

BRITISH PHILATELIC

The ROYAL MAIL magazine *for stamp collectors*

Volume 41 Number 5

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Bulletin

End of the TPO • Lord of the Rings and Occasions issues



Forthcoming issues and withdrawals



Cover *Loading the Travelling Post Office*, a 1948 poster by Grace Golden for the GPO, shows post office staff sorting mail for the TPO on a platform of Euston station in London.

Cover, Heritage, Royal Mail; *Irish Mails* p140, Science & Society Picture Library; cigarette card p140, courtesy Imperial Tobacco Ltd; p141, Mary Evans Picture Library; *The West Gate of Moria* p143 reprinted by permission Harper Collins Publishers Ltd, © Alan Lee 1991; Tolkien p143 by Snowdon, Camera Press London; preserved railways p152-54, John Wildgoose

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

6 January	Issue Classic Locomotives stamp cards.
13 January	Issue Classic Locomotives stamps, miniature sheet, presentation pack and coin cover.
13 January	Withdrawal Birds of Prey stamps, presentation pack and stamp cards.
20 January	Withdrawal Flowers Smilers sheet.
21 January	Withdrawal 2nd class definitive coil of 500 (issued 29 April 1997).
27 January	Issue Ingot cover for Pillar to Post stamps (last in series); 2004 Occasions stamp cards.
3 February	Issue 2004 Occasions stamps, presentation pack and Smilers sheet (generic & personalised versions); Ingot pack (Victorian Ingot No 6).
3 February	Withdrawal 2003 Occasions stamps, presentation pack, stamp cards and Smilers sheet.
19 February	Issue The Lord of the Rings stamp cards.
24 February	Withdrawal Secret of Life stamps, presentation pack and stamp cards; Microcosmos prestige stamp book.
26 February	Issue The Lord of the Rings stamps and presentation pack.

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The British Philatelic Bulletin is published monthly by Royal Mail, 148 Old Street, London EC1V 9HQ • **Editor** J R Holman • **Price** £1.10 single copies from Post Office Limited philatelic outlets • **Annual subscription** £11.75 in UK and Europe; £16.75 rest of the world. Subscriptions should be sent to Royal Mail Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB • **Binders** to hold 24 issues, price £7, are available by post from Royal Mail (Edinburgh address above) • Royal Mail also publishes the fortnightly *British Postmark Bulletin*, which gives details of forthcoming special handstamps. Available on annual subscription from Edinburgh address above: £12.25 UK and Europe, £24.95 rest of the world • **Copyright** Design & text Royal Mail Group plc, unless attributed to a specific author. All requests to reproduce any article should be addressed to the Editor, British Philatelic Bulletin, Royal Mail, 148 Old Street, London EC1V 9HQ • **Design** Robert Maude • **Printed** in Great Britain by White Productions Ltd • **ISSN** 0953 8119 • Royal Mail is a trading name of Royal Mail Group plc. Registered in England and Wales no 4138203, registered office 148 Old Street, London EC1V 9HQ

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Stamp scene Upcoming UK and overseas exhibitions • Publications • Robert Oliver

Stampex enquiries 020 7490 1005.

Philatex enquiries 020 8946 4489 or 01793 513431.

ABPS national exhibitions

Enquiries about entering the competitions should be sent to Frank Jones, 21 Thoroughgood Road, Clacton on Sea CO15 6AN. Other exhibition enquiries to R How on 01702 544632 or see website www.basildon2004.org.uk

UK Exhibitions Spring Stampex (25-29 February) at the Business Design Centre, London N1 will include invited displays by the German & Colonies Philatelic Society, the American Stamp Club of GB, and the Guild of St Gabriel. Royal Mail's Lord of the Rings stamps will be issued on the second day of the exhibition. The GB Philatelic Society's Stampex meeting on 28 February will include a display of George VI High Values by Peter Dawson. Philatex will be held at the Royal Horticultural Hall, Greycoat Street, London SW1 on 26-28 February and 28-30 October. Autumn Stampex (15-19 September) will include the national competitions (senior and junior) and displays by the China Society •

The fifth of the ABPS national exhibitions will be held at the Towngate Theatre, Basildon, Essex on 20-21 November. This is being staged on behalf of ABPS by the Association of Essex Philatelic Societies, and follows successful exhibitions in Newcastle (1996), Hove (1998), Glasgow (2000) and Chester (2002). The exhibition will include the following competitive classes: international and national aerophilately, national special studies, national social philately, international and national literature, as well as the usual Inter-Federation competition. There will also be national youth classes in four age groups, and a design a poster illustrating stamp collecting competition. There will be a good spread of dealers from throughout the UK and, it is hoped, from abroad. Rooms will be available for specialist society meetings. For accompanying non-philatelists there will be local tours, and easy access to the modern shopping centre of Basildon •

The popular Thematica exhibitions will be held in London on 26-27 June and in November, and the Philatelic Congress of GB will be staged in Winchester, 30 September - 3 October. The Picture Postcard Show 2004 (formerly BIPEX) will take place at the New Royal Horticultural Hall, Greycoat & Elverton Streets, London SW1, 1-4 September •

The annual Thematica exhibition in June is planning a new competition for young collectors for which the main criterion will be originality; whether an original theme, an original slant on an already popular theme, or an original way of presenting the material. The competition will be divided into three age groups (ages at 1 June): up to and including eight, 9-12, and 13-18. The entries will be on standard album pages, or similar sized paper, including A4, and arranged in vertical format. The number of pages required will be four, eight and 16 for the three age groups. While material should be mainly philatelic, it may include up to a quarter of non-philatelic items. The judges will welcome more vibrant methods of presentation. Prizes will be awarded in each age group •

Overseas exhibitions Three international exhibitions are planned this year: España (Valencia, May), Olymphilex (Athens, 13-28 August) and Singapore (28 August-1 September).

España 2004, to be held at the City of Arts and Sciences in Valencia, Spain, 22-30 May, is sponsored by Spanish Post in collaboration with the Spanish Federation of Philatelic Societies. There will be around 3600 exhibition frames as well as stands for dealers and postal administrations. Exhibits will be arranged in non-competitive and competitive classes, non-competitive including displays by postal authorities, museums, stamp printers and designers as well as a Court of Honour. Competitive entries will be displayed in Championship, Traditional, Revenue, Postal History, Postal Stationery, Aerophilately, Astrophilately, Thematic, Maximaphily, Youth, Open, One Frame, and Literature classes •

The Singapore exhibition will include the World Stamp Championship. To promote the exhibition, Singapore Post, in association with 15 world-class companies, is issuing a collection of souvenir sheets commemorating the 150th anniversary of the first use of stamps in Singapore. The sheets contain two stamps plus labels advertising the companies – American Express, Coca-Cola, McDonald's, Reader's Digest, Swatch, CNN, Creative Technology, Microsoft, Siemens, Singapore Airlines, AIA, GlaxoSmith-Kline, HSBC, Shell and Sony. The series began in November 2002 and will be completed in February 2004 •

Other major overseas exhibitions will include Hong Kong 2004 Stamp Expo (30 January - 3 February) and MonacoPhil 2004 (3-5 December). The theme of the Hong Kong exhibition will be Tourism and since April 2003 the Hong Kong Post Office has been issuing 'Tourism' miniature sheets to promote the exhibition. The eighth and final sheet will be released on the closing day of the exhibition. Stamp Expo has been designated the 17th Asian International Stamp Exhibition by the Federation of Inter-Asian Philately. The Monaco exhibition follows previous prestigious exhibitions of rare stamps and philatelic material. Some 18 postal museums and 122 individuals will display material and 70 postal administrations and international stamp dealers will offer classic and modern stamps for sale •

Australia Post, Australian Philatelic Federation and Australian Philatelic Traders Association are staging the 'Pacific Explorer 2005' international stamp exhibition in Sydney, 21-24 April 2005. This follows the successful show in Melbourne in March 1999 which attracted 70,000 visitors. Pacific Explorer 2005 will have 1900 frames of competitive exhibits, a Court of Honour, children's area, and 110 trade stands •

España 2004 enquiries

Aparetado de Correos 1010,
E-28080 Madrid, Spain. E-mail espana2004@correos.es

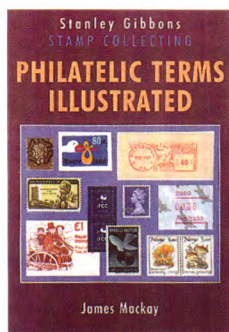
Pacific Explorer enquiries

www.sydney2005.com.au

Publications A major event in philatelic publishing is the new edition of *Philatelic Terms Illustrated* in the 'Stanley Gibbons Stamp Collecting' series. *PTI* was first published in book form in 1973 and it is 16 years since the third edition in 1987. James Mackay has considerably expanded on his last edition and there are many new illustrations – all now in colour – making for a most attractive as well as extremely useful book. Over 1000 terms are explained covering not only stamps but postmarks, postal stationery, postal labels and postal services. The philatelic world is constantly changing and a good number of new terms have been added, such as marriage and death announcement stamps, media release sheetlet, iriodin (ink), guaranteed

Philatelic Terms Illustrated

Available from the SG Strand shop or from Stanley Gibbons Publications, 7 Parkside, Ringwood BH24 3SH, at £14.95 plus £3 postage (UK). UK Mail order phone 0800 611622.



Kennedy update \$22 (\$18 to ATA members). The original book costs \$5 if ordered with the Update.

Topical Stamp Collecting \$3 (\$2 to ATA members) plus \$2 postage (\$1 USA & Canada) from: ATA, PO Box 57, Arlington, TX 76004-0057 USA.

Friends of Postal Heritage (formerly the Association of Friends of the National Postal Museum): Mrs A Harms, 13 Amethyst Avenue, Davis Estate, Chatham ME5 9TX.

delivery, facer canceller table, service indicator (labels), electronic and personalised stamps, and eculetter. Whether you are a new or veteran collector, this will be a worthwhile addition to your philatelic library and worth regular perusal – you are bound to learn something new each time. As with all glossaries, there will be some debates over definitions and this reviewer was slightly surprised to see the commemorative labels (eg Berlin Airlift) found in GB stamp books 1995-2001 described as ‘jumbo labels’ – not a term he had heard used before. The illustrations are well-chosen and include some unusual items – such as ‘HVP’ (High Value Packet) and New Zealand ‘BoxLink’ labels, TNT and IFCC pre-paid tickets for use on holiday postcards from Spain and the Canary Islands, and German self-service registration stamps. Some of the illustrations are from the Stanley Gibbons reference collection, supplemented by items from the collections of four SG staff members. However the bulk of the illustrations are from James Mackay’s own extensive collections on just about every philatelic subject from pre-stamp postal history to the latest new issues. Few – if any – other collectors could have compiled and illustrated this book. His encyclopaedic knowledge and vast collection make him truly ‘the Master’ •

The American Topical Association has published an update to *John Fitzgerald Kennedy and His Family on Worldwide Stamps* which was reviewed here in June 1995. The Update includes material issued since the deaths of Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis and John F Kennedy Jr. The sections of this book include locals and cinderellas, Kennedy namesakes, ‘Royal Bulgarian Post’ Kennedy stamps, the Kennedy family and the free franking privilege, and Kennedy dogs. An essential reference for all Kennedy thematic collectors.

The ATA’s 148th handbook – *Topical Stamp Collecting: a Universal Hobby for Seniors* – is an amalgam of basic information about topical (thematic) stamp collecting by ATA Executive Director Ray E Cartier, and a re-editing of handbook 60 *How to Collect Topical Stamps for Fun and Relaxation*, published in 1963. The updating includes information on the use of computers, archival safe pages, page holders, and the use of over 420 checklists of stamps by topic available on the internet. The handbook is targeted at the over-50s who comprise the majority of collectors today. A recent demographic survey shows the average collector in the USA is 62-63 years old, married and retired. The ATA hopes that purchasers of the book will, after they have read it, donate it to a local senior citizens centre to help spread the word about the hobby. It will also be of use to those giving talks on stamp collecting to local stamp or senior citizen clubs •

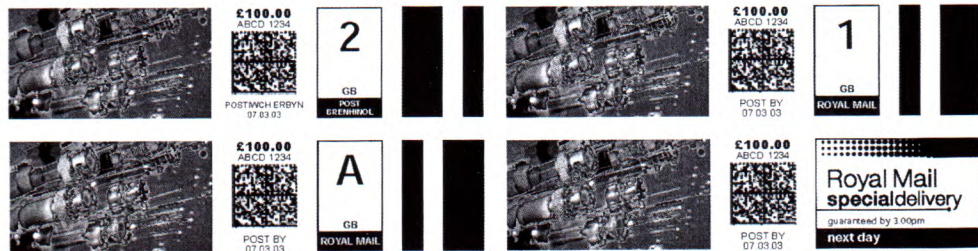
The Autumn 2003 issue of *Cross Post*, journal of the Friends of Postal Heritage, includes a good article by Peter Worsfold on the work of Edmund Dulac and Eric Gill, designers of the George VI definitives, with mention too of H J Brown, the schoolboy whose design for Edward VIII stamps formed the basis of the issued definitives (see *Bulletin* July 1999). W Iain Stevenson continues his study on Henry Fawcett and Postal Reform, this time looking at stamp savings slips, postal orders, and the sixpenny telegram. *Bulletin* contributor Ron Negus records the Polish Forces Mail in GB in the Second World War, with excellent illustrations of covers and postal

markings. Michael Bament tells the story of Dr Laurence Halloran, a clerical imposter who came to prominence in 1818 when he was tried and found guilty of forging the frank of a MP and sentenced to transportation for seven years. Robert Johnson provides 'an exercise in using the Post Office Archive' in an article entitled 'Interpreting Some Two Pence Blue Covers', and Douglas N Muir reports on two covers, recently acquired by Heritage, Royal Mail, which illustrate the first phase of the introduction of postal districts in London in the 1850s – forerunners of the present post-code. *Cross Post* reports the appointment of a Chairman and Trustees for the new Postal Heritage Trust, the setting up of which was announced in the *Bulletin* February 2003, page 190. The new Chairman and five Trustees have worthy experience in the academic, archive and business worlds, but there is no mention in their otherwise impressive *curricula vitae* of any interest in philately or Post Office history •

End of an era Robert Oliver retired from Stanley Gibbons last month after 49 years service. Robert, who joined the firm in the days of C P Rang, Freddie Wall, and Cyril Andrews, will be long remembered for his work on the five volumes of the *GB Specialised Catalogue*. He completed work on a new edition of Volume 1 (Queen Victoria) shortly before he retired. Work on the catalogue made him an authority on British stamps, although his own collecting interest is Afghanistan. In wishing him well for the future, we also thank him for help given on the *Bulletin* •

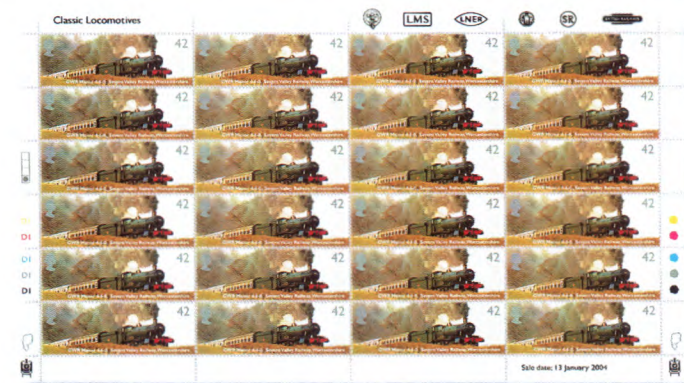
Royal Mail news Railways sheets • Special issues 2004 • Ingot covers • 2002 Quantities

SmartStamp Mention was made in October (p76) of the new SmartStamp service for small businesses. Four examples of SmartStamp impressions are shown here so collectors will know what to look out for on their mail •



Favourite stamp poll If you haven't voted yet for your favourite stamps and *Bulletin* author of 2003 there is still time to return the voting form sent out with the December *Bulletin*. All forms are entered in a prize draw. Return your form by 16 January to: 2003 Bulletin Poll, British Philatelic Bulletin, Royal Mail, 148 Old Street, London EC1V 9HQ •

Heritage, Royal Mail (formerly PO Archives and the National Postal Museum) is at Freeling House, Phoenix Place, London WC1X 0DL (near the Mount Pleasant sorting office). Telephone 020 7239 2570.



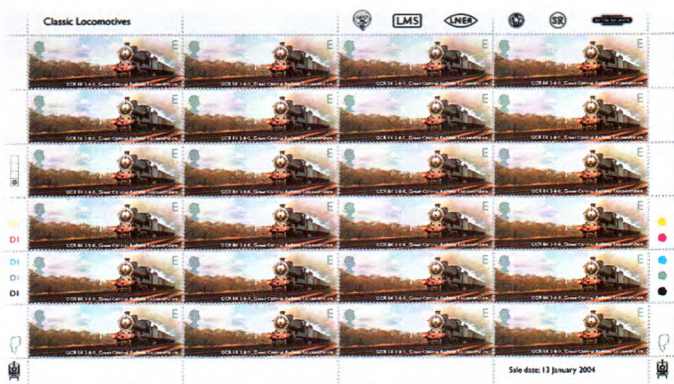
Railway stamp sheets Logos of the companies whose locomotives feature on the stamps are printed in the top margin; the check dots ('traffic lights') in the lower right margin take the form of puffs of smoke.

The photographs used on the stamps were taken specially for this purpose by John Wildgoose.

Railway stamps Shown here are the sheets (of 24) of the Classic Locomotive stamps which go on sale from 13 January. Royal Mail is pleased to start the 2004 stamp programme with this issue, part of the year-long 'Rail Festival' being co-ordinated by the National Railway Museum in York.

A Royal Mail commemorative cover is to be produced to mark the end of the Travelling Post Office (TPO) service. The cover will bear a block of four of 'The Station' stamp from the Pub Signs issue cancelled with a commemorative handstamp on 9 January 2004. It will also bear a cachet signifying that it was carried on the very last TPO on the Bristol-Penzance route. It will contain a four-colour filler card as a certificate of authenticity, and each will bear an individual number. The total number produced will be 15,000. It will be available, price £7.95, from Royal Mail Tallents House from 16 March, day of issue of the *Letters by Night* prestige book. The commemorative cover will remain on sale for one year unless sold out earlier.

The prestige book will contain four panes: of three and two class and three 68p Scottish country stamps; one 28p, E rate and 42p Classic Locomotives stamps; four 1st class 'The Station' Pub Signs stamps; and four 1st class and four 37p Machin definitives. The issue of this book in March coincides with the centenary of the issue of the first regular British stamp book, in March 1904. Further details of the book will be given next month •



New Tallents House handling charges For orders despatched after 1 January 2004, Royal Mail Tallents House will be increasing the charges for the handling and despatch of items so they more closely reflect the cost of fulfilment. The new prices are shown at right. If you are a Tallents House customer, you will be receiving a letter with your regular communications explaining these costs further. However, if you would like to know any more about the new prices please contact the enquiry line on 08457 641 641 •

Delivery address	Regular orders	One-off orders	Bulky items
UK	£0.30	£1.30	£ 2.95
Europe	£0.55	£1.55	£ 5.99
Other	£1.15	£2.15	£14.00

British Museum stamps research Royal Mail undertakes research on the impact of each new stamp issue. For the British Museum stamps (7 October) research was conducted among 2047 adults across the UK on 17-23 October. The stamps were of interest particularly to Southerners and, notably, to women more than men. Some 17% of the interviewees were aware of the stamps, 24% had an interest in the subject as a stamp theme, 24% thought the subject appropriate for stamps, and 54% found the images attractive. For those who identified themselves as collectors, the relevant percentages were 85, 74, 86 and 89. The percentage of those identifying themselves as stamp collectors suggests the total number of adult collectors in the UK is in the range 580,000-860,000 •



Date	Subject and number of stamps	Alternative
13.01	Classic Locomotives (6 + MS)	York
03.02	Occasions (5)	Merry Hill, Wolverhampton
26.02	Lord of the Rings (10)	Oxford
16.03	British Journey: Northern Ireland (6)	Garrison, Enniskillen
16.03	Letters by Night PSB	London NW10
06.04	Entente Cordiale (2)	London SW1
13.04	Ocean Liners (6 + MS)	Southampton
25.05	Royal Horticultural Society (6 + MS)	Wisley, Woking
15.06	British Journey: Wales (6)	Llanfair PG
10.08	Royal Society of Arts (6)	London WC2
16.09	Woodland Animals (10)	to be announced
12.10	Crimean War (6)	London SW3
02.11	Christmas (6 + MS)	Bethlehem, Llandello

2004 Special issues Dates of issue for this year's stamps are listed opposite. First Day of Issue postmarks will be available for Tallents House Edinburgh and the alternative places indicated. Note some set titles have changed from those previously announced. MS indicates a miniature sheet.

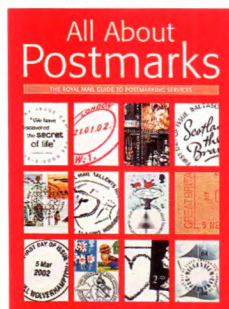
The Classic Locomotives issue was previewed last month, and Occasions and Lord of the Rings this month. Three of the British Journey: Northern Ireland set (16 March) are illustrated above, at proof stage; the six locations to be featured are: 2nd class Ely Island, Lower Lough Erne; 1st class Giant's Causeway, Antrim Coast; £ (Europe rate) Slemish, Antrim Mountains; 42p Banns Road, Mourne Mountains; 47p Glenelly Valley, Sperrins; and 68p Islandmore, Strangford Lough. The complete issue will be previewed next month •



The postmark for Pillar to Post ingot cover no.5.

Ingot covers and pack The last in the series of five covers incorporating silver ingots of the Pillar to Post stamps will be available from 27 January. The cover, featuring artwork relating to the postal and social history of the time of the postbox shown on the ingot, bears a pair of the 68p stamps cancelled by a special Edinburgh postmark. Price £29.95, available only from Royal Mail Tallents House.

The sixth pack bearing ingots reproducing Victorian stamps will be available from 3 February and will feature the 'Jubilee' 1s stamp. Price £26.95 from Tallents House, Edinburgh. For details of this series see the back cover of the September 2003 *Bulletin* •



New Postmarking Guide A new edition of *All About Postmarks, the Royal Mail Guide to Postmarking Services*, is now available. This gives details of the different types of postmarks – operational and philatelic – applied by Royal Mail and Post Office Ltd, arrangements for first day and other covers for special postmarks, dual postmarking, sponsoring special handstamps, etc. A copy has been sent free to all subscribers to the *British Postmark Bulletin*. Readers of this *Bulletin* may request a free copy (additional copies £1.20 each, order code PB373) from: Royal Mail Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB •

Album continuation pages The 2003 continuation pages for the Royal Mail de luxe album are now available from Tallents House, price £9.99, order code PW025. Pages for the Smilers Sheets Album cost £5.99 (PA684) •

Quantities Special stamps of 2002

Kipling		Airliners		Astronomy	
Sheetlets of 10	1,600,050	2nd	10,587,200	miniature sheet	1,176,800
stamp cards	36,893	1st	11,446,600	stamp cards	29,214
Golden Jubilee		E	3,735,100	Pillar Boxes	
2nd	11,840,200	45p	3,757,300	2nd	9,988,500
1st	12,641,600	65p	3,599,100	1st	11,287,000
E	3,891,300	miniature sheet	607,200	E	3,499,100
45p	3,900,500	stamp cards	26,842	47p	3,363,000
65p	3,786,000	stamp book	1,000,000	68p	3,361,700
stamp cards	57,183	World Cup		stamp cards	30,453
Occasions		1st	11,762,500	Christmas	
1st New baby	3,711,600	miniature sheet	1,123,980	2nd	186,826,950
1st Love	3,951,600	stamp cards	29,403	1st	81,326,850
1st Hello	3,980,700	stamp book	4,000,000	E	13,417,700
1st Best wishes	4,014,700	Commonwealth Games		47p	11,411,250
1st Moving house	3,992,900	2nd	9,916,500	68p	13,847,600
stamp cards	37,098	1st	11,796,800	stamp cards	30,600
Coastlines		E	3,637,200	1st class book	6,761,850
1st class (10)	16,463,000	47p	3,539,100	2nd class book	4,901,900
stamp cards	35,391	68p	3,449,800	airletter, national	189,050
Circus		stamp cards	27,031	airletter, Welsh	13,280
2nd	10,518,000	Peter Pan		Prestige books	
1st	11,302,100	2nd	9,464,900	Gracious Accession	113,975
E	3,788,000	1st	11,424,400	Across the Universe	102,060
45p	3,799,400	E	3,579,900	Wildings 1	
65p	3,647,800	47p	3,478,500	miniature sheet	532,790
stamp cards	27,753	68p	3,419,800	Quantities for stamp cards are sets	
Queen Mother		stamp cards	28,158	Quantities © Royal Mail Group PLC 2004	
1st	13,597,300	London Bridges			
E	3,723,600	2nd	9,292,500		
45p	3,752,300	1st	11,265,200		
65p	3,681,300	E	3,455,700		
		47p	3,336,000		
		68p	3,297,400		
		stamp cards	31,288		
		stamp book	3,000,000		

Special draw Win February's stamp issues

WE HAVE SETS of the February issues to give away – to the senders of the first five cards drawn on 30 January. The winners will be sent sheets, pack, first day cover, and stamp cards of both the Occasions and The Lord of the Rings stamps. To enter the draw simply write your name and address on the back of a postcard and send it to: February Stamps Draw, British Philatelic Bulletin, Royal Mail, 148 Old Street, London EC1V 9HQ.

The winners of mystery prizes in our draw in the October *Bulletin* are given at right •

October prize draw winners

Mrs C Bayliss-Jones, R Ellis, N Moore, J Willard, A Hiroshi, J Allcock, V Batty, A Leyland, P van der Wal, E Wichbold, P Gibbs, H Wippich, A Peel, B Morriss, B Kassner, J Schopmam, B Normanton, G Patterson, A Chandler, E Pimenidis.

The Travelling Post Office: 1838-2004



LAST TRIP

A proud run of achievement comes to an end

THE FIRST CARRIAGE OF MAIL by railway took place on 11 November 1830. The first bag of mail left Manchester Post Office at 6.50am in a 'new light mail cart' to be placed on the 7am train for Liverpool. The mail guard travelled with the bag in a first class carriage, his fare being included in the charge of 2s6d per mail bag. There was, however, fear for the safety of the mail while it was being carried over the 30 miles of track, for the new railway was fraught with danger. It had to be lit the whole way by night, and the embankments were steeper than any the Superintendent of Mail Coaches had ever seen.

In April 1831 two first class carriages, the *Wellington* and the *Lord Derby* were converted to carry mail. The last compartment was cut away to accommodate a seat for the mail guard and a long box, called an imperial, was fitted across the roof to hold the mail bags. The lower panels of the coach were painted red with the upper in black. The 'postal carriage' was at the rear of the train, as the Post Office considered this the safest place.

Under the mail coach system, regular stops were made to change horses and, at certain stages, those stops were long enough to allow the sorting and exchanging of mail, the despatch arrangements along the way being regulated to coincide with the London coach's timetable. The train's stops were not long enough to sort and exchange the mail and this threw into chaos all the existing intricate arrangements made for the mails.

The idea of special mail coaches in which the guard could sort letters while on the road to London had been proposed by Rowland Hill as early as 1826. In January 1838, the first travelling post office, a converted horse box, went into service between Birmingham and Warrington on the Grand Junction Railway. It was declared an immediate success enabling the Post Office to 'duplicate time by travelling and working at the same instant'.

Arrangements were soon made for the provision of four specially-designed TPOs. The first was employed from Euston to a point just north of Bletchley, where the mail was transferred to a mail coach which took the bags to Birmingham for onward transmission by rail. In September 1838, the London and Birmingham Railway was opened throughout, joining the Grand Junction and North Union lines to give a direct service to the north.

The first TPO had no apparatus for exchanging the bags while the train was moving. The train had to slow down while the bags were thrown out, the mail guard seizing the incoming bag from the end of a pole thrust towards him. In October 1838 the first 'mail bag exchanging apparatus' came into use, bags from the carriage being dropped down a chute onto the side of the track while incoming bags were snatched from a 'standard' by a net fixed to the side of the carriage. Later, this system was improved by placing nets at the side of the track to catch the bags dropped by the TPO. The last



Loading the mail train, c1860. The final services of the Travelling Post Office system this month bring to an end a service which operated for 166 years.

Opposite page: a detail from LMS poster *The Irish Mails* by Bryan de Grineau, promoting the Euston to Holyhead mail trains. The 125th anniversary of the Irish Mail was marked in 1973 by a special postmark. A mail bag exchange apparatus featured on the 18p Transport & Communications stamp of 1988, shown here on a cover for the last trip of the Cardiff-Carlisle TPO.



A Royal Mail TPO train of the 1980s.

trackside apparatus, virtually the same in method of working as that of the earliest TPOs, came out of service in 1971. By that time, because of the increased speeds being reached by trains, enabling more stops to be made without affecting the timetable, there was no longer need for the mail to be exchanged in this way.

The men of the early TPO service faced a constant risk of serious injury or death and suffered dreadful working conditions with poor ventilation and no seating or sanitation. The mail guards were responsible for the despatch and receipt of mail, and between 1860 and 1867 there were 28 accidents in which TPO men were seriously injured or killed. Fumes from the oil lamps and the wax used for sealing the bags caused nausea and 'affected the brain'. TPO staff were forced to retire through 'loss of memory'; 'congestion of the brain'; 'weakness of the legs'; and 'concussion of the brain'. Few could stand the wear and tear of the TPO above 15 years.

Despite the hazards, TPO services quickly spread to all parts of the UK. Amongst the most important, since they also carried foreign mails, were the 'Irish Mail' (London-Holyhead) and the 'Continental' TPO (London-Dover). The Irish Mail connected with the Holyhead-Kingstown Packet and the journey between London and Dublin was timed to take 11.5 hours. To achieve this letters were also sorted on board the mail steamers across the Irish Sea. From 1895 the London-Holyhead TPO also handled US mails.

Important too was the South Western TPO linking London with Southampton; its relief, the Portsmouth Sorting Carriage, carried letters for Queen Victoria when she was in retreat at Osborne.

The greatest of all changes in TPO working came in 1855 with the introduction of 'Special Mails', the sole use of the train being devoted to the Royal Mail. The service, first known as the NW Down Postal (Night) was amalgamated in 1923 with the Caledonian TPO (Night) to form the Down Special TPO (Euston-Aberdeen). The TPOs were made famous by the *Night Mail* film of 1936 which included a reading of Auden's evocative poem, 'This is the Night Mail crossing the border...'

By 1939 there were more than 70 day and night TPOs running, and even in the late 1980s there were 42 TPOs with 650 staff sorting up to 1.25 million letters a night – 5% of first class mail. Since then the service has been reduced; several routes ended in 2003 and the final services will run for the last time on 9 January: North West Up and Down (London-Carlisle); North East Up and Down (London-Newcastle); Great Western Up and Down (London-Plymouth); Midland North (Bristol-Newcastle); Midland South (Newcastle-Bristol); Penzance-Bristol; and Bristol-Penzance.

The forthcoming *Letters by Night* prestige book (16 March) pays tribute to the TPO service and a special cover will be available which was carried on the last run of the Bristol-Penzance service. A booklet about the TPOs, by leading railway author Peter Johnson, will be published as Bulletin Publication no 10 and sent out free with the March *Bulletin* ●

The above is an abridged and updated version of an article in the Bulletin of March 1988 coinciding with the 'Railways and the Post' exhibition at the National Postal Museum. The exhibition marked the 150th anniversary of the first TPO.

The Lord of the Rings Ten 1st class stamps mark the 50th anniversary of the publication of the first two books in J R R Tolkien's great work: on sale on 26 February



JOHN RONALD REUEL TOLKIEN is undoubtedly one of the most influential fantasy writers in the whole of literary history. His interest in Anglo-Saxon England, combined with his love of Norse mythology, led him to create a comparable mythology for England. He initiated his mythical world in *The Hobbit* (1937), then further refined and expanded his ideas in *The Lord of the Rings*, now one of the most famous books in the world. The first two parts, *The Fellowship of the Ring* and *The Two Towers*, were published in 1954; *The Return of the King* followed a year later.

Interest in 'Middle Earth' led to Tolkien (above) becoming a cult figure in the 1960s. *The West Gate of Moria*, by Alan Lee, depicts a scene from *The Fellowship of the Ring*.

The Lord of the Rings stamps, by HGV Design, are printed in a se-tenant block of 10. The images, by J R R Tolkien, are reproduced by permission of the J R R Tolkien Estate and The Bodleian Library, Oxford. We are pleased to be able to show these rarely reproduced drawings on the stamps.



Technical details

Printer Walsall

Process Lithography

Stamp size 35 x 37mm

Sheets 30 and 60

Perforation 14.5

Phosphor Two bands

Gum PVA

Gutter pairs Vertical

Plate numbers and colours

W1 cream ● W1 gold ● W1 black ● W1 yellow ● W1 magenta ● W1 cyan (blue) ● W1 phosphor

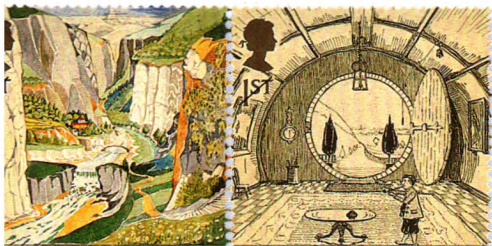
This is the first set of Royal Mail stamps devoted to J R R Tolkien, although *The Hobbit* featured on the 20p stamp of the 1998 Magical Worlds (Children's Literature) set, and a prestige book was issued in 1992 to mark the centenary of his birth.

The stamps will be issued to Post Office branches in sheets of 30. Sheets of 60, with gutter margin, will be supplied to Royal Mail Tallents House and Post Office philatelic outlets.

Tolkien graduated from Oxford University and was appointed Professor of Anglo Saxon in 1924, and later Merton Professor of English. In 1918-20 he worked on the editorial staff of the *Oxford English Dictionary* and wrote most of his works whilst living in Oxford. The city is, therefore, most appropriate as the location for the alternative first day of issue postmark.

FIRST DAY FACILITIES Unstamped Royal Mail FDC envelopes will be available from main Post Office branches and philatelic outlets about a week before 26 February, price 25p. Orders for FDCs with stamps cancelled by a pictorial first day postmark of Tallents House Edinburgh or Oxford must reach Tallents House by the date of issue. Price £3.71 UK or £3.16 overseas.

Collectors may send stamped covers on the day of issue to: Royal Mail Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB, or for the Oxford handstamp to any of Royal Mail's six Special Handstamp Centres, marking the outer envelope 'FDO405' or 'FDO406'. Covers can be posted or handed in at main Post Office branches for the Oxford postmark. Details of sponsored handstamps will be announced in the *British Postmark Bulletin* – available on subscription from Tallents House. For a sample copy write to: The Editor, British Postmark Bulletin, Royal Mail, 148 Old Street, London EC1V 9HQ ●



TOLKIEN · THE LORD OF THE RINGS

J.R.R. TOLKIEN · THE LORD OF THE RINGS



TOLKIEN · THE LORD OF THE RINGS

J.R.R. TOLKIEN · THE LORD OF THE RINGS

Top row, left to right: 1) map from *The Lord of the Rings*, re-drawn by Christopher Tolkien; 2) The Forest of Lothlórien in Spring; 3) Dust-jacket for *The Fellowship of the Ring*; 4) Rivendell; 5) The Hall at Bag End (residence of Bilbo Baggins).

Bottom row: 6) Orthanc; 7) Doors of Durin; 8) Barad-dûr; 9) Minas Tirith; 10) Fangorn Forest.

The images all relate to places and characters in *The Lord of the Rings*, although some are more commonly associated with *The Hobbit*.



A well-illustrated pack (below, price £3.30) and stamp cards (30p each) will be available from main Post Office branches and philatelic outlets. The pack was written by Christina Scull and Wayne Hammond. Some readers may recall Ms Scull's article on Tolkien in the October 1992 *Bulletin*.



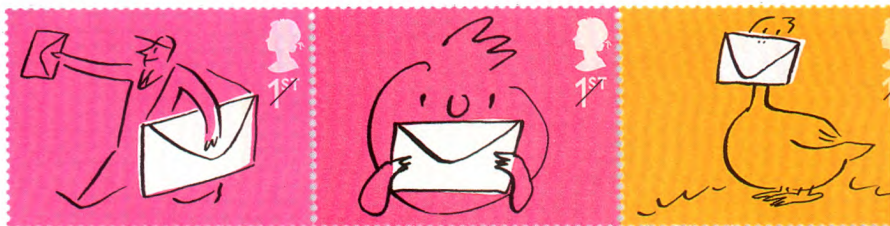
ROYAL MAIL FIRST DAY COVER

Mrs J Robinson
200 Manorbier Road
Ilkeston
Derbyshire
DE7 4AB

ROYAL MAIL TALLENTS HOUSE 11 NORTH OYLE CROSSLAND GLENBURGH EDINBURGH



Occasions: Entertaining Envelopes The



Technical details

Printer De La Rue

Process Lithography

Stamp size 41 x 30mm

Sheets 25 and 50

Perforation 14.5 x 14

Phosphor Two bands

Gum PVA

Gutter pairs Vertical

Plate numbers and colours

All values D1 lemon ● D1 bright mauve ● D1 blue ● D1 magenta ● D1 pale turquoise ● D1 black ● D1 phosphor

THE FOURTH in the series of Occasions stamps goes on sale at Post Office branches and philatelic outlets and Royal Mail Tallents House from 3 February. The five 1st class stamps, printed in horizontal se-tenant strips, feature a humorous representation of an envelope with postman, being kissed, a duck, a baby, and an aeroplane. The Queen's head and service indicator are positioned at top right. The designs are by Satoshi Kambayashi.

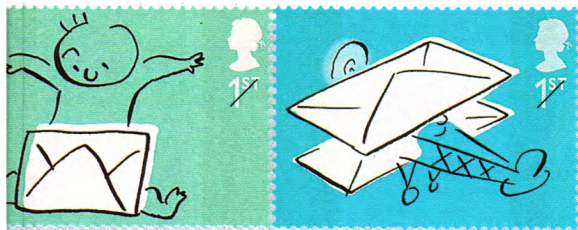
The stamps will be issued to Post Office branches in sheets of 25. Sheets of 50, with gutter margin, will be supplied to Royal Mail Tallents House and Post Office philatelic outlets.

FIRST DAY FACILITIES Unstamped Royal Mail FDC envelopes will be available from main Post Office branches and philatelic outlets about a week before 3 February, price 25p. Orders for serviced FDCs must reach Tallents House by the date of issue. Price £2.07 UK or £1.76 overseas. State whether Tallents House Edinburgh or Merry Hill, Wolverhampton postmarks required. Collectors may send stamped covers on the day of issue to: Royal Mail Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB, or to Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, St Stephens Street, Birmingham B6 4AA (Merry Hill postmark), marking the outer envelope 'FD0403' or 'FD0404'. Covers can be posted or handed in at main Post Office branches for the Merry Hill postmark. Details of sponsored handstamps will be announced in the *British Postmark Bulletin* – available on subscription from Tallents House. For a sample copy write to: The Editor, *British Postmark Bulletin*, Royal Mail, 148 Old Street, London EC1V 9HQ.

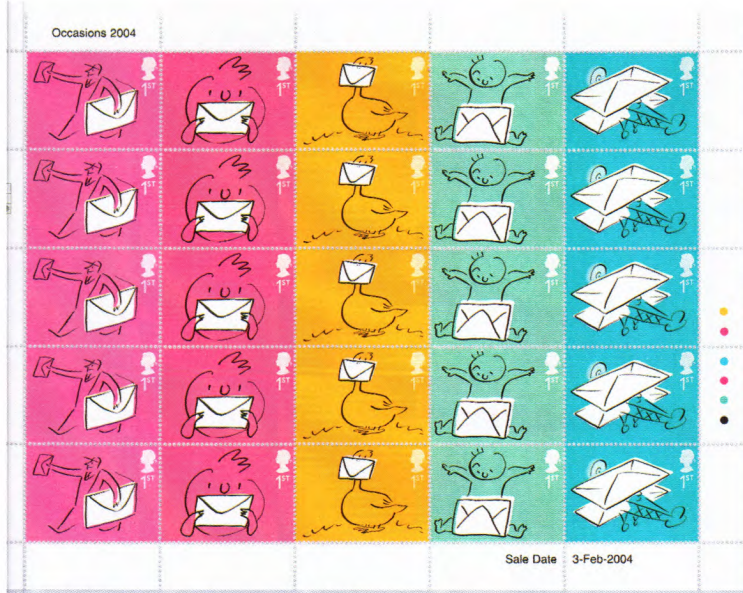
PHILATELIC PRODUCTS A well-illustrated pack (price £1.90) and stamp cards (30p each) will be available from main Post Office branches and philatelic outlets and Tallents House. The pack was written by Lara Maiklem with illustrations by the stamps' designer, Satoshi Kambayashi.

SMILERS SHEETS The new Occasions stamps will be available in Smilers sheets. These contain 20 stamps – four each of the five designs – plus labels, price £6.15. The sheets will be printed in litho by De La Rue. Smilers sheets are available from Royal Mail Tallents House and Post Office philatelic outlets. Personalised sheets with your own image printed on the labels can be ordered from Tallents House. For further information and an order form phone 0845 074 2000 (UK) or + 44 131 316 7483 (overseas) ●

fourth set in the series, on sale on 3 February



The five 1st class stamps are printed in horizontal se-tenant strips. They feature humorous drawings of an envelope: with a postman, being kissed, and as a duck, a baby, and an aeroplane. The designs are by Satoshi Kambayashi.



Left: a sheet of 25 stamps, as they will be distributed to Post Office branches.

Below: the two pictorial postmarks, and the first day cover and presentation pack.



Christmas around the world Part 2, by Dorothy M Martin



Bell ringing tradition In Switzerland Christmas is very much connected to the family, and praying comes before merrymaking. On Christmas Eve the church bells ring summoning people to worship and sing carols. The Christkindli in the form of a radiant angel wearing a golden crown, delivers fruit and nuts to the children. In the canton of Valais, the bell ringing tradition becomes a competition on Christmas Eve; folk in each valley trying to out-ring their rivals. After midnight mass everyone gathers round the family table for a frugal supper of hot chocolate and large doughnuts. The New Year is welcomed by groups of singers, passing from house to house.

In Zurich, processions are formed of children wearing long flowing white robes and high hats ornamented with lights and carrying cow-bells and whips. They call from door to door and are given small gifts as a token of good cheer. One of the strangest Swiss Christmas cakes is the *tirggel*, of Zurich, said to derive from an early German sacrificial cake featuring animal designs as tokens of offerings. The modern version depicts illustrations of the Christmas story, or the heroic deeds of William Tell. The *tirggel* has kept its traditional place under the Christmas trees in Zurich up until the present day. In the mountainous region, the week before Christmas and New Year is visiting week; as many as three generations can emerge from one household, all with skis, for a social evening at a neighbour's home.

The Christmas season in Italy lasts from eight days before Christmas until Twelfth Night, the Feast of Epiphany. Before Christmas Day, children dressed as shepherds go from door to door playing songs on shepherds pipes and giving recitations; as a reward they are given coins to buy seasonal delicacies. In some regions, real shepherds carry out this performance.

The Nativity scene is the centre of attraction for all families. Guests kneel in front of it, musicians sing before it, and on Christmas Eve candles are lighted and children recite their poems around it. Fasting is observed during the 24 hours preceding Christmas Eve, followed by a banquet. A New Year feast, on the last day of the year, consists of turkey, chicken, rabbit, spaghetti and rain

sin bread, and champagne. Gifts are exchanged on 6 January when the benevolent witch Befana calls to fill the shoes of good children and leaves pieces of coal for the naughty ones.

Christian Turks observe a three-day festival of entertaining and visiting when coffee, sweetmeats and fruit play an important part.

Wheat and logs In what was Yugoslavia the three main racial groups are Serbians, Croats and Slovenes and each have customs of their own. The Croats and Serbians both plant wheat on a plate on 10 December and by Christmas Day it has grown enough to be placed on the window sill as a decoration. They also share a Yule log custom. On Christmas Eve, the men of the family bring home a log from a nearby forest which they carry through the doorway lighted by candles on both sides. Corn and wine are sprinkled on top of the log wreathed with garlands. When it is burning, a neighbour strikes it sharply so the sparks fly; he then wishes for the prosperity of the family and that their harvest may be fruitful. Youngsters sing old songs whilst mother bakes cakes and the boys prepare the pig for the festive dinner. Supper of fish, beans, cabbage and seasoned onions with wheat bread follow. At Christmas dinner a roast suckling pig is carved to definite rites.

The Serbians strew their tables with hay and straw, as a reminder of the manger in the stable. *Kolach* is a ring-shaped coffee cake peculiar to the Croats. Three candles are placed in the hollow; the first is lit on Christmas Eve when the father makes a sign of the cross saying 'Christ is born'. The second candle is lit at noon on Christmas Day and after prayers it is blown out. The third is lit on New Years Eve, and the cake is cut on the Three Kings' Day, 6 January, each member of the family receiving a slice to symbolise his share in the good fortune of the coming year. All Slovenian household must have a crib, lined with moss gathered from the forests by members of the family. The cribs are elaborate with a background representing Bethlehem, images of the Holy Family, the Magi, and the shepherds plus the animals. A musical box playing carols is quite often an addition to the scene.

On Christmas Eve in Greece, groups of boys sing carols outside the houses beating small drums and tinkling triangles; they expect a reward of money, nuts, sweets and figs. After midnight mass, a table is set with Christmas fare – nuts, oranges, and pomegranates, and cakes decorated with nuts or covered in powdered sugar and honey. There are no presents or trees; gifts are exchanged on St Basil's Day. Throwing a small cross in the water on Epiphany brings the festive season to an end; the village priest goes from house to house sprinkling holy water to bless the home.

In Hungary children receive presents from St Nicholas on 6 December. Celebrations last only two days; on Christmas Eve the family gathers around the Christmas tree and after prayers the presents are opened. When the first star appears, the evening meal is served. Carol singing and church services are important on both days.

Festivities begin on Christmas Eve in Rumania. Housewives make *turte*, a cake consisting of layers of dough with honey and crushed walnuts. Boys go from house to house repeating greetings and carrying long bags for gifts they are given. A pole topped with a star and bells tied underneath informs the approach of the singers. Shepherds enact a play based on The Slaughter of the Innocents, its main characters being Herod, the Magi, a child, an angel and two Roman soldiers. They have no costumes or scenery but are very impressive. On 6 January the priest visits his parishioners and blesses them; he dips a bunch of basil in Holy Water and sprinkles the houses with it. He is rewarded with coins and gifts of ham, hemp and grain. The priests often make the hemp into cloth, and the food is used for their support.

Christmas begins on 6 December in Czechoslovakia and ends with a visit from the Three Kings on 6 January. To start the festivities, St Wenceslas supposedly descends from the heavens with an angel bringing gifts for the good children, and the devil, who carries rods for naughty ones. The children rush to the table to say their prayers knowing they will then be rewarded. At midnight on Christmas Eve, the family attend mass in decorated churches, the Manger being the focal point, as it is in their own homes. On

Christmas Day, a special meal of roast pig is enjoyed by the family, who leave an empty chair for the Christchild.

East meets west Christians in India are in a minority, and celebrations are a mixture of Eastern and Western traditions. Indians celebrate their own Hindu Festival of Light. In church, Crib and Nativity Scenes are very much in evidence, and candles and poinsettias are everywhere. The main service on Christmas Day is a mass lasting two to three hours. New clothes are often worn, as they are in Pakistan where 25 December is a public holiday in memory of Jinnah, founder of Pakistan. Friends visit and presents are exchanged. There are comparatively few Christians in Japan. Christmas is mainly a commercial event with an American flavour, shops encouraging the buying of gifts and cards. Many families have a richly iced Christmas cake. Christians take the opportunity of spreading the Nativity story and promoting the idea of serving and helping others. Christmas is one of the most important events of the year for Australians and is held in midsummer during the holiday season. It is celebrated along traditional lines and families often travel very long distances to be together. Churches are full and the congregations enjoy singing carols. In Hawaii the people attend church in the morning and enjoy their Christmas dinner *al fresco* under blue skies and hot sunshine.

North America In addition to the usual services, merriment and feasting, the people of Canada and the USA celebrate Christmas in various ways, each area having its own special traditions. The Eskimos in the far north are unique, as it is a celebration between two communities, originating from an ancient midwinter festival. One year a town or village invites another for entertainment and folk dancing in costumes of fur trimmed with feathers, feasting and the giving of presents. The following year the compliment is returned. Every member of the village will arrive in a caravan of dog teams on an appointed day and stay as long as the hosts can produce feasting and hospitality. It is a happy time of gaiety and goodwill.

In Newfoundland fish caught by the local people in Christmas week is sold for their parish church. The curate also receives a huge load of wood. In Nova Scotia, where the first settlers were Scottish Highlanders, the inhabitants sing old songs and carols in churches and in their whitewashed cottages. Vancouver is alight with Christmas trees. The 80 miles of waterfront are full of ships laden with fir trees from the forests, salmon from the sea and grain from the prairies, all bound for overseas countries.

Christmas in the USA has an enormous variety of customs which the people brought from their original lands. Central to them all are our own familiar traditions. Weeks before Christmas, the Moravian housewives in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania (and other settlements), prepare *kummelbred*, sugar cake, mince pies and Christmas biscuits shaped like animals, stars and trees. The Nativity Scene is invariably found under a decorated tree topped with a star. On Christmas Eve families go to church and while the choir sings, an enormous bun and a huge cup of coffee are passed around as a token of fellowship. A lighted candle is given to each person to remind them of the coming of Jesus, the Light of the World. This custom originated in 1741 when Count Nicholas von Zinzendorf, carrying a lighted candle, named the settlement 'Bethlehem' to honour the Christchild.

Mammoth displays of coloured lights are a common sight all over the land in homes, churches and public places. For example, Denver uses over 33,000 lights to illuminate its Civic Centre. In the 'Old South', the land itself provided most of the festive food: pigs for roasting and ham, the turkeys, most of the ingredients for puddings, preserves, jam, pickles, peppers, sweet potatoes, nuts and the many delights of southern cooking. The woods and fields provided logs and pine for the fireplace, holly and evergreen for decorations, rabbit and partridge for the table. In the house everything was cleaned and polished to sparkling perfection. On Christmas Eve, the cow bell was rung, inviting all to midnight mass. After prayers were offered and hymns sung, the joyous festivities began and lasted for a week. Many people shot firearms and set off fireworks, some believe

this originated when the early settlers sent greetings to their neighbours; others suggest the noise frightened away the evil spirits.

The people of the Philippines are religious, and most attend mass which is held every hour on 25 and 26 December, bells inviting folk to the services. After church, children form floral processions and parade through the street singing carols led by a band. Plays are performed by the young, who travel from village to village. There is also a lantern contest when boys make colourful paper lanterns with candles inside, and at night they go on parade making a most spectacular sight. Most customs are related to religion.

Ancient superstitions A great majority of American Indians follow their ancient superstitions appeasing the evil spirits under the supervision of the medicine men; a minority are administered to by the missionaries. About a third can speak the English language. The largest tribe of around 80,000 are widely scattered, moving about in nomadic fashion with their flocks and herds. They roam the desert country in New Mexico, Arizona and southern Utah; their homes are made of logs and mud plaster. On Christmas Day, thousands gather to await a special meal of meat, beans, potatoes, and onions boiled in huge pots over a camp fire, several tubs of coffee, cases of bread and buns. By 11 o'clock the women and children, then the older men followed by the young men, line up with their plates and tin cans to be filled. They then gather around one of the many camp fires with their family and friends. On the Indian reservation in Arizona, the choir rehearses at church on Christmas Eve, and women busily prepare chickens for the feast the next day. Early on Christmas morning, 'Silent Night' is heard coming from the churches. Families arrive and enjoy a good meal together, followed by a siesta under the trees, then the children play whilst the adults chat. At dusk they all troop into the church for a programme of recitations and songs, after which Santa brings toys and sweets for the children.

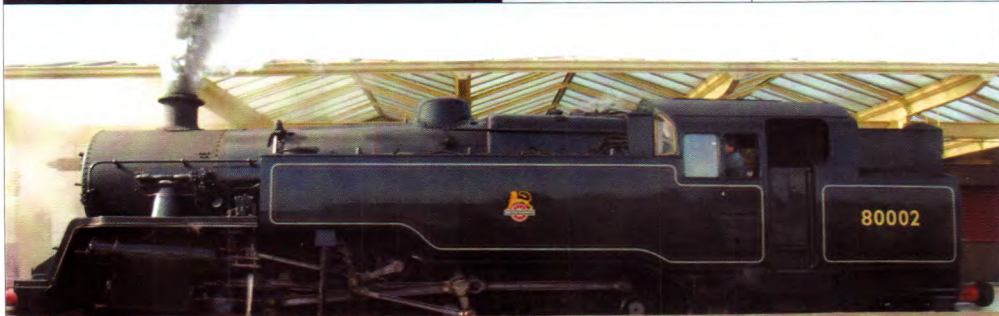
All around the world, Christmas is celebrated with a mixture of religious worship and secular enjoyment •

Preserved steam railways Profiles of the railways shown

Keighley & Worth Valley Keighley to Oxenhope, 5mi

01535 47777

www.kwvr.co.uk



The Keighley & Worth Valley Railway operates in West Yorkshire's scenic 'Bronte Country', with stations at Ingrow, Damens (Britain's smallest), Oakworth and Haworth. The line was closed by British Railways in 1962 and reopened by a preservation society in 1968. It has featured in several cinema and television films including *The Railway Children*, which was filmed at Oakworth sta-

tion, which remains the quintessence of the Edwardian era. Amongst the visitor attractions are a Vintage Carriage Museum at Ingrow, and the railway museum at Oxenhope. All stations have been restored and include gas lighting. Services are both diesel and steam-hauled. The KWVR is ideal for a family day out, with picnic areas near Keighley and Oxenhope stations •

Bo'ness and Kinneil Bo'ness to Birkhill, 3.5mi

01506 822298

www.srps.org.uk



The Bo'ness and Kinneil Railway runs from Bo'ness on the south shore of the River Forth (eight miles west of the Forth Road Bridge) to Birkhill, a short walk from the delightful Avon Gorge. The station constructed at Bo'ness used to be the station at Wormit in Fife and that at Birkhill was the former Monifieth station from the Dundee to Arbroath line. Before it was erected at Birkhill it served as The Heart of Scotland Station at the Glasgow Garden Festival in 1988. Also at Bo'ness

visitors can see the restored Haymarket train shed and a Caledonian Railway signal box, a model railway exhibition, and Scottish Railway Exhibition with an impressive collection of locomotives, carriages, wagons and railwayana. The Railway was built and is run by volunteers of the Scottish Railway Preservation Society. Trains run April to October, with special Santa trains in November and December. The nearest ScotRail stations are Linlithgow and Falkirk Grahamston •

on the Classic Locomotives stamps, to be issued 13 January

Bluebell Kingscote to Sheffield Park, 9mi

01825 722370

www.bluebell-railway.co.uk


The Bluebell Railway in East Sussex is part of the former East Grinstead to Lewes line, opened in 1882. Following its closure in 1958, a preservation society reopened the section from Horsted Keynes to Sheffield Park in 1960. The line has since been extended north to Kingscote and will, it is hoped, be restored to East Grinstead. The railway is famous for its extensive collection of vintage locomo-

tives, principally the London Brighton & South Coast Railway terrier tanks *Stepney* and *Fenchurch* built in the 1870s. At Sheffield Park station there is a museum, gift shop, and a real ale bar. The Golden Arrow Pullman operates most Saturday evenings for dinner and most Sundays for luncheon. The line is open daily from May to September, weekends only the rest of the year •

Severn Valley Kidderminster to Bridgnorth, 16mi

01299 403816

www.svr.co.uk


The Severn Valley Railway opened in 1862 and was incorporated into the GWR a decade later. It ran originally from Shrewsbury to Hartlebury, but a line was later built to connect Kidderminster and Bewdley to allow trains to operate from the West Midlands to Shrewsbury. The line closed in 1963 and two years later, the Severn Valley Railway raised funds for the purchase of a five-mile section from Bridgnorth to Avely. The first section was reopened in 1970. Today the railway has

over 30 locomotives and is a major player among preserved railways. In 1990 two British Rail locomotives were named *Penny Black* and *Sir Rowland Hill*. A special train took VIPs and the press from London to Kidderminster, Sir Rowland's birthplace, and then by the Severn Valley Railway to Bridgnorth. In 1997 a restored TPO carriage was presented to the SVR. Reports of all these events were published in the *Bulletin* in July 1990 and August 1997 •

Talyllyn Tywyn to Nant Gwernol, 7mi

01654 710472

www.talyllyn.co.uk

The Talyllyn Railway (Rheilffordd Talyllyn) was built to transport slate mined at Bryn Eglwys to the coast at Tywyn (formerly Towyn). Construction was authorised by an Act of Parliament in July 1865, and the line was opened the following year. The line was built to a 2ft 3in gauge. The slate quarries closed in 1947, but the railway remained open for tourist passenger traffic until the owner, Sir Henry Hadyn Jones, died in 1950. The Talyllyn Railway Preservation Society was then

formed to reopen the line and the first train under 'new management' ran from Tywyn to Rhydyro-nen at Whitsun in 1951. The efforts of the society have been vividly recorded by the late L T C Rolt in his book *Railway Adventure* (1953, 2nd edition 1961). The original locomotives *Talyllyn* and *Dol-goch* (shown on the new 20p stamp) are still in use, together with locomotives acquired from other railways, such as *Sir Haydn* and *Edward Thomas*, from the Corris Railway •

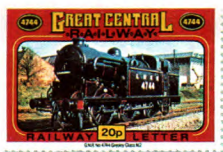
Great Central Loughborough to Leicester, 8mi

01509 230726

www.gcrailway.co.uk

The Great Central Railway runs from Loughborough Central to Leicester North with stations at Quorn & Woodhouse and Ropley. The line is part of the former Great Central Railway from London (Marylebone) to Nottingham (Victoria) via Aylesbury Town, Woodford Halse, Rugby Central, Leicester Central and Loughborough Central (126 miles) – the last main-line railway to be built in Britain. The line was closed by British Railways in 1969, and the first section was re-

opened as part of a preservation scheme in 1977. Loughborough Central station has been restored to its former importance, and a fine three-road locomotive shed has been built north of the station. The railway has a number of large express passenger steam locomotives although it is a GCR freight locomotive that is featured on the new 2p rate stamp. Amongst locomotives shown on the GCR railway letter stamps were GCR loco *Butler Henderson* and LNER B1 class *Mayflower* •



Bluebell Railway Letter Service 64 Gordon Road, Carshalton SM5 3RE.

Talylyn Railway Letter Service Postmaster, Talylyn Railway, Wharf Station, Tywyn, Gwynedd LL36 9EY. Talylyn will issue a new stamp on 13 January for the Classic Locomotives issue.

Articles on railway letter stamps were published here October 1984 - April 1985 and in May 1997. We hope shortly to publish an article about the Bluebell Railway and its letter stamps.

Railway Letter Service stamps Four of the six railways featured on the Classic Locomotives stamps issue, or have issued, railway letter stamps under an agreement with Royal Mail. The Railway Letter Service started in 1891, when more than 70 companies were authorised by the Post Office to carry urgent letters. These were subject to a 2d charge, for which special railway letter stamps were issued, plus the normal postage. Although British Rail ended this service on the main rail-

ways in 1984, it continues to operate, for tourist and philatelic mail, on a number of preserved lines. The Talylyn was the first of the preserved lines to issue railway letter stamps, in 1957; its early stamps are now scarce. The Bluebell Railway has issued such stamps on a regular basis since 1975, and the Keighley and Worth Valley and Great Central issued stamps between 1979-90 and in 1982-83 respectively. Some examples of these stamps are shown above •

A search for knowledge Dr Alan Drysdall by Richard West

ALAN DRYSDALL is one of those unusual people who was born to be a stamp collector. His father collected the Commonwealth, and conveyed his passion to his three sons, Alan being the eldest. Not for Alan, the familiar schoolboy grabbing at every stamp that came along. From the beginning he realised it was best to specialize, and his choice was Canada. It was only when at university that he deviated from this passion, selling the collection to finance two new interests: beer and girls!

His father was not the only strong influence; from an early stage he joined the Southampton Philatelic Society, which at the time had a thriving youth section, with regular competitions for the younger members.

Philatelic history Alan's career as a geologist, for Her Majesty's Overseas Colonial Service, took him to Northern Rhodesia during the final days of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland,

and the birth of Zambia. He realised that he was living in the midst of important philatelic history, and thus in the early 1960s started to collect both east and southern Africa. By the end of the decade he was showing particular interest in Rhodesia and Nyasaland and the states of South Africa.

He shared his interest and knowledge, joining the Lusaka Philatelic Society and producing its newsletter, and also joining the Rhodesian Study Circle. As a result he met Gerald Simpson, from whom he learned a great deal.

Still he needed to face a challenge, and that proved to be collecting Transvaal, a most difficult area. However, again he would be inspired by another experienced collector, this time Major Harold Criddle, a member of the Transvaal Study Circle who became a good friend.

In 1975 Alan left Africa, moving on to Pakistan, then Canada, and finally Saudi Arabia. On leaving Africa he wrote his first book, on the postal

history of the transition period when Northern Rhodesia gained independence. This was published by Robson Lowe.

Understandably Alan regards Robbie as one of the greatest philatelists there has been, whose knowledge was so wide reaching, but who was also a wonderful raconteur. In the context of great collectors, Alan would also place R B Yardley, who achieved so much in the study of Transvaal.

It is perhaps not realised that King George v was also a fine collector of Transvaal, forming an almost unrivalled collection, perhaps only bettered by that of John Curle, now housed in a museum in South Africa.

Over the years Alan has made some good purchases, mainly because many dealers are not fully conversant with Transvaal, and cannot distinguish between forgeries and the genuine item. Equally the rarities are hard to find, and condition is a major problem. Today most of his acquisitions are through auction, and those dealers who are aware of his interests.

Not that Alan devotes that much time to his own collection. For this, he prefers Frank Godden albums and hinged leaves, although these are becoming increasingly difficult to find. He has bought second-hand albums which still have a few blank pages just for the leaves. His stamps are mounted using hinges; as he says, they will have been hinged in the past, probably several times, so one more hinge is not going to matter.

Writing and research Most of his time these days is devoted to writing – and research. He always has two or three books on the go at any one time. That way, if he finds himself flagging on one, he can always turn to another, and thereby keep all fresh. It is research which he finds most stimulating – then sharing his discoveries with others. He finds nothing more satisfying than achieving good results from research and so discovering something new. For the results of such research, he has received two world-wide honours: first being invited to sign the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists of South Africa in 1995, and in 2003 being invited to sign the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists. This accolade still leaves him overwhelmed.

Persistence and enthusiasm Alan currently demonstrates just what a bit of persistent beaver-ing away can achieve: a box of correspondence which came up for auction at Spink has revealed a fascinating family history due to his enquiring mind.

As for the future of the hobby, he points to the fact that some philatelic societies are doing extremely well, as are most stamp auction houses. It is those who have reached retirement whom he feels are most likely to take up the hobby with enthusiasm. Certainly Alan exudes enthusiasm, and shows how much there is to be gained and enjoyed by searching out as much as you can about your material ●

ALAN DRYSDALL FACT FILE

Lives In Southampton, since retirement in 1990.

Supports Southampton Football Club, although not with a great deal of enthusiasm, and Hampshire in cricket.

Other family collectors I have a son and daughter, and two grandchildren. The eldest grandchild does like stamps, as long as they are pretty.

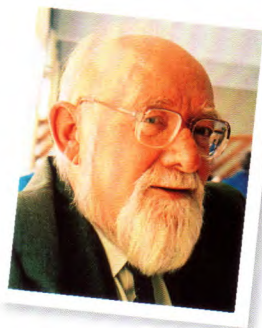
Other interests In the past I did play bridge, and was keen on photography. And a bit of gardening – to keep the wife happy.

Favourite book It has to be *The Postage Stamps in Africa* (abbreviated title) volume 3, published on behalf of The (Royal) Philatelic Society London by Stanley Gibbons in 1906, because of the papers it contained on Transvaal, which were written by Yardley and Tamsen.

Opinion of modern collecting trends I have mixed views on thematics, although I can see it is a good introduction to the hobby. However, I do find social philately exciting, and like the thought of combining postal and social history.

Holidays Because I spent so much of my life travelling, today my wife and I tend to spend our holidays in the UK or Europe. However, we have been back to South Africa twice.

Ambitions Just to finish all the books I plan to write.



Philately on-line A site for young collectors, by Ron Negus



www.royalmail.com/stampsforkids The new site is designed to encourage more children to take up the hobby. Knowing that most school children today are computer literate, Royal Mail has provided this attractive package on the internet to whet their appetite.

overseas issues. When I looked at the site, this segment was showing the current issues of Australia and New Zealand. All this part of the site will be updated regularly.

Starting a collection 'Collector's Guide' is the section of the site that provides basic information for those starting on the hobby. Under the heading 'I want to collect' it reveals a five step guide which complete beginners can follow to create their first collection. The final item in this list advises new collectors to join a stamp club, and it is intended that the site will incorporate a listing of UK clubs in due course. In the meantime, a 'Links & Events' button provides access to a listing of stamp fairs around the country.

Also under the 'Collector's Guide' main heading, users can find 'Amazing Stamp Facts' and a 'History of Stamps'. The first of these provides trivia type answers to 10 'facts' about UK stamps and 10 about international stamps. The 'History' item lists a very brief timeline of notable British postal events.

The final part in this 'Collector's Guide' is an invitation to 'Ask the Experts'. Choosing this brings up a blank form on which any questions about stamps may be written and sent over the internet to Royal Mail. The answers to the question will be sent back to the enquirer by post or e-mail.

As a final inducement to children to visit, a 'Fun & Games' section is included. This provides a simple game based upon the Fruit and Vegetable stamps, called Fruit Drop, that requires the player to create different faces whilst avoiding obstacles. Also in this section is an offer of 100 mixed stamps, free in exchange for the child's name and address. Comments from trial users on this page show that this part was the favourite of most of the children using the site ●

IN THE OCTOBER 2003 *Bulletin*, a brief mention was made of the new web site for young collectors, called 'Stampsforkids'. This is sponsored by Royal Mail and appears as a group of separate pages within their main website. It is necessary to quote the full site address (see above) to gain access because there are some American sites called the same thing. These have no relationship with the Royal Mail site, but will be located if 'Stampsforkids' is input as a keyword via a search engine.

Royal Mail has continued some of the features previously offered in the *Collectors Club* magazine, including the cartoon character 'Sammy'. The site layout is colourful to make it attractive to children and contains three main parts. These are 'What's New?', 'Fun and Games' and 'Collector's Guide'. There is also a 'Safe Surfing' section that warns children about the dangers of using internet chat rooms. It advises them that adult guidance should be sought if they are suspicious of anything they find whilst surfing the net.

The 'What's New?' section contains a 'Sneak Preview' button. Pressing this brings up illustrations of the next scheduled issue of GB stamps, plus a brief commentary explaining what they commemorate. The current issue from Royal Mail is displayed if the 'Latest Stamps' button is selected, and choosing 'International Stamp News' allows users to see a limited number of

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



October identify The detail was from the 2003 Christmas £1.12 stamp. The winner was M Sokel of Cyprus.

October knowledge The answers: 1) David Gentleman; 2) Glasgow; 3) Hugh Jefferies. The winner was D McCormick of Northern Ireland.

Ten runner-up prizes were also sent for each competition. Our thanks to all who entered.

FIRSTLY, identify the stamp from the detail above. Send your answer to January *Identify* Competition. Secondly, test your philatelic knowledge by answering the questions below. Send your answer to January *Knowledge* Competition.

- 1 Where will the ABPS 'National' exhibition be held in November 2004?
- 2 In which year did Benjamin Franklin feature on a British stamp?
- 3 What colour was the 1952 Wilding 1½d stamp?

Send your answer (addressed to either January *Identify* competition or January *Knowledge* competition), name and address on a postcard or back of a sealed envelope to: British Philatelic Bulletin, Royal Mail, 148 Old Street, London EC1V 9HQ. The senders of the first cards drawn in each competition on 13 February will each receive £100. Ten runner-up prizes of presentation packs or first day covers will be awarded in each competition. The competitions are not open to Royal Mail employees ●

Events

16-17 January York Stamp & Coin Fair, York Racecourse.

17 January GB Philatelic Society display: Telegraph Stamps and Forms by Dr Conrad Graham and Dr Alan Huggins. British Philatelic Centre, 107 Charterhouse Street, London EC1, 11.00. **Enquiries** C Harman, Greylands, Melton, Woodbridge IP12 1QE.

7 February Streetley PS Stamp Fair at Collingwood Centre, Collingwood Drive, Pheasey, Birmingham B43 7NF, 10.00-16.30. Car parking near centre. National stamp dealers, displays, light refreshments. Admission 20p (children 10p). **Enquiries** M Chapling, 0121 329 2487.

25-29 February Spring Stampex at Business Design Centre, London N1. See p132.

26-28 February Philatex at Royal Horticultural Hall, London SW1. **Enquiries** C Rainey 01793 513431, T Davis, 020 8946 4489, or www.stampshows.co.uk

28 February GB Philatelic Society display: George VI High Values by Peter Dawson, at Autumn Stampex, 14.00. **Enquiries** C Harman, Greylands, Melton, Woodbridge IP12 1QE.

28 February Welsh Philatelic Society meeting at Aberystwyth. **Enquiries** P Gaywood, 2 Fairways, Fulwood, Preston PR2 8FX.

13 March Joint meeting of GB Philatelic Society and British Aerophilatelic Federation at British Philatelic Centre, 107 Charterhouse Street, London EC1, 11.00-16.30. **Enquiries** C Harman, Greylands, Melton, Woodbridge IP12 1QE ●

Late news

Rugby Miniature Sheet A miniature sheet commemorating England winning the Rugby World Cup went on sale at selected Post Office branches and Royal Mail Tallents House on 19 December. The sheet contains two 1st class and two 68p stamps, price £1.92. A pack is available, priced £2.30, but there are no stamp cards for this issue.

First day covers can be ordered from Tallents House until 30 January, priced £2.67 UK, £2.28 overseas. Please state if Tallents House or Twickenham postmark required. Collectors can submit their own covers for these two handstamps up until 30 January. Covers for the Tallents House postmark should be sent to Tallents House; covers for the Twickenham postmark can be sent to any of Royal Mail's Special Handstamp Centres as follows.

Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, Mount Pleasant, London EC1A 1BB • Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, 15 Wexham Road, Slough SL1 1AA • Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, Penarth Road, Cardiff CF11 8TA • Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, Keppell Street, South Shields NE33 1AA • Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, Duchess Place, Rutherglen, Glasgow G73 1BT • Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, St Stephens Street, Birmingham B6 4AA •

Auction results An imperf sheet of 2002 1st class Christmas stamps (with small faults) made £1300 (estimate £1000) at the Cavendish auction on 22 November. A mint block of eight of the Edward VII 7d overprinted CANCELLED went for £360 (£200), and a George V 1½d Silver Jubilee booklet pane with similar overprint made £300 (£140). Two binders containing approximately 300 Postage Due covers of the present reign made £280 (£150), and photographic essays for Edward VIII stamps achieved £300 (£100). A complete run of Royal Mail Yearbooks 1984-2002 sold for £180 (£240). All hammer prices subject to a buyer's premium of 15%. Future auctions of GB material include Michael Champness Scots Locals and Peter Kay's Inverness Town postmarks 1704-1950 (24 January), and Yorkshire postal history (5-6

March). Enquiries: Cavendish Philatelic Auctions 01332 250970 •

The 'Gaetano Vullo' collection of GB stamps, formed over many years, was eagerly snapped up by avid collectors at Harmers sale on 12 November. The total realizations exceeded £1.1 million. A 2d Blue block of four, sold in the Adam Brown Collection by Harmers in 1949 for £440, made £45,874 (est £20,000). An unused block of 12 in deep blue shade went for £70,575 (£30,000). A fine 'VR' Penny Black made £17,644 (£6500). The Vullo collections of Airmails and Italian States were also auctioned – the three sales achieved a total of £3 million. For details of future Harmers auctions contact Harmers on 020 8747 6100 or see website: www.harmers.com •

New literature list James Bendon's new (November 2003) *Listing of Philatelic Literature* includes Aerophilately, Bibliography, Forgeries, General Works, Maritime, Military, Philatelic History, Postal Stationery, and Revenue Stamps. Write to: James Bendon Ltd, PO Box 56484, 3307 Limassol, Cyprus or see website: www.JamesBendon.com •

Lord of the Rings The Isle of Man PO issued eight stamps and a miniature sheet on 17 December to coincide with the release of the latest *Lord of the Rings* film. Enquiries: Philatelic Bureau, PO Box 10M, Douglas, Isle of Man IM99 1PB. Telephone 01624 698430 •

Heritage Royal Mail The Search Room at Freeling House will be closed for refurbishment from 23 January until early April 2004. A limited service will be available during this period. For further information and to make an appointment, contact 020 7239 2570. Heritage Royal Mail apologise for any inconvenience, but hope to provide greatly improved facilities in the future. Enquiries to: Heritage Royal Mail, Freeling House, Phoenix Place, London WC1X 0DL. E-mail libby.buckley@royalmail.com or see website www.royalmail.com/heritage •

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