of the logo measures 57mm on the 1st class book, 58mm on the 2nd.

Back Cover: Type A. The overall length of the logo is 31mm. As the books were sold from 22 August 1989 at the then current rate and at the new price when the rates were increased on 2 October 1989 the "UK recommended price" was omitted from below the bar code. However the bar code was updated to be the same as that for the new rate of 2 October 1989.

Bar Codes: 1st - 5 014721 100135; 2nd - 5 014721 100159.

Rates Panel: Type A.

Cover Board: Invercote I/S.

19 September 1989 - Printed by Questa

Contents: 10 x 1st NVI black, Phosphor Coated Paper; 10 x 2nd NVI bright blue, one centre phosphor band.

Perforation: Stamps perforated on all sides. Panes can be found with the binding margin perforated right across every row or more rarely

with the binding margin completely imperforate (see Bulletin February 1990, p.144).

Plate Numbers: None.

Front & Back Covers: Type A, as Harrison printing except overall length of logo on front cover measures 56mm.

Bar Codes: as Harrison books.

Rates Panel: Type A.

Cover Board: 1st class - Queen of Arts board; 2nd class - Invercote I/S 240gsm board.

2 October 1989 - Printed by Harrison

Details as for Harrison 22 August 1989 issue except:

Rates Panel: Type B

Cover Board: 1st class - Invercote I/S 240gsm. A small number of the 1st class books had covers made of thinner feeling Montrose Super-matt 250gsm board.

2. Mark III Books of Four 1st & 2nd Class NVI stamps

22 August 1989 - Printed by Walsall

Contents: 4 x 1st NVI black, Phosphor Coated Paper; 4 x 2nd NVI bright blue, one centre phosphor band.

Perforation: Panes have upper and lower straight edges with extension holes, right edge completely straight cut.

Plate Numbers: 1st – W1W1, W1W2, W1W3, W2W4; 2nd – W1W1.

Front Cover: Type A.

Back Cover: Type A.

Bar Code: 1st – 5 014721 100128; 2nd – 5 014721 100142.

Rates Panel: Type A.

Cover Board: Ikonorex.

November/December 1989 – Walsall/Harrison Printing

Stamps printed by Harrison in covers produced by Walsall. There was no pre-announced date of issue for these books; 2nd class were on sale by 28 November; 1st class by 5 December.

Details as for Walsall books of 22 August 1989.

Cylinder Numbers: B2 1st and 2nd but trimmed off in production so do not appear in issued books.

3. Mark III Worldwide Postcard Stamps Book

2 October 1989/22 February 1990 – Printed by Walsall

Contents: 4 x 29p stamps with two phosphor bands (2 October 1989) or on phosphor coated paper (22 February 1990). *Note:* Supplies of the second printing (PCP) went into use as required, the earliest reported date of sale being 22 February 1990. Supplies were put on sale at the British Philatelic Bureau and philatelic counters on 17 April 1990.

Perforations: as Walsall NVI books of four (22 August 1989).

Plate Numbers: W1W1 (2 bands); W2W2 (PCP).

Front Cover: Type B. Contents caption WORLDWIDE POSTCARD STAMPS.

Back Cover: Type B. "UK recommended price £1.16" below bar code.

Bar Code: 5 014721 100166.

Rates Panel: Type C. A revised version of type B, modified to give emphasis to overseas postings. Reference to Aerogramme 30p omitted;

Worldwide Postcards now moved to the bottom of the panel.

Cover Board: Ikonorex.

4. Mark III Books of Ten Penny Black Anniversary stamps

30 January 1990 – Printed by Harrison

Contents: 10 x 20p Penny Black Anniversary stamp, Advanced Coated Paper; 10 x 15p Penny Black Anniversary stamp, one centre phosphor band.

Perforations: as Harrison books of 10, 22 August 1989.

Cylinder Numbers: 20p – B1A B1B; 15p – B6 Phosphor B84.

Front Cover: Type C. As Type A but with Penny Black Anniversary stamps instead of 1st and 2nd NVI stamps.

Back Covers: Type B. UK recommended price below bar code.

Bar Codes: 20p – 5 014721 100135; 15p – 5 014721 100159.

Rates Panel: Type B.

17 April 1990 – Printed by Questa

Contents: 10 x 20p Penny Black Anniversary stamps, Phosphor Coated Paper; 10 x 15p Penny Black Anniversary stamps, one centre phosphor band.

Perforations: as Questa books of NVI stamps (19 September 1989).

Plate Numbers: None.

Front Cover: Type C. Logo measures 56mm – books of 20p stamps; 57mm books of 15p stamps.

Back Cover: Type B.

Bar Codes: as Harrison books, see above.

Rates Panel: Type B.

12 June 1990 – Printed by Walsall

Contents: 10 x 20p Penny Black Anniversary stamps, Phosphor Coated Paper; 10 x 15p Penny Black Anniversary stamps, one centre phosphor band.

Perforations: as Walsall books of four (22 August 1989).

Plate Numbers: 20p – W1W1W1; W1W2W1; W1W2W2; 15p – W1W1.

Front Cover: Type C. Logo measures 57mm.

Back Cover: Type B.

Bar Codes: as Harrison and Questa books, see above.

Rates Panel: Type B. Erroneously a small print run of the 15p book was made with rates stereo of the 4 x 29p Worldwide Postcard Stamp book (Type C).

Cover Board: Ikonorex.

5. Mark III Books of Four Penny Black Anniversary stamps

30 January 1990 – Printed by Walsall

Contents: 4 x 20p Penny Black Anniversary stamp, Phosphor Coated Paper; 10 x 15p Penny Black Anniversary stamp, one centre phosphor band.

Perforations: as Walsall books of four (22 August 1989).

Plate Numbers: 20p – W1W1W1; 15p – W1W1W1; W2W1; W2W2.

Front cover: Type C. In the black of the 20p “stamp” there is an additional yellow wash to highlight the head of Queen Victoria. The 15p does not have this yellow wash except for a part printing; the book covers were printed using the correct set of plates for 15p books but erroneously in addition the plate used to add a cream tint behind the Victoria head on the 20p books was also used. A print run of 7000 sheets was undertaken in this manner producing approximately 250,000 books. Although the error was noted by Quality Control at Walsall, it was allowed to pass through as the stamps themselves were unaffected.

Back Cover: Type C.

Bar Codes: 20p – 5 014721 100128; 15p – 5 014721 100142.

Cover Board: Ikonorex.

17 April 1990 – Harrison/Walsall Printing

Stamps printed by Harrison in covers produced by Walsall.

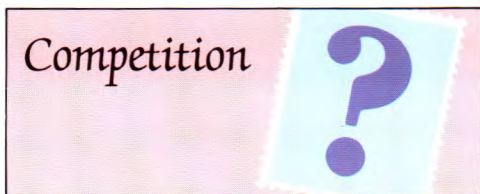
Contents: 4 x 20p Penny Black Anniversary stamp, Advanced Coated Paper.

Perforations: Upper and lower edges cut straight with extension holes; right edge completely cut straight.

Cylinder Numbers: B7 B4B but trimmed off in production so do not appear in issued books.

Covers, etc: as Walsall book of four (30 January 1990).

Part 2 of this article dealing with the Mark IV window books of August 1990 will be published in the August Bulletin. Ed.



Win £50 worth of British stamps

Enter this month's competition and stand a chance of winning £50 worth of current British philatelic products of your choice — stamps, stamp books, postcards, albums, etc. Answer the questions below, the answers to some will be found in this month's *Bulletin*, and send with your name and address on a postcard to: June Bulletin Competition, National Postal Museum, King Edward Street, LONDON EC1A 1LP to arrive by 31 July.

The sender of the first all-correct entry drawn will be invited to order £50 of philatelic products; five runners-up will be sent presentation packs of the Roses stamps. Answers and winners' names will be published in the September *Bulletin*.

1. After whom is *Rosa moyesii* named?
2. Who designed the 1990 Kew Gardens stamps?
3. In which city is the new home of the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company?
4. Where was the first experimental 2s6d stamp book machine installed in June 1955?
5. What is the current basic airmail rate for letters from Great Britain to non-European countries?
6. In which year were the William Caxton stamps issued?

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

The answers and results of the March competition will be published next month.

Swindon First Day Handstamp

The pictorial First Day of Issue handstamp showing a GWR locomotive introduced at Swindon on 5 March 1991 will be taken out of use after the issue of the Sport stamps on 11 June 1991. Items for reposting to: Special Handstamp Duty, Royal Mail Swindon, Station Road, SWINDON SN1 1AA.

The Pearson Hill Stamp Cancelling Machines

Part 1: The Machines

JACK PEACH

This article concerns inventions of the famous son of a famous father. Without the revolutionary reforms introduced by Sir Rowland Hill the name of Pearson, his son, may never have reached the history books. It is the story of an historical year starting in the Spring of 1857, by which time Sir Rowland had been appointed Secretary of the Post Office and Pearson, now aged 25 had been working as a clerk in the Secretary's Office for seven years.

Postage stamps had become popular and with over 400 million letters being processed annually the quality of postmarking was already being criticised and in high quarters. Each letter needed to be handstamped twice, once to apply a mark showing place and date of posting and again to obliterate the postage stamp(s). Between each blow of a handstamp on a letter there has to be another on to an inking pad; particularly is this necessary for the obliterating stamp. Unfortunately, in the quest for high productivity, this practice was not always followed, the resulting fainter postmarks being more readily removed and stamps re-used. In 1853 Viscount Canning, the Postmaster General, suggested to Rowland Hill then his Personal Secretary, that better marks might be made by machine. Son Pearson was given the job of investigating the problem, so kindling his interest in cancelling machines.

By March 1857 he had patented quite an advanced machine and on 3 April was able to report to his father that he had made a "model of the machine... constructed out of such materials as I happened to have at hand... it would, with perhaps a single day's work, knock itself to pieces..." It was agreed that a robust prototype should be made (by the firm Messrs Simpson), the work being supervised by a more technically minded Post Office employee Mr E A Cowper. This was ready for testing by September 1857.

1857 proved a fruitful year for cancelling machine development. Three were patented and their principle features will now be examined.

The first in the field was Pearson Hill's Patent No 832 notified on 25 March. The complete specification dated 25 September

exhibits much ingenuity and fore-sight into the way machine cancelling was destined to develop in the decades ahead.

Hand, foot treadle and separate engine drives are seen as alternatives for providing operating power.

Hill suggested that the table (on which letters are placed prior to stamping) be covered with vulcanised rubber to accommodate varying letter thicknesses. For similar reasons the die head was made in three segments, each backed by vulcanised rubber. The split die also allowed compensation when the die met the table at a slight angle – which was likely being at the end of a pivoted arm. The die design itself was duplicated, one half to serve as the town mark and the other as obliterator (Fig 1).



Pearson Hill (1832-98)

The feeding of letters to the machine could be individually by hand or sequentially by tape. Four methods for automatically removing stamped letters from the die and transporting them to a stack are described – thus maintaining their "facing".

A special mechanism ensured that a uniform quantity of ink was dispensed at each cancelling operation; that it was evenly spread over the die and that the portion of the die serving as obliterator received two coatings of ink.

The problem was envisaged of ink being impressed on to the table should a letter not be in position when the die descended. A subsequent letter receiving an offset on its reverse (Fig 2). A solution is suggested involving a calico band being interposed between the table and the die head, letters to be stamped being placed over the band. Should a letter be not so placed then the ink impression would be made on the band. The band was arranged to move forward at each stroke of the die. Another quoted arrangement was a continuous band of sufficient length that the ink had time to dry before re-presentation.

An alternative inking arrangement is described whereby the die made its impression through an inked band as with a typewriter. The band being shifted forward after each stroke of the die. Mr Hill acknowledges, in a report to his father dated 12 November 1857, that Mr Cowper had made this suggestion and indeed a number of others aimed at simplifying and thus cheapening the machine. The number of letters cancelled could be counted, the counter mechanism being actuated by the letter itself as it was automatically removed.

On 12 October 1857 George Beard submitted the Provisional Specification (Patent No 2607) for a stamping machine which again could be hand or engine driven.

The machine incorporated an automatic die inking device but the patent makes no mention of automatic feeding, removal or counting of letters. It was introduced to the Post Office by Charles Rideout, a Surveyor and Mr Beard's father-in-law. An example was placed on trial in February 1858 making a distinctive duplex mark with vertical oval bars (Fig. 3). It was sometimes used for backstamping but without the obliterator portion of the die (Fig. 4).

The third machine patented in 1857 was by Henry Palmer, who submitted his Provisional Specification (Patent No 2814) on 5 November 1857. The important feature was the "parallel motion" linkage arrangement carrying the die. This ensured even contact between the die and table unlike the Pearson Hill machine in which the die was attached to the end of a pivoted arm. The die was not automatically inked but had to be moved alternately from the letter stamping position to an ink pad. The patent does, howev-

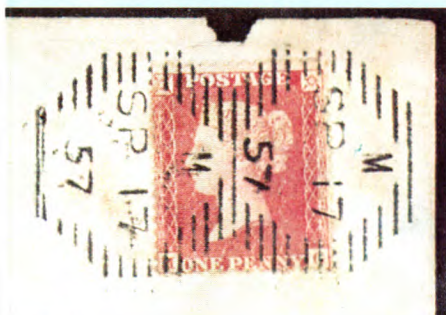


Fig.1

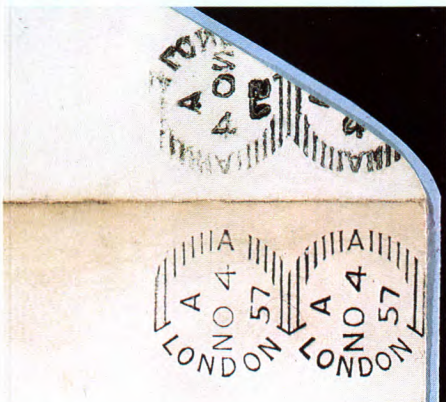


Fig.2



Fig.3



Fig.4

er, describe an arrangement for foot treadle or engine drive as alternatives to hand. As far as is known no machine made by Palmer was tested by the Post Office. Pearson Hill did, however, adopt this "parallel motion" action in his third

machine probably (and hopefully!) with Palmer's blessing.

The dies known to have been used in machine trials during the period September 1857 to May 1858 are listed as follows:

Mark Type Figure	Dates Known		Codes Within Design	In centre dater
	Earliest	Latest		
1	17-09-57	17-09-57	None	M
2	21-09-57	17-02-58	A	A, (M,2,3,4)†
3 & 4	05-02-58	14-10-58	1 (in diamond)	HS‡
5 & 6	10-03-58	30-03-58	None	CA,CB,CC,CA...
7	23-03-58	23-03-58	3 (in diamond)	CB
8	24-03-58	09-04-58	A	B
9	12-05-58	19-03-59	3 (in diamond)	BA,BB,BC,BA...

†For most of the period the centre code was A, on five days is it known to have been different. The code "M" might suggest that those marks were made by the original "model" (known dates 14 January, 3 February, 10 February 1858) – but there is no hard evidence for this.

‡ Possibly maker's initials

In the second instalment Mr Peach attempts to reconstruct the events by which the various postmarks may be attributed to particular machines.

Collections & Philatelic Counters

Some of the information given in the May *Bulletin* has been superseded and up to date information is given below:

Bath Philatelic Counter: The reposting address for the Philatelic Counter handstamp is the South East Special Handstamp Centre (Windsor), not the Wales & The West SHC as stated.

Birmingham Collections: Opening hours are: Mon-Fri 9.00 to 17.30; Sat 9.00 to 13.00. Telephone: 021-643 5542.

Brighton Collections: Opening hours: Mon-Fri 9.00 to 17.40 (Wed. opens 9.30); Sat 9.00 to 12.30. Telephone 0273-748704.

Coventry Philatelic Counter: Opening hours: Mon, Tue, Wed & Fri 9.30-12.30 and 13.30-16.30; Thu & Sat 9.00-12.30.

Exeter Philatelic Counter: Opening hours: Mon-Fri 9.00-17.30; Sat 9.00-13.00. Telephone 0392-432401.

"Cross Post" Magazine

The Spring 1991 issue of *Cross Post*, journal of the Friends of the National Postal Museum is now available. It contains articles on the Dock-ree Bag Holder (an important piece of Edward-234

ian Post Office equipment); The Peover Papers (early documents of Post Office administration); Stock Letter Alphabets of Elizabeth II stamp rolls; "Tying the Post Office in Knots" (methods of tying letter bundles) and an account of the Swedish postal museum in Stockholm. Details are given of the Friends' 1990 AGM and the Museum's 1991 exhibition programme.

This will be the last issue edited by Doug Myall who retires with the thanks of the Friends for producing interesting and attractive issues of the magazine. *Cross Post* is available to non-members, price £2. Orders and/or enquiries about membership of the Friends to: Hon Secretary/Treasurer, Friends of the Museum, c/o National Postal Museum, King Edward Street, LONDON EC1A 1LP.

Bournemouth Stamp Fair

The Bournemouth & District Philatelic Society will be holding its Annual Bournemouth Stamp & Postcard Fair at Summerbee Secondary School, Mallard Road, Bournemouth on 15 June, 10am to 5pm. Admission free. Some 24 well-known dealers will be attending; there will be invited displays and refreshments will be available. Enquiries: R W J Sharp, 72 Cardigan Road, BOURNEMOUTH BH9 1BG.

20th Anniversary of British Postmark Bulletin

When the *Philatelic Bulletin* was established in 1963 details were included of forthcoming special handstamps and postmark slogans. From September 1965 when the *Bulletin* changed to its current magazine format it was possible to include illustrations of some of these postmarks. By 1971 the number of postmarks was increasing and it was not always possible to give adequate notice of new postmarks or even to record them all. The May 1971 *Bulletin* announced the setting up of a new service: "We are ... offering a *Postmark Bulletin* which will be published at fortnightly intervals plus as many other issues in between as are necessary to give 100% coverage."

The first issue of the new publication made its appearance on 1 June – four pages listing over 40 special handstamps for use up to November. The wording of each handstamp was given plus the location of the special posting boxes. However no addresses were given of the offices to which covers had to be sent; collectors were merely instructed that "Unless otherwise stated, items for re-posting should be sent to the Head Postmaster of the town in which the special posting box is located, marking the outer cover 'Special Handstamp'." None of the handstamps were illustrated.

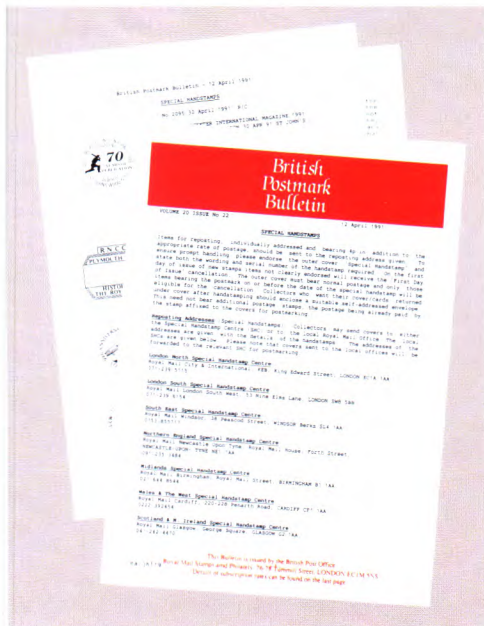
Over the years the *Postmark Bulletin* has been considerably developed. The current title and masthead was introduced in June 1984 when the late Frank Brench became Editor. Reference numbers were then allocated for each handstamp (a similar numbering system was added for slogans in 1988). Frank included short editorial comments in his usual friendly style; these continued up to his retirement in 1985.

Illustrations of pictorial First Day of Issue handstamps were introduced in March 1981 with illustrations of Post Office Philatelic Counter and National Postal Museum handstamps following. Sponsored handstamps were not illustrated until June 1984; the names and addresses of handstamp sponsors were first given in 1986. Slogans were first illustrated in 1988.

In June 1988 the editorship of the *Postmark Bulletin* was transferred from the British Philatelic Bureau in Edinburgh to the National Postal Museum in London where John Holman (also Editor of this *Bulletin*) compiles the *Postmark Bulletin* from information received from

Royal Mail Stamps in London, seven Special Handstamp Centres and Royal Mail local offices. The *Postmark Bulletin* is printed in Edinburgh and despatched to subscribers from the Bureau.

As time permits the *Postmark Bulletin* will be further developed. Already short articles by leading collectors are being included; James Mackay writes about old postmarks and Colin



Peachey about modern operational handstamps and machine cancels. Reviews of books of interest to collectors of British postmarks appear from time to time. The layout of the *Bulletin* was revised in January 1990 to position the illustrations of the handstamps alongside the details of their use. With the setting up of the Special Handstamp Centres with full-time staff the arrangements for special handstamps has been much improved and it is now usually possible to give greater advance notice of their use. Illustrations are provided of all special handstamps – an important factor for the growing number of thematic collectors who like to include relevant postmarks in their collections. A majority of postmarks slogans are also illustrated.

The *Postmark Bulletin* is available on subscription from the British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, EDINBURGH EH3 5TT. The current annual rates are: UK £8.75; Europe £10.75; Rest of World (Airmail) £19.50.

Postbag

JOHN HOLMAN

Window Books

The following exchange of letters between Douglas Myall of the GB Decimal Stamp Book Study Circle and David Dale, Manager Definitive Stamps – Royal Mail Stamps, will be of interest to stamp book collectors:

Douglas Myall's letter:

I write concerning Royal Mail's future policy for window books and would be glad if you could let me have the answers to the following questions:

1. Is it the fact that future window books will contain only NVI stamps?
2. Will the colours of these change when there is a tariff change?
3. Will future window books carry commercial advertisements, or logotypes of particular commercial enterprises?

4. If the answer to 1. is yes, would you consider issuing at least one of the three 10 x 1st class books with normal definitives? The reason is that the convenience of the books and their many sales outlets is lost when one is writing to correspondents in the EEC since NVIs are not valid for prepayment of the 22p postage to these countries abroad. Since there are three printers producing these books, could not one of them be instructed to use 22p stamps for them?

David Dale's reply:

The issues you raised are large ones on which it is possible to debate at great length. Lack of space prevents me doing so, but briefly:

1. NVIs do seem to be here to stay as we are working towards a standard product with an indefinite lifespan – hence longer print runs, no new issues, no changes to posters, no wastage when tariffs change. There is also a clear customer benefit in retailers and customers not having to buy 1p or 2p stamps to up-rate stock.
2. We believe the general aim above can be achieved only by keeping standard colours. These give the added benefit that customers and retailers are not confused by the existence of "old colour" stock after a tariff change. They also reduce the number of philatelic varieties.

However, no final decision has been taken on this.

3. We do not favour unrelated commercial advertisements because the books are our most important retail product and the general presentation, branding and image are important to us. However, it may make sense to "customise" books for large retailers or large customers. The multi-value coil strips are a precedent for this. We may also consider offers or advertisements which relate directly to promoting stamp sales or letter writing. All the above is speculative and there are no firm plans at present.

4. We are very conscious of the disadvantage of NVIs with regard to overseas use which partly offsets the advantages mentioned above. We propose to solve this by agreeing with EC postal administrations to accept NVIs – after all, we accept each others citizens, cheese, lamb, etc! We have made considerable progress on this, but unfortunately it may take a little while yet to gain the agreement of all eleven of our partners. The main problem with your suggestion of one of the printers producing value stamps is not with production, but with distribution and availability. Retailers would probably not buy both types of book from us – they would choose to buy either the value or non-value type and either choice would cause problems for some customers.

Self-adhesive stamps

R Tidmarsh of Swindon wrote concerning Dr Lane's article on self-adhesive stamps in March: "... while he commented on the 'health lobby' in the United States as a motive for adopting this form, he did not comment on the likely reasons for the earlier experiments. From my own experience as a resident for some years in a tropical country (Fiji), a combination of high humidity, light clothing and heavy rainfall leads to a frequent phenomenon – conventionally gummed stamps becoming moist in one's pocket (even en route home from the post office) and attaching themselves to anything available! I often wished for self-adhesive stamps as I tried to regum or adhesive tape "mint" stamps to letters. So it seems significant that countries like Sierra Leone, Tonga, Barbados and Norfolk Island were the earlier users. The reasons they did not continue were probably economic ones. If the costs of production were high, as the article suggests, the net revenue was reduced and whether stamps were sold to cover costs of the service or, as collectors material, as a source

of income, the reduction in income from the use of a more expensive paper became unacceptable as the countries' economies were affected, for example, by the rise in oil prices in the early 1970s. In contrast, the industrialised countries can afford the extra costs even if the practical need for self-adhesive stamps is, I venture to suggest, less obvious."

"As Mr Tidmarsh states, high humidity is a detriment to conventionally gummed stamps and another reason for the current experiments in the United States is the severe losses of stamps due to blocking in the hot and humid regions of the country. The introduction of particle gum was an alternative which avoided this problem, but it does not seem to have found widespread acceptance.

Self-adhesive stamps in sheets are definitely more expensive than normal sheeted stamps, which explains the current interest in books, where the overall increase in price over conventional books is much smaller. Countries which already sell stamps in book form are more likely to move in this direction. There is also a volume effect which favours the larger countries in that the more that are produced, the cheaper they become."

Offices open during the 1971 Strike

I am pleased to say that readers are still reporting post offices which postmarked and delivered local mail during the 1971 strike. Thanks to Mrs M Nelson of York, D Morrison of Perth, and an anonymous reader in Cheltenham, the following can be added to the listings published here in February and May:

Aylesbury, Bucks (Bierton Road)
Newburgh, Fife
Ridgeway, Westcliff on Sea, Essex

From further research in my records at home, I can add:

Errol, Perth
Glenbarr, Tarbert, Argyll
Woodley, Stockport, Cheshire

Since I recorded Brewood, Stafford in May, I have come across a reference to this office in the April 1971 issue of *Gibbons Stamp Monthly*. This states that as mail could not, because of the strike, be taken to Stafford for postmarking, the Brewood handstamp was brought back into use. It had been discontinued about three years earlier.

Events

until 2 July 1991. Exhibition of work of Keith Bowen, designer of 1988 Welsh Bible stamps, at Museum of the North, Llanberis, Gwynedd. See April Bulletin, page 187, for details.

until 30 August 1991. "Post Office at Work in Edwardian Times" exhibition at National Postal Museum, King Edward Street, London EC1. Open Monday-Thursday 9.30am to 4.30pm; Friday 9.30am to 4pm. Admission free.

until April 1992. "Stamping the Mail" exhibition at National Postal Museum. Opening times above.

29-30 June 1991. Thematica 91 - Britain's Thematic Stamp Exhibition, Carisbrook Hall, 63 Seymour Street, London W2. Open 29th 10.30am to 5.30pm; 30th 10.30am to 5pm. Details in May Bulletin, page 212.

5 July-29 September 1991. "The Pursuit of Perfection: The Photographs of Dorothy Wilding" exhibition at National Portrait Gallery, St Martin's Place, London WC2. Open Mon-Fri 10am-5pm, Sat 10am-6pm, Sun 2-6pm. Admission free.

17 September-31 December 1991. "Maps and the Post Office" exhibition at National Postal Museum. Details above.

15-20 October 1991. Autumn Stampex/BPE. National stamp exhibition at Royal Horticultural Society Halls, Greycoat Street and Vincent Square, London SW1. Open 15 October Noon to 7pm, 16-19 October 10.30am to 7pm, 20 October 10.30am to 6pm, admission charge.

Displays of old letter boxes and other postal artefacts will be provided by enthusiast David Harrop at the following summer events: 8-9 June - Ingrow station, Keighley & Worth Valley Railway, West Yorkshire; 15-16 June - Morecambe Bay Steam Engine Rally, Stodday near Lancaster; 22-23 June - Emneth Vintage Country Show, Emneth Hungate Park near Wisbech; 29-30 June - Clwyd Steam & Vintage Show, The Plassey Eyton, near Wrexham; 6-7 July - Hollowell Steam Show, Hollowell, Northants.

A Royal Presentation

Courtesy of Mr Nigel Fordham of the Crown Agents Stamp Bureau we illustrate two of the Forces covers produced last August to commemorate the 90th birthday of HM Queen Elizabeth, The Queen Mother. The covers were flown in a Wessex helicopter of The Queen's flight from Windsor to Portsmouth where The Queen Mother then embarked on the Royal Yacht *Britannia*. These covers were given to The



Queen Mother by Mr Fordham, on behalf of the RAF Benevolent Fund at a private audience at Clarence House in February. The main purpose of the audience was to present Her Majesty with an album containing the stamps issued by Crown Agents countries to celebrate her 90th birthday. A similar presentation of the British 90th birthday stamps had been made to The Queen Mother by Sir Bryan Nicholson, Chairman of The Post Office last year.

The covers are two of many produced in recent years by Group Captain Bill Randle in aid of RAF charities. These particular covers were issued in support of the Wings Appeal. Details of the covers are regularly published in the "Commemorative Covers" section of this *Bulletin*. Details of those still available can be obtained from Gp. Capt. Randle at: 60 Shelveys Way, TADWORTH, Surrey, KT20 8QF. The Crown Agents supported the RAF charities by selling commemorative covers on their stand at Spring Stampex.

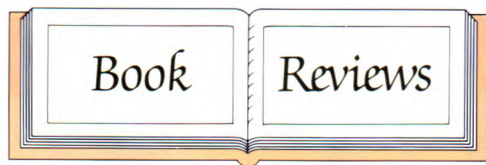
Gems from the R M Phillips Collection

186. 1870 1/2d Imperf at Left

The humble Victorian 1/2d rose has not featured too often in these pages yet it is a popular stamp with collectors. It was printed in sheets of 480 from 15 plates (numbers 1, 3-6, 8-15, 19 and 20). Plate numbers can be seen in the engine-turned background surrounding the Queen's portrait near the cross bar of the 1/2d on both sides of the stamp. The first two plates were put to press in June 1870, the last in June 1879. Plate 9 was kept as a reserve plate and stamps from that plate are rare, valued at £2000 unused in the Gibbons catalogue. The Phillips Collection contains examples from all plates including a block of six, two pairs on covers, a single on cover and three off cover from the rare plate 9. Imperforates are known from plates 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10 and 14; an example from plate 3 is in the Phillips Collection together with the interesting vertical strip of three imperf at left, from plate 14, shown here.



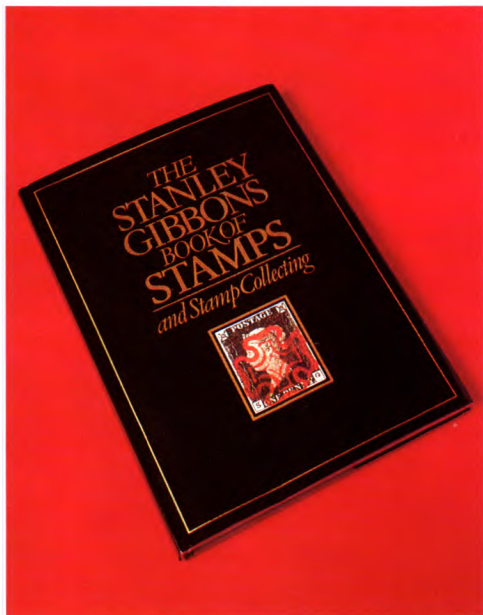
The Phillips Collection can be seen in the National Postal Museum in London's Chief Post Office, King Edward Street, London EC1, open Monday-Thursday 9.30am to 4.30pm and Friday 9.30am to 4pm. Admission free.



The fifth part of the Great Britain Philatelic Society's **British Stamp Booklets** by Jean Alexander and Leonard F Newbery is now available; it deals with the Series 7 books. This covers 2s6d books issued between July 1940 and December 1957, 3s books of January 1958 to May 1965, and 4s6d books of July 1965 to October 1970. As in the previous parts in this series, details are given not only of the issued books but of the trials that led up to them. In general the cover designs for the Series 7 books did not alter much until 1968 when pictorial covers were introduced. Eminent artists were commissioned for the illustrations and the layout and typography were the work of Stuart Rose of the Post Office. Len Newbery is particularly interested in stamp book machines and provides details of the first of the experimental machines issuing a 2s6d book which was installed at the Charing Cross Post Office in June 1955. The machine, coloured grey with white lettering, was an adaptation of a machine made to dispense lettercards. The machine was found to suffer from dampness. Other machines were installed at the Gracechurch Street Post Office, EC3 and the Nottingham Head Post Office. The listings give the numbers of books issued with clear information as to the contents, i.e. stamps with green, blue or violet phosphor and variations in phosphor bands, 8 or 9.5mm. One minor quibble – the authors state that £sd stamp books were finally withdrawn from sale at philatelic counters on 29 February 1972; this reviewer believes the date of withdrawal was 24 November 1971, the February 1972 date being the last day £sd stamps were valid for postage. Available from: G.B. Philatelic Publications, Anso Corner Farm, Hempstead, SAFFRON WALDEN, Essex, CB10 2NU. Price £4.50, postage 50p.

The Stanley Gibbons Book of Stamps and Stamp Collecting by James Watson was first published ten years ago and reviewed here in November 1981. The reviewer commented "If you are one of those people for whom only the best is good enough, this is exactly what you

have been waiting for". The book proved popular both for the clear, easy-to-read text of James Watson and for the many fine colour illustrations of stamps, postmarks, covers, personalities, mail coaches, mail ships, etc, etc. Jim Watson worked for Gibbons for many years building up a wide knowledge of stamps with particular interest in stamp design, printing and varieties. As well as his articles in *Gibbons Stamp Monthly* he wrote regularly for the *Bulletin* including the "British Special Stamps" feature.



He died in 1987. The second edition of this book has been revised by John Holman, now Editor of this *Bulletin*, who worked with Watson on the illustrations for the 1981 edition. In 20 chapters the reader is taken through the history of the postal service, early stamps, stamp design and printing, a survey of modern British, Commonwealth and Foreign stamps, postmarks, famous collectors, philatelic literature, exhibitions and given good advice on starting a collection and on the pleasures of thematic collecting. Of particular interest to collectors of British stamps will be the chapters on Stamp Design and Designers and Modern British and Commonwealth Stamps. Both include many illustrations of special issues and portraits of stamp designers M C Farrar Bell, David Gentleman, Professor Richard Guyatt, Andrew Restall and Clive Abbott and Stuart Rose, former Design Adviser to The Post Office. Since 1979

when Watson wrote the first edition, there have been many new developments and changes in the stamp world; in updating the text Holman has included Greetings, Non Value Indicator and Frama stamps and revised the sections on Stamp Books and Magazines and Philatelic Organizations and Societies. A chapter on the history of Stanley Gibbons has replaced an earlier chapter on Stamps for Investment, thought inappropriate in a book designed primarily for newcomers to the hobby. The words of the 1981 reviewer still hold good for this new edition. 232 pages, hardbound with Penny Black dust-jacket. Available from Stanley Gibbons London shop or by post from Stanley Gibbons Publications Ltd, Parkside, RINGWOOD, Hants, BH24 3SH. Price £15.95, postage £2.50 UK, £5 overseas.

Birmingham Penny Post Book

The Midland (GB) Postal History Society is undertaking a project which is planned to lead to a new book in 1993 to celebrate the bicentenary of the Birmingham Penny Post. The Society is studying the local posts of Birmingham and ten Midland counties and is keen to have details of all letters thought to have passed through unofficial, 5th Clause or Penny posts in the Midland area.

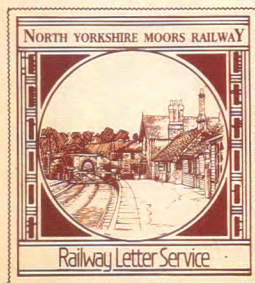
Anyone who has relevant material and is willing to help is asked to contact the Co-ordinating Editor, John Calladine, Dunley House, Cranham, GLOUCESTER GL4 8HQ, who will be happy to supply pre-printed questionnaires. For the purpose of this project, "the Midlands" comprise Derbyshire, Gloucestershire (except Bristol), Herefordshire, Leicestershire (and Rutland), Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire, Worcestershire and, of course, Birmingham.

Railway Letter Stamps

The North Yorkshire Moors Railway will issue new 25p railway letter stamp on 15 June to mark the 10th anniversary of Newtondale Halt (shows loco No. 80135). First day covers will be available. On 22 April the NYMR issued a 25p stamp to commemorate the 10th anniversary of its railway letter service and published an attractive *Illustrated history of the NYMR and its railway*

letter service. The 52-page book gives a history of the line from its inception as the Whitby & Pickering Railway in 1836 to the present. The line was closed by British Railways in 1965 but reopened under a preservation scheme in 1973.

An illustrated history of the NYMR and its railway letter service



Interleaved with NYMR railway letter stamps

The book contains 13 different NYMR stamps, in singles, pairs, blocks and full sheets. Price £7.50. Orders/enquiries about NYMR stamps, covers and the book to: Mrs M Atkins, 5 Tiber View, Brinsworth, ROTHERHAM, S Yorkshire, S60 5EA.

Special Handstamps and Postmark Slogans

Collectors sending in covers for handstamps or slogans to the Special Handstamp Centres or Royal Mail local offices are reminded that all covers should bear postal addresses. Some collectors prefer unaddressed covers so the addresses may be written lightly in pencil or be on peelable adhesive labels, which can be removed after delivery to make unaddressed covers. The Managers of the Special Handstamp Centres and local managers reserve the right to return uncanceled any item submitted without a delivery address.

Collectors who want their covers returned under cover to avoid damage in transit should enclose an addressed cover of suitable size. This need not bear additional postage stamps, postage being paid by the stamps on the covers sent for postmarking. Such covers still need to bear delivery addresses.

Six Month Digest

Listed below are the issues of the past six months and the proposed dates of issue for stamps until November 1991. Any change in these dates will be notified in the *Bulletin*. British Philatelic Bureau order codes are quoted where known.

4 Dec	N Ireland 17p (IS170)
4 Dec	N Ireland 22p (IS222)
4 Dec	N Ireland 26p (IS262)
4 Dec	N Ireland 37p (IS370)
4 Dec	Scotland 17p (SS170)
4 Dec	Scotland 22p (SS223)
4 Dec	Scotland 26p (SS262)
4 Dec	Scotland 37p (SS370)
4 Dec	Wales 17p (WS170)
4 Dec	Wales 22p (WS222)
4 Dec	Wales 26p (WS262)
4 Dec	Wales 37p (WS370)
4 Dec	Country stamps pack (CP009)
29 Dec	Dogs stamp cards (AQ146)
8 Jan	Dogs stamps (AS441)
8 Jan	Dogs pack (AP093)
14 Jan	NPM Edwardian PO cards (NQ907)
5 Feb	Greetings (Good Luck) stamps (JB002)
19 Feb	Science stamp cards (AQ152)
26 Feb	Spring Stampex exh. card (EQ028)
5 Mar	Science stamps (AS447)
5 Mar	Science pack (AP034)
12 Mar	Scot Aerogramme (Rugby) (QS027)
19 Mar	Prestige stamp book (YB002)
26 Mar	Greetings (Smiles) stamps (JB003)
9 Apr	CEPT/Space stamp cards (AQ157)
23 Apr	CEPT/Space stamps (AS452)
23 Apr	CEPT/Space pack (AP095)
14 May	Definitives Pack No. 24 (DR001)
14 May	NPM Stamping Mail cards (NQ908)
14 May	Scotland 22p CPL paper (SS224)
14 May	Scotland 26p CPL paper (SS263)
14 May	Scotland 37p CPL paper (SS371)
14 May	Wales 22p CPL paper (WS223)
28 May	Sport stamp cards (AQ162)

Forthcoming

11 Jun	Sport stamps & pack
25 Jun	50p & £1 books (cover change)
16 Jul	Roses stamps & pack
23 Jul	Scot Aerogramme (Gaidhealach)
6 Aug	Dinosaur stamp cards
20 Aug	Dinosaur stamps & pack
3 Sep	Map stamp cards
17 Sep	Map stamps & pack

17 Sep	NPM Map cards (4)
8 Oct	Christmas aerogramme
29 Oct	Christmas stamp cards
12 Nov	Christmas stamps & pack
12 Nov	1991 Year Pack
12 Nov	1991 Yearbook
12 Nov	NPM "Old Christmas" cards

Alma Lee Honoured

It is with great pleasure that we report that Mrs Alma Lee has been elected one of four new signatories to the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists – regarded internationally as the world's pre-eminent philatelic honour. Mrs Lee, who will add her name to the Roll at the BPF Congress in September, is the first lady to be elected since 1976, and becomes the first lady in the 70 year history of the RDP to follow her husband as a signatory. The late Ronald A G Lee signed the Roll at the Harrogate Congress in 1965.

Mrs Lee has formed superb collections of Swiss stamps which have been displayed locally, nationally and internationally on numerous occasions. She has been awarded large gold medals at Stockholmia 1986, Hafnia 1987 and Finlandia 88 and invited to show in the Court of Honour at Philexfrance '89, New Zealand 1990 and Geneve '90. Mrs Lee, who has also formed collections of France, Israel, United Nations and thematic, has for many years performed considerable work for organised philately in the UK – having served as Secretary of the Melville Youth committee, 1968-75, and as a national judge at Stampex since 1973. She has done much good work for the Royal Philatelic Society, London, both in the library and for the Expert committee; earning her the London Medal for her services to the Society. Mrs Lee has found time to write articles for *The London Philatelist* and other national philatelic journals; as Alma Grunberg she contributed six interesting articles entitled "Stamp Collecting for the Beginner" to this *Bulletin* in 1976. She is author of the useful booklet *Introducing Thematic Collecting*, published by the National Philatelic Society in 1983 (re-printed 1984 and 1990).

Joining Mrs Lee in adding the coveted letters RDP after their names will be Robert P Odenweller and Charles J Peterson of the USA and Harry Sutherland of Canada. Congratulations to all four on this recognition of their philatelic work.

Commemorative Covers

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

Gallantry/10th Gurkhas. *The following revised text supplied by the cover producer replaces that published in the April Bulletin.* To mark the 25th anniversary of the 10th Gurka Serekin VC action 300 official First Day Postal and Courier Services covers with five Gallantry stamps or single 20p VC stamp were prepared. All covers were signed by Rambahadur Limbu, VC, MVO. Other combinations include signatures of Company Commander, Major "Kit" Maunsell MC and Commanding Officer Lieutenant Colonel P O Myers OBE, MC. Covers with two signatures £6.50, one signature £5. Covers with single VC stamp and three signatures £7.50; with one signature £3. All postpaid. Orders/enquiries: R Litherland, 2 Sutcliffe Close, BUSHEY, Herts, WD2 3PL.

Maidstone Against Fire. To mark the 400th anniversary of fire protection in Maidstone a commemorative cover, showing the coat of arms of the Borough of Maidstone incorporated into a logo for "Maidstone Against Fire 1591-1991" has been produced with a printed insert quoting the entry recorded in the Burghmote Book in 1591 of the resolution to provide firefighting equipment for the town. A limited number of covers will be available bearing the four Fire Service stamps issued in 1974 depicting fire appliances cancelled by a special handstamp dated 29 June 1991. Price £4.50 each plus stamped, self-addressed 9 x 6" envelope. Orders/enquiries: Miss P Masters, 11 Upper Fant Road, MAIDSTONE, Kent, ME16 8BP. Remittances payable to "Maidstone Against Fire".

Royal Aeronautical Society. To commemorate the 125th anniversary of the Society, a special first day cover was prepared on 23 April bearing the Europe in Space stamps cancelled by a special handstamp. The cover features aspects of flight since the Society's founding, viz ballooning; a biplane over Stonehenge; Concorde at Heathrow; and an artist's impression of HOTOL, British Aerospace's aerospaceplane. The special handstamp features the Society's logo. The cover with the full set of Space stamps costs £6.75; signed by Michael Turner (artist of the biplane and Concorde pictures) £9.75. The

cover is also available with the 1991 Scientific Achievements 31p (Radar) and 37p (Jet Engine) stamps and the 5d and 1s 9d 1969 Anniversaries stamps depicting Alcock and Brown and England/Australia flights and the 1969 9d Concorde stamp (five stamps in all) @ £9.75. Orders/enquiries: A G Bradbury, address above.

65th Birthday of HM The Queen. To mark the occasion of Her Majesty's 65th birthday, Benham produced a commemorative cover (in Benham's Royalty series) bearing a "silk" illustration of The Queen and postmarked with a special Birthday handstamp at Windsor on 21 April. Price £2.50 plus 40p postage. Orders/enquiries: Benham (A Buckingham) Ltd, The Bayle, FOLKESTONE, Kent, CT20 1SD.

Rugby School. One of the Sport '91 stamps to be issued on 11 June features Rugby, and to coincide with this Rugby School has commissioned A G Bradbury to produce a first day cover. This features a reproduction of a hand-painted engraving of the School with the game of rugby being played in the foreground. The special postmark depicts the school's coat of arms. Covers with the full set of Sport stamps cost £5, signed by Bill Beaumont or the Headmaster £9.75 each. Cheques payable to A G Bradbury, overseas customers please remit in sterling and add 50p. Orders/enquiries: A G Bradbury, 3 Link Road, LEICESTER LE2 3RA.

Brunel's Box Rail Tunnel TPO. A commemorative cover will be produced to mark the 150th anniversary of the opening of Brunel's legendary Box Tunnel which took 6 years to build, is almost 2 miles long and cost the lives of over 100 labourers in its construction. The tunnel was the final link in the Great Western Railway between London and Bristol. The covers, which will be carried through the tunnel on the anniversary by the South Wales Travelling Post Office, will bear a railway stamp, 1 July 1991 TPO postmark and pictorial CARRIED THROUGH BOX TUNNEL ON T.P.O. cachet. Price £2.20 or £4.20 for a pair of covers with "Up" and "Down" TPO handstamps. Overseas customers please add 60p postage. Orders/enquiries: G Eldridge, 177 Moushole Lane, Bittern, SOUTHAMPTON SO2 4TD.

Sports/Perth Grammar School. In connection with the forthcoming issue of Sport stamps, Perth Grammar School are producing a specially designed cover, featuring a grid of 10 different sports, in aid of the School Fund. The cover will bear a 22p Sports stamp with First Day of Issue

handstamp. Price £1. Orders/enquiries: Sport Cover, Perth Grammar School, Gownans Terrace, PERTH PH1 5AZ.

International Olympic Committee. The IOC stage their 97th session at the newly opened International Convention Centre, Birmingham from 9-16 June. A limited edition first day cover bearing the Sport stamps and special 11 June handstamp will be available. Price £5 (overseas add £1 for airmail); covers signed by the Rt Hon Denis Howell, MP, President 97th Session Organising Committee or Sir Arthur Gold, Chairman of the British Olympic Association, price £9.75 each. Signed covers limited to 100 of each. Orders/enquiries: A G Bradbury, 3 Link Road, LEICESTER LE2 3RA.

The Cricketer Magazine. To commemorate the 70th anniversary of *The Cricketer* International, founded by Sir Pelham Warner in 1921, a special limited edition cover was produced for use with a special handstamp on 30 April. The cover illustrates "Plum" and the current proprietor B.G. Brocklehurst, with a potted history on the insert card. Each cover is numbered. Price £3 with Europe in Space stamp or £3.25 with 34p Australian Bicentenary stamp showing W G Grace. Orders/enquiries: The Cricketer Stamp Offer 1991, Beech Hanger, Ashurst, TUNBRIDGE WELLS, Kent, TN3 9ST.

Tallyllyn Railway. The Tallyllyn named its latest locomotive "Tom Rolt" at a ceremony on 6 May. The locomotive originally worked in Ireland and used peat as its fuel; it has now been converted to coal and to the 2'3" gauge and it is hoped will haul passenger trains later in the year. Rolt was one of the founders of the Tallyllyn Railway Preservation Society in 1950. A commemorative cover, showing a likeness of Rolt, is available bearing the 25p railway letter stamp issued in October 1990 to mark the 40th anniversary of the TRPS. Price £2, postage 40p. Orders/enquiries about TR railway letter stamps: Sara Eade, Dept TR Stamps, Tallyllyn Railway, TYWYN, Gwynedd, LL36 9EY.

D'Oyly Carte Opera. To commemorate its historic opening night in its new home, the Alexandra Theatre in Birmingham, on 7 March, the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company, in association with the Post Office, produced a limited edition first-night cover. Patrons at the first night of "The Gondoliers" had the opportunity to post their covers in a Victorian postbox supplied by the Post Office. A limited number of covers are available, each bears a colour



reproduction of the D'Oyly Carte poster for its Alexandra Theatre season and a large special handstamp commemorating the first night. Price £3.50 plus stamped, addressed 9 x 6" envelope. Orders/enquiries: Mrs Pat Jones, Secretary: D'Oyly Carte Opera Company, First Floor, Clarence Chambers, 39 Corporation Street, BIRMINGHAM B2 4LS.

Roses. To coincide with the Roses stamps (16 July), A G Bradbury is producing a cover which will bear the five new stamps and the four Roses stamps of 1976 all postmarked with a special "Roses on Stamps" handstamp at Rose, Truro, Cornwall. Price £9.75 (overseas add 50p postage). Orders/enquiries: A G Bradbury, 3 Link Road, LEICESTER LE2 3RA.

All in a good cause...

On 18 March the managers of Royal Mail Stamps, including General Manager Keith Fisher, took part in a netball match against a team of their junior colleagues at the Finsbury



Leisure Centre near the Royal Mail Stamps headquarters in Turnmill Street, London EC1. The rules for the match required "netball skirts" to be worn by all players. The event raised some £200 for the BBC Comic Relief fund. The result a draw!

June Digest

Issued in June

11 June: Sport '91 stamps – 22p (Fencing), 26p (Hurdling), 31p (Diving) and 37p (Rugby).

Designer: Huntley Muir.

Printing: Harrison and Sons Limited, photogravure, 35 x 37mm, perf. 14 x 14½, phosphor coated paper, sheets of 100, PVA Dextrin gum.

Pictorial First Day of Issue postmarks: British Philatelic Bureau and Sheffield.

Presentation Pack: No. 218, price £1.45.

12 June: Sport '91 stamps souvenir cover, price 19p. Available from Collections and philatelic counters.

25 June: 50p and £1 machine stamp books with new cover designs: 50p Aeroplanes 4 — British Aerospace BAE 146, BAE ATP and BAC Concorde; £1 Mills 4 — Howell Mill, Llanddeusant, Anglesey. Contents as previous books, i.e. 50p 2 x 17p left side phosphor band and 1 x 17p right side phosphor band; £1 3 x 22p 2 phosphor bands, 2 x 17p right side phosphor band. £1 book has straight edges at left and right of pane.

Withdrawn in June

4 June: Kew Gardens stamps, presentation pack, stamp cards and souvenir cover.

11 June: £1.50 and £2 stamp books containing 15p and 20p Penny Black Anniversary stamps printed by Walsall. *Note:* the stamps in these books are printed in litho and have straight edges at top and bottom of the panes. Following the withdrawal of these books only the photogravure-printed Penny Black Anniversary stamps from sheets of 200 (15p, 20p, 29p, 34p, 37p) will remain on philatelic sale.

28 June: 28p Country stamps for Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. These were issued on 27 January 1987 and have perf 15 x 14. The previous 1983 printings had perf 13½ x 14. Collectors still needing the second perf variants should order before 28 June. The 1983 printings were withdrawn in January 1988.

For the Record

Supplies of the £1.16 stamp book containing 4 x 29p stamps on phosphor coated paper (issued 17 April 1990) were sold out at the British Philatelic Bureau during February 1991. Any remaining stocks at Collections and philatelic counters were withdrawn from sale on 16 April 1991.

Book Cover Changes



Shown here are the new stamp books which go on philatelic sale on 25 June. Details opposite.

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