

BRITISH PHILATELIC

The ROYAL MAIL magazine for stamp collectors

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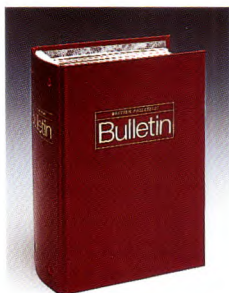
Bulletin

The Great Tudor, Henry VIII
• Decimal stamp books

HENRY VIII



Forthcoming issues & withdrawals



New-look *Bulletin* binder A new supply of the binder has recently been manufactured, bearing the new *Bulletin* masthead on the front cover and spine. It holds 24 issues and includes a sleeve to store the *Commemorative Covers Review*. The binder is available from the British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, Edinburgh EH3 5TT, price £7 postpaid.



The Directors and staff of Royal Mail wish all *Bulletin* readers a happy and peaceful Christmas and New Year.

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

3 December	Issue 2nd class NVI stamp in sheets of 200, with extended phosphor bands
11 December	Withdrawal Walsall 4 × 2nd & Harrison 10 × 2nd books (issued December 1995)
30 December	Issue 1997 Greetings stamp cards
6 January	Issue 1997 Greetings book (Flowers), and presentation pack
13 January	Issue 10 × 1st book with Asda promotion. First day of availability from Bureau; books on sale at Asda stores from October 1996
14 January	Issue The Great Tudor (Henry VIII) stamp cards
15 January	Withdrawal £1 & £2 stamp books, issued 16 January 1996
21 January	Issue The Great Tudor stamps, presentation pack, postcard book and philatelic numismatic cover
24 January	Withdrawal Robert Burns stamps, pack & stamp cards

Events

Until 31 December	'Robert Burns: Man of Letters' exhibition at National Postal Museum
11 December	Display 'GB Postal Mechanisation' by Tom Norgate at Guildford & District PS, Friends Meeting House, North Street, Guildford, 19.30. Enquiries: Patricia Stokoe, 01483 416066
28-29 December	'Big Stamp Manchester' stamp show at Matchpoint Centre, Bramall, Manchester, 10.30-17.00. Enquiries: 01279 433910 or 01279 871110
28-30 December	PhiLondon International Stamp Fair at Croydon College, London. Enquiries: Fairs International, 01273 558066

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Merry Christmas from Royal Mail

The last posting dates for Christmas mail are: for First Class, Friday 20 December; for Second Class, Wednesday 18 December.

But please post earlier if you can, to help us make sure all your seasonal greetings arrive in good time.

BIA

B2B

B2C

B1D

B1E

B1F



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Royal Mail news The Great Tudor • Asda stamp book • Christmas stamps colours & cylinders • Postmark slogan service • Stamp histories at NPM • Scottish aerogramme

A Philatelic Numismatic Cover will be issued on 28 January, the anniversary of Henry's death, price £12.95. This will be available from the Bureau – early ordering is advised as previous PNCs have sold out very quickly.

Presentation pack A presentation pack (price £2.20) and stamp cards (25p each) will be available from the Bureau, Post Office Counters philatelic outlets, and main post offices. The pack contains text by historian Dr David Starkey of London University, and numerous illustrations relating to Henry VIII's reign.

The Great Tudor Seven 26p stamps featuring King Henry VIII and his six wives go on sale at post offices, and philatelic outlets on 21 January. They commemorate the 450th anniversary of the King's death. The 26p denomination covers the basic rate for letters within the UK (1st class) and to European Union countries. The six stamps showing the wives are printed in horizontal se-tenant strips within sheets of 60. The large-size stamp showing King Henry is printed separately, also in sheets of 60. The stamps were designed by Kate Stephens.



Mrs J Robinson
200 Manorbier Road
Ilkeston
Derbyshire
DE7 4AB

Postcards A postcard book will also be available, price £3.50.



HENRY VIII AND HIS SIX WIVES Henry VIII was born at the riverside Palace of Placentia, Greenwich on 28 June 1491, second son of Henry VII. His elder brother Arthur, Prince of Wales, died suddenly in 1502, shortly after his marriage to Catherine of Aragon. Henry, who became betrothed to Catherine the following year, succeeded to the throne on his father's death in April 1509. 'He was', writes historian Dr David Starkey, 'a big, bright, bonny boy, not yet 18 but determined to usher in a golden age of new Renaissance learning and old military glories'.

Henry married Catherine of Aragon (1485-1536) at Greenwich on 7 June 1509, shortly before his coronation at Westminster. He joined his father in law, Ferdinand of Spain, in a war against the French. This put Henry and England amongst the top European powers which he relished with peace treaties and conferences, most famously the Field of the Cloth of Gold, near Calais, in 1520.

But despite his success in Europe, Henry lacked what he most desired, a son and heir. Four children born between 1510 and 1514 all died in infancy. Their presumptive was his daughter, Mary, born at Greenwich in February 1516. Henry believed that the lack of a son was punishment for breaking divine law in marrying his sister-in-law. By 1527 he had fallen in love with one of the ladies of the court, Anne Boleyn, and urged his chief minister, Thomas Wolsey, to seek a dissolution of his marriage to Queen Catherine. Pope Clement VII refused and Wolsey fell from grace. His successor, Thomas Cromwell, sought Parliamentary approval of Henry, not the Pope, as head of the Church in England. In 1533 Thomas Cranmer, newly appointed Archbishop of Canterbury, proclaimed Henry's marriage to Anne Boleyn, ending that to Queen Catherine. She refused the title Princess Dowager, retired to Bedfordshire, died at Kimbolton House, Huntingdonshire three years later and was buried at Peterborough.

Anne Boleyn (?1502-36), daughter of Sir Thomas Boleyn of Hever Castle, Kent, was a maid of honour to Queen Catherine when she began her liaison with Henry. (Her elder sister, Mary, was also a mistress of King Henry.) With flashing eyes, long black hair and a demonstrative nature, Anne captivated many men. Henry created her Marquess of Pembroke



The portrait of King Henry is attributed to the circle of Hans Holbein the Younger. Holbein (1497-1542), son of Hans Holbein the Elder (painter of religious subjects and portraits), was born at Augsburg (Germany). His aptitude for portraiture brought him to the attention of Erasmus who helped him come to England in 1526-28. He was occupied mostly with portraits of Sir Thomas More and his family. Returning in 1532, he designed a pageant arch in honour of Anne Boleyn's entry into London as queen. In 1536 he painted his best-known portrait of Henry VIII (there are numerous copies), being appointed painter to the King. He was entrusted with producing, for Whitehall Palace, a dynastic group portrait of Henry, his parents, and Jane Seymour. This was destroyed by fire in 1698, but a copy exists in the Royal Collection and the cartoon (drawing) in the National Portrait Gallery. Later Holbein developed miniature painting, or 'limning', producing such works of Catherine Howard and his own self-portrait.



Catherine of Aragon and Anne Boleyn by unknown artists. Courtesy of National Portrait Gallery, London



Jane Seymour by Holbein.
By permission of Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna



Anne of Cleves by an
unknown artist. By permission
of Musee du Louvre, Paris



Catherine Howard Portrait
formerly called Catherine
Howard (identity now disput-
ed) after Hans Holbein the
Younger. Courtesy of National
Portrait Gallery, London. There
is no fully authenticated por-
trait of Queen Catherine.



Catherine Parr by an
unknown artist. Courtesy of
National Portrait Gallery,
London

and secretly married her in January 1533. After Archbishop Cranmer declared her Henry's legal wife, she was crowned in May, and gave birth to Princess Elizabeth in September. By January 1536, when she miscarried a son, Henry was already courting her maid, Jane Seymour. Henry accused Anne of adultery, incest (with her brother George), and treason. Despite denials, she was beheaded on Tower Green in May 1536, the executioner using a sword rather than the traditional axe.

Henry became betrothed to Jane Seymour (?1509-37), the day after Anne's execution. The daughter of Sir John Seymour, she served as lady in waiting to both Queens Catherine and Anne. Described as no great beauty, she possessed a small mouth in an oval face. Nearly 20 years younger than the King, she provided him with the long-awaited son, Edward, born in October 1537, but died soon after of child bed fever. She is buried at Windsor with the King.

With a Prince of Wales safely delivered, Henry's fourth marriage was politically inspired. For two years a suitable candidate was sought. Anne of Cleves (1515-57), daughter of John, Duke of Cleves (Germany), was favoured by Cromwell as part of an anti-Catholic policy. A flattering portrait of her, by Holbein, was instrumental in Henry's drawing up a marriage treaty in 1539. Far from impressed when he met her, the marriage was speedily ended by Archbishop Cranmer on the grounds of non-consummation. Anne

retired, with a good financial settlement; spending several years at a royal manor house at Dartford, Kent. (The Dartford Stamp Club met for a short period in this historic building.) She was also granted Hever Castle, which Henry took possession of following the death of Sir Thomas Boleyn in 1538. Anne of Cleves survived King Henry by a decade. The marriage and its failure brought an end to Cromwell's career; he died on the block the day the King married his next wife.

A month after he rid himself of Anne, Henry married Catherine Howard (1521-42), a cousin of Anne Boleyn's, from an impoverished branch of the Duke of Norfolk's family whose members were advanced at court. When the King was seriously ill in 1541 she became romantically involved with Thomas Culpepper. Her adultery revealed, she was arrested on grounds of treason in November 1541 and died on the block the following February. She survived 18 months as Queen – three times longer than her predecessor.



Postmark will read 'Hampton Court, East Molesey', not as shown above.

Henry's final wife, Catherine Parr (1512-48), came to his attention early in 1543. The daughter of Sir Thomas Parr of Kendal, she was noted for her learning and knowledge of religious matters. When her second husband died, Catherine was involved with Thomas Seymour, brother of Jane, but cast him aside when Henry declared his intentions. They married in July. Regent in her husband's absence, Queen Catherine served as nurse and step-mother to his children and published devotional writings. After Henry's death, she married Thomas Seymour, the new King's uncle, but died the following year after childbirth.

Henry's reign is perhaps best known for the split with the Church of Rome and the establishment of the Church of England, and for the development of an effective Royal Navy and coastal defences. From 1538 Henry set about the strengthening of coastal defences with many new castles and forts from Hull to Milford Haven, notably on the Thames, Southampton Water, Isle of Wight, and Cornwall. Three castles 'which keep the Downs' were constructed at Sandown, Deal and Walmer in Kent, under the control of the Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports.

The Royal Armouries were greatly developed at the Tower of London, Greenwich, Westminster, Hampton Court, and Windsor Castle. Many items are preserved, including a grotesque helmet presented to Henry by the Emperor Maximilian I, and armour made for him as Prince of Wales and King.

Henry is also remembered for his building work at St James's Palace and Hampton Court. This was started by his chief minister Wolsey in the 1520s, and presented to the King in a vain attempt to regain favour. Henry's coat of arms and Tudor symbols are to be found in the stonework and decoration. A gate-tower, known as Anne Boleyn's Gateway, was embellished by Henry during the short reign of his second queen. More important is the Great Hall, built by Henry to replace the more modest hall of Wolsey's house, and the Chapel Royal, built by Wolsey but enriched by Henry in 1535-36. Along the Haunted Gallery is said to run the ghost of Catherine Howard, recalling her desperate attempt to reach the chapel to plead for mercy from the King.

During the reigns of Henry VII and Henry VIII the postal service developed to carry the King's despatches. Sir Brian Tuke, a Clerk of the Signet to both monarchs, has become known as the first 'Master of the Posts', although the title was not formally granted until after his death. Tuke featured on a National Postal Museum postcard in 1989 (see *Bulletin* July 1990, p 267). Tony Gammons wrote on the Tudor posts here in January 1986.

Henry, it should be remembered, was King of England, Wales and Ireland, but not of Scotland. He was linked to the Stewart kingdom through his sister Margaret who married King James IV. In the 1540s Henry tried, unsuccessfully, to arrange marriage of his son Edward to Mary, Queen of Scots. The Tudor dynasty ended, after 118 years, when Elizabeth I died childless in 1603. She was succeeded by James VI of Scotland, great-great-grandson of Henry VII, who then ruled both kingdoms. Another century passed before the two countries were united under a single Parliament.

Technical details

Printers Harrison & Sons Ltd

Process Photogravure

Size 41mm square (Henry),
30 x 41mm (wives)

Sheets 60 (separate sheets
of King Henry and wives)

Perforation 15 (King Henry),
15 x 14 (wives)

Phosphor Two bands, incor-
porating blue fluor

Paper OBA (Optical Brighten-
ing Agent) free

Gum PVA



Henry established great naval dockyards at Deptford and Woolwich and built many fine warships, including the *Mary Rose*, and the *Henri Grace a Dieu*, the greatest of her day. The *Mary Rose*, which featured on a British stamp in 1982 (above), was built at Portsmouth 1509-11, and refitted in 1536. In 1545 she sailed to meet French invasion and sank off Portsmouth with the loss of over 600 men.



Asda Stamp Book The book containing 10 x 1st class NVI stamps and Asda store coupon will be available from the British Philatelic Bureau and Post Office Counters philatelic outlets from 13 January. It went on sale at Asda stores in October.

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 about a week before 21 January, price 25p. Collectors may order serviced covers bearing the stamps, cancelled by pictorial 'first day of issue' postmarks of the Bureau or Hampton Court, price £2.56 UK (including VAT), £2.18 overseas (no VAT). Orders must reach the Bureau by 21 January.

Collectors may submit 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, Mount Pleasant, London EC1A 1BB (Hampton Court postmark). Please mark outer envelope 'FD9703' (Bureau), or 'FD9704' (Hampton Court). Boxes will be provided at most main post offices for posting covers to receive local (mostly non-pictorial) 'first day of issue' handstamps.

Other special handstamps will be announced in the *British Postmark Bulletin* – Royal Mail's magazine for postmark collectors. It is available on subscription from the British Philatelic Bureau: £10 UK/Europe; £21.75 rest of world (airmail) ●

Postmark slogan reposting service Since the introduction of the Culler Facer Canceller (CFC) machines in Royal Mail sorting offices it has become increasingly more difficult to provide a service to customers who request specific postmark slogans to be added to individual items of mail. This is because our machines are designed to process, segregate and postmark large volumes of mail in one single operation. The interruption of this process in order to add a specific postmark to a handful of mail items for collectors can cause delay to the rest of the mail. Under these circumstances we regret we are unable to continue to provide a reposting facility for postmark slogan collectors. The service was withdrawn from 4 November 1996. Postmark slogans will continue to be illustrated in the *British Postmark Bulletin* on an information only basis. JAMES ELDRIDGE Postmarks Manager, Royal Mail ●

Definitive update

The National Postal Museum report the following cylinder/plate numbers

20p definitive 14

2nd class NVI in sheets

Q5Q5 and Q6Q6

Wales 20p Q3Q3

£10 high value 4A x 10 and 5A x 10

Stamp rolls (margins and numbers trimmed off before issue) 1st class NVI R4 ●

37p R2 ● 43p R2 ● 25p 'Readers Digest' horizontal roll (non-elliptical perfs) B4

Stamp histories at NPM Staff from the National Postal Museum have been researching the background to British commemorative stamps in Post Office Archives files. Detailed histories of commemorative issues to Christmas 1974 can be seen, by prior arrangement, at the National Postal Museum or Post Office Archives. Histories of the 1964 Shakespeare Festival and 1974 UPU Centenary sets were published in the Museum's Review (annual report) of 1994 and 1995 respectively. Both are still available from the British Philatelic Bureau, price £5 each ●

Presentation packs to remain unchanged In April 1995 I asked for *Bulletin* readers' views on re-designing presentation packs along the lines of those issued by Australia Post. Of the 300 letters received, nearly 60% came out against any changes. The reasons given were (a) the AP design doesn't allow access to the stamps themselves, (b) many collectors were worried that a

new design wouldn't fit their album leaves, and finally, (c) a small minority actually like our packs! While a pack re-design could have been done that satisfied two of the three arguments above, we took the view that our energies were better spent improving the existing product, for example, with celebrities writing the text. STEVE GRIFFITHS Philatelic Products Manager, Royal Mail ●

Scottish aerogramme The date of issue of the Alexander Graham Bell aerogramme will now be 3 March 1997, instead of April as announced here in September. The new date corresponds with the 150th anniversary of Bell's birth ●

Royal Mail printers use computer technology In the January 1992 *Bulletin*, Douglas Muir reported on a visit to the Enschedé stamp printers in the Netherlands, describing their use of a Klischograph scanning machine and computer-generated and controlled engraving of photogravure cylinders. This omits the traditional step-and-repeat camera stage, making for a more uniform appearance of each stamp in the sheet. Indeed each stamp should be identical, without constant flaws or slight variations in the position of the stamp in relation to the rest of the design. Enschedé has used this new technology for all Royal Mail definitives it has printed, also the 1994 Medical Discoveries and 1995 Children's TV sets.

Harrison & Sons Ltd are now using similar methods, their engraving machine being a Klischograph which operates from digitised information produced through the Linotype front end origination system. So far they have used it for the 100 Years of Going to the Pictures, Women of Achievement, Classic Sports Cars, and Christmas stamps. Extensive trials have been carried out on definitive stamps, and the first computer-engraved Harrison definitives are expected early in 1997. Collectors will notice some variation in the depth of colour of the background compared to existing printings, and greater detail in the Queen's head. The Royal Mail colour descriptions for the stamps will remain the same.

Another computerised photogravure system is being developed by Walsall Security Printers. It will be used for the Tales of Terror stamps to be issued in May, NV1 definitives, printed by Walsall using this method, will be announced later.

John Orford, Sales & Marketing Director of Harrisons, comments: 'This has been a dramatic change for us, moving away from the old traditional craft-based system to the latest state-of-the-art computer technology. A whole new range of opportunities present themselves. Apart from greater quality consistency, production times are significantly reduced and finished cylinders are much more "spot free". This may not endear us to the philatelists! It has always been our objective as a company to keep our customers, in this case Royal Mail, in the forefront of technical developments. We felt that now was the time for us to make this change.' ●

Christmas stamps colours and cylinders

2nd P42 (phosphor) ● 1A (gold) ● 2B (greenish yellow) ● 1C (magenta) ● 1D (blue) ● 1E (black) ● 1F (light brown)

1st P44 (phosphor) ● 1A (gold) ● 1B (yellow) ● 1C (cerise) ● 1D (new blue) ● 1E (black) ● 1F (light brown)

31p P43 (phosphor) ● 2A (gold) ● 2B (orange-yellow) ● 1C (cerise) ● 1D (blue) ● 1E (black) ● 1F (light brown)

43p P44 (phosphor) ● 1A (gold) ● 2B (greenish yellow) ● 3C (magenta) ● 1D (new blue) ● 1E (grey-black) ● 1F (light brown)

63p P44 (phosphor) ● 1A (gold) ● 4B (greenish yellow) ● 7C (magenta) ● 2D (new blue) ● 1E (black) ● 1F (light brown)

Barry Robinson, Royal Mail's Design Director, told the *Bulletin*

'This new technology presents some very interesting design and origination opportunities. Whilst the actual engraving of the cylinder is the last step in the process, at the front end is the ability to electronically manipulate images. The first real evidence of this in GB stamps was the Tennyson set of 1992, although the cylinders were made by the conventional method. It is now possible for the printer to transmit and for us to receive an image on the screen in our Finsbury Square office and print it out via a laser copier.'

Stamp scene Autumn Stampex • Postal memorabilia display • Keeping you posted • Ilsapex '98 • Railway Letter Service

January Stampex 1997 takes place at the Business Design Centre, Islington, London N1, 22-26 January. Autumn Stampex 1997 will be 17-21 September, and Spring Stampex 1998, 25 February-1 March.

Enquiries Stampex, 107 Charterhouse Street, London EC1M 6PT. Telephone 0171 490 1005

Stampex The final attendance figure for Autumn Stampex 1996 (18-22 September) was 12,090 – a 3% increase on the number visiting the 1995 show. The Court of Honour display of 1839 Treasury essays, from the Royal Collection, proved a very popular attraction. The Open Class, judged by visitors, was won by David Springbett for his exhibit 'Around the World in Plus or Minus Eighty Days'. The *Stamp Magazine* trophy for the best stand was awarded to M & N Haworth.

The Melville Youth Stamp Competition, held as part of Autumn Stampex, was judged by Richard West (chairman), Franceska Rapkin, John Sussex, and Margery Wharton. There were 12 new entrants this year. The following received awards: Adam Bell, Julia Crowell, Martin and Scott Fergusson, Rebecca Humfrey, Jonathan Spooner, Jonathan Vaughan, Sara Watts, and Iain Waugh. The Philatelic Society trophy was won for the second time by Newcastle upon Tyne; the Schools trophy was retained by Springwell School (Hounslow) •

Enquiries David Harrop, 15 Hawthorne Road, Heaton Mersey, Stockport SK4 3DQ

Postal memorabilia display at Leeds For the past few years David Harrop, a keen collector of postal memorabilia, has been providing displays at stamp exhibitions, vehicle rallies, and permanent displays at museums in north west England. David currently has a display at the City Square Post Office in Leeds. His display entitled 'Mail by Road' was a popular attraction at Autumn Stampex; David wrote a feature about his display in the exhibition catalogue •

Enquiries Paul Gaywood (Preston & District PS) 01772 684302, or John Rayment (Museum of Lancashire) 01722 264061

Keeping You Posted exhibition An exhibition marking the 60th anniversary of the Preston & District Philatelic Society can be seen at the Museum of Lancashire, Preston until 4 May. 'Keeping You Posted' tells the story of stamps with a strong emphasis on Lancashire's postal history. Visitors can see old postal vehicles, including the well-known Hen & Chicks pentacycle, postmen's uniforms, a model of the York-London mail coach, flintlock pistols, and pillar boxes. Most of these are on loan from the National Postal Museum, London.

Amongst the philatelic material on show are Penny Blacks, Mulready envelopes, an example of the rare Preston Maltese Cross postmark in blue, a PO poster giving details of Christmas Day delivery in 1850, and an example of a pre-1840 letter demonstrating how people kept down the cost of postage by writing two ways on one sheet!

There will be a competition for young visitors and a special handstamp will be applied to mail posted at the exhibition. Open 11.00-17.00, except Thursday and Sunday •

Ilsapex '98 This international philatelic exhibition is to be staged in Johannesburg, South Africa in October 1998 – jointly sponsored by the Society of Israel Philately (Johannesburg) and the South African Philatelic Dealers Association, and held under the auspices of the Philatelic Federation of Southern Africa. The first exhibition bulletin has recently been published, giving details of the Executive Committee (chaired by David Stern, FRPSL), the Commissioners, the Ilsapex 250 Club, the exhibition classes and special regulations for potential exhibitors.

The South African miniature sheet promoting Ilsapex, issued in October 1995 (SG MS890), was illustrated on page 171 of the February 1996 *Bulletin* •

Railway Letter Service celebration The Talyllyn Railway will mark 40 years of its Railway Letter Service with a celebration weekend next May. The Railway was the first preserved railway to operate the Railway Letter Service. The weekend begins on Friday 23 May with a special evening train and buffet; a special cover will be produced for those travelling on the train. On Saturday there will be a day of celebration with speakers, displays, old films, a tour round the Pendre railway works, and a celebration dinner at a local hotel, with coach travel from Tywyn via Talyllyn Lake and Corris and return via Aberdovey. On Sunday 25th a week-long TPO service will commence, staffed by the Honorary Postmaster and colleagues; anyone wanting to join in can ask to be rostered during the week. The weekend celebrations are only open to pre-booked participants •

The UK Commissioner is Gerald Bodily, 72 Fitzjohns Avenue, London NW3 5LS

Enquiries about the exhibition to: Ilsapex '98, PO Box 1916, Houghton 3041, South Africa

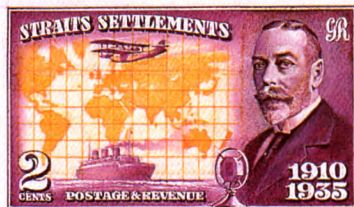
For full information send stamped addressed envelope to: Tony Skinner, 2 Wheatfield Road South, Northampton NN3 2HH

The Queen's stamps at the National Postal Museum

Philatelists have recently had a rare opportunity to see stamps from The Queen's Collection, normally tucked away inside Buckingham Palace, at the National Postal Museum. The exhibition, entitled 'The Queen's Stamps – Mauritius', amounts to over 150 album pages, many written-up in the well-known hand of Sir Edward Denny Bacon, Keeper of the Royal Collection, 1913-38.

GREAT RARETIES The exhibition opens with two of the world's classic stamps – the 1d 'Post Office Mauritius' on cover, postmarked 21 September 1847, and an unused example of the 2d stamp. The famous story of these stamps was retold by Peter Ibbotson in October's *Bulletin*. Only 15 examples of the 1d and 12 of the 2d are believed to have survived. Catalogue value, unused, is a staggering £800,000 each!

Shown with these classics, is a letter written by the Prince of Wales (later George V) in January 1904 to his philatelic adviser, J A Tilleard, who later became the first Keeper of the Royal Collection. Prince George asked Tilleard to purchase the 2d Post Office Mauritius stamp for him at auction for £1200, also 'any other of the Mauritius stamps you can at the sale, pro-



One of the stamp-sized designs for the Silver Jubilee Empire-wide omnibus

Stamps from the Royal Collection are reproduced by gracious permission of HM The Queen. © HM The Queen

The NPM in the former London Chief Post Office, King Edward Street, London EC1, is open Monday-Friday 09.30-16.30. Exhibitions include 'Robert Burns Man of Letters' (until 31 December), 'Victorian Posts', 'Post Haste!' (artefacts and vehicles), and permanent displays from the R M Phillips and Post Office stamp collections.

viding they go fairly cheap', and to send the auction catalogue with prices realised as it would 'interest me very much to see what they fetched'. Tilleard acquired the stamp for £1450.

The 'Post Paid' stamps of 1848-56 cover 40 pages, with no fewer than 80 examples of the 1d and 32 of the 2d, with plated reconstruction sheets of the 12 types. The plates became progressively worn during printing, examples of the five recognised states, from good to weak impressions, are shown.

In 1859 the 1d plate was re-engraved but no stamps were printed. Nearly 20 years later impressions were taken from the plates for E B Evans, a well-known philatelist (later Editor of *Stanley Gibbons' Monthly Journal*) then on military service on the island. These impressions are now in the Royal Collection. In 1911 the plates were defaced and given by the the King to the Royal Philatelic Society.

The exhibition includes 32 examples of the new 2d stamp engraved by Jules Lapirot (March 1859), 14 examples of its successor, engraved by Robert Sherwin (October 1859), and 18 1d and 2d stamps printed in lithography by Louis Adolphe Dardenne (December 1859). Although classic and important stamps, they all bear rather unattractive images of Queen Victoria

The Royal Collection, like many older collections, includes much duplication – sometimes irksome to modern collectors. Earlier generations of collectors liked to have several, if not many, examples of the same stamp – and George V was no exception. Similar duplication can be seen in the Tapling and Phillips collections.

BRITANNIA DESIGN In the 15-page section on the undenominated Britannia higher values of 1858-61, pride of place goes to Henry Corbould's original drawing. Corbould is an important name in philatelic history: his pencil drawings of Queen Victoria being used when producing the dies of the Penny Black. His Britannia drawing is accompanied by fine impressions on India paper, attractive colour trials, examples of the blue stamp locally surcharged 'FOUR-PENCE', and blocks of the vermilion (6d) and dull magenta (9d) stamps, also the dull magenta stamp used as a 1d value in 1862, confirmed by use of the 'B53' postmark. Also shown are examples in red-brown and blue, prepared but not issued, and subsequently overprinted in 1890 as stamp exhibition souvenirs.

Over 40 pages are displayed of the Victoria head stamps of 1860-63 and 1863-72 and the 1895-1907 Coat of Arms issue. Included is the inverted 6c on 18c surcharge (SG 134a), used on postal stationery cover with normal, and a block of 48 of the 6c on 10c surcharge showing the different spacings between the '6' and 'cents'. Further surcharge errors are shown on the six pages of the Express Delivery stamps of 1903-4.

The 10 pages of Edward VII head definitives provide a colourful bridge between the Victorian classics and more modern issues. Some values were printed in two colours on yellow, green and blue papers giving an attractive three colour effect, especially pleasing in plate blocks.

COMMEMORATIVES Mauritius honoured Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee a year late with a 36¢ stamp subsequently surcharged. The display includes specimens, blocks and two examples of the 12¢ inverted surcharge. The 1899 commemorative for the bicentenary of the birth of Admiral Mahe de Labourdonnais, Governor of the island, 1735-46, is one of Mauritius's most pleasing designs. Three pages show die proofs in blue, red, yellow and green with the word 'SPECIMEN' engraved in reverse, as well as the issued stamp in blocks and with specimen overprint.

Amongst the most interesting items in the exhibition are the artists sketches for the 1935 George V Silver Jubilee omnibus issue. Designs, inscribed 'Straits Settlements' or 'Ascension' were prepared by three printers – Bradbury Wilkinson, De La Rue, and Waterlows – featuring Coronation scenes, Westminster Abbey and St Paul's, the Cenotaph, Buckingham Palace, Windsor Castle, maps, and George V in his Coronation regalia, on horseback, and in his study (working on his stamp collection perhaps?). The Windsor Castle design was selected. Visitors will judge for themselves if this was the best choice. Colour trials, without country name, of the Windsor Castle design are shown, also the issued set from Mauritius in plate blocks, with specimen perforation, and on first day cover sent, at royal request, to 'The King, Buckingham Palace, London SW1'.

The exhibition concludes with the 1948 centenary issue, showing a rejected essay with the 2d Post Office Mauritius stamp at left rather than in the centre of the design, colour trials, and the issued stamps in 13 different plate blocks of the four values.

EXHIBITION SOUVENIRS The Museum has produced a handsome 16-page free guide book to the exhibition, and a special handstamp, featuring the famed 2d Post Office Mauritius, is in use until 13 December.

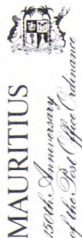
Covers, bearing a 1st class stamp, can be handed in at the Museum or sent to: Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, Mount Pleasant, London EC1A 1BB, requesting handstamp No 4458A •

The Mauritius Post Office will commemorate the 150th anniversary of the island's first stamps next year. Meanwhile, on 2 December 1996, four stamps mark the sesquicentenary of the Post Office Ordinance, 'providing for the conveyance and postage of letters', authorising the introduction of stamps. These feature islanders posting a letter (60 cents), Mauritius postmark of 1866 (4 rupees), mobile post office (5r), and carriage (horse-drawn wagon) outside post office (10r).



Two further designs for the Silver Jubilee

Stamps from the Royal Collection were also displayed at Autumn Stampex (1839 Treasury essays), and the New-castle '96 exhibition (Airmails). The new Keeper, Mr Charles Goodwyn, aims to make the Collection more accessible. Hitherto displays have been mostly limited to international stamp exhibitions and for the Royal Philatelic Society, London.



Decimal stamp books 30 Specialist report by D G A Myall

Christmas books cylinder numbers seen to date: 1st class B1A (silver); B2B (old gold); B2C (red); B1D (blue); B1E (black); B1F (brown); B10 (phosphor). These exist with and without stops. 2nd class B1A (gold); B1B (yellow); B2C (red); B1D (blue); B1E (black); B1F (brown); B11 (phosphor).

Olympics books (opposite) Group 1 (top) and Group 5 (underneath) covers.

Merry Christmas from Royal Mail

The last posting dates for Christmas mail are: for First Class, Friday 20 December; for Second Class, Wednesday 18 December.

But please post earlier if you can, to help us make sure all your seasonal greetings arrive in good time.

B1A
B2B
B2C
B1D
B1E
B1F



Merry Christmas from Royal Mail

The last posting dates for Christmas mail are: for Second Class, Wednesday 18 December; for First Class, Friday 20 December.

But please post earlier if you can, to help us make sure all your seasonal greetings arrive in good time.

B1A
B1B
B2C
B1D
B1E
B1F



The 1996 Christmas books This year there are two Christmas books. They contain special issue stamps prepaying the basic rates for the inland 1st and 2nd class services. Designed by Laura Stoddart, these feature the Star in the East (2nd class) and the Annunciation to Mary (1st class). The general public normally prefers to use 1st class stamps but Christmas cards are traditionally sent second class (unless you overlook someone or leave it late!) The books contain either 10 first class stamps or 20 second class. The words 'Season's Greetings' appear on the yellow strip of both books.

The stamps are Non Value Indicators (NVI). Pictorial NVIs have been issued before, notably in the Greetings books, but this is the first time that they have appeared on a Christmas issue. There is no difference between the book stamps and those sold in sheets. Another new feature for Christmas stamps is that they have been printed from cylinders made by the computerised method instead of by the traditional acid etch method. This first Harrison special issue cylinders made this way were for the Cinema stamps.

Both Christmas booklet values were printed on the Jumelle press from cylinders which were 20 stamps wide. For making the books of 10, the web was slit vertically into two columns. These may be distinguished by the fact that the cylinder numbers on the right-hand column have full stops. Those seen to date are listed above.

The Asda promotion On 7 October, books of 10 1st-class NVI stamps became available from Asda supermarket stores. Printed by Walsall, these contain a coupon, or voucher, on the inside back cover which may be exchanged for a reduction of £1 from the price of four greetings cards purchased singly from the stores – the offer is not available if you buy cards in boxes or packs. The voucher is valid until 31 December and the books are not on general sale until after the promotion is well past, becoming available from the Bureau on 13 January 1997. The terms of the offer are printed inside the cover of the booklet. These state that the voucher may not be redeemed for cash, although a cash value is given. However, this is only .0001p, so one would need to buy 10,000 books to get a penny back and one wonders whether the embargo was worth imposing.

The £1 deduction is almost the cost of four 1st class stamps, one for each card. This is reminiscent of a similar use of 1st class NVIs to promote sales of greetings cards at Boots stores in 1994. On that occasion, one needed to buy only a single card and obtained a sheetlet containing the free stamp without having to buy any stamps at all, let alone a book of 10. I wonder which form of promotion of greetings card sales will prove to have been the most successful?

The 1996 Olympics books These have been on sale since last February and are set to continue until next February. In my last column I men-



tioned that the Olympics series has incorporated several changes in the detail and layout of other features of the covers. In fact, the Olympics books have become rather complicated and readers might like to know what has been issued in order to complete their collections while the material is still fairly easily obtained.

It is sufficient, I think, to limit consideration to three features. These all appear on the outside covers when opened out. They are: (1) the presence or absence of white lines across the bottom right corners of the stamps in the block illustration at the left (the front cover), (2) the manner of setting the text stating what the content is, also at the left, and (3) the presence or absence of the printer's initial at the right (the back cover).

The white lines, referred to by Royal Mail as defacing bars, have been a requirement for many years whenever coloured reproductions of stamps are published, whether on stamp covers or in magazines etc. This is a security matter, to prevent their being used for postage. No defacing bar is required when the reproduction is reduced to less than $\frac{1}{4}$ the width of the original stamp. This relaxation seems to have been applied rather unevenly. The bars were first omitted from the covers of The Queen's birthday label books. They have never appeared on the covers of value bearing books with Olympics logos.

The text which states the stamp content (first class stamps, or whatever), was, until recently,

centred, ie each word which occupies a separate line is at the centre of its line. Now the three lines are ranged left, which is a printer's term meaning that each line begins at the same point. The single initial, H, Q or W, indicates the firm which printed the cover and its contents.

The books are best considered in the following groups which are given in roughly chronological order. It is not expected that there will be any further variants.

GROUP 1 white lines, centred text, no initial: Harrison 10 × 2nd, 10 × 1st; Questa 10 × 2nd; Walsall 4 × 2nd, 4 × 1st, 10 × 1st.

GROUP 2 no white lines, centred text, no initial: Walsall 4 × 35p, 4 × 41p, 4 × 60p.

GROUP 3 no white lines, text ranged left, no initial: Walsall 4 × 37p, 4 × 63p.

GROUP 4 white lines, text ranged left, initial: Harrison 10 × 2nd, 10 × 1st.

GROUP 5 no white lines, text ranged left, initial: Questa 10 × 2nd; Walsall 10 × 1st.

GROUP 6 no white lines, text ranged left, no initial: Walsall 4 × 1st.

As can be seen, the books with value stamps were included in the promotion, unlike the 1992 Olympics issue. Not every printer has produced books in each group. With three printers involved and nine different contents as well as numerous plate and cylinder combinations, readers seeking completeness need some assistance. The cylinder and plate combinations are given in the table which follows. It should be noted that the British

Philatelic Bureau cannot undertake to supply particular plate books.

Group 6 appears to have been an aberration. There were only three plate combinations, all of which also appeared in books in Group 1. In fact, on the day that the last of the three plate books was reported, a later combination appeared with Group 1 covers and this has continued for another five combinations at the time of writing. The book in Group 6 is scarce and non-plate examples are already fetching three times their face value. Plate books are, of course, even scarcer and are likely to command prices of £15, or even more. Books of 4 × 1st are the fastest selling and turnover is quite rapid (which accounts for the large number of plate combinations). Nevertheless, you might well find some still in your local sub post office or newsagent. You may even have some, unrecognised, in your collection already. It is worth checking.

In the table, the colour and phosphor numbers are separated by a solidus. Walsall do not number their phosphor plates. It is particularly interesting to see the same combinations appearing within different covers. On the other hand, several combinations were short-lived. Lithographic plates are cheaper to make than photogravure cylinders and are not so durable so that the print runs are shorter. In addition, if a plate develops a fault or gives trouble on the press it is a fairly simple matter to replace it during the run, without taking the remaining plates off the press. This can result in a scarce combination. When you take into account the fact that distribution, especially to individual retailers, is rather random, some may be difficult to find and there even may be some which are never reported. If you know of any unlisted combinations, I should like to hear from you. An interesting result of compiling a table in this way is that it reveals the possibility of a missing combination. Taking the Walsall books of 4 × 1st, for example, the following numbers do not appear: w37 and w38 in the first position, w45 in the second position and w48 and w49 in the third position. However, these plates exist. They were used for the label panes commemorating The Queen's 70th birth-

day, which did not have Olympics covers. The two recent promotional books, the W H Smith leisure guide offer, and the Asda card offer, also carried the Olympics logos, a sort of double promotion.

What comes next? On 4 February 1997, six books of NV1 stamps are due to be issued without the Olympic logos. They are: 4 × 2nd (Walsall), 10 × 2nd (Harrison and Questa), 10 × 1st (Harrison and Walsall). Full details are not to hand at the time of writing, but it is intended that the logos will be replaced with text mentioning other stamp book products. Also to be issued, on the same date, are revised covers for the 4 × 37p and 4 × 63p. On these, the space formerly occupied by the logos will refer to the validity of the contents, for worldwide postcards and worldwide letters up to 20g respectively, and a statement that books of stamps for the other service are also on sale.

The NV1 books, but not the value-bearing ones, will carry the printer's initial. The contents text ranged left will become standard on all books. It is understood that the removal of the defacing bar will also become standard. The NV1 books will continue to have blank yellow strips, ie the absence of the words 'Pull Open' will become permanent. Still, readers should be on the lookout for any variations.

'Send a Cake' books The plate combinations used by Walsall to print the 'Send a Cake' books are proving to be rather numerous. So far, there have been eight combinations and nearly all of them have appeared in covers with and without the black box which denotes books sold through retailers. It seems that Royal Mail is expecting to distribute a lot of miniature cakes. These books do not have the block illustration on the front cover and so there are no white lines. Nor is there a printer's initial, presumably because half the books have a black box where that would normally be placed. The contents text is ranged left. So that readers can see the complete list of plate combinations used on Walsall books of 10, the cake books have been included in the table.

Recent cover variations and plate etc combinations

Content	Printer	Group	Plate and cylinder combinations				Notes
4 x 2nd	Walsall	1	W11 W15 W14 W18	W12 W15 W14 W19	W13 W16	W14 W17	
4 x 1st	Walsall	1	W34 W42 W45 W39 W46 W50 W42 W47 W52 W43 W49 W53 W45 W49 W55	W34 W42 W46 W39 W46 W51 W42 W48 W52 W43 W49 W54 W45 W49 W56	W35 W43 W46 W40 W46 W51 W42 W48 W53 W44 W49 W54 W45 W50 W56	W36 W44 W47 W41 W47 W52 W42 W49 W53 W44 W49 W55 W46 W50 W56	
		6	W42 W49 W53 W37 W45 W48	W43 W49 W53 W38 W45 W48	W43 W49 W54 W38 W45 W49		1 2
10 x 2nd	Harrison	1	B1/B8	B3/B8			
		4	B3/B8				
	Questa	1	Q23 Q23/Q2	Q24 Q24/Q2	Q25 Q25/Q2		
		5	Q25 Q25/Q2				
10 x 1st	Harrison	1	B5/B99	B11/B99			
		4	B11/B99				
	Walsall	1	W45 W33 W38 W47 W35 W40 W49 W36 W41	W45 W33 W39 W47 W36 W40 W49 W37 W41	W46 W33 W39 W48 W36 W40	W46 W34 W39 W48 W36 W41	
		5	W52 W39 W42 W49 W36 W41 W53 W41 W44	W53 W40 W43 W49 W37 W41			3 4 5
			W49 W37 W41 W52 W38 W42	W50 W38 W41 W52 W39 W42	W50 W38 W42 W53 W39 W42	W51 W38 W42 W53 W40 W42	6
4 x 35p	Walsall	2	W3 W4				
4 x 37p		3	W1 W1				
4 x 41p		2	W2 W1				
4 x 60p		2	W2 W1				
4 x 63p		3	W1 W1				

1 Scarce; subsequent books of this value reverted to Group 1 covers

2 The Queen's 70th birthday label book

3 Non-promotional books; no printing on the yellow strip

4 W H Smith promotion; 'W H Smith Offer Inside' on the yellow strip

5 Asda promotion; 'Offer Inside' on the yellow strip

6 'Send a Cake' books; all appeared with and without the black box except W53 W39

W42 which is known only in the black box version; all have 'Open For Details' on the yellow strip.

Walsall turn to photogravure Walsall have installed a photogravure press and are currently running it in and conducting trials. The cylinders for it will be prepared by the computerised method. It is likely that the new press will be used to print books some time next year. Given the much longer life of photogravure cylinders this will probably mean the end of numerous plate number combinations, emanating from this firm. If so, it will come as a great relief to a lot of collectors – and to their pockets.

Cartoons greetings book reprint The Cartoons greetings book has been reprinted with some important changes. The stamp and label designs are the same but the stamps now have two phosphor bars instead of phosphor printed all over. I still see occasional references to the first issue being on phosphor coated paper but, as explained here in June, the phosphor was printed over the colour and was not incorporated into the paper coating. The text on the inside front cover has been thoroughly revised. The main changes are that the 1996 dates have gone and

Plate combinations seen on the original issue

W1W1W1W1W1W1 *
W2W2W2W2W2W2 *
W2W2W2W2W3W2
W2W3W2W2W2W2 *
W2W3W2W2W3W2 *
W3W2W2W2W3W2
W3W3W2W2W3W2 *
W4W3W3W3W4W3
W4W4W3W3W4W3
W5W4W3W3W4W3
W5W4W3W3W4W4
W6W4W4W4W5W4

* also known on unfolded
panes in presentation pack

**Don't forget to
post your cards in
1996 for:**

Valentine's Day
14 February

Mother's Day
17 March

Easter
7 April

Father's Day
16 June

Grandparent's Day
28 September

These greetings st
class and are valid
rate. They may be
to 60g within the
part payment for
any country prov
paid for the item.

For customer serv
information abou
Tel: 0345 740 740

Need to know a

**Greetings stamp
offices and select**

**Other Greetings
stamps to suit all**

These beautiful Greetings stamps are designed to make sending and receiving cards and letters even more enjoyable. They are ideal for all your special occasions mail – and don't forget to use the complementary greetings labels!

These stamps are simply mark First Class and are valid what the current postage rate. They may be used for First Class ite up to 60g within the UK. The can also be used as part payme on heavier items to any count provided the full cost of posta is paid for the item.

For customer service enquire or any information about our products and services tel: 0345 740 740

Need to know a postcode? Tel: 0345 111 222

are replaced with a note extolling the virtues of greetings stamps and the 'complementary' labels. This is a correct use of the word since the labels complement the stamps with messages similar to those on the stamps and are written in the same manuscript style. They are also 'complimentary',

since they are free.

The plate combination seen on the reprint is w7w5w5w5w6w6. No doubt there will be others. To complete the picture, the plate combinations seen on the original issue are given above. ●

Out of the Arc First National Standard Pillar Box, 1876

Since 1990 the Post Office Archives has been using the wealth of historical information which it holds to produce a range of miniatures. The Archives is pleased to announce that the latest in the series is now available. Simon Bates reports



Miniature No 10 shows a First National Standard Pillar Box, set in the year 1876. From their introduction to the British mainland in 1853, responsibility for pillar boxes of various sizes was left to the various District Surveyors. This led to the appearance of boxes of various size and shape and there was no uniformity; boxes which you saw in one part of the country would not be used in others.

In 1857 came the first attempt at uniformity. The Postmaster General decreed that pillar

boxes modelled on the Science and Art boxes used in London, but lacking the external decoration, were to be introduced for use in the country. This initiative was less than successful; letters regularly overflowed from these boxes and a larger-capacity standard box was sought.

The opinion of all London District Controllers, and the Surveyors of Manchester and Birmingham, was sought and a design produced. The contract to supply these boxes was awarded to Cochrane & Co in March 1859. Like its pre-



Far left First National Standard Pillar Box with lamp attached – Lord Street, Rochdale

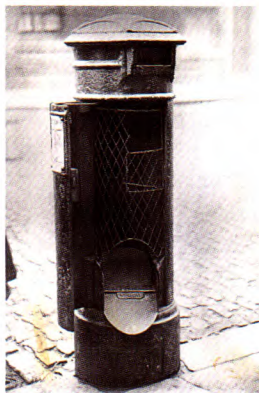
Left Miniature no 10

Below Inside the first National Standard – the crowd-pulling wire cage

Opposite page The current range of miniatures

decessor, the First National Standard lacked external decoration. A number of its design features were intended to address earlier problems. The new box was taller and was designed to protect its contents from the elements; not only was the posting aperture sited below the projecting rim of the roof, it also had an inward opening flap which could not be left open. Once opened for collection, a wire guard ensured that letters did not fall out of the box. According to contemporary reports this last feature was popular with the public and drew crowds to the pillar box at collection times! The First National Standard was produced for only seven years and was replaced in 1866 by the Penfold.

Miniature No 10 of a First National Standard of 1876 is based on one in the NPM collection. The pillar box is painted in the red colour first introduced in 1874 as a brighter alternative to dark green. It has no indicator tab (not intro-



duced until 1882), but does feature an enamelled collection plate.

On the very first boxes collection times were simply painted onto the front of the box. Separate iron plates were introduced in 1857 and, by 1861, printed paper notices were being affixed to this. Enamelled collection plates were first introduced in London in 1862 but were not widespread until 1871. Such plates were dark grey in colour, with white lettering; they were changed to white with black lettering some time before 1878.

Until 31 December 1996 this new miniature is available to *Bulletin* readers at the special introductory price of £19.95 (strictly limited to one per customer). Cheques payable to The Post Office in £ sterling should be sent to: Post Office Archives, Freeling House, Mount Pleasant Complex, Phoenix Place Entrance, London EC1A 1BB. A handling charge of 60p should be added to each order. Miniature no 11, a First World War Postwoman, will be available early 1997 •

ROYAL mail

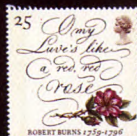


Stamps in each set
are numbered from
left to right

mint stamps,

Robert Burns

1 2 3 4



Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust

5 6 7 8 9



100 Years of Going to the Pictures

10 11 12 13 14



Football Legends

15 16 17 18 19



Swifter, Higher, Stronger (Olympics)

20 21 22 23 24



Cast your votes in £500 Prize Draws

Favourite stamps of 1996 For the 11th year running we are inviting you to vote for your favourite stamps. Shown below are the special and greetings stamps of 1996. Tell us your top three sets and favourite individual stamp (numbered 1-54) on the enclosed voting form.

All forms will go into a prize draw – the sender of the first 'out of the hat' will win £250. Runner-up prizes will go to the senders of the next five drawn.

Stamps shown here as in 1996 Yearpack.



Women of Achievement

25 26 27 28 29



Big Stars of the Small Screen (Children's TV)

30 31 32 33 34



Classic Sports Cars

35 36 37 38 39



Christmas

40 41 42 43 44



Greetings (Cartoons)

Top row:
45 46 47 48 49

Bottom row:
50 51 52 53 54

Prize Draws Favourite *Bulletin* writers and famous people

Favourite *Bulletin* writer We are asking you the readers to vote for your favourite *Bulletin* writer of the year. Please enter the surname of your chosen author on the voting form. If you wish, also enter the title of your favourite article. All voting forms go into a second prize draw, the sender of the first drawn will receive £100. Five runners-up will also receive prizes. The favourite author will also receive £100. This year's writers are listed opposite, with the months their articles were published.

Patrick Awcock February, April, July
Colin Baker January, March, May, August, November
Martin Balls December
Richard Beith February, August, September
John Gatrell November
Fred Gee September
Matt Hinton January, May, July, September
Peter Ibbotson October
James Mackay February, March, July, October

Donald Malcolm April, October
D G A Myall February, March, April, June, August, October, December
James Negus May
Ron Negus January, May, July, December
Alan Peirce May
Franceska Rapkin August, November
Kim Styles March
Bob Wilcock July

Who would you like to see on stamps? During 1996 two sets in particular featured famous and eminent people (Football Legends and Women of Achievement). We would be interested to know who *Bulletin* readers would like to see featured on British special or greetings stamps in the future. We invite you to nominate up to five notable persons on the voting form. Please remember that no living persons, other than members of the Royal Family, can appear on British stamps. Persons nominated can be from any period of history and from any background

— scientists, entertainers, writers, artists, sports stars, politicians, etc.

All voting forms will go into a third prize draw and the sender of the first drawn will receive £150. Runner up prizes will go to the senders of a further five entries drawn.

To refresh your memory, the following people have appeared on British special and greetings stamps already, but this does not preclude you nominating them again. Living members of the Royal Family are excluded from this list. (Year of issue follows each name.)

Sir John Alcock 1969
Prince Albert 1987
Charles Babbage 1991
Francis Baily 1970
Sir John Barbiroli 1980
Billy Batten 1995
Sir Thomas Beecham 1980
Brian Bevan 1995
The Black Prince 1974
Admiral Blake 1982
Danny Blanchflower 1996
Charlotte Bronte 1980
Emily Bronte 1980
Sir Arthur Brown 1969
Robert Burns 1966
Charlie Chaplin 1985
Emperor Claudius 1993
Harry Corbett 1996
Viscount Cunningham 1982
Winston Churchill 1965, '74
Charles Darwin 1982
Bishop Richard Davies 1988
Dixie Dean 1996
Benjamin Disraeli 1987
Lord Dowding 1986
Sir Francis Drake 1973

Dame Daphne du Maurier 1996
Duncan Edwards 1996
George Eliot 1980
Elizabeth I of England 1968
Michael Faraday 1991
Lord Fisher 1982
Dame Margot Fonteyn 1996
Benjamin Franklin 1976
Dame Elisabeth Frink 1996
Sir Martin Frobisher 1972
Mahatma Gandhi 1969
Mrs Gaskell 1980
George VI 1990
Owain Glyndwr 1974
W G Grace 1973, '88
Thomas Gray 1971
Emperor Hadrian 1993
Thomas Hardy 1990
Sir Arthur Harris 1986
Marea Hartman 1996
Henry V 1964, '74
Henry VIII 1982
Sir John Herschel 1970
Sir William Herschel 1970
Sir Rowland Hill 1979, '95

Alfred Hitchcock 1985
Dorothy Hodgkin 1996
Henry Hudson 1972
Alice Hughes 1995 *
John Keats 1971
Alice Keppel 1995 *
Stan Laurel 1990 *
Edward Lear 1988
Vivien Leigh 1985, '96
John Lennon 1988
David Livingstone 1963
Joseph Lister 1965
Guglielmo Marconi 1995
Annette Mills 1996
Bobby Moore 1996
Rev William Morgan 1988
Lord Nelson 1982
Florence Nightingale 1970
David Niven 1985
Sir Laurence Olivier 1996
Emmeline Pankhurst 1968
Bishop Richard Parry 1988
Lord Portal 1986
Sir Henry Raeburn 1973
Sir Walter Raleigh 1973
Gus Risman 1995

Sir James Clark Ross 1972
Sir Joshua Reynolds 1973
Robert the Bruce 1974
William Salesbury 1988
Sir Malcolm Sargent 1980
Capt Robert Scott 1972
Sir Walter Scott 1971
Peter Sellers 1985
William Shakespeare 1964, '88, '95
H M Stanley 1973
Charles Sturt 1973
Jim Sullivan 1995
Lord Tedder 1986
Alfred, Lord Tennyson 1992
Lord Trenchard 1986
Harold Wagstaff 1995
Sir William Wallace 1996
H G Wells 1995
Ralph Vaughan Williams 1972
Victoria 1940, '70, '92 *
Sir Henry Wood 1980
Billy Wright 1996

* Depicted on greetings stamp

Note that some of the depictions are not immediately obvious, eg Henry V on 1964 Shakespeare stamp, Wells and Shakespeare on 1995 Science Fiction and Shakespeare's Globe issues. Look carefully! Not included in the listing is the tiny representation of Sir Francis Chichester on the 1967 stamp marking his world voyage, representations of Christ on Christmas issues, and Christ and the Goddess Roma in the 1993 Roman Britain set.

Send your votes for all three draws – Favourite Stamps; Writer; and Famous People for future stamp issues on the enclosed voting form to: Prize Draws, British Philatelic Bulletin, Royal Mail, 22 Finsbury Square, London EC2A 1NL to arrive by 24 January. The results will be announced in the *Bulletin*. The Editor's decision will be final and no correspondence will be entered into.

We look forward to receiving your votes! ●

Eminent early collectors 2 Gordon Smith, by Ron Negus

Although he died just three weeks after his 49th birthday, Gordon Smith left his mark in English philatelic circles. He was well-known and admired as an experienced collector, an able administrator and a philatelic writer.

Born on 15 January 1856, Gordon Smith studied at King's College School in London and subsequently at Cambridge, obtaining an honours degree in mathematics in 1897. He earned recognition as an oarsman and was stroke for his college boat. Later, he joined the Thames Rowing Club and participated in races at Henley with distinction.

After graduation, he took up teaching and became mathematics master at Truro College. The academic life did not appeal, however, and he returned to London to study law. In 1882, he was called to the Bar at Lincoln's Inn and joined the chambers of a leading Admiralty lawyer. Part of his duties there were to help edit and compile legal texts, a task that stood him in good stead later in the philatelic field.

During his time as a barrister, Smith renewed his interest in stamps which had started at uni-



versity but had been laid aside. By 1885, he had begun to collect British stamps seriously. He built up a sizeable collection, which contained unused specimens only, and was particularly strong in plate numbers. Eventually, the shortage of suitable specimens in this popular area led him to change countries. South Australia became his new interest, in 1890, and he soon formed a specialised collection. The attraction of that Colony's issues was shared by his close friend, Lt F H Napier and together

they wrote a handbook on its stamps. This work, published in 1894, is still regarded as an authoritative text.

Whilst still working on his book, he changed careers again and entered the philatelic world full-time by becoming a member of the staff at Stanley Gibbons Ltd in 1893. In the previous year he had applied, and been accepted for, member-

ship of the (later Royal) Philatelic Society of London. The notice of their meeting of 3 December 1892 records his application as being proposed by Hastings E Wright, a prominent GB collector. Gordon Smith soon became heavily involved at both Gibbons and the Society.

Changing interests He sold his South Australian material to another eminent collector, Mr L L R Hausburg, after the book was completed and turned his attention elsewhere. During this later phase, he collected Luxembourg, Portugal, Russian locals, postcards and postal stationery. He also made a fine collection of the stamps of the English Private Telegraph Companies and so became an early Cinderella collector.

At Stanley Gibbons, he undertook the editorial work on the catalogues, and handled their annual revisions. From 1894 until his death, he was in sole charge of the regularly updated editions of the *Imperial Postage Stamp Album*, which the firm claimed was 'the best known and most popular stamp album in the world'. In recognition of the care and accuracy of his editorial work, he was appointed a director of Gibbons in 1898.

At the Philatelic Society of London, Smith was appointed to Council in May 1897 as a result of his active participation in its affairs, including the presentation of a number of displays. In 1897 itself, he had been largely responsible for the organisation and success of the London Philatelic Exhibition that was held in Piccadilly to mark the 60th anniversary of the accession of Queen Victoria. After the event, the Society held a dinner in his honour and presented him with a gold watch and chain. In a subsequent interview, published in the *Philatelic Journal of Great Britain*, he said he regarded this as his most valued possession, and wore it regularly.

Perforations expert In 1900, Smith was invited to join Bacon, Castle and Evans to augment the Expert Committee of the Philatelic Society. From then until his death, he served in this task with great distinction, and was noted for his wide ranging knowledge of stamps of all countries.

His legal training was said to have enabled him to distinguish between evidence and proof when faced with doubtful submissions. In addition, he was recognised as an expert in the field of perforations.

Another lesser-known role undertaken by Gordon Smith was to act as secretary of the Society for the Suppression of Speculative Stamps. This body was formed, as a joint venture representing both collectors and dealers, in May 1895 and used Gibbons' offices at 391 Strand as its administrative base. Its purpose was to expose the rash of undesirable stamp issues being produced by many nations and encourage collectors to boycott them.

Gordon Smith shared his knowledge freely with others, and was the author of many articles in the philatelic press. One notable exercise was his detailed listings of stamps in the Tapling Collection which he contributed to *Gibbons Monthly Journal* from 1895 to 1901.

Outside of his philatelic pursuits, Smith was deeply interested in Freemasonry, was connected with many of its organisations, and was appointed Grand Sword-Bearer of England in the fraternity in 1897. He was also concerned with military affairs, and rose to occupy the rank of Major in the Queen's Own Battalion of the West Kent Volunteers, a territorial army unit.

Although he had such an active working life, he was often in severe pain from what was thought to be chronic indigestion. In January 1905, whilst attending a dinner, he fainted and was rushed to hospital. A stomach ulcer was diagnosed and he had to undergo immediate surgery, which was successful. However, post-operative complications set in and a few days after the operation, on 3 February 1905, he suffered a heart attack which proved fatal.

An obituary in *Stamp Collectors' Fortnightly* said of him 'He wrote, and wrote well, on philatelic matters and had got well into the heart of a series of papers on British stamps for *Gibbons Stamp Weekly* when the touch of the grim reaper stayed his pen for ever.' His passing, at such an early age, was regarded as a great loss to British philately. ●

My kind of collecting Martin Balls records his own brand of collecting

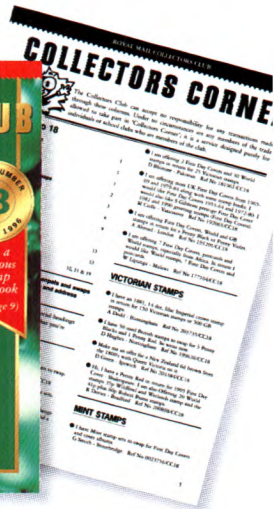
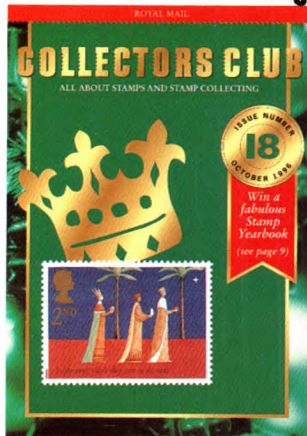
I suspect my challenge in collecting is shared by many keen collectors: I'm self-employed so time is money and I always feel as if I should be working rather than enjoying myself; I don't belong to a philatelic society; and when it comes to writing up my collection, I have to admit that I haven't mounted a stamp in an album for probably three years. Yet I collect GB material that is relatively inexpensive; the paradox is that it's so hard to come by.

First a little background. I've been collecting stamps since I was six, then graduated to specialising, if you can call it that, in GB when I was 11. It became so bad that for my 13th birthday I was bought a year's subscription by my parents to *Philatelic Bulletin*, which has been maintained. I became a marketing-cum-advertising man, and worked for a couple of years in the late 1970s for a large dealer on London's Strand, promoting their albums and catalogues. There I discovered Sammy the Stamp Bug. I hear readers' groans – more of Sammy later. Now I work in computer software.

My collection has meandered through many backwaters over the years. As a generalist GB collector, who has always found QV impossibly expensive and hence very difficult to understand with so little raw material, I have largely ignored that era with some exceptions. I stopped collecting commemoratives, or what are now called 'special' stamps after Christmas 1981 to concentrate on definitives. Yet I've 25 volumes of GB in SG 'Universal' albums, plus half a dozen or so stockbooks and shoe boxes full of roughly classified covers, awaiting final display.

Although a generalist, there are rules. If my stamp is used, it has to have been commercially used through the post...so no 'philatelic' items. I do admit to having GPO/Post Office first day covers, but I specify commercially used ones with addresses that are genuine. Many modern collectibles without addresses look as if they've never been within a mile of a postbox.

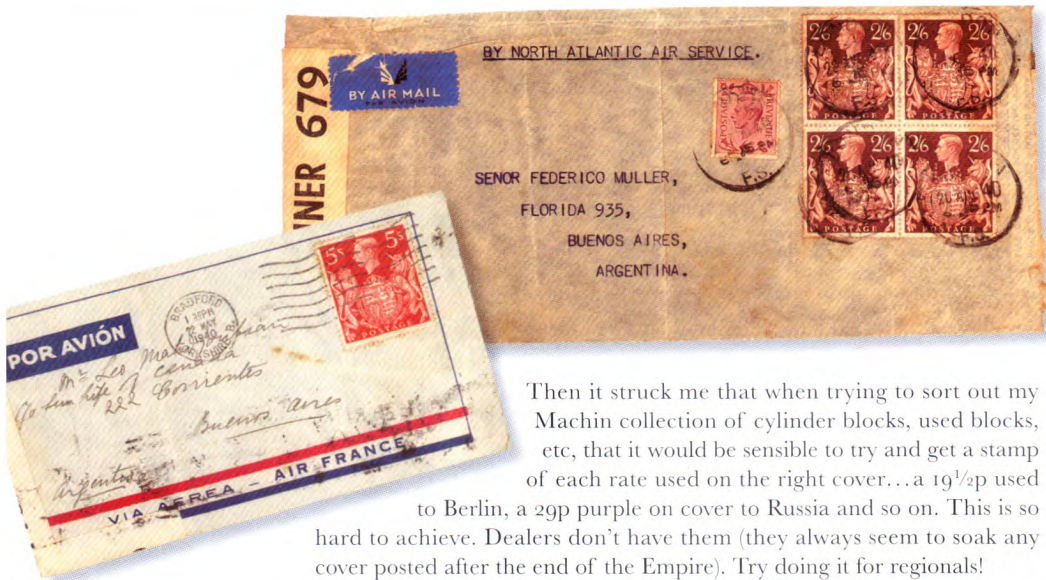
Better on cover Catalogue value is irrelevant. If I can fill a gap I'm delighted. I was so pleased to find a 1d Wilding recently with a sideways watermark I had not got – catalogued 10p. But slowly I have realised that all these stamps seem so much better if they are on cover – what the purists call postal history, which is a little too serious for me. Nevertheless a cover adds so much more breadth and meaning to a display. Take Greetings stamps for example. A greetings stamp on a postcard saying someone is enjoying their holiday – or on a birthday card with the Happy Birthday sticker – represents to me why a stamp was issued.



Royal Mail Collectors Club

was originally formed as the Stamp Bug Club in 1980, it changed its name in 1994. Intended primarily as a club for young collectors up to age 16, it now has over 60,000 members. The Club magazine is published six times a year. *Bulletin* readers might like to consider taking out membership for their children or other young stamp collectors. Membership is a modest £5 for two years or just £7 for five years.

For application form write to Collectors Club, Freepost, Northampton NN3 6BR



Covers bearing George VI stamps exchanged by Martin Balls with other Club members: addressed to Argentina, both 1940. Stamps on the top cover have HB & Co perfin.

Then it struck me that when trying to sort out my Machin collection of cylinder blocks, used blocks, etc, that it would be sensible to try and get a stamp of each rate used on the right cover... a 19½p used to Berlin, a 29p purple on cover to Russia and so on. This is so hard to achieve. Dealers don't have them (they always seem to soak any cover posted after the end of the Empire). Try doing it for regionals!

Postage Dues or To Pay stamps, now increasingly difficult to obtain, also seem to me much better collected on cover with associated frankings.

And I collect retail books too – all the cylinder numbers. Which leads to my next foible: when the concept of selling stamps through retail outlets instead of just Post Offices began in the late 1980s, I decided to build a sub-collection specialising in the marketing of stamps in the UK: merchandising, posters, stickers, shelf-wobblers, etc.

But how do you assemble anything like a representative collection? Especially with few contacts and little spare cash?

It is all done remotely, by letter. By and large I don't buy from dealers, other than in exceptional circumstances. The key to all this is the former Stamp Bug Club, at which everyone scoffed, now the Collectors Club. I had discovered it in 1980, when promoting junior stamp albums. Ten years later my son joined (well I told him he should), and a year or so later so did I at the ripe old age of 40. I discovered their Collectors Corner, an A5 12 page swapping forum with a Freepost response mechanism. Without it my collection would be so much the poorer.

Sources of supply It all started with regionals. Living in Surrey, and without knowing a local stamp club, it proved quite hard to get those higher value definitives from Northern Ireland. Yet here in Collectors Corner were people, albeit mostly young collectors, offering stamps with clues as to their addresses like Belfast or Edinburgh – or Iran. So I sat and wrote to them via the given Freepost address, and sure enough they responded.

I placed a free ad too. Then after a couple of months, I had responses. I placed ads for windows books, postage dues, regionals, Readers Digest stamp cards, and especially for GB stamps used on cover to destinations

abroad. Now I have a network of correspondents from Argentina and the Ukraine to France and India; not forgetting a key correspondent in Plymouth! There's the Serb who will only admit to living in Yugoslavia.

What then do I swap? The answer is virutally everything – stamps from sorted kiloware (worth buying from dealers), even empty stamp books and used phonecards, and world stamps off the mail. These I offer in packs in return for whole booklets. Overseas correspondents cry out for sets of greetings stamps, or recent higher value 'special' stamps. These I buy from a charity I work with; in return I get my definitives on cover. Some of my correspondents also collect rail and bus tickets and other items of ephemera for which they send me stamps which are either added to my collection or exchanged again for other stamps. Everything is 'recycled'; nothing goes to waste.

The key is always to give slightly more to your correspondent than is asked for, then they will come back for more – and you never know who might write back with some wonderful discarded box of rubbish! Most of this has to be dealt with in front of the television on Sunday nights, which is my evening off work. My long suffering wife (another find at the dealers on the Strand) puts up with this, just. My son helps too.

My system has developed. It has been important to remember who I've written to, what I've offered them and what they've offered me. To stop my collection being just an accumulation it has been vital to record what I have. So it's all recorded on my ageing 386 PC, with an application I also use for work called ACT!, which is a sales tracking package. I now know what several key correspondents collect, and they each have their own file or envelope. These envelopes sit in an ordered pile next to my armchair, dutifully hoovered round by my wife. Australia is put aside in the envelope for person x, while South Africa may go to y and so on.

Which reminds me about the lady who still owes me a book of 10 1st-class for some quite good India I sent months ago...still, you can't win them all! That's the risk of course. But most people in this hobby are trustworthy. The rule is give them what they want...you never know what might come back.

My letter writing of course extends well outside the Collectors Club. In this way I have had the Niceday greetings stamp on cover from a division of W H Smith (a very commerical FDC), Readers Digest strips on response envelope to Readers Digest, and Royal Mail promotional material. But how do you mount a box of Thornton's chocolates?

A few odd thoughts. Get your Machin 60p on cover to the us while they still might be found. Remember it was only available here in books. I have



Correct use of Machins

20½p on card to France (July 1984) and 41p to Iran (December 1993). The 41p was postmarked in London, and again on arrival in Tehran!



An attractive registered cover bearing Channel Islands Liberation stamp and four 11d definitives, June 1956.

the humidity or sun. My luxury would be my Machin cylinder blocks, GB Specialised and Doug Myall's DEEGAM catalogue. Perhaps then I could be a philatelist! The one question I haven't answered is why I collect. I honestly don't know – I just enjoy it! So what else are dealers good for? Well I do have a Machin 1/2p sideband on FDC from my former employer's 75p box of rubbish covers (bought many years after I left, I would point out). It's finding items like that that make philately such fun! ●

Books Undated postmarks of Wales • Railways of the world • Stanley Gibbons Commonwealth catalogue

The Undated Postmarks of Wales 1840 to 1860 As part of its 25th anniversary celebrations the Welsh Philatelic Society has published this important work by Roger W Broomfield. The subtitle sets out its scope: A study of the undated namestamps of Welsh Post offices and Receiving Houses in use between 1840 and 1860 together with the pre-1840 usages of those handstamps which were in use prior to, as well as after, 1840. Studies have been published for parts of Wales, but this is the first consolidated work for the whole country. Many of the postmarks here recorded are very scarce, of some less than six examples are known. The author's well-written introduction advises how to use the book and explains the different types of postmark and the classification system used (devised by Michael Champness, published in the *East Anglia Study Circle Bulletin* no 23). The various types used in Wales are illustrated as part of the introduction and in the County lists that follow. The first section lists alphabetically places, under main post

towns, using undated stamps between 1840 and 1860, differentiating between straight line and circular stamps. For example under Bangor six places used straight line stamps, and a further 30 circular handstamps. English sub-offices of Welsh post towns are included and identified.

The listings in the 13 county sections are arranged under eight headings, detailed in the introduction, including the earliest and latest recorded dates of usage and date of issue recorded in Impression Books in Post Office Archives. Each section includes a useful map, and postmark and cover illustrations. The alphabetical index of offices, with county and page number assists in using the book effectively. The section entitled 'A not unusual problem!' provides help in trying to identify 'blobby' or indistinct postmarks found on many covers. All students of Welsh postmarks will welcome this book, published with assistance from the Stuart Rossiter Trust which promotes postal history research and publications.

124 pages, card covers, A4 format. Available from: R W Broomfield, 78 Court Road, Malvern WR14 3EG. Price £10, postage £2.

Details of the Welsh Philatelic Society available from P Gaywood, 27 Church Street, Kirkham, Preston PR4 2SE. ED ●

Railways of the World on Stamps This, the American Topical Association's 130th handbook, is the work of Howard J Burkhalter who sadly died shortly after completion of the manuscript. Listed in alphabetical order by country, and chronologically, are postage stamps that show any railway equipment, railway-related items, and people connected with railways. Also included are variations of colour, watermark and perforation, as well as overprints and surcharges. In some instances (including USA), efforts have been made to provide information on revenue stamps and postal stationery with relevant designs, also souvenir sheets where railway items are featured in the borders. Omitted are stamps showing only aerial cableways, trackless trolley buses, or other self-propelled vehicles that do not run on rails. The listings are based on the Scott catalogue although include stamps not listed by Scott but found in Gibbons, Minkus, Yvert & Tellier and other specialised catalogues.

268 pages, card covers. Available from American Topical Association, PO Box 65749, Tucson, AZ 85728, USA. Price \$20 postpaid ●

Stanley Gibbons Stamp Catalogue: Part 1 British Commonwealth The 1997 edition of this famous catalogue was published at the end of September. For some years now it has been produced in two volumes: 1, Great Britain and Countries A-J; 2, Countries K-Z. The GB section, including Channel Islands, Isle of Man, and GB stamps used abroad, amounts to 116 pages, with GB stamps listed to the Football set of May 1996. In his preface, catalogue Editor David Aggersberg explains the meaning of the prices quoted in SG catalogues. They are SG's selling prices, 'not estimated "market" trade or buying prices... The SG listings are unique in the world of major catalogue publishers in being produced by a group

whose principal business is the sale of stamps to collectors, covering all periods from the classic to the new issue.' He also writes on the increasing problem of obtaining reliable information from some postal administrations which delays listing stamps in the catalogue. His comments deserve careful reading. As to stamp prices, he writes: 'The signs of a partial recovery in the stamp market, barely discernible when the last edition was prepared, have become much more visible over the past twelve months. In certain areas demand is once again outstripping supply...' Price rises for GB stamps are mainly for pre-1880 issues, and the often-neglected postal fiscals. Yet some prices for modern stamps are also up: eg 1989, 1990 and 1991 Greetings stamps. Most notably the used price of the 1990 Greetings set rises from £3.25 in the Concise catalogue (published in May) to £14 now! A few of the scarcer Machins and Regionals are up, such as 31p photogravure 2 bands (x919) by 50p, and Scotland 23p 2 bands (s68) by £1.

The admission of Cameroon and Mozambique to the Commonwealth results in the listing of subsequent Mozambique issues in Vol 2. Future Cameroon stamps will appear in Vol 1 – in preparation the overprinted issue the Southern Cameroon in 1960-61 now joins the earlier 1915 British occupation issues under 'C'. The Editor notes problems listing Indian new issues from late 1994 onwards. The change from state to commercial printer has resulted in chaos in the new issue programme with some commemoratives abruptly withdrawn due to technical problems. These are listed but unpriced. In Vol 2 revisions have been made to the listings of several countries, including Malaysia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, and South Africa, and previously unrecorded booklets added for Jamaica and Sri Lanka.

Vol 1 832 pages, Vol 2 800 pages, hardbound, laminated covers. Available from SG Strand shop, stamp shops, or by post from Stanley Gibbons Publications, Parkside, Ringwood BH24 3SH. Price £27.50 per volume, postage £3 UK, £6 overseas ●

Competition Win valuable classic stamps



1st prize GB Queen Victoria 1878 10s greenish grey, letters B-E, Maltese Cross watermark, SG 128, sound used good colour example, neatly struck and although off-centre perfs well clear of design. Attractive and scarce. SG cat £900. Classics Without Tears retail £275.

2nd prize GB Queen Victoria 1840 1d black, letters M-I, fine 4 good to large margins example, ex plate 2, cancelled by well-positioned crisp clear red-brown Maltese Cross. Most desirable. SG £150, CWT retail £75.

3rd prize GB Edward VII 1902 10s ultramarine De La Rue printing, very fine used, small circular datestamp dated OC 17 (19)04 WEST STRAND, well centred, fine colour; SG 265, cat £200 + 50% premium = £300. CWT retail £130.

The winners of the September competition were: M J Ward of Co Dublin; D Ramsay of Isle of Wight; and R Sutherland of Aberdeen.

The Answers 1. Simon Clay; 2. \$2.09 million; 3. Selwyn College; 4. Rembrandt & Jumelle; 5. Inverness, Dundee & Cumnock. Our thanks to all who entered.

Introducing Omniphil £200 Loyalty Bonus Program Keep £200 worth of free stamps of your choice in exchange for your loyalty – plus – if you have not applied before collect a *free* £40 cat GB 1841 2d blue, yours to keep whatever you decide.

If you are interested in expanding your collection you may be interested in Omniphil's new £200 loyalty bonus program. In addition to good discounts off SG catalogue prices, Omniphil are offering all their clients the opportunity to deduct a whopping 25% off their regular selling prices. (Their previous £100 promotion proved so popular that increased volume has permitted them to make this offer.)

The only catch (if you could call it that) is that clients need to be able to spend £12 – but for this they can select stamps to a value of £16. Select £20 worth send £15, select £40 worth send £30, etc.

Some approval companies have complex rules, not so Omniphil. You have total control – you will receive selections of fine stamps upon approval by post – as little or as often as you wish. Stop their service anytime, without penalty or obligation.

So if your collection has gaps between 1840 and the 1980s, give Omniphil a try. With over 37 years trading they have large stocks of GB, Commonwealth and foreign and best of all they sell every stamp individually, so that you have the chance to complete sets. How many dealers do that?

So if you like the idea of seeing stamps you want before you buy, without pressure, in the comfort of your own home – write now stating all the countries you collect and whether you require mint or used. All clients benefit from the £200 loyalty bonus but clients who have not applied before please request a free GB 1841 2d blue SG 14 cat £40. Write soon to have yours for Christmas. Regular clients are automatically entered for £200 loyalty bonus so need not reapply. Write to **Omniphil Approvals Bulletin Blue Offer, PO Box 29, 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: December Bulletin Competition, Royal Mail, 22 Finsbury Square, London EC2A 1NL to arrive by 24 January 1997. Each entry must be posted separately; multiple entries in one envelope will be disregarded.

- 1 Who was Henry VIII's fourth wife?
- 2 How much did the Prince of Wales pay for a Mauritius stamp in 1904?
- 3 Who were responsible for pillar boxes when introduced on the British mainland in 1853?
- 4 Who died three weeks after his 49th birthday in 1905?



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

Postbag

Encouraging new collectors My two grandchildren, boys aged 9 and 6, have let it be known that they like, of a morning, receiving mail addressed to them individually. On discussing this serious issue, I raised the point that neither of them had shown any interest in stamp collecting even though I had indicated a readiness to assist. (I have, for example, kept all issues of *Collectors' Club* journal for them just in case.) I was hoping Football issues might change all this.

The response, from the children and their parents, has been an eye-opener, brief and to the point. Machin definitives, now as old as the hills, are infinitely boring; commemoratives are rarely to be found at post office counters as nobody knows when they are due and then offices carry a sheet or two for a couple of days at most; greetings stamps are never offered by the Postmaster and there is nothing like enough advertising by the Bureau. Finally, electronic mail and privatisation will complete the decline of stamps that began with the introduction of franking machines.

Assuming that these views are widespread, it seems to me that we have a serious job on our hands if we wish to see a new generation of collectors marching towards us over the horizon. DAA FAGANDINI, LONDON SE21 ●

STO Stationery and College Stamps Thanks for the very varied contents of recent (and previous) *Bulletins*. It's interesting to read of college stamps and postal stationery, especially stamped to order (sto) stationery. Towards the end of the reign of sto stationery, I prepared labels for use on my packet mailings, and had a variety of values impressed on them. Of course, postage rates altered very soon afterwards, and it was too much trouble for me in those hectic days (120-hour weeks) to put on labels, and make up the cost with other stamps; so not a lot were used. At a later date, I had quantities overprinted in aid of Salvation Army funds. Soon I hope to have an article ready for the *Salvation Army Philatelic Circle Bulletin*.

In your September issue mention is made

(page 14) of Lister's *College Stamps of Oxford & Cambridge*. This book is quite scarce, but in 1974 I did a reprint of this – 500 copies – and I'm almost sure that copies are still available – probably from Vera Trinder Ltd. The retail price should be around £3, against possibly £25 for the original Golden Head Press edition. Perhaps your readers would like to know this. HARRY HAYES, HAXBY, YORK ●

Highest posting box cachet In referring to the article in September's *Bulletin* regarding the highest posting boxes you give the cachet at Aonach Mor as being introduced in 1995. When on holiday in May 1993 I obtained the Aonach Mor cachet on a postcard but I do not know the date of commencement. I hope this will be of interest. GEORGE GOODALL, WATFORD

Can any reader report an earlier date for this interesting cachet? ED ●

Bulletin back issues offered Two readers have back numbers for disposal. David Wellman of 46 Water Lane, Farnborough GU14 8XQ has volumes 4-15 and 25-33 for sale, and Keith L Moody of 341 Burringham Road, Scunthorpe DN17 2BJ has a near full series from 1963 to date, packed in a large cardboard box, free for collection ●

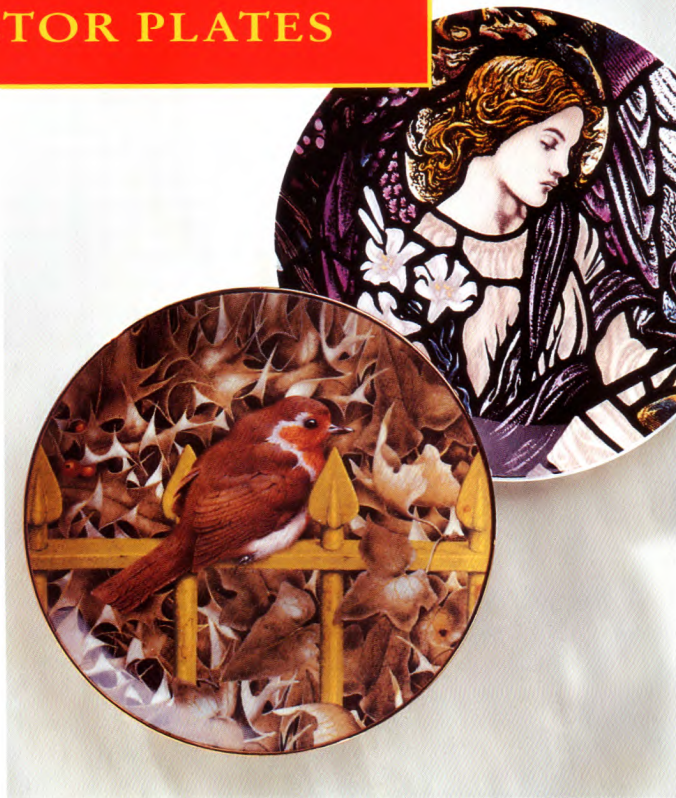
Late news

Royal Mail are trialling the sale of standard NVI books within special 'hook and hang' packaging at 10 Marks & Spencer stores. The trial which started in early November will last for three months. Collectors should note that the stamp books are the same as those on sale at post offices and other retail outlets. These stamp book packages will not be available from the Bureau ●

Coils (rolls) of 63p stamps printed by Harrisons will be available from machines in selected post offices, the Bureau and other philatelic outlets from 12 December 1996. No first day of issue facilities available ●

ROYAL MAIL CHRISTMAS COLLECTOR PLATES

The late Ken Lilly's Christmas Robins were voted the most popular set of 1995 stamps by *Bulletin* readers. The robin and holly design of the 25p value is reproduced on a high-quality collector plate. A second plate in the Christmas series reproduces the design of the 18p Christmas stamp of 1992, featuring the Angel Gabriel stained glass window in St James's Church, Pangbourne, Berks.



Individually numbered limited edition • 8" diameter fine bone china Royal Doulton plates • Supplied with a certificate of authenticity • One year money-back guarantee • Price £19.95 each • Ideal Christmas presents • Early ordering advised

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£19.95 each or £75 set) • **1995 Cats** – Sophie (19p), Puskas & Tigger (25p) Chloe (30p), Kikko & Rosie (35p), or Fred asleep (41p) (8" Royal Doulton, £15 each or £69 set). Please state design(s) required.

Royal Mail Collection, Freepost, 20 Brandon Street,
Edinburgh EH3 0HN. UK Telephone order line 0345 641 641



5 014721 103112



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