

BRITISH *PHILATELIC*

The ROYAL MAIL magazine *for stamp collectors*

Volume 33 Number 10

JUNE 1996 • 75P

Bulletin

New definitives • PO Archives
centenary • Olympic stamps



Swifter, Higher, Stronger:
new Royal Mail stamps
commemorate the Olympic
and Paralympic Games

Forthcoming issues & withdrawals

Below are proposed issues from 28 August through October. Any changes or additions will be notified in this magazine.

September (date to be announced) Youth aerogramme

3 September Children's TV stamps, pack, and souvenir pack

24 September Cars stamp cards

1 October Christmas aerogramme • Cars stamps and pack • NPM postcards: Postal Vehicles

21 October Christmas stamp cards

28 October Christmas stamps and pack • Christmas stamp books (3) • Christmas Philatelic Numismatic Cover • 1996 Year Book and Year Pack

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

5 June

Withdrawal 50p and £1 books: *Sea Charts 3* and *Sir Rowland Hill 3*

8 June

Issue *Football Legends* Philatelic Numismatic Cover (includes £2 commemorative coin)

18 June

Issue Olympics aerogramme

25 June

Issue New Definitives: 20p, 26p, 31p, 37p, 39p, 43p, 63p

28 June

Withdrawal 29p definitive with yellow fluor (printing with blue fluor remains on sale)

1 July

Withdrawal 1991 Post Paid Envelopes (imprinted stamp of Queen's head within black octagonal frame)

2 July

Issue *Olympic/Paralympic* stamp cards • Scottish aerogramme: *Edinburgh Festival*

3 July

Withdrawal European Youth Olympics aerogramme

8 July

Issue Stamp Books: £1 (3 × 26p, 1 × 20p, 2 × 1p) and £2 (7 × 26p, 1 × 20p) machine-vended; £1.48 (4 × 37p), and £2.52 (4 × 63p) • Coils: 1st and 2nd class, 37p and 43p stamps

9 July

Issue *Olympic/Paralympic* stamps and presentation pack

17 July

Withdrawal Scottish aerogramme: *Prehistoric Scotland*

23 July

Issue New Country stamps (N Ireland, Scotland, Wales) 20p, 26p, 37p, 63p

30 July

Issue *Women of Achievement* stamp cards

August

Issue (date to be announced) *Northern Ireland Tourism* aerogramme

6 August

Issue *Women of Achievement* stamps and pack

27 August

Issue *Children's TV* stamp cards

Contents

Main feature



NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC.

GENERAL POST OFFICE,
7th May, 1840.

IN those cases where Adhesive Stamps are used, it is requested that they may be placed on the Front of the Letter and upon the right hand corner on the upper side. Should this direction not be attended to, from the rapidity with which the duty must be performed, Letters which bear Stamps will frequently be taxed, while the Parties receiving them will be put to much trouble in obtaining a return of the Postage improperly charged. In all cases of complaint, whether of overcharge or of any other irregularity, the Cover of the Letters must invariably be kept and sent to the Post Office, as affording the only means of investigating the complaint.

By Command,

W. L. MABERLY,
SECRETARY.

100 years of Archiving...

Jean Farrugia celebrates the centenary of Post Office Archives

303

The *British Philatelic Bulletin* is published monthly by Royal Mail, Royal London House, 22 Finsbury Square, London EC2A 1NL. ● **Editor** JR Holman ● **Price** 75p single copies from Collections, philatelic counters, and National Postal Museum ● **Annual subscriptions** UK and Europe £8.50, rest of the world £12.50. Subscriptions should be sent to British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, Edinburgh EH3 5TT ● **Binders** to hold 24 issues, price £7. Available by post from British Philatelic Bureau (address above) ● Royal Mail also publishes the fortnightly *British Postmark Bulletin*, giving details of forthcoming special handstamps and postmark slogans. Available on annual subscription from British Philatelic Bureau (address above) UK & Europe £10, rest of world £21.75 ● **Copyright** Unless copyright attributed to specific authors, all articles and features may be reproduced without formal permission, but acknowledgement should be given to *British Philatelic Bulletin*. Requests to reproduce copyright articles should be sent to the Editor, 22 Finsbury Square, London EC2A 1NL ● **Design** by Robert Maude ● **Printed** in Great Britain by The White Dove Press ● **ISSN** 0953 8119

Issues & withdrawals for June and July, and proposed new issues to October **290**

Royal Mail news New definitives; Olympics and Paralympics; New aerogrammes; Robert Burns exhibitions; NPM news; Stamps on the internet **292**

Exhibition news

Stamp '96; Capex '96; Stamp '96 Autumn; Pacific '97 **298**

Stamp scene

Ship Stamp Society; new Railway letter stamps; Competitions for young collectors; Centenary of Bristol Philatelic Society; Astro Space Stamp Society; Wyon family exhibition **300**



1995 Stamp poll – readers' comments
Continued from May **306**

Decimal stamp books
Part 27 Specialist report by DGA Myall **310**



25 years of Postmark Bulletin **314**

'Christmas' student stamp designs The Royal Society of Arts design competition, continued from May **315**

Books New editions of Gibbons catalogues; Aberdeen & Dundee philatelic history **316**

Competition Sponsored by Omniphil Approvals **318**

Posting boxes Lion's head letter box **319**

Events for June and July **319**

Royal Mail news New definitives: stamps, books and rolls • Olympics and Paralympics 1996 • NPM news • New aerogrammes • Robert Burns exhibitions • Stamps on the internet • New design for the *Bulletin*



The increases are being made with great reluctance. In announcing the increases, The Post Office stated: 'We would have liked to have continued the Royal Mail price freeze but the Treasury's cash demand on the Post Office rose steeply in last November's Budget and amounts to £925 million over the

next three financial years. That's virtually the equivalent of what The Post Office has paid in cash demands to Government over the last ten years. It is the biggest cash demand in the history of The Post Office and is equivalent to £1 million every working day. We have done everything possible to try to absorb the cash demand – the External Financing Limits set by the Treasury – and have identified savings of £100 million a year throughout The Post Office. But even with these savings and a growth in Royal Mail productivity of 32 per cent over the past ten years, we are left with no alternative but to propose a price rise.'

band, the others two bands, all with blue fluor in the phosphor. All stamps will have elliptical perforations on the vertical sides and pva gum. Printing will be in sheets of 200.

BOOKS Two new machine-vended books will be available from 8 July. The £1 book will contain three 26p stamps, one 20p, two 1p and two labels. The £2 book will contain seven 26p and one 20p stamps. Both are to be printed in offset-litho by The House of Questa. The 1p and 20p stamps will have one phosphor band, 26p two bands, pva gum.

Two overseas rates books will be produced by Walsall (offset-lithography) containing four 37p and four 63p stamps. These will be sold at post offices and retail outlets with a demand for these books. Stamps will have two phosphor bands, pva gum.

ROLLS New stamp rolls will also be available from 8 July: rolls of 500 of both 37p and 43p values, and rolls of 500 and 1000 of both 1st and 2nd class NVI (Non-Value Indicator) stamps. No rolls will be produced of 20p and 26p values. These will all be printed by Harrison. The 2nd class NVI will have one phosphor band, others two bands. Gum pva.

New definitives Several new definitive stamps, books and rolls are to be issued shortly to cover the increased postal tariffs which are proposed for 8 July 1996. The last increase took place from 1 November 1993.

SHEET STAMPS Seven new sheet stamps will be issued on 25 June to cover new rates: 20p light green (basic inland 2nd class) • 26p rust (basic inland 1st class and European Union rate) • 31p purple (Europe, non-EU countries) • 37p rhododendron (airmail postcards) • 39p shocking pink (inland 1st class, second step) • 43p dark brown (basic airmail letter rate) • and 63p emerald green (airmail letters, second step).

The 20p and 26p values will be printed by Harrisons, the others by Enschedé – all photogravure. The 20p stamp will have one phosphor

COUNTRY STAMPS It is intended that new stamps for Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales will be issued on 23 July in the following denominations: 20p, 26p, 37p, 63p. All will be printed by Questa, sheets of 200, PVA gum, elliptical perfs on vertical sides. One phosphor band on 20p, others two bands.

FIRST DAY FACILITIES Royal Mail first day cover envelopes for definitive and Country stamps will be available shortly before 25 June, price 25p each. First day posting boxes will be available at main post offices on 25 June for standard (mostly non-pictorial) 'first day of issue' postmarks. Pictorial 'first day of issue' postmarks will be available at the Bureau and for Windsor. A FDC service will be provided by the Bureau – application forms should be returned by 25 June.

Collectors may prepare their own covers and submit on 25 June for first day postmarking to: British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, Edinburgh EH3 5TT (Bureau cancel), or Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, Wexham Road, Slough SL1 1AA (Windsor). The outer envelope should be endorsed 'FD9613' (Bureau) or 'FD9614' (Windsor).

Details of sponsored postmarks for 25 June will be announced in the *British Postmark Bulletin*. Royal Mail's fortnightly magazine for postmark collectors.

Details of first day facilities for the Country stamps will be given in next month's *Bulletin*.



PRESENTATION PACKS Two new packs will be issued, one containing the seven new definitives (25 June), the second the 12 new Country stamps (23 July).

WITHDRAWAL OF OBSOLETE STAMPS Stocks of the 19p, 25p, 29p, 35p, 36p, 38p, and 41p stamps (including Country versions of 19p, 25p, and 41p values) and books of 4 x 60p stamps will be withdrawn from sale at post offices after close of business on 6 July. Please note that books of 60p stamps are only sold at offices with a demand for this value. All will remain on sale from the British Philatelic Bureau and Post Office Counters philatelic outlets for a further year.

POSTAL STATIONERY & PRIORITY SERVICES The prices of prepaid envelopes will be increased by 1p to take account of the tariff change. The price of aerogrammes will remain 36p. The cost of the Recorded Delivery service will increase from 55p to 60p plus postage, charges for Registered, Registered Plus, and Special Delivery remain the same •

At time of going to press, consultation between Royal Mail and the Post Office Users' National Council over implementation of the proposed tariff increase was still in progress. To confirm availability and agreed pricing of definitive stamps, books and rolls, readers should check with their local post office 10 days before the planned tariff implementation date of 8 July. Details of postal rates will be displayed in post offices.

The stamps are the work of Design House, using photographs by Nick Knight. They feature: Runner at starting blocks; Javelin-thrower; Basketball player; Swimmer; and a Victorious Athlete. These are all sports common to both the Olympics and Paralympics. The final stamp includes the Olympic Rings emblem in the background. The five stamps are printed as a horizontal set-tenant strip.

Technical details

Printers House of Questa Ltd

Process Offset lithography

Size 30 × 41mm

Sheets 100

Perforation 15 × 14

Phosphor Two phosphor bands. Blue fluor in phosphor

Paper OBA (Optical Brightening Agent) free

Gum PVA

Colours The colours and plate numbers are: 1A (greenish grey) ● 1A (silver) ● 1A (rosine) ● 1A (black) ● 1A (magenta) ● 1A (bistre-yellow) ● 1A (new blue)

Swifter, Higher, Stronger – Olympics & Paralympics 1996 Five 26p stamps commemorating the centenary of the modern Olympic Games and British participation in the 1996 Olympic and Paralympic Games go on sale at post offices and philatelic outlets on 9 July. The theme of the issue echoes the motto of the Olympic Movement – *Citius, Altius, Fortius* (Swifter, Higher, Stronger). The 26th Olympic Games will be held in Atlanta, USA 19 July-4 August 1996, the 10th Paralympics follows on 15-25 August. The Paralympic Games were first held in Rome in 1960 when 400 sportsmen and women from 23 nations competed. Royal Mail is proud to be associated with the British Paralympic and Olympic teams; it was the sole sponsor of both in 1992, and is again this year in Atlanta.

FIRST DAY FACILITIES Unstamped Royal Mail first day cover envelopes will be available from main post offices, the British Philatelic Bureau and Post Office Counters philatelic outlets around a week before 9 July, price 25p. The Bureau will provide a first day cover service for covers bearing stamps cancelled with a pictorial 'first day of issue' postmark of the Bureau or Much Wenlock, Shropshire. Application forms for first day covers must be returned to the Bureau by 9 July 1996.

Much Wenlock has been selected for a first day postmark as it was here that Dr William 'Penny' Brookes founded the Much Wenlock Olympian Society and instigated annual games (which still take place) in 1850. He proposed regular 'International Olympian Games' and his influence was crucial to the revival of the modern Olympics. Baron de Coubertin, generally acknowledged as the founder of the modern Olympics, was guest of honour at the Much Wenlock Games in 1890.

Collectors may send their own stamped covers on the day of issue, for these cancels, to: British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, Edinburgh EH3 5TT, or Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, Penarth Road, Cardiff CF1 1AA (for Much Wenlock postmark). The outer envelope should be endorsed 'FD9615' (Bureau), or 'FD9616' (Much Wenlock).

First Day Posting Boxes will be provided at most main post offices for collectors who wish to post covers to receive local (mostly non-pictorial) 'first day of issue' handstamps.

For details of other special handstamps, see the *British Postmark Bulletin* – the Royal Mail's magazine for postmark collectors. It is available on subscription from the British Philatelic Bureau: £10 UK and Europe; £21.75 rest of the world (airmail).

PRESENTATION PACK AND STAMP CARDS A presentation pack and stamp cards will be available from the Bureau, Post Office Counters philatelic outlets, and main post offices. The pack takes the form of an Olympic Lexicon, an A-Z of Olympic and Paralympic facts and history. Composed by Jonathan Crawford, it features the British heritage of the events. The pack is designed by Why Not Associates of London ●





Mrs J Robinson
200 Manorbier Road
Ilkeston
Derbyshire
DE7 4AB



Royal Mail Post Stamps

SWIFTER,

OLYMPICS & PARALYMPICS 1996

higher, STRONGER.

Women were banned from the ancient Games, but the first woman Olympic gold medalist was British: in 1900 Charlotte Cooper won the tennis singles. 72 years later Britain's Lorna Johnstone reached the finals in the dressage five days after her 70th birthday – the oldest woman known to have competed in an Olympics.

Jeu De Paume (or Real Tennis), Lacrosse, Motorboating and Tug-of-War: some of the sports discontinued at the Olympics.

Motto of the Olympic Movement – 'CITIUS, ALTUS, FORTIUS' (Swifter, Higher, Stronger).

Essential concept summed up by 'The most important games is not to conquer but to participate'.

Hayden, Ian – Royal Mail employee, silver medals in the javelin at the '92 Olympics. Won an award for outstanding work as a sportsman.

Yachting is an Olympic sport cultivated by Britain. The country earned the country's first Olympic gold, as well as the medal won by Peter Scott in 1936.

Kings Edward VII and George VI opened the Olympics in London in 1908 and 1948 respectively.

Olympic Oath which binds the competitors at the start of every Olympic Games, respecting and abiding by the rules which govern them, in the true spirit of sportsmanship, for the glory of sport and the honour of our country.

Working time for the Olympic Games is 100 days.

UK is fourth in the table of summer Olympic Games winners with 49 medals (177 goals). The UK, France and Switzerland are the only countries to have attended every Olympic and Paralympic Games.



For details of the **Society of Olympic Collectors** and its activities, write to the Hon Secretary: Betty Miller, 258 Torrisholme Road, Lancaster LA1 2TU (enclose stamped addressed envelope or international reply coupon).



Olympic philately Large numbers of Olympic stamps have been issued since 1896 when the Games were revived. Olympics is a very popular collecting theme and there is a thriving Society of Olympic Collectors for all who collect and study the stamps, postmarks, postal stationery and related material. The Society recently put on a most impressive display at Spring Stampex, and assisted in the fine 'British Philately at the Olympic Games' exhibition at the National Postal Museum in 1988 (see December 1988 *Bulletin*).

British Olympic stamps began in 1948 with four values values to commemorate the Olympic Games at Wembley (SG 495/8). A commemorative aerogramme was also issued. The stamps were designed by Percy Metcalf, Abram Games, Stanley Scott, and Edmund Dulac. For detailed accounts of this issue see articles by Bob Wilcock (*Bulletin* November 1988) and Douglas Muir (February, March, April 1989). The unused designs were reproduced in Mr Muir's articles, and in the November 1988 *Bulletin*.

The 1992 Olympic and Paralympic Games in Barcelona were commemorated by two 24p stamps in the Europa series (SG 1615/6). These were designed by Keith Bassford who wrote on the subject here in April 1992.

The collector can supplement his rather meagre collection of British Olympic stamps with 1992 and 1996 stamp books reproducing Olympic/Paralympic logos. The logo also appeared on the two 1992 Scottish aerogrammes. Postmarks, meter impressions and postcards are a rich field for study as Bob Wilcock's articles on the 1908 and 1992 Games (October 1988 & August 1992 *Bulletin*) demonstrate •

The National Postal Museum is open Monday to Friday 09.30-16.30, admission free. It is a short distance from St Paul's Cathedral and underground station. Enquiries: National Postal Museum, King Edward Street, London EC1A 1LP. Telephone 0171 239 5420.

NPM welcomes more visitors The number of visitors to the National Postal Museum has increased considerably in recent months. The number for January 1996 was more than double that for the same month in 1995. Over the year to February 1996 the number had increased by nearly 20%. The increase has been especially noticeable since the opening of the *Post Haste!* display of vehicles and artefacts in the former London Chief Post Office area. The special exhibitions in the temporary exhibition gallery – *Communications*, *Railway Photographs*, and *Greetings Stamps / Cartoons* – have proved popular with visitors.

Current exhibitions include *Robert Burns – Man of Letters* and stamp designs by students in the Royal Society of Arts annual design competition. Permanent displays include world stamps, thematics, a basic collection of British stamps from Edward VII to date, and the specialist R M Phillips Collection of Victorian stamps •

New aerogrammes Three new aerogrammes are in preparation. The second of the 1996 Scottish aerogrammes will be available from 2 July, marking the 50th Edinburgh International Festival. Illustrated by John Raynes and printed by McCorquodale Envelopes Ltd, it will cost 45p.

A large-size aerogramme featuring Northern Ireland tourist attractions will go on sale in mid-August, price 50p. A new Youth aerogramme, simi-

lar to the Pen Pal issue of 1993, is expected mid-September. As with the 1993 aerogramme, it will be available in packs of six •

Robert Burns exhibitions Royal Mail has sponsored a touring exhibition in Scotland of the Life and Works of Robert Burns, arranged by the National Library of Scotland. During June the exhibition can be seen at: Bearsden Library (10 June-10 July) and the McLean Museum & Gallery, Greenock (1-29 June).

A Burns exhibition – *Pride and Passion*, featuring a wealth of national treasures from the collections of the Scottish national galleries, museums and library will be on show at the Royal Museum of Scotland from 8 June until 15 September.

For details of the *Robert Burns – Man of Letters* exhibition, see National Postal Museum News above •

The Royal Museum of Scotland Chambers Street, Edinburgh EH1 1JF. Open Monday-Saturday 10.00-17.00, Sunday 12.00-17.00

Surf's up for stamps on the internet The estimated 30 million people around the globe who are connected to the internet can now call up and 'surf' information about stamps from Royal Mail.

Royal Mail's internet address is
<http://www.royalmail.co.uk>

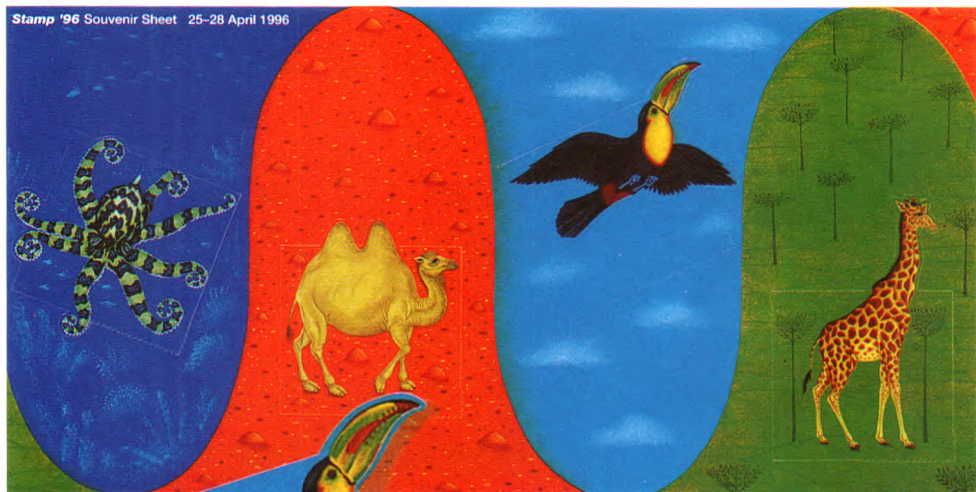
Royal Mail has launched an internet site on the information superhighway where browsers can read the latest news releases and learn of the latest services. Available exclusively on the site is an especially-composed section on the history, design and production of stamps including a 'Strange but True' page of unusual facts, such as: a gravure press running at full speed prints around 24,000 Special Stamps per minute. The section has been written by Fay Sweet who has written Royal Mail Special Stamps 13 – the Yearbook – which will be published on 28 October 1996 •

New-look *Bulletin* Following the move of the *Bulletin* from Royal Mail's Stamp Products Department to the Design Division, the opportunity was taken to look afresh at the magazine's appearance which has been largely unaltered for the past decade. What you see before you now is the result of several months work, taking into account market research expressed by existing and potential readers. We hope it will be well-received. The *Bulletin*'s new designer is Robert Maude who earlier in the year designed the first day cover envelope and first day postmarks for the Cartoons Greetings stamps.

I would like to record my thanks to our former designer Angus Mathieson who worked conscientiously on the *Bulletin* for many years, often under great pressure to meet deadlines, making difficult last-minute changes to copy and illustrations without complaint. Angus has played an important part in making the *Bulletin* so successful. Robert has a hard act to follow, I wish him well. JOHN HOLMAN, EDITOR •

Exhibition news Stamp '96 • Capex '96 • Stamp '96 Autumn • Pacific '97

Stamp '96 Souvenir Sheet 25-28 April 1996



Stamp '96 Amongst the popular attractions at the recent Stamp '96 exhibition at Wembley was the stand of stamp printers Walsall Security Printers Ltd, noted for production of self-adhesive stamps. Available at the stand was a colourful souvenir sheet featuring four labels depicting animals which could be peeled from the sheet and affixed to a souvenir cover.

The sheet was sold in aid of The Childrens Society. A limited number is still available and can be ordered from The Childrens Society, Edward Rudolph House, 69-85 Margery Street, London WC1X 0JL, price £1.50 UK, £2 overseas (prices include postage & packing). Orders should be received by 28 June.

Two souvenir sheets were issued for Stamp '95. The first, reproducing the 1925 British Empire Exhibition stamp, was included in the exhibition catalogue. The second, featuring the winning designs in a children's stamp design competition, was printed by The House of Questa, and issued free to readers of this *Bulletin* (August 1995) and *Gibbons Stamp Monthly*.

On display in the Special Exhibits Section at Stamp '96 was a stunning block of 10 Penny Blacks used on cover on the first day of usage (6 May 1840). The cover was discovered in the office of a Scottish solicitor in 1968. The cover,



James Burnie Esq
Kirkcudbright

together with other items from the same collection, were valued in the region of £500,000 – not surprisingly security guards mounted a 24-hour vigil for the duration of the exhibition •



Capex '96 Visitors to this international exhibition in Toronto (8-16 June) will be able to see several 'galleries' featuring unique or rare philatelic material. In addition to those recorded here last month, the Jewels of the World gallery will include some of the world's rarest stamps from private collectors and foreign postal administrations, along with unique material from Canadian Postal Archives. Capex '96, a World philatelic exhibition, is organised by the Royal Philatelic Society of Canada with the support of the presenting sponsor, Canada Post Corporation. It will be held at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre.

Royal Mail will be attending Capex '96, organising an 'international destination area' which will include sales booths for Ireland, Jersey, Guernsey, and the Isle of Man. The National Postal Museum will also be displaying. A Capex souvenir folder containing the recent Queen's Birthday pane will be sold exclusively at the Royal Mail booth which will be staffed by representatives from the British Philatelic Bureau, and Royal Mail National's London headquarters •

Stamp '96 Autumn Tomorrows World Exhibitions, organisers of Stamp '96, are launching a new show at the National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham, 22-24 November 1996.

Prior to the launching of the NEC show many of the exhibitors at Wembley were asked for their opinion. Initially it was intended to hold the event in Manchester but the majority of dealers expressed a preference for the Midlands. This was supported by independent research.

The NEC is situated alongside the M42 within easy walking distance of Birmingham International rail station and close to Birmingham airport. Some 22 million people live within 60 miles of the NEC which can be reached in about 1 1/2 hours from Bristol, Leeds, London, and Manchester •



Pacific '97 This exhibition will be held in San Francisco, 29 May-8 June 1996. The American Philatelic Congress and the exhibition organisers have agreed to expand the annual *Congress Book* for 1997 to include research articles on the philately of the Pacific Rim countries – an area being emphasised by Pacific '97 along with the celebrations of the 150th anniversary of the first US postage stamps. The deluxe hard-bound edition will be available only to members of the APC. The soft-bound edition will be sold at the exhibition. The *Congress Book*, published since 1935 is an anthology of original papers of high quality and lasting reference value •

Enquiries Capex '96, PO Box 204, Station Q, Toronto, Ontario M4T 2M1, Canada

Companies interested in attending Stamp '96 Autumn should contact Maureen Leamon at Stanley Gibbons Ringwood office. Telephone 01425 461353.

Enquiries about Pacific '97 to: Quinby Bldg, Top Floor, 650 S Grand Ave., Los Angeles CA 90017-3809, USA.

For APC membership information write to Mrs J Klug, PO Box 250, Pleasant Plain, OH 45162, USA.

Stamp scene Ship Stamp Society • New RNLI licensees • New railway letter stamps • Competitions for young stamp collectors • Centenary of Bristol Philatelic Society • Astro Space Stamp Society • Wyon family exhibition • Stamp collecting course

Encyclopaedia and supplements are available at a special price of £35 post paid UK/Europe (add £5 surface postage overseas). Remittances should be payable to Ship Stamp Society and orders/enquiries sent to T Broadley, 10 Heyes Drive, Lymm WA13 0PB.

Ship Stamp Society The Ship Stamp Society, formed in 1970, caters for thematic collectors of ship stamps, from canoes to passenger liners. The annual subscription of £13 includes the monthly illustrated magazine, *Log-book*, and exchange packets (UK members only). The Annual General Meeting is held at British maritime locations. The Society publishes an *Encyclopaedia* of all named vessels appearing on stamps, with supplements covering the years 1989-93.

The Society has now published a second reprint of its 52-page Royal Navy Checklist listing over 900 RN ships in alphabetical order, giving date, type of ship, year of stamp, and SG catalogue number. Price £2.80 UK/Europe, £3.50 overseas. Remittances payable to D A Rouse should be sent to: D A Rouse, 7 Meadow, Waringham, CR6 9RW •



Railway letter stamps from North Yorkshire Moors Railway (above) and Mid-Hants Railway (right).



Railway letter stamps THE NORTH YORKSHIRE MOORS RAILWAY Shown here are new 25p railway letter stamps issued by the North Yorkshire Moors Railway on 12 April and 26 May 1996. Both were printed in sheets of eight by Walsall Security Printers. Available mint at face value plus postage (30p UK/Europe, 80p rest of the world) from: NYMR/RLS, 5 Tiber View, Brinsworth, Rotherham, S60 5EA • THE MID-HANTS RAILWAY issued a new 25p railway letter stamp on 6 April, featuring an oil painting of Alresford station. It was printed by Walsall Security Printers in sheets of nine. Available mint at face value from: Postal Co-ordinator, Mid-Hants Rly, Alresford, SO24 9JG. Postage 50p on all orders. Details of first day covers and postcards available from same address – enclose stamped addressed envelope, or international reply coupon •

For details send stamped addressed envelope or two international reply coupons to Brian Lockyer, 21 Exford Close, Weston-super-Mare, BS23 4RE.

Astro Space Stamp Society Andy Swanston of the Society will be giving a display entitled 'Man in Space' (stamps, covers, postcards, flown items, etc) to the Probus Club of Salford at the Woodlands Suite, Buile Hill Park Salford (15 October), and to the Merseyside Philatelic Society at Liverpool Public Library (25 November) •

Bristol Philatelic Society centenary The Society celebrates its centenary in March 1997, having been formed in 1977 from the incorporation of the Bristol & Clifton Philatelic Society (founded 1897) and the Bristol North Philatelic Society (1935). The Centenary Committee is preparing a programme that will not only draw attention to the event, but provide interest and entertainment to the philatelists of Bristol and surrounding area. This will include an Introduction to the Postal History of Bristol and a History of the Bristol Society. Displays and exhibitions are planned, also a one-day symposium which will include talks, displays and a 'valuation and general advice' corner. A centenary dinner will be held •

Introduction to stamp collecting course This course, the first of a series, is aimed at those with no, or at the most very little, knowledge of the hobby. It is designed to introduce the fascination of stamp collecting to women and men who are: early retirees; retired; people with time on their hands or those seeking a way of reducing stress. Each session will be held on a Tuesday (11.00-16.00) 21 May-2 July inclusive (except 28 May) at the British Philatelic Centre, Charterhouse Street, London EC1.

Topics to be covered include: starting a collection; sources of stamps; types of collecting, eg thematic, postal history, commemorative, 'aero' and postal stationery and stamp collector terms such as perforation, watermarks, phosphor lines, tête-bêche pair, etc.

The leaders of the course are Dr Jean Alexander and Mr Frank Jones and there will be a number of guest speakers with visits to local facilities such as the National Postal Museum. The fee for the complete course, inclusive of lunch, is £25.

Only 21 places are available, these will be allocated on a first-come-first-served basis. The next similar course is scheduled for September 1996 and reservations can be made now •

Wyon exhibition at British Museum The Wyon family dominated British coin and medal production throughout the 19th century. Originating in Germany, the family settled in Birmingham but from 1800 London became the centre of their activities as engravers of dies for coins, medals, tokens, and seals. The most celebrated members of the family were William (1795-1851) and his son Leonard Charles (1826-91). William was Chief Engraver at the Royal Mint from 1828 until his death; his medal head of the young Queen Victoria was used as the basis for the design of the Penny Black in 1840. For 40 years Leonard produced dies for British and Colonial coins.

An exhibition commemorating this talented family is on show at the British Museum until 8 September. The exhibition begins with an example of the earliest known medal by a Wyon (1742), and ends with works by the sculptor Allan Gairdner Wyon who died in 1962.

William Wyon was commemorated by a special Royal Mail/Royal Mint Philatelic/Medallion cover last year and has featured on a National Postal Museum postcard. Articles on the Wyon family, by Tony Gammons, were published here in April and May 1990 •

Enquiries John Tovey,
36 Northville Road, Bristol
BS7 0RG.

Applications to the course should be addressed to: Philatelic Development Manager, British Philatelic Trust, 107 Charterhouse Street, London EC1M 6PT. Telephone 0171 490 3112; Fax 0171-490 4253. Cheques should be payable to BPT.

The British Museum Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3DG.



For full details contact

Muriel Griffiths, 17 Berry Park
Road, Plymstock, Plymouth
PL9 9AG.

Young stamp collector competition Plymouth Philatelic Society, in association with Lloyds Bank PLC Ivybridge Group, is organising a competition for stamp collectors between the ages of seven and 16. Entries should be one page only, choosing stamps linked by a common theme, ie birds, animals, trains, etc, or stamps from one country. Marks will be awarded on originality of subject and title, layout and presentation, care and neatness, and condition of stamps. Entries should be handed in at branches of Lloyds Bank, in The Broadway, Plymstock, The Ridgeway, Plympton, or Fore Street, Ivybridge by 12 July. Winning entries will be displayed at Lloyds Bank Plymstock 22-26 July and at the Plymouth Philatelic Society's Exhibition & Fair at Plymouth Guildhall on 27 July •

Entry forms are available

from Mrs J M Wood, 6 Beech
Grove, Whitley Bay NE26 3PJ

National Youth Stamp Competition Entry forms for the 1996 Melville National Youth Stamp Competition are now available. The competition is open to all young collectors from under nine years to 21 years. The entries are judged by accredited National Judges who make helpful comments to individual competitors and usually attend the Awards Ceremony held at Autumn Stampex where the entries are on display. There are cups, medals and certificates awarded in each class depending on the standard the competitor attains. There is also a trophy for the best exhibit on a horticultural theme as well as the School and Society trophies.

The Competition is named after Frederick J Melville (1882-1940), a leading philatelic writer, and founder of the Junior (now National) Philatelic Society •

For details of these GB

first day cover auctions, and
Collect GB First Day Covers
catalogue contact Stamp
Searchers Ltd, PO Box 11,
Arundel BN18 9SS. Fax
01903 882210.

RNLI appoints new philatelic licensees Stamp Searchers Ltd of Arundel has been appointed exclusive philatelic licensees by the Royal National Lifeboat Institution. Jeffrey Booth, Managing Director of Stamp Searchers, is delighted to be associated with the RNLI and to have the opportunity to carry on the fine work done over the years by Ken Jaggars of Pilgrim Philatelics. A royalty will be paid by Stamp Searchers to the RNLI on all new covers sold. The 1996 programme involves some 16 commemorative and nine first day covers, all with sponsored postmarks •



Post Office postcard The North of Ireland Philatelic Society has produced its eleventh post card; this features Sandy Row po, Belfast in 1937 shortly before its demolition. Mint cards are available at 20p, used with first day postmark 45p. Postage 30p extra.

Orders and enquiries: N Scott, 49 Kingsdale Park, Belfast BT5 7BZ •

Out of the Arc special item on 100th anniversary of archiving by Jean Farrugia MBE, Chief Archivist & DRO The year 1996 is a historic date in the history of the Post Office Archives, or the Record Room as it was once known, marking as it did the unit's first centenary as the custodian of the Post Office's records and a provider of historical services.

The formation of the Record Room 1896 The Record Room came into being on 1 May 1896, as a result of the wish of the then Secretary to the Post Office that all the records should be brought together in one place in the new HQ building in St Martins-le-Grand, for easier access. Hitherto, records of the recent past had been filed away in the creating department, with the older papers and relics of all kinds left lying, long forgotten, in the vaults of the old General Post Office across the road. The task was carried out by two people: Herbert Joyce CB, who had recently produced a definitive history of the Post Office down to 1836 (one still used by Archives' staff today) and John G Hendy, who was to produce a few years later a history of early postmarks (one still well-known to postal historians), and a number of important (unpublished) official studies of subjects such as the Travelling Post Office service.

Archives' role in exhibitions Over the years, as well as ensuring that its important records were preserved for official use, the Post Office has also seen as important the need to make these available to its customers, not only to historians using Archives' search room but also to a wider audience through exhibitions. The first time that the Post Office did this was in 1890, through exhibitions celebrating the Jubilee of Uniform Penny Postage. The public interest in its history aroused by these early exhibitions, and by Joyce's *History of the Post Office*, is very likely to have been the stimulus that prompted The Secretary in 1896 to gather all the records and relics together. In



Researchers in the Archives (top) and Herbert Joyce in PO Record Room, c1898. Post Office Archives is open to the public Monday to Friday, 09.00-16.15. A leaflet giving details of the services can be obtained by sending a DL-size stamped addressed envelope to Post Office Archives, Freeling House, Mount Pleasant (Phoenix Place entrance), London EC1A 1BB.

recent years, the Archives has continued to play a part in this kind of activity, for example by supporting exhibitions such as those mounted on Post Office stands at Liverpool for the International Garden Festival in 1984, and at the major international stamp exhibitions London 1980 and Stamp World '90.

The preservation of philatelic records and artifacts The Archives has always been conscious of the interest in philatelic history and the need to preserve records of stamp design and production and make these official files available for philatelic research. In the 1930s it was also entrusted with the task of mounting and safeguarding the Post Office's World Collection of stamps. Later, however, with the opening in 1966 of the National Postal Museum as a philatelic museum, the Archives passed on to the new museum its philatelic library, stamps and its large collection of stamp artwork, where such visual material could be better deployed for display purposes. Since then, it has been only official records such as files and committee reports that have remained with the Archives, for study in its public search room under the '30 year rule'.

More recently, with the Museum's aspirations to become a museum of Post Office history, Archives also transferred to it many of the postal relics it had preserved over the years, eg mail coach guards' equipment, early handstamps etc and pillar boxes. Although no longer directly responsible for safeguarding such relics, and visual records such as stamp artwork, Archives remains active in the task of ensuring their preservation. It does this today through Heritage Agreements negotiated with the heads of the creating departments, for example that with Royal Mail National designed to identify what philatelic and related material is required to further enrich the Museum's holdings, and to ensure its timely transfer to that treasurehouse of philatelic history. Similarly, all other Heritage Agreements made by the Archives include a clause about the need to preserve artifacts for the Museum.

The status of the records As was the case a century ago, when The Secretary arranged for Joyce to bring all the Post Office's records together in a new Record Room, in the care of a designated keeper. The Secretary remains the senior official ultimately responsible for their preservation and availability for research. Unlike a century ago, however, all this is done today by the Post Office not only because it is a worthy task and one seen

as important to its customers, but also because it has a statutory duty to do so. The latter derives from the Public Records Act of 1958, which also required the Post Office (like all other government departments) to appoint a 'Departmental Record Officer', or DRO.

Today, despite the changes of 1969, when the Post Office ceased to be a government department, its records continue to carry the status of public records. The task of selecting important records for permanent preservation, and making them available for study, is carried out by me in my role of DRO. This role extends to all records created anywhere in the Post Office, irrespective of their form, age and location; and it encompasses records as diverse as photographs, videos and information held in electronic form. It is this that makes it possible for me, as Chief Archivist & DRO, to enlist the support of everyone who is making history today in the task of ensuring that the Post Office's heritage continues to be enriched, irrespective of whether, ultimately, it is in the Archives or the Museum where it is deposited for safeguarding and making it available to a wider audience.

The various locations of the Archives since 1896

Disregarding the move of HQ departments (and their records) from Lombard Street to the new purpose-built GPO in St Martins-le-Grand in 1829, and the gathering in of records for the new Record Room of 1896, the records have been moved four times over the past hundred years. The first move was that which took place after the outbreak of war in 1939, when the oldest and more valuable papers, stamps and relics were removed from the Record Room on the second floor of HQ Building to the safety of the Post Office's underground railway. On their return to HQ in 1946, when the public search room service was restored, they were re-located on the sub-ground floor of that building. Incidentally, I should add that legend has it that the building itself had been saved (after an incendiary bomb had landed on its roof during the Blitz), through the fire-fighting efforts of E C Baker, who was to become the Archivist upon the restoration of ser-

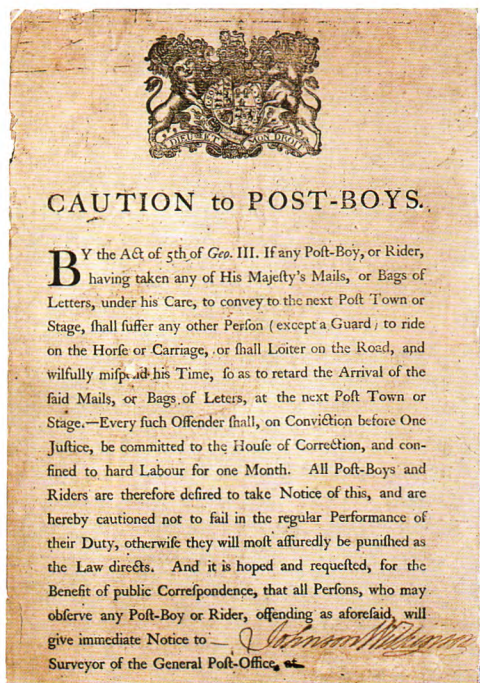
vices in 1946. The Archives remained in that location until the end of 1984, when the 90 years old building in St Martins-le-Grand ceased to be the HQ of the Post Office and the various departments moved out. We moved to an office block in Glasshill Street, Southwark, which we named Freeling House. This was in recognition of Sir Francis Freeling, Secretary to the Post Office from 1798 until his death in service in 1836, and whose system of registering official papers we still use today. Our latest move took place in 1991, when we moved into new purpose-built accommodation (formerly the Boiler House) in the Mount Pleasant sorting office. We named our new home Freeling House, too, and the importance of the Post Office's archives was recognised in the following March when their new place of deposit was officially opened by the Lord Chancellor, the person ultimately responsible for all public records.

Our researchers and outreach activities When I first joined the Archives in 1961, the interests of researchers lay mostly in the areas of philately and associated subjects such as postmarks, and local postal history. Over the years, those interests have widened and, today, the most popular study being undertaken by visitors to our search room is family history. Archives has much to offer the family historian as well as the philatelist. This is not only because the Post Office has been a large employer over the years, with its services operating throughout the country and extending to the smallest of villages, but also because it took care to preserve staff records such as appointment registers and copies of its letters to the Treasury in support of a pension or a gratuity for individual employees. Because of the increasing interest generally in historical research as a leisure activity, Archives does all that it can to spread the work about what it holds, to bring this knowledge to a wider audience. It does this in a variety of ways, for example by taking stands at events such as the annual Family History Fair. For the needs of children and teachers, it also works closely with the Post Office's education officer on projects such as school packs featuring postal his-

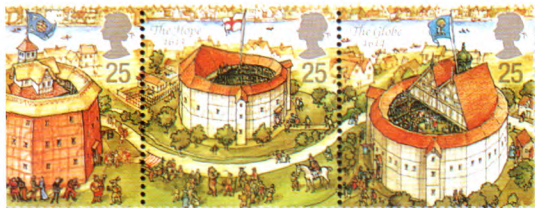
tory and images from the archives. Through a range of products forming its Miniatures series (hand-finished scale reproductions of early pillar boxes and uniforms) it aims to bring postal history to an even wider audience.

Internal services Only too aware that life blood of an archive is the continuing acquisition of fresh records, the Archives also operates for Post Office staff throughout the organisation a range of records-management services. These services are designed not only to fully utilise its expertise in paper-keeping but also to help ensure that modern records are regularly reviewed, and that important items are added to the collections so that the Archive does not become a 'dead' one.

Looking towards the future In looking forward to the next century, the outcome of the current Heritage Review, and a continuing partnership with the Museum on shared objectives, the Archives takes this opportunity to think how difficult the task must have been for Joyce and Hendy a century ago, and to thank them both for all that they did to set us on the right road •



1995 Favourite stamps poll – readers' comments



SHAKESPEARE'S GLOBE

A triumph of miniscule philatelic art. R G MARTIN, E YORKSHIRE

They really look like a set, are beautifully linked together, are full of imaginative detail, are all of one value, and they all turned up on my mail!

C SPENCER, BERKS

A set to be proud of, and representative of the best in English history, literature and art.

A D JONES, BUCKS

Just like the Bard, the stamps tell a story and will last for ages. P COOK, BERKS

They teach us about very interesting historical subject...colours are marvellous.

P NENAD, SLOVENIA

Follow classic stamp design and have a true national heritage reason for their issue. Individually fascinating and collectively successful.

T HOLTHAM, LONDON

A colourful, detailed, if prosaic, panorama of Thames side London. It doesn't matter that the scene as shown couldn't possibly have existed.

K NEIGHBOUR, HERTS

Full marks to C Walter Hodges...most interesting and informative set of stamps of the year. A G ROSSER, S GLAMORGAN

I liked the interesting way the road was interwoven across the five stamps which allowed the exquisite Lilliputian figures to wander across the entire philatelic stage so authentically.

M J NORRIDGE, OXON

Detailed draughtmanship...I never tire of looking at them. D FUNNELL, E SUSSEX

A strip of 5 winners! M SPENCER, CLWYD

My overseas friends have taken an interest in the representation. Try a 41p version.

J DICKSON, SOMERSET

As all are 25p in value I have seen each in use – plenty of variety in the post. I M TAYLOR, HANTS

An enlightening set. S SAUNDERS, KENT

Bright, colourful, cheerful and witty, a pleasant relief from the dour offerings that make up most of the 1995 special issues. R SEABROOK, HERTS

A masterpiece of philatelic art that does great justice to the history of Shakespeare.

D & M STANFORTH, WILTS

Walsall's first commemorative stamp is an excellent example of miniscule art, well designed and printed. M P COLCLOUGH, MIDDX

Diorama style...I returned to these stamps over and over again. M F BIRT, KENT

Educational and fun. C P GALEY, CAMBS

Royal Mail se-tenant sets are always good.

D JANNER, HANTS



COMMUNICATIONS

Back to the previous high standard of British stamps

D C JEFFERIES, EDINBURGH

The worst set...dull and American looking.

J M SHADBOLT, CORNWALL

Class and style – the design and colour combination is superb. C P KING, BEDS

Smart 'official' looking...less looking like a Christmas charity label. E N COOK, BIRMINGHAM
If all our stamps were as good as these, I would still be collecting modern British stamps.

D RYDER, MANCHESTER

'Excze-slawnianian' – the ultimate in the art of stamp engraving. J ROWLANDS, W YORKS

A classic example of Slania's work, a master of his craft. Absolutely superb. G PATTERSON, CHESHIRE
They go back to the traditional standard for earlier British stamps. G WHARRIE, GLOS

By honouring Marconi we have crossed national boundaries in a good healthy way.

J M PRYCE, CHESHIRE

Simple and thought-provoking – a picture tells a thousand words. DR S GILL, BUCKS

Subjects are of national and international importance... designs are ingenious, dignified and look like stamps not advertising labels or amateur's paintings. R L WILSON, WIRRAL

Jewels of craftsmanship. L DERYMCK, BELGIUM
Stamps in the true sense... Slania's engraving is a sight to behold! R G SEALS, SURREY

The fitting of the values to their destinations was well thought-out. G DIXON, CAMBS

Beautifully clear with legible captions, fine craftsmanship and thoroughly pleasant to look at on the envelope. E MEURET, FRANCE

A triumph of stamp art. B ARMSTRONG, OXON
'Instant classics' that will be treasured and admired for years to come. P J JARDINE, ISRAEL
The recess printing gives the design 'life'.

H C ROCKE, CO DURHAM

Sombre but steeped in history. Brilliant.

R REED, ESSEX

Like the stamps of Sweden, they are a joy to behold. E A CORDEAUX, LONDON

These are not Slania's best ever work, but the best British stamps for some time.

M HOLDSWORTH, FRANCE

Engraving is one of my favourite art forms; its clarity is admirably suited to stamps. Interest was enhanced by article on Slania in *Bulletin*.

P BEALE, LEICS

A set to be valued. R BEAN, HERTS

Czeslaw Slania should be used by Royal Mail at least once a year! H G BROWN, SURREY



HAROLD WAGSTAFF
RUGBY LEAGUE 1895-1995



BRIAN BEVAN
RUGBY LEAGUE 1895-1995

RUGBY LEAGUE

The Rugby League stamps on envelopes jump up into my ears and eyes – I can hear the crowds. K H DENMAN, HUMBERSIDE

Young Christian Birmingham has produced our best Sports stamps to date – good colour, good perspectives, totally capturing the action, thrills, skills and excitement of this wonderful game.

W J ROLLESTON, BELFAST

Great sport, great action equals exciting stamps.

K ELDER, BERKS

Convey the sense of energy in the game whilst emphasising the 'hero' status of these players.

D PHILLIPS, CAMBS

The colourful pictures are neatly framed and do not get lost on a white envelope as do 60% of the Cats and Christmas issues. J TAYLOR, CUMBRIA
Capture the agony and glory of a sport that has ascended to new heights of popularity.

R T SMITH, SURREY

'Alive'. N BREEZE, NORFOLK

Pulsate with the drama of the game. Dare I say it; this is a set with balls! W LEAMY, LONDON

Awful... should never have been considered.

A M PLEASS, DEVON

From the design perspective, the viewer is on the pitch with the players. You can almost hear the crowd. P TARRANT, BERKS

The 25p stamp made us both proud and brought back many happy memories of Salford's most successful team – the original Red Devils (subsequently purloined by Man Utd!)

T KENNEDY, LANCs

GREETINGS

C'est beau! G REYNAULD, FRANCE

Colourful, flamboyant and intimate – a bizarre set to brighten the early Spring... well advertised on local bus stops. C R WAITE, DEVON

When we receive a letter with these stamps we receive a lovely fragrance. M FOURNIER, FRANCE
A must in the Greetings series... exquisite – very artistic, symbolic and full of transpiring thoughts, feelings and moods...

PHILUNIVERSUM D L P, ROMANIA

Anyone receiving a letter bearing such a stamp would start the day pleased with life.

A SPROSTON, GLOS

It's not very often that our multi-racial country is represented on British stamps. They illuminate love, music, dance and friendship.

D CAMPBELL, W MIDLANDS

A cohesive set of 10 imaginative ways of portraying togetherness. J R OAKLEY, LEEDS

Possibly the worst series of designs ever. Isn't it about time Royal Mail stopped trying to win the Turner Prize by producing trendy rubbish and started producing stamps that collectors actually enjoy looking at – get some thematic collectors on the selection panel. B ALCOCK, ESSEX

There's not enough smiles, love, hugs and kisses in the world. C EYDEN, DEVON

Happy stamps. C CARPENTER, KENT

It is difficult to get a set of 10 without a dud design – this set is all good. B R UNITT, GWENT



CHRISTMAS

This is Christmas. Full stop.

L PRYDE, E SUSSEX

The only stamps of 1995 which are attractive. The others do not make you proud to be British!

I HOPKINS, ABERDEEN

They depict a British Christmas exactly with clever use of post box, milk bottles, road sign, and door emphasising Royal Mail delivery.

R L SMITH, ESSEX

I would like to see 'Christmas 19...' printed on future Christmas issues. S MACGREGOR, ARGYLL

The robin is friendly – as the Post Office is to us. M HALNAN, MIDDX

For me as a German, the Christmas stamps are a very unusual set of stamps. They give a beautiful impression for this time of year. One of the most beautiful stamp sets I've ever seen.

J PESSEL, GERMANY

The robins all stand out well against their different backgrounds – unlike the Cats (which would have been my first choice) – the outlines were not bold enough. V A LANGLEY, HANTS

A beautiful set of stamps depicting the time of year – but nothing to do with 'Christmas'.

P V RICKETTS, BEDS

British designers give always the best when representing nature or animal themes. Perhaps this reflects the respect for nature of English people.

D F ENRICO, ITALY

Much admired by a recipient in New Zealand.

P M LETTS, SURREY

The robins look so real, as though they are about to hop off the stamp. E V SIMEY, LEEDS



A simple concept, charmingly executed...each stamp a mini-masterpiece. M BALLS, SURREY
Haven't liked a Christmas stamp for years until now. M A BAKER, GWYNEDD

The letter box and milk bottles are typically British. P BONSOR, BEDS

GENERAL COMMENTS

I have a large mail delivery every day but seldom see any of these special stamps.

M WATSON, SUFFOLK

Shame on you for not including or forgetting Keats and Purcell! J KALMAR, LONDON

Still too many square stamps. Also down with 60p stamps. R A CARTER, BIRMINGHAM

Does the selection panel not consider that stamps often get cancelled? F HAMBROOK, SURREY

I still love British stamps, but perhaps you have too many these days which must deplete the high standard set earlier. B MITCHELL, AUSTRALIA

No comment this year – very uninspiring.

J N SYMONDS, ESSEX

Must we still produce five values? A BERRY, LANCAS
The best effort was the Mitchell/Spiritfire label!
S G JONES, CLWYD

Design in general needs a rethink. I also feel there are far too many per year. The *Bulletin* on the other hand is excellent. K MUDD, SURREY

I'd like to commend Royal Mail on its printing of the Mitchell commemorative booklet pane. It has been admired by fellow US collector friends.

J M LIGHT, USA

This year's issues finally persuaded me to cancel my Bureau standing order for special stamps.

D W GENT, WILTS

I enjoyed nearly all the stamps except Science Fiction. Is it really so popular? Surely many other varieties of fiction have given more hours of pleasure – please confound the Politically Correct critics and remember Enid Blyton's centenary when it comes. A MOTT, ESSEX

It appears that we are at last moving away from the 'Arty Crafty' type of product which has recently lowered the tone of British stamp design throughout the world. Long may it continue!

V R DEARDEN, DORSET

I am saddened by the lack of commemoratives/greetings stamps which appear on general social mail. Can we not have an annual tourism series, as Belgium and France, to promote the country further. A NIMBI, GLASGOW

An impossible choice! Bouquets to you for a wonderful year. K WELL, CANADA

Scrawny cats, Puzzle plants, Untrustworthy Trusts, Peace and Freedom not victorious, Unscientific gaudy fictional stickers, 'Muppet' rugby players, Stuffed robins, Communicators before and after the cure!, Comical kissers galore! Thank God for Shakespeare!!

D KITCHEN, HUMBERSIDE

Stamp design has lost its way and my decision to stop collecting GB commemoratives in 1985 is vindicated by this year's offering.

M PITT-PAYNE, BUCKS

As for the Greetings, Wells, Peace, National Trust and Springtime stamps, no words of condemnation are strong enough. C J GUSCOTT, GLASGOW

Overall a very good year for British stamps.

A J AGNEW, DEVON

As we had a set for the Civil War, what happened to the '45 and Bonnie Prince Charlie?

W A HOWARD, AVON

Too many issues. If we are to encourage the hobby then the cost should be kept down. It's difficult to fill the gaps of the past when one's money goes on the present. D LEE, LINGS ●

All voting forms received were entered in a draw. The first form drawn was submitted by H F Slater of Tyne & Wear who was invited to order £500 worth of current Royal Mail stamps and products. Runner-up prizes were sent to: D Funnell, J Barrett, M Holloway, D Hall, K Jewitt, J Dreyfus, D Tatham, J Parker, P Pearson, R Jones, D Lunt, B Musgrave, T Phillips, J Budge, W Evans, B Wade, F Bouton, M Harris, A Cook, P Walton, P Rolph, D Tuckwell, M Mason, J Taylor, and R Chynoweth. Our thanks to all who took part.

Decimal stamp books 27 Specialist report by D G A Myall



Scratch card stamp books Scratch cards have become very popular with the public and are widely available at newsagents and other retail stores. What more natural then that Royal Mail's red books, available at the same retail outlets, should incorporate the concept. The first use of a scratch card was the one given in association with the Disney retail book, but this was available only from participating post offices. Scratch card books are now sold by retailers.

They have been issued in association with the 1996 Olympic triathlon. The triathlon is an endurance event usually involving swimming, cycling and long distance running, to be completed in a single day. Royal Mail's triathlon, however, comprises archery, hurdles and shot put. Each is featured on the cover of a book of 10 1st-class NVIS. Each has nine silver scratch spots which are laid out in a format appropriate for the featured event. For example, they are in three lanes of three for the Hurdles book. Uncovering a spot reveals either a cross or a tick. Three ticks win you the gold, one of 10 all-inclusive holidays to the Atlanta games, worth over £4,000. Two ticks wins a silver, one of 50 hand-held Casio TV sets while one tick wins a bronze, one of 300 Timex watches. Even if your cover is all crosses you can send off for a free set of five Olympic postcards while stocks last.

The books were printed by Harrison from cylinders B11 and B99, the latter applying two

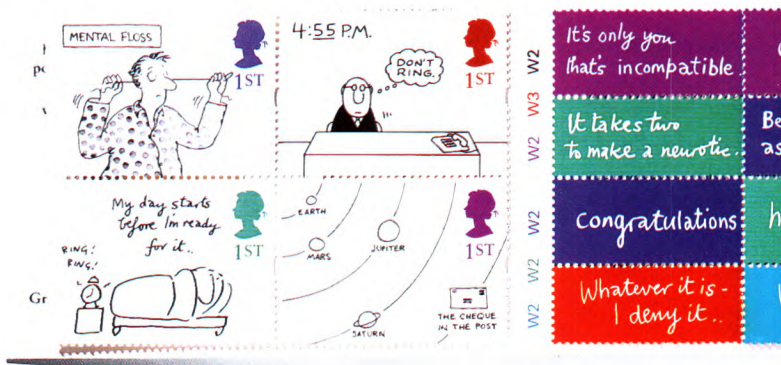
blue fluor phosphor bands. The name of the featured event is printed on the yellow strip at the right. The books are bundled in 50s containing 17 of two of them and 16 of the third.

Yellow strip information The yellow strip at the right of retail books is often used to impart useful information. For example, the three value-bearing books of four issued with Olympic covers state what service is prepaid by the stamps inside. Normally, there is just an instruction to 'pull open' since it is here that the sealed book is opened. Recently, however, this has been omitted and the space left blank. There is, for example, no printing on any of the 1996 Olympic books containing NVIS. There does not seem to be any consistency about this as the 1995 Greetings book carried the instruction while the 1996 reprint does not; an easy way to tell the unopened books apart. Even more curious is the 1996 Cartoons Greetings book. This does not carry the 'pull open' instruction but the display card for it, which cannot be opened, does! The commemorative label books issued for the tercentenary of the Bank of England on 27 July 1994 and the birth centenary of R.J. (Spitfire) Mitchell on 16 May 1995, had yellow strips with the usual 'pull open' instruction as did the contemporary ordinary books of four 1st-class stamps. There was no indication that these label books contained anything unusual. The third book in

Far left Back cover of Olympic Triathlon Archery book – with silver spots scratched off!

Left Yellow strip information on Olympic Triathlon, Olympic logo and Queen's Birthday label books.

Right Cartoons Greetings book – plate numbers W2 W2 W2 W2 W3 W2.



this series, issued on 16 April to commemorate The Queen's 70th birthday, does, however, draw attention to its contents; the yellow strip reads 'commemorative label inside'. These variations in the printing of the yellow strip could make quite a nice display at your local Stamp Club. If you study them carefully you will notice variations in the size, direction and typeface of what might appear to be identical tabs.

A unique phosphor application In the little information box for the Cartoons Greetings book (page 146 January *Bulletin*) the phosphor is described as 'screen'. This was the first time that this word has been used and it led at least one expert commentator to take the Editor to task for a supposed error! In fact the description, although brief, is entirely accurate and I think that readers will find a fuller explanation interesting. In February I drew attention to the fact that the phosphor appeared all over the stamps (ie, there were no bands as on previous greetings stamps) but that the attached labels had no phosphor at all. If one thinks about this, it is clear that some new technique must have been employed since it would be practically impossible to incorporate the phosphor into the coating during manufacture, the way that phosphorised paper is made. What happened is that Walsall printed the phosphor by a special plate (un-numbered) all over the stamps instead of in bands. This had a 40%

screen, hence the *Bulletin* description. The percentage determines the depth or strength of the finished effect. It should not be confused with the screen *angle*, changes in which are a means of avoiding pattern interference.

This is the first time that GB lithographed stamps have had an all-over phosphor overprint. Previously all stamps were either printed on paper which had the phosphor incorporated into the coating before printing began or had phosphor bands added as part of the printing process. The nearest equivalent occurred in August 1979 when Harrison £1 counter books containing 10 × 10p stamps in covers illustrating the famous Ironbridge near Telford. At that time, a heavy printing programme of multicolour special issues was occupying six of the seven gravure units on Harrison's Jumelle press. Although this giant press can print more than one job at the same time, the remaining unit was not enough to print the 10p stamps as one was required for the colour cylinder and another for the phosphor. Pre-coated, phosphorised paper was then still at the trial stage and could not be used. Instead the paper was first printed with all-over phosphor on another machine and then the stamps were printed on the Jumelle in the normal way. In that case, the all-over phosphor was printed under the (coloured) ink. In the case of the Cartoons stamps it is over the colours.

£2 Rowland Hill no 4 reprint This machine-vend book with cover illustrating the Mulready envelope and the introduction of the penny post was first issued 4 September 1995. The eight 25p stamps were overprinted with two phosphor bands containing yellow fluor. A reprint was issued during February and this time the phosphor overprint had the recently-introduced blue fluor. The stamps were not new as the 25p with blue fluor had appeared last September in part of the printing of the £1 machine-vend book featuring Archibald McIndoe. The 25p stamps have Dextrin gum. I have heard it said that this was an unnecessary reprint as the books with illustrated covers had been replaced in January with the new *Questa* red books, mentioned here in February. This is untrue and is based on a misunderstanding; the red books were available only at a few locations while they were being trialled.

Red machine books successfully trialled The £1 and £2 *Questa* machine vend books with red covers went on philatelic sale on 16 January but were sold to the general public only from a few selected machines as a trial to see how the public reacted to them and whether the machines could operate efficiently with the new contents. There were five locations in the London area of Post Office Counters Ltd and seven in Scotland. The addresses were:

Lupus St BO 121-125 Lupus Street, London SWLV 3EW

Hammersmith BO 30 The Broadway Centre, London W6 9YY

Trafalgar Sq BO 24-48 William IV Street, London WC2N 4DL

Victoria St BO 110 Victoria Street, London SW1E 6JU

Fleet St BO 40-41 Fleet Street, London EC4A 1BT

Dumfries BO 7 Great King Street, Dumfries DG1 1AA

Dundee BO 4 Meadowside, Dundee DD1 1AE

Fort William BO 5 High Street, Fort William PH33 6AA

George Sq BO 107 George Square, Glasgow G2 1AB

Frederick St BO 40 Frederick Street, Edinburgh EH2 1EY

Morningside BO 265 Morningside Road, Edinburgh EH10 4RD

St James BO St James Centre, Edinburgh EH1 3SR

The machines were the standard electronic K and L types and there were either one or two at

each site. Despite the fragility of the heavily scored covers which collectors have found liable to break with handling, nothing untoward occurred and the trials were completed successfully. The books will now be made available across the country as stocks allow. They will be sent at random, alongside the books with illustrated covers, until such time as they are phased in nationally and will eventually be the only form of vend book stocked.

Walsall reversion to inset bands The width of the phosphor bands applied to the panes in Walsall books of four 2-bar stamps has varied and the firm has recently reverted to a previous layout. As no set standard has been reached, it seems an opportune time to recapitulate the varieties which have occurred so that those interested can complete their collection and know what to look out for in the future.

There have been three different layouts employed on panes of four. The first had a double ('split') band in the centre, in which two 3.5mm bands were separated by a 1mm gap, and a 3.5mm band at the left and right of the pane. The latter were inset and did not reach to the edge of the perforations. In the second layout, the centre band was a solid 8mm wide and the left and right bands were still inset. The third layout also had a solid centre band but the left and right ones were widened to 4.25mm and covered the perforations completely. The phosphor used to print these arrangements has had either a yellow or a blue fluor added. In consequence the possibilities have become a little numerous and the following table lists all that have been issued with elliptical perforations so far and includes the distinguishing features which have been mentioned in previous articles. Not all books have appeared with all three phosphor layouts.

Walsall's version of the blue fluor is rather difficult to see, compared to that of the other printers. I find it helpful to place a piece of black card under the pane before using the lamp. It is also important to view it in complete darkness.

Readers will appreciate why the study of decimal stamp books offers so many opportunities

for compiling an interesting collection. Because of minor variations in the width of the phosphor bands, specialists actually recognise six layouts and those interested in studying the subject further could not do better than join the G.B. Decimal Stamp Book Study Circle which is celebrating its silver jubilee this year. Enquire of The Hon Membership Secretary, 3 Buttermere Close, Brierley Hill, DY5 3SD.



Content	Layout	Date issued or first seen
4 × 1st first security issue; non-fluor phosphor	1	01.11.93
4 × 1st second security issue, glossy inside cover card; non-fluor phosphor	1	17.08.93
4 × 1st second security issue, matt inside cover card; non-fluor phosphor	1	22.12.93
4 × 1st ditto	2	22.04.94
4 × 1st ditto	3	07.10.94
4 × 1st thick cover card; yellow fluor phosphor	3	21.12.94
4 × 1st thin cover card; yellow fluor phosphor	3	21.06.95
4 × 1st R J Mitchell	2	16.05.95
4 × 1st blue fluor phosphor	3	01.08.95
4 × 1st ditto	2	13.12.95
4 × 1st 1996 Olympic cover; blue fluor phosphor	2	27.01.96
4 × 1st The Queen's 70th birthday	2	16.04.96
4 × 35p glossy inside cover card; non-fluor phosphor	1	01.11.93
4 × 35p matt inside cover card; non-fluor phosphor	1	25.03.94
4 × 35p ditto	2	03.08.94
4 × 35p ditto	3	14.12.94
4 × 35p thick cover card; yellow fluor phosphor	3	16.05.95
4 × 35p thin cover card; blue fluor phosphor	3	05.10.95
4 × 35p thick cover card; blue fluor phosphor	3	20.10.95
4 × 35p 1996 Olympic cover; blue fluor phosphor	2	19.03.96
4 × 41p glossy inside cover card; non-fluor phosphor	1	01.11.93
4 × 41p matt inside cover card; non-fluor phosphor	2	28.01.94
4 × 41p ditto	3	21.03.95
4 × 41p yellow fluor phosphor	3	16.05.95
4 × 41p 1996 Olympic cover; blue fluor phosphor	2	19.03.96
4 × 60p non-fluor phosphor	1	09.08.94
4 × 60p ditto, Christmas 1994 version with greetings 'stickers'	1	04.10.94
4 × 60p yellow fluor phosphor	3	16.05.95
4 × 60p 1996 Olympic cover; blue fluor phosphor	2	19.03.96

George Best label at centre of 25p definitive/Country stamp pane in European Football Championship prestige books.

European Football prestige book This year's prestige book commemorates the European Championships which are being held here this summer. By now, we have come to expect both high quality printing and unusual se-tenant arrangements in these books and the new one will not disappoint. The total face value of the stamps is £6.48 at which odd price the book is sold. The first three panes contain special issue stamps from the Football Legends series and features famous footballers of the past chosen by public ballot. The fourth pane contains eight 25p definitive stamps and a central label with a picture of George Best, another football legend. Six of the stamps are Country issues; two each for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The other two are standard unified issues, and represent, I suppose, England's contribution. The phosphor band layout is unusual and caused by Royal Mail's desire not to let any phosphor encroach onto the label. The bands have blue fluor phosphor and are 9.5mm wide. The pane yields new single stamps for the specialist since the 25p blue fluor Country issues in sheet form have 8mm bands. It also yields the maximum of 12 se-tenant pairs, if one takes account of the interrupted phosphor bands and treats the label as a unit in a pair ●

Errata There was an error in the caption to the illustration of panes of 5 × 3p stamps and a label in my jubilee Machin article on page 206 of the March *Bulletin*. The reference should have been to the 30p counter books. At the time, 3p was the basic 1st-class inland letter rate while 2½p, in the 25p books referred to, was the 2nd-class rate. Of course, the change from perforated to imperforate labels affected all counter book panes of the period which incorporated a label, including those in the 25p books.

25 years of *British Postmark Bulletin*



British Postmark Bulletin

is published fortnightly, and despatched to subscribers from the Bureau in Edinburgh. The annual subscription is £10 UK/Europe, £21.75 rest of world (airmail). Subscriptions or requests for a sample copy should be sent to: British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, Edinburgh EH3 5TT.

When this *Bulletin* was introduced in 1963 details were included of forthcoming special handstamps and postmark slogans. Some illustrations were included when the magazine changed to its present A5-size format in September 1965. By 1971 the number of postmarks was increasing and it was not always possible to give adequate notice of their use. The May 1971 *Bulletin* announced the setting up of a new publication – the *Postmark Bulletin* launched on 1 June. The first issue comprised 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 where collectors needed to send covers for postmarking; subscribers were merely advised that ‘items for reposting should be sent to the Head Postmaster of the town in which the special posting box is located...’ There were no illustrations in the new publication which was sent out as loose A4-size sheets, to be assembled by the subscribers on arrival.

Over the years the *Postmark Bulletin* has been considerably changed. The current title (*British Postmark Bulletin*) was introduced in June 1984 together with a new look. The then Editor, the late Frank Brench, included short editorial comments in a chatty style.

Illustrations of pictorial ‘first day of issue’ handstamps were introduced in March 1981; followed by sponsored handstamps in June 1984, and slogans in 1988.

In June 1988 responsibility for the *Postmark Bulletin* was transferred from the Bureau in Edinburgh to London, being combined with the Editorship of the parent *British Philatelic Bulletin*. John Holman has edited both magazines for the past eight years, working at the National Postal Museum until 1992, subsequently at Royal Mail National’s offices in Turnmill Street and now Finsbury Square. Information is supplied from the Special Handstamp Centres, Forces Post Office, local sorting offices, and by Jim Eldridge, Royal Mail National’s Postmark Manager at Finsbury Square.

Feature articles by leading postmark collectors and writers, James Mackay and Colin Peachey, were introduced in 1991 and the *Postmark Bulletin* redesigned as an A5-size companion publication to this *Bulletin* in September 1992. Since then the number of subscribers has increased significantly and the magazine is now mailed to some 2000 keen postmark and first day cover collectors worldwide.

Many of the special handstamps announced are for use on the first day of issue of new stamps; over 20 different cancels are normally available. (No fewer than 35 were provided for the 1994 D-Day issue!) Collectors are spoiled for choice of postmarks to use on their first day covers.

The *Postmark Bulletin* reviews books of interest to postmark collectors, and announces commemorative postcards reproducing postmarks, usually produced by local philatelic societies. There have been the occasional competition, and exclusive opportunity for subscribers to obtain trial Royal Mail postmarks. It has come a long way since 1971 •

'Christmas' student stamp designs

Last month we featured a number of stamp designs in the Royal Society of Arts's annual design competition for students at colleges of art. The theme for the Stamp section of the 1995/96 competition was Christmas. Further designs are featured this month. An exhibition of the student designs can be seen at the National Postal Museum until 28 June.



Iris Kiewiet's tutor praises her hard work which produces 'strong and interesting illustrations'. Her entry won her a £750 bursary.

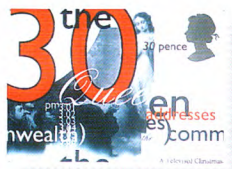
Iris Kiewiet age 21, of the Netherlands is studying at Edinburgh College of Art as an exchange student. Her designs feature Christmas activities: a parent and child, with their dog, out walking in the snow; sitting around a blazing fire; carol singing; and the Christmas dinner table.



Thomas Barker's designs were highly commended by the judges. He is described by his tutor as 'a diligent student, who is not prepared to settle for second best for himself.'

Thomas Barker age 21 of Middlesex, studies at Richmond upon Thames College. He took as his theme the story of Good King Wenceslas with four bold designs showing the King watching the poor man gathering winter fuel; the page and monarch setting out together; food and wine (Chateau Camail); and the King and his page trudging through the snow. Thomas describes his work thus: 'Having decided on the key points in the carol I set about designing compositions for the stamps. For the media I decided to use collage as, rather than simply doing colour illustrations. For the collage I chose to use magazine cuttings rather than buy coloured paper, these give you more textures and shades. I wanted to include

the relevant text of the carol so the stamp buyers would know what part of the storyline each stamp represents. This was not easy as the text must be legible when the designs are reduced to stamp size and not so big that it dominates the overall design. For The Queen's head and the stamp price I found it was easier to design the stamp bearing in mind where they were going to be situated, rather than finish the final collage and hope it would fit in somewhere.'



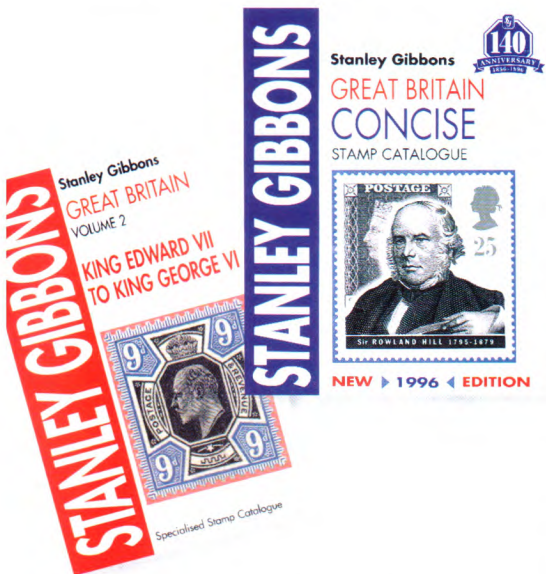
Daniel Bonner received a £500 bursary for his work. His tutor describes him as 'a passionate typographer who is developing his graphic language to fit a variety of project requirements.'

Daniel Bonner age 22 of Cleveland, is also a student at the Edinburgh College of Art. His designs on the theme 'a televised Christmas', recall four well-known Christmas television programmes: *Noel's House Party*; *The Queen's Christmas* broadcast to the Commonwealth; *The Morecambe & Wise Show*; and *Top of the Pops*.

The Postage Stamp section of the RSA Competition started in 1971. Sarah Godwin, one of the winners, designed the 1987 Sir Isaac Newton stamps – see *Bulletin*, March 1987.

In addition to the Student Designs Exhibition at the National Postal Museum, the RSA will mount an additional display for the period 24-28 June to mark the 10th anniversary of the 'New Design for Old' project within the Student Design awards scheme. The aim of this display is to show the best of student work over the years. The student examples will be complemented by the best in professional work in the area from members of the Faculty of Royal Designers for Industry. This will form the basis of a travelling exhibition, later to be shown in Copenhagen, Helsinki, and Munich •

Books Stanley Gibbons catalogues • *Aberdeen and Philately* and *Dundee and Philately* by Stanley Brown



GB Specialised Stamp Catalogue The 10th edition of Volume 2 of the Stanley Gibbons *GB Specialised Stamp Catalogue* was published at the end of March. It is appropriate that it should appear during the 60th anniversary of the 'year of three Kings' (1936) as it covers the stamps of the reigns of Edward VII, George V, Edward VIII, and George VI. Whilst the issues of the first two monarchs can be linked to those of Victoria in complexity and price, the stamps of Edward VIII and his brother are more manageable in number and cost for most collectors. In this respect they also compare well to the stamps of the present reign.

The Editors, David Aggersberg and Robert Oliver, explain the fascination of the stamps covered in this volume: 'The first five decades of the twentieth century were a period of sustained change in the history of British postage stamps. At the beginning of the period the stamps were an echo of the last Victorian issue, by its end patterns had been established which are still with us

today. From 1910 the rate of change gathered pace. Initial encouragement came from a philatelist monarch...but by 1952 the Post Office had evolved into a national institution, well able to maintain itself in the forefront of what was soon to become a high-technology industry. One area of change was, of course, stamp production... with the recognition of the advantages of photogravure printing for high-volume stamp printing. Stamp coils, commemoratives and postage dues were all introduced during the reign of George V. All these changes and new innovations are fully recorded in this catalogue and it is thus not surprising, to quote the Editors, that this volume 'should be one of the most popular in this award-winning (Specialised) series.'

The catalogue lists not only lists stamps but die proofs, colour trials, plate numbers and essays, with additional information, in seven appendices, on perforators, booklets, specimen overprints, postage rates, wartime Channel Islands issues, etc.

Much new information has been added since the last edition (1993), including revisions to the listing of Edward VII 1/2d and 1d values (based on a study by Michael Astley), further George V essays, and improvements to the booklet listings. Further perforation types have been added to George V and George VI cylinder block listing, and further plate numbers and cylinder flaws added throughout. In the Postage Due section, the listings now incorporate a quick guide to the value of each stamp when used on cover.

Many prices have been increased, especially for proof material, varieties and essays. Some Downey head essays are doubled in price. Control blocks and singles, booklets and panes are also revalued. Demand for unmounted mint Edward VII stamps and well-centred lightly used George V seahorses remains high.

The Edward VII bicoloured 9d definitive graces the front cover, with a pleasing unused design by Barnett Freedman for the George V Sil-

ver Jubilee issue as the frontispiece. 448 pages. Price £22.95. Available from Stanley Gibbons Strand shop, or by post from Stanley Gibbons Publications, Parkside, Ringwood, BH24 3SH. Credit card mail order hotline 0800 611622 •

Great Britain Concise Catalogue The 1996 edition of sg's popular *Great Britain Concise Catalogue* was published at the end of April to coincide with the Stamp '96 exhibition at Wembley. This provides a comprehensive listing of British stamps from the Penny Black to recent Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust stamps. In addition it includes Channel Island wartime issues, Official overprints, booklets, Postal Fiscals, etc. It is the ideal catalogue for the moderate specialist, with listings beyond those in Part 1 of the 21-volume sg standard catalogue, but less detailed than those in the five-volume Specialised. The front cover features the 25p Communications stamp of 1995, depicting Sir Rowland Hill, and the logo commemorating 140 years since young Edward Stanley Gibbons started trading in stamps at his father's chemist shop in Plymouth. 320 pages. Price £12.95. Available from sg Strand shop or by mail order from sg Publications, Ringwood (address & phone number above) •

Also new from sg are the 1996 edition of *Collect Channel Islands and Isle of Man Stamps* (£7.95), and the 5th edition of Part 19 of the standard catalogue covering the Middle East countries of Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, United Arab Emirates, Yemen Arab Republic, and Yemen People's Democratic Republic (£24.95) •

Aberdeen and Philately and Dundee and Philately In February we received Stanley Brown's books on the postmarks and philatelic covers of Perth and Shetland. Two more titles are now available, *Aberdeen and Philately* and *Dundee and Philately*. Produced in a handy A5-size, they illustrate special cancels and covers. In the Introduction to the Aberdeen book Mr Brown writes: 'Aberdeen has yet to have a postage stamp. However the Great

Garden at Pitmedden was depicted on one in 1983 and two stamps have been issued showing North sea oil installations.' His account begins with the special handstamp used on 2 September 1969 for Friendship Week – a conference organised by Aberdeen City Police for the International Police Association. Events such as the Highland Games, Hazlehead, 250th anniversary of Aberdeen Royal Infirmary, and opening of Cults Academy have all been philatelically commemorated. Several covers have marked important aspects of the history of the North Sea oil industry, and air services from Aberdeen. Featured amongst the illustrations are the 1977 Scottish aerogramme showing the Wallace Monument in Aberdeen, and a Royal Mail commemorative cover for John McMaster's testimonial game, Pittodrie Stadium, 16 December 1985. Of interest are special presentation-pack style 'folders' produced for The Queen's Silver Jubilee stamps (1977) and Queen Mother's birthday (1980) – Aberdeen and Royal Deeside has strong Royal connections. Both folders are illustrated in colour on the back cover of the book.

'Since the opening of the Tay Road Bridge thirty years ago in 1966', writes Mr Brown, 'the City of Dundee has produced many philatelic souvenirs. This has been in no small way due to the efforts of the Dundee and District Philatelic Society who, for example, have kept the name of James Chalmers, the inventor of the pre-paid adhesive stamp, to the fore.' Amongst Chalmers-related items shown, are the cover of a £1.43 stamp book marking his bicentenary in 1982, and two special handstamps used on 2 February 1982 at Arbroath, his birthplace, and Dundee where he died. The doggerel poet, William McGonagall, was commemorated by a special cover in October 1991. A number of covers celebrate local railway history.

Both books will be of interest to collectors of Aberdeen and Dundee philatelic souvenirs, but may well appeal to a wider, thematic audience. Further titles on The Clyde and Fife are in preparation. The Aberdeen and Dundee titles cost £1.20 each postpaid from: Stanley Brown, 14 Buchan Drive, Perth PH1 1NQ •

Competition sponsored by Omniphil Approvals



1st prize GB Queen Victoria 1891 1d green, letters C-G, SG 212 catalogued £375. A sound lightly used circular postmarks example with faint blue registered crayon line and good colour.

2nd prize GB Edward VII 1902 1d dull blue-green sound used, well-centred for this issue, example, SG 266 catalogued £325. Imperceptible small crease cancelled by two heavier Guernsey rubber circular postmarks, good colour.

3rd prize GB Victoria 1840 1d black, letters HH, lovely lightly cancelled by red Maltese Cross example of plate 2 with four good to very good margins. Premium quality fine used, catalogued £150.

The winners of the February competition are L Tompsett of East Sussex (Cape of Good Hope 4d); W Turner of East Lothian (1d black); and R Glander of Germany (Edward VII 10s). Our thanks to all who entered.

The answers 1. Sir Peter Scott; 2. G Class flying boats; 3. Perth; 4. Johannesburg.

Win a GB Queen Victoria 1891 1d green used cat £375! The prizes for this month's competition have been supplied by Omniphil, specialists in supplying fine stamps on approval, without obligation, by post.

Special promotion: last chance before summer to apply Introducing Omniphil Approvals. If you

have not tried Omniphil Approvals before they are giving away a fine £12 GB set *plus* 1841 2d blue, cat £35, in order to let you try a selection of their fine approvals before summer.

It seems like it may be worth having a fling as you don't have to buy a thing in order to receive a *free* 1841 GB 2d blue, SG cat £35 – and in addition if you purchase a minimum of £12 from their first selection they will give you a gift of a GB unmounted mint set which has realised £12 at auction! A set which has generated a lot of interest and mystery. All these incentives offered for you to participate in their famous 'we'll pay you £100' Discounts Promotion. Apparently it's been pretty successful too, as they now have over 1000 participating collector members.

Their offer seems fair – something for nothing in exchange for having a look at what they have to offer – no obligations to purchase and a nice touch of a *bonus* £12 GB set if you do (sent with your second selection).

In order to benefit from their offer, *write now* telling them *all* the countries/areas that you collect, and they will send you a suitable selection as available without obligation to purchase, plus your free 1841 2d blue, yours to keep whatever you decide. You can stop their service anytime.

They supply stamps from most countries/areas of the world in addition to GB. Although they don't handle wants lists or new issues, if your collection is missing stamps from 1840 to the 1980s *write now* stating *all* countries you collect and whether you collect mint or used to: Omniphil Approvals, Bulletin Blue/Mystery Offer, Stroud, GL6 6RW.

To enter the competition, answer the questions below and send, with your name and address, on a postcard or back of an envelope to: June Bulletin Competition, Royal Mail, 22 Finsbury Square, London EC2A 1NL to arrive by 26 July. You may submit as many entries as you like but each must be poster separately; multiple entries in one envelope will be disregarded.

- 1 How many new sheet definitive stamps are due for issue on 25 June?
- 2 In which city did the Wyon family first settle in the UK?
- 3 Which stamp appears on the front cover of the new edition of SG's *GB Specialised Catalogue*, Volume 2?
- 4 Where did Baron de Coubertin watch Olympic-style Games in 1890?

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



Posting boxes 162



Lion's head letter boxes Our photographs this month were submitted by Roberta Hanson of Spain who writes: 'With reference to the Lion's head letter boxes featured in March 1995 (page 218) I thought you might be interested in the enclosed photos. They show boxes outside Fuen-girola Post Office labelled for local post, Malaga province, other (Spanish) provinces, and abroad. They are above a ramp, which means that foreigners have to be on the tall side to post a letter comfortably. There is also a lion's head on a wall-mounted box inside the building for express mail. I gather they are also in use in other parts of Spain. Someone mentioned seeing them in the Canary Islands marked more or less 'Germany' and 'everywhere else' which gives one an idea of the nationality of the majority of the tourists there! The Fuengirola lions don't appear to have been up as long as the Minorca ones. They roared onto the scene when the new post office opened in August 1993. They certainly look fierce – almost enough to put one off posting a letter!'

Miss Hanson adds that a Lion's head letter box was shown on Spain's 1995 Stamp Day stamp (SG 3317). Other photos, submitted by Miss Hanson, showing boxes in Gibraltar, were shown here in July 1995 •

Readers interested in letter boxes should consider joining the Letter Box Study Group which has some 700 members. For details send a stamped addressed envelope to the Membership Secretary: Sally Jones, 43 Miall Road, Hall Green, Birmingham B28 9BS.



Events

Until 28 June Student Stamp Designs exhibition at National Postal Museum, King Edward Street, London EC1A 1LP. Royal Society of Arts 1995/96 Design Competition. Open Mon-Fri 09.30-16.30, admission free.

Until 30 June Display of Seychelles/Zil Elwan-gen Sesel 1983 Wildlife issue (artwork, essays, proofs, issued stamps) at British Library, Great Russell St, London WC1. Open Mon-Sat 10.00-17.00, Sun 14.30-18.00. Enquiries: 0171 412 7635/6

8 June Lytham St Annes Phil Soc Stamp & Postcard Fair at Drive Methodist Church Hall, St Annes-on-Sea, 10.00-16.30. Admission 30p, children 10p. Dealers, displays, refreshments. Enquiries: Mrs N Barrowclough, 26 Berwick Road, St Annes-on-Sea, Lytham St Annes FY8 1JT.

8-16 June Capex '96 world philatelic exhibition at Metropolitan Toronto Convention Centre, Toronto, Canada. Enquiries: Capex '96, PO Box 204, Station 'Q', Toronto, Ontario, Canada M4T 2M1

15 June Bodmin Stamp Club Stamp Fair at Shire House Suite, Bodmin, 10.00-16.00. Entrance 20p (accompanied children free). Dealers, youth collectors corner. Enquiries: John Booth, 01579 340079.

29-30 June Thematica '96 at Carisbrooke Hall, 63 Seymour Street, London W2. Sat 10.30-19.00; Sun 10.30-17.30. Admission free. Enquiries: Thematic Exhibitions, 0181 343 2434, or B Sole, 01372 467652 (evenings).

6 July Weston-super-Mare Phil Soc Annual Exhibition & Stamp Fair at St Paul's Church Hall, Walliscote Road, Weston-super-Mare, 10.00-16.00. Dealers, refreshments, car parking. Enquiries: J Williams, 10 Brockley Crescent, Bleadon Hill, Weston-super-Mare BS24 9LL •

COMMEMORATING THE EUROPEAN FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS



Royal Mail and Royal Mint are pleased to announce a limited edition 'Philatelic Numismatic Cover' to mark the 1996 European Football Championships in England.

The cover bears the five Football Legends stamps (issued 14 May) cancelled by a Royal Mint sponsored special postmark at Wembley on 8 June, the day the Championships start.

Encapsulated in the cover is the Royal Mint's Brilliant Uncirculated commemorative £2 coin, designed by John Mills, featuring a football on the reverse. (The coin is legal tender as well as a collectors' item.)

Price £12.95. Early ordering advisable – earlier Philatelic-Numismatic/Medallion covers have quickly sold out.

British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, Edinburgh EH3 5TT



Royal Mail