

BRITISH PHILATELIC

Bulletin

The ROYAL MAIL magazine for stamp collectors

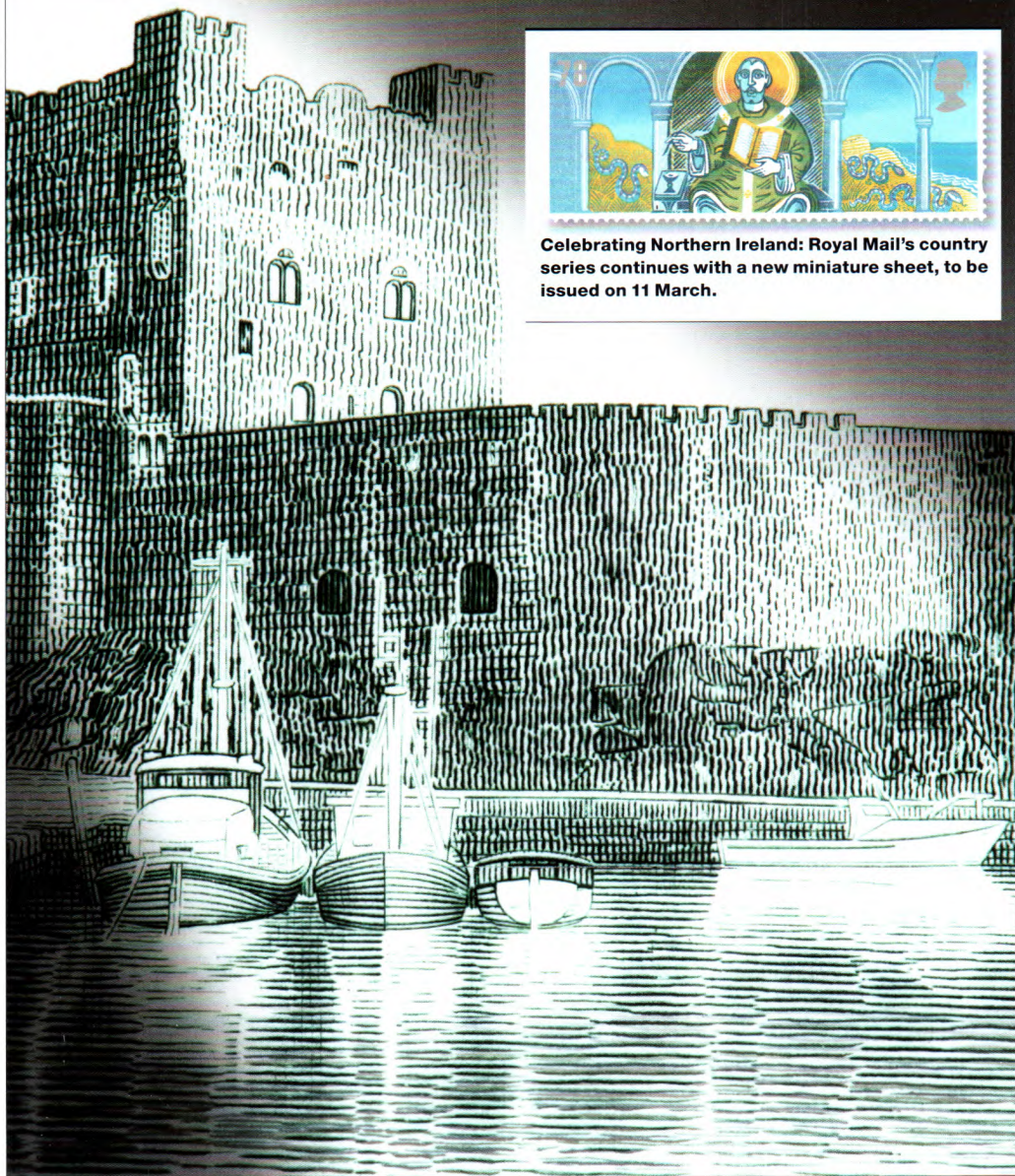
Volume 45 Number 7

MARCH 2008 £1.20

Jeffery Matthews • Northern
Ireland • Air Displays issue



Celebrating Northern Ireland: Royal Mail's country series continues with a new miniature sheet, to be issued on 11 March.



Forthcoming issues and withdrawals



Cover A detail from the 1988 £1 Castles high value stamp, featuring Carrickfergus Castle in Northern Ireland. Frances McKinley describes the new Celebrating Northern Ireland miniature sheet on page 204.

Availability All items available from Royal Mail Tallents House (address below). Selected items are available at Post Office branches and Post Office philatelic outlets at the main post offices in: Bristol, Cambridge, Chester, Colchester, Coventry, Croydon, Durham, Edinburgh, Exeter, Glasgow, Grimsby, Harrogate, Lichfield, London (Eastcheap & Trafalgar Sq), Newcastle upon Tyne, Norwich, Nottingham, Plymouth, Portsmouth, Princes Risborough, Southampton (High St and Hedge End), Southend-on-Sea, Stevenage, Stroud, Trowbridge, Truro and York.

Royal Mail Tallents House 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB, UK. Telephone order line (08.30-17.00 Monday to Friday): 08457 641 641; from overseas +44 131 316 7483. Minimum handling charge UK £1.45, Europe £1.55, rest of world (airmail) £2.15. Some products can be ordered on Royal Mail's website: www.royalmail.com/shop

28 February	Issue Monarchs: Houses of Lancaster & York stamps, miniature sheet, presentation pack, stamp cards, press sheet and cachet cover
28 February	Issue Retail book: 6 x 1st class Smilers (mix of 2005 and 2006 issues)
29 February	Withdrawal World of Invention stamps, miniature sheet, pack, stamp cards and prestige book
11 March	Issue 'Celebrating Northern Ireland' miniature sheet, presentation pack and stamp cards • 'Glorious Northern Ireland' generic and Smilers sheets (contain self-adhesive NI 1st class country stamp)
13 March	Issue Mayday: Rescue at Sea stamps, presentation pack and stamp cards
21 March	Withdrawal Abolition of the Slave Trade stamps, presentation pack and stamp cards
31 March	Withdrawal British Journey series (Scotland, N Ireland, Wales, South West England, England) stamps, presentation packs and stamp cards
31 March	Withdrawal 50p definitive, sand colour, issued 1 April 1997
31 March	Withdrawal Welsh airletter: single and discount pack, issued January 2005
1 April	Issue Machin definitives 15p, 56p, 81p, plus 9p reintroduced at Post Office Branches • 50p and 81p country stamps for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland • Definitive presentation pack (15p, 56p, 81p) • Country presentation pack
1 April	Issue Centenary of the Territorial Army: commemorative sheet and medal cover
15 April	Issue Insects stamps, pack and stamp cards
29 April	Issue Ingot Pack Edward VIII & George VI No 5: 1948 Olympic Games 1s stamp

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The British Philatelic Bulletin is published monthly by Royal Mail, 35-50 Rathbone Place, London W1T 1HQ. • **Editor** J R Holman • **Price** £1.20 each from Post Office Ltd philatelic outlets • **Annual subscription** £12.95 UK & Europe; £17.95 elsewhere. Send subscriptions to Royal Mail Talents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB • **Binders** (to hold 24 issues) £8.50, storage boxes (about 30 copies) £9.95 available by post from Royal Mail (Edinburgh address, above) • Royal Mail also publishes the fortnightly *British Postmark Bulletin*, giving details of forthcoming special handstamps. Available on annual subscription from Edinburgh address above: £12.25 UK and Europe, £24.95 rest of the world • **Copyright** Design & text Royal Mail Group Ltd, unless attributed to a specified author. All requests to reproduce any articles should be sent to the Editor, British Philatelic Bulletin, Royal Mail Letters, 35-50 Rathbone Place, London W1T 1HQ • **Design** Robert Maude • **Printed** in Great Britain by Beacon Press • **ISSN** 0953 8119 • Royal Mail is a trading name of Royal Mail Group Ltd. Registered in England and Wales no 4138203 registered office 148 Old Street, London EC1V 9HQ

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Stamp scene News and upcoming events:

Glenn Morgan keeps you posted



Glenn Morgan

World's largest stamp On 6 November 2007, TNT Post in The Netherlands issued the world's largest postage stamp. An elementary school class from Ouderkerk aan de Amstel delivered a really special card to a local bakery. On this card was the world's largest stamp. The stamp measured 55.7 × 45.8 centimeters and is eligible for the record title of 'largest postage stamp in the world'. With the card, the school class thanked all the bakers who had provided 440,000 breakfasts in 2000 schools on behalf of the National School Breakfast.

The stamp was printed at Royal Joh Enschedé and will, when the record attempt is approved, be entered in the Guinness Book of Records. I understand that just 10 of these stamps were printed, so your favourite new issue dealer is unlikely to have a copy for sale!

Joh Enschedé describes itself as one of the world's three largest stamp manufacturers. Postal services of more than 60 countries have their stamps printed by them. Every month, they produce 30 different types of stamps and despatch over 50 international shipments •

London 2010 Volunteer help from over 150 people is sought for the next British international stamp exhibition. There are a number of areas where help is needed, such as mounting and dismounting exhibits, supervising the build and dismantling of frames, organisers' office/bin room support, and staffing information stands. Then there is preparation of seminar and awards rooms, placing sponsor labels, ribbons and results on frames and arranging transport. Something for everyone, surely.

If you would like to register, then write to Richard Stock, Moor Cottage, Manorial Road, Parkgate, Neston CH64 6QW with your name, date of birth, address, telephone number, email address and skills or previous experience helping at exhibitions •

British Library website The British Library has recently introduced new and revised web pages for the Philatelic Collections, and these include many additional images. The website offers a full description of the 50 collections or archives held by the Library, with details of their scope and coverage. An alphabetical index of collections, countries and subjects helps the researcher find the appropriate material. For the visitor to the major permanent Philatelic Exhibition, details of the display may be found along with opening times. At www.collectbritain.co.uk/collections/philatelic/ an online section of Philatelic Rarities may be explored, with certain items highlighted as the 'Curator's Choice'. A range of background information includes articles about certain of the collections, philatelic literature (including the Crawford Library), philatelic conservation and other materials held by the British Library for the philatelist. The new web pages will be found at: www.bl.uk/collections/philatelic •

Keeping You Posted! The free winter 2007 issue of this publication appeared towards the end of last year, following quite a gap since the previous issue. It contains the usual mixture of articles and promotional features on products available from the Post Office. Collectors will no doubt find the articles entitled 'Collector's Edition' (secrets behind the Special Stamps programme) and 'Please Mr Postman!' (songs inspired by the postal service) of particular interest. It appears that when the USPS issued its Elvis Presley commemorative stamp in 1993, some American collectors posted covers with fictitious addresses on them, so that they would come back marked 'Return to Sender', the title of a 1962 Elvis hit single! ●



The winter 2007 edition of *Keeping You Posted!* includes this article on the 'secrets' of the Special Stamps programme.

Lighthouse Publications This German producer of accessories for coin and stamp collectors has recently celebrated 90 years of existence, and its extensive 2008 catalogue is available now.

Interested collectors enquiring from within the UK should make contact with the Duncannon Partnership at 4 Beaufort Road, Reigate RH2 9DJ, from whom a 124-page full-colour priced catalogue of available items can be obtained, or visit their website at www.duncannon.co.uk to place an online order ●

Philatelic Congress of GB 2008 The 90th Philatelic Congress of Great Britain will be held at the Holiday Inn, Stratford-upon-Avon from Thursday 24 to Sunday 27 July 2008. Booking forms should be available by now, although details had not been supplied by the time that this *Bulletin* was due to go to print. If you are interested in attending, write to Mike Brindle at the address opposite, as soon as possible ●

Congress enquiries Write to Mike Brindle, General Secretary ABPS, 6 Nunnery Drive, Thetford IP24 3EN.

WIPA 2008 If you were one of almost a billion people who watched the new year's day music concert from Vienna, you cannot fail to have been impressed by the splendour of this Austrian capital city. Between 18 and 21 September, it is scheduled to again play host to the latest in a long line of WIPA shows that dates back to 1881. Some 40,000 to 50,000 visitors are expected. Amongst the many planned activities are: Rarity Cabinet, Court of Honour and special philatelic shows; Competitive exhibition (Traditional Philately, Postal History, Postal Stationery, Thematic Philately, Maximaphilie, Aerophilately, Revenue and Open classes); Philatelic literature exhibition with reading room and a literary café; Guided tours, philatelic symposia; Meetings of international philatelic organizations; Children's postal office, a youth corner and internet café; and Stamp designs, stamp designers 'close-up'. There will clearly be much to enjoy, both at the show and around the city of Vienna, so why not consider giving yourself a late summer break? ●

WIPA enquiries Visit www.wipa08.com



Collecting British First Day Covers Write to A G Bradbury, 3 Link Road, Stoneygate, Leicester LE2 3RA, or visit www.bfdc.co.uk



Booth Catalogue Write to First Day Publishing Company Co Ltd, PO Box 11, Arundel BN18 9SS, or email jhbfdc@gmail.com

Both catalogues are also available from your favourite philatelic literature dealer or bookseller.

Catalogue reviews Two new editions of British First Day Cover catalogues have recently appeared. I shall tabulate the main details before offering personal comparisons.

Title	Collecting British First Day Covers	Collect GB First Day Covers
Edition	27th, 2008	29th, 2008
Compiler	Adrian Bradbury	Jeffrey H Booth
Price	£14.75	£10.80
Publisher	A G Bradbury	First Day Publishing Company
ISBN	978-0-9540710-6-6	978-0-9519608-8-2
Colour	Throughout	18 pages
Cover	Laminated	Laminated
Binding	Softback	Softback
Pages	250 with 16 adverts	468 with 13 adverts
Period	1837 to 2007	1839 to 2007

Both catalogues appear to cover commemoratives, definitives, regionals, early Channel Islands, booklets, dues, coils and Framas for all appropriate reigns. The general notes in both catalogues will prove indispensable to old and new collectors of FDCs alike.

The Booth catalogue additionally features separate sections on GB overprints, pre-release and missing colours on covers and an interesting 14-page colour section about the 1951 Festival of Britain issue, where an impressive 68 FDCs are both illustrated and described.

The Bradbury catalogue has a section on 'new services', such as Speed-Post. I also appreciated the Index for Commemorative Issues at the end of the publication, for I can no longer keep in my head the year when a particular issue came out – most seem like it was just yesterday!

I have not collected FDCs since around 1970, so I continue to be surprised at the volume of material available and the vast array of postal markings that have been used to adorn the covers, some operational but mostly philatelic of course.

If I had to choose between the two catalogues, I would struggle to know which one was 'best'. I suspect that a serious collector should buy both, especially as you would get over 700 pages of valuable information for relatively little outlay. If I had to get off the fence, I would go for the Bradbury catalogue as I am a sucker for colour imagery of the actual product. The Booth primarily has illustrations of the postal markings rather than the covers, although it does offer a photocopying service at 50p (+P&P) for a black-and-white image of over 90% of the covers listed. The Bradbury on the other hand focuses on illustrating covers and offers purchasers free download access to a website that illustrates all the images previously to be found in earlier editions. This seems like a good compromise and helps to keep down the cost of the catalogue. Around 30 postmarks appear for my favourite issue of recent years – the 2002 Letter Boxes issue. Searching can also be made by location of postmark – useful for local postal history collectors – and an impressive 28 covers were illustrated in colour for my local town of Romford ●



Military Uniforms Last year Royal Mail issued the first in a series on Military Uniforms, with six stamps featuring Army uniforms from the 17th century to the present day. A number of CASCO (formerly Crown Agents) countries are issuing similar stamps, beginning with the set from Kiribati (formerly the Gilbert Islands), to be followed by issues from Barbados and Tristan. The colourful Kiribati stamps are shown above •

Jersey buses Jersey Post issue six stamps and a miniature sheet showing island buses from the 1920s to 1970s on 8 April. The stamps, designed by Alan Copp, were printed by Enschedé. For further information contact the Jersey Philatelic Bureau – details at right •

Thematica 2008 Britain's national thematic stamp exhibition will be held on Saturday and Sunday 28-29 June at its usual venue of the Carisbrooke Hall, 63 Seymour Street, London W2 2HF. Admission is free and dealers from Britain and abroad will be offering items to enhance your collection. There will also be thematic competitions and exhibits to enjoy together with a children's activity section. The AGM of the British Thematic Association will be held in the afternoon of the Sunday, which will be followed by a display from BTA Cup winner 2007 •

Post-Expo 2008 The 12th International Postal Technology Exhibition and Congress will be held at the ExCeL Centre in London's docklands on 30 September to 2 October 2008. The three-day event annually attracts more than 4000 top-level personnel from approximately 100 countries and is universally recognised as the world's premier event for the postal, mailing and parcel industry. It is a non-philatelic event, but attracts those collectors with an interest in postal automation and stamp vending labels •

Bulletin back issues R C Sutherland offers a complete run of the *Bulletin* from September 1965 to December 2006. This weighs 25kg and occupies about 0.78m (2ft 7ins) shelf length. Anyone interested must bear the cost of transport. All will go for recycling unless found a home by the end of March. Contact Mr Sutherland at [Heatherybanks, Turriff AB53 8EY](mailto:Heatherybanks@farmline.com), e-mail robin.heatherybanks@farmline.com •

The Kiribati issue features the Royal Engineers, 95th Rifles, 24th Regt of Foot, New Zealand soldiers and (not shown) 93rd Sutherland Highlanders, Irish Guard, US Marine Corps and Japanese soldiers.

Jersey Philatelic Bureau
Postal Headquarters, Jersey
JE1 1AB. Telephone 01534
516320, or see website www.jerseystamps.com

Thematica enquiries Write to
Thematic Exhibitions, PO Box
8843, London N3 1HL, phone
020 8343 2434, or email
mgale@btconnect.com

Post-Expo enquiries Visit
www.postexpo.com/index.html
for further information.

Enquiries Write to the GBPS Membership Secretary, Peter Tanner, Highstandings, 13 St Hubert's Close, Gerrards Cross SL9 7EN, email him at peter@ltanner.freeserve.co.uk or visit www.gbbs.org.uk

The GB Journal and GBPS Newsletter Both of these publications are published bi-monthly by the Great Britain Philatelic Society, and they always contain much to interest the collector of British material. There is possibly a misconception that the GBPS is interested only in the Victorian and Edwardian issues, but nothing could be further from the truth, as all eras are covered. If proof were needed, the latest two issues of both publications include features about the Wilding Castles, 1971 Strike Mail and a Machin exhibit. There is also a major contribution by the stamp dealer Mike Holt, concerning the amazing find of Wilding material, entitled The 'Dollis Hill' Wilding Experimental Phosphor Trials, that runs to 11 pages and includes many colour photographs reproducing these unissued definitives. Other features relating to older material include London Hotel Posts in 1912, The Post-Trial Archer Plates, More Usages of the King George v 9d Agate and 7d Olive and a feature about The Post Magazine. The newsletter also provides an important recognition to those collectors who display their material at GBPS meetings by featuring a selection of album sheets from each display along with an accompanying write-up for those members who were unable to attend ●

Enquiries www.fggg.de

Rundbrief 150 To celebrate the milestone of 150 issues of their magazine *Rundbrief*, the German Forschungsgemeinschaft Grossbritannien eV group has published a bumper issue comprising 190 pages of A4, many pages of which are printed in colour. Collecting any philatelic material from a country in which you are not resident always presents that 'extra' challenge, so the group is to be congratulated for their achievement in having produced such an excellent and well-illustrated publication, which relates to so many aspects of British philately.

Rundbrief 150 includes articles on more than 20 different subjects, including two by the well-known *Bulletin* contributors Tony Walker (pre-decimal Machins) and Douglas Myall (neglected Machins). Timothy Bryan-Burgess has a major 20-page article about the Prince Consort essay that must surely be the last word on the subject, while Erich Kirschneck records the end of Harrison Machins in 15 pages.

Space does not permit a complete listing and review of all the material contained in this souvenir edition, but other features include ship letter mail, mileage marks, George VI 'Arms' high values, the telegraph service, squared circles – something for everyone, surely? ●

Enquiries Write to the American Topical Association, 411A Lillard Road, Arlington TX 76012-3698, USA.

Topical Time Issue number 346 of this fine American thematic journal has been released. Within its 100 pages will be found the usual features expected of a major worldwide society, plus the one-off articles that are rarely to be found elsewhere. My own specialty has been covered in a feature by C D Singh entitled Victorian Letter Boxes. It is mainly about boxes used in India, but starts with an interesting look at the early history of the letter box. Other articles in this issue relate to Indian names, Papal transport, Judaica, fighting falcons, birds that live in caves, Inuit art, and conclude with a tour of Argentina ●

Royal Mail news 2008 special issues • New issues and products • New postal rates



New definitives New postal rates will come into effect on 7 April. The basic 1st and 2nd class inland rates (standard size up to to 100g) will increase to 36p and 27p; letters to Europe (up to 20g) 50p, and worldwide airmail (to 10g) will increase to 56p.

Three new definitives will go on sale on 1 April – 15p shocking pink, 56p lime green and 81p sea green; there will also be new 50p and 81p country stamps in existing 48p and 78p designs. The 9p definitive (orange) will be reintroduced at Post Office branches. All these stamps are printed in gravure by De La Rue, in sheets of 200.

A new definitive presentation pack will be available containing the 15p, 56p and 81p values, priced £2.05. A combined presentation pack containing the eight new country stamps (50p and 81p values) will also be available, price £5.75.

Definitive and country FDC envelopes will cost 30p each. Serviced covers will cost £2.26 (UK) or £1.93 (overseas) each for the definitives, and £2.02/£1.72 each for the country stamp covers. As usual Tallents House, Windsor, London, Edinburgh, Cardiff and Belfast first day of issue cancels will be provided. Except for Tallents House, these will be in pictorial and non-pictorial designs. All are available for use on covers bearing any of the new stamps. The 9p stamp is not a new issue and will not be cancelled with the first day postmark •

2008 First Day postmarks The special issues are listed below, with the alternative First Day of Issue postmarks. Miniature sheet is abbreviated 'ms' ●

11.03 Celebrating N Ireland (MS) Downpatrick, Co Down	26.08 Olympics Handover to be announced
13.03 Mayday – Rescue at Sea Poole, Dorset	18.09 RAF Uniforms London NW4
15.04 Insects Crawley, West Sussex	29.09 Country Definitives anniversary (MS) to be announced
13.05 Cathedrals London EC4	14.10 Women of Distinction Aldeburgh, Suffolk
10.06 Carry On and Hammer Films Bray, Maidenhead, Berks	04.11 Christmas Bethlehem, Llandelo
17.07 Air Displays Farnborough, Hants	06.11 Lest We Forget (MS) London SW1

2008 issues There are two sets of new special stamps this month – the Celebrating Northern Ireland issue on 11 March, followed by Rescue at Sea two days later. For details of these issues see the December and January issues of the *Bulletin*. Next month's issue is Insects (15 April), followed by Cathedrals (May) and Carry On and Hammer films (June).

The special stamp programme continues with an issue for Air Displays (17 July), a miniature sheet to mark the Olympic Handover from Beijing to London (26 August), an RAF Uniforms set (18 September) and a miniature sheet commemorating the 50th anniversary of the first country (regional) stamps (29 September). The Women of Achievement issue (14 October) is linked to the 150th anniversary of the birth of Emmeline Pankhurst. The Christmas stamps (4 November) feature Traditional Pantomime, followed by the final Lest We Forget miniature sheet (6 November) marking the 90th anniversary of the end of the First World War ●

2009 issues The first details have just been announced of the 2009 stamp programme, as shown below. Prestige books will be issued for the Design Classics, Darwin and Navy Uniforms sets, and a Treasures of the Archive book will go on sale in May. Exact dates of issue, stamp values, and other information will be published nearer the time of issue. Miniature sheet is abbreviated 'ms' ●

January Design Classics (10 stamps)	June Mythical Creatures (6 stamps)
January Robert Burns (MS)	July Olympic Disciplines (10 stamps)
February Charles Darwin (6 stamps and MS)	August Postboxes (MS)
March Celebrating Wales (MS)	September Fire Brigade (6 stamps)
March Pioneers of the Industrial Revolution (8 stamps)	September Navy Uniforms (6 stamps)
April Kings & Queens Part 2 (6 stamps and MS)	October Best of British (10 stamps)
May Action for Species Part 3 – Plants (10 and MS)	November Christmas (7 stamps and MS)

Territorial Army centenary A new philatelic product, known as a Commemorative Sheet, will be available from 1 April, to mark the centenary of the Territorial Army. It will comprise ten 1st class Union Flag stamps with appropriate labels attached. Price £13.50. The sheet will be printed by Cartor in litho. A Territorial Army centenary medal cover will also be available from 1 April, price £14.95. A further 'Olympic Start' commemorative sheet will be issued in June ●

Special Handstamp Centres Addresses for Royal Mail's five Special Handstamp Centres are published in each issue of our companion magazine, the *British Postmark Bulletin*. For the convenience of *Philatelic Bulletin* readers who do not subscribe to that publication, we will give the addresses here from time to time. To receive a free sample copy of the *Postmark Bulletin* write to: The Editor, British Philatelic Bulletin, Royal Mail, 35-50 Rathbone Place, London W1T 1HQ ●

London Special Handstamp Centre Royal Mail, Mount Pleasant, London EC1A 1BB

Northern England Special Handstamp Centre South Shields DO, Keppell Street, South Shields NE33 1AA

Midland Special Handstamp Centre Birmingham Mail Centre, St Stephens Street, Birmingham B6 4AA

Wales & The West Special Handstamp Centre 220-228 Penarth Road, Cardiff CF11 8TA

Scotland & Northern Ireland Special Handstamp Centre Rutherglen DO, Duchess Place, Rutherglen, Glasgow G73 1BT

Medal Covers and Ingots A new medal cover marking the 300th anniversary of St Paul's Cathedral will be available from 13 May. A Machin 'coin medal' cover will be available from 5 June, commemorating the 40th anniversary of the first decimal coins designed by Arnold Machin. A 40th anniversary Machin stamp cover was issued last June – see the May 2007 *Bulletin* for illustrations of the 2007 Machin product range.

The penultimate issue in the Edward VIII and George VI Stamps Ingot Collection will be available from 29 April, price £27.95. This features the 1948 1s Olympic Games stamp ●

Generic and Smilers sheets Readers are reminded that new generic and Smilers sheets, entitled 'Glorious Northern Ireland', containing 20 Northern Ireland 1st class stamps with adjoining labels featuring Northern Ireland buildings, scenery, and landmarks will be available from 11 March, price £7.35 for the generic sheet. Both stamps and labels are self-adhesive.

Generic sheets are defined as those having pre-printed labels; Smilers sheets have a customer's image printed to order. To find out how to order Smilers sheets, phone 0845 074 2000 (UK customers) or +44 131 316 7483 (overseas), or pick up the Smilers leaflet/order form from a Post Office branch. Orders using digital photos can also be placed over the web, at www.royalmail.com/smilers ●

Journey's end The Abolition of the Slave Trade issue will come off sale on 21 March. All five sets in the British Journey Series – Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales, South West England, and England – will be withdrawn on 31 March. Also coming off sale at the end of March will be the 50p sand-coloured definitive (issued 1 April 1997) and the Welsh language airletter of January 2005 (single and discount packs) ●

British Postal Museum & Archive On show until April is an exhibition marking the 40th anniversary of the Machin stamp – see August *Bulletin*, pages 368-69. This will be followed, from 6 May, by an exhibition commemorating 50 years of Regional (Country) Stamps.

The BPMA, located at Freeling House, Phoenix Place, London WC1X 0DL (near Mount Pleasant), holds the collections of the former National Postal Museum and the Post Office Archives ●

BPMA For more information telephone the BPMA on 020 7239 2570 or visit website www.postalheritage.org.uk

Northern Ireland The new miniature sheet and its iconic images, by Frances McKinley

FOR DECADES Royal Mail has depicted iconic images from all parts of the British Isles on special stamps. The new Northern Ireland miniature sheet features four of the province's most famous icons: the Giant's Causeway, Carrickfergus Castle, Saint Patrick and the Queen's Bridge, Belfast. These images of Northern Ireland are sure to enhance any collection.



The Giant's Causeway, one of the world's most impressive basalt features, and a UNESCO world heritage site, is where science meets myth. It has been one of Northern Ireland's foremost tourist attractions since being declared one of the great wonders of the natural world by the Royal Society in 1693, and was voted the UK's fourth greatest natural wonder in a *Radio Times* poll in 2005. Made up of some 37,000 interlocking basalt columns, the Causeway was formed following a massive subterranean explosion 60 million years ago, and stretches from the North Antrim Coast to Mull in Scotland.

Folk tales in respect of its formation are more appealing to tourists. One story tells of the Ulster giant Fionn Mac Cumhaill's love for a Scottish giant; such was his desire for her that he built the Causeway to bring his love to his side. Another version of the story tells of Fionn building the Causeway in order to have a duel with a Scottish giant, but, having crossed the Causeway and seen the size of his adversary, Fionn retreated to Ireland where he asked his wife to tuck him into an oversized cot. The Scottish giant had followed Fionn and, seeing the size of Fionn's apparent 'baby', fled back to Scotland. To give added credence to their tales, the Causeway guides have named various physical features of the Causeway after the giant, including the Giant's Harp, the Giant's Eyes, his Chimney and many more. ►



Giant's Causeway, Antrim coast
Northern Ireland 1st



2ND

The Giant's Causeway in the British Journey Northern Ireland issue, and on the 2nd class country stamp.



Carrickfergus Castle, painted by Thomas Creswick (1811-69), and as featured on High Value stamps. The earlier set, issued 1955-69, is by Lynton Lamb. The later series (top, 1988-99) were engraved by Chris Matthews and Inge Madlé, based on photographs by Prince Andrew.

Carrickfergus Castle, an image previously used on Royal Mail stamps, is a prominent feature of the County Antrim coastline, striking from the sea and air, with dramatic images of Belfast Lough forming a backdrop. One of the largest and earliest of Irish castles, it was built on a rocky promontory in around 1180 by John de Courcy, an Anglo-Norman invader who, along with his kinsmen, conquered much of counties Antrim and Down, including Downpatrick, believed to be the site of the final resting place of Saint Patrick.

Garrisoned until 1928, the castle represents 800 years of military might and is reflective of the defensive nature of the whole area. It became a museum in 1928 and, now owned by the Environmental and Heritage Centre, has undergone extensive restoration and is a major tourist attraction. The interior features a number of life-size models of characters associated with its history including England's King John, who stayed in the Castle during his tour of Ireland in 1210; his image now resides in the cloakroom. It also houses an impressive collection of armour and weaponry, and a history of a number of Irish battalions.

Saint Patrick, Ireland's Patron Saint, is credited with driving the snakes out of Ireland, although it is unlikely they ever existed, and with bringing Christianity to the country. Born in Roman Britain, Patrick was brought to Ireland as a slave and worked there as a herder for six years during the 5th century. He escaped back to his family, but is said to have had a dream urging him to return to Ireland. He is credited with using the three-leafed shamrock, a symbol now so often associated with Ireland, to explain the concept of the Trinity to the Irish people.

Saint Patrick also overlaps with a number of legends, written down and preserved during the Christian era, so some authors have invented stories where Saint Patrick meets mythical heroes. The best known of these is the tale of Oisín, son of Fionn Mac Cumhaill. Legend says that on his return to Ireland after 300 years spent in the land of Eternal Youth (Tír na nÓg), Oisín met Saint Patrick, in whose house he was a guest. During a lengthy debate Patrick is said to have tried to convert the warrior, telling him of the virtues of the faith, but Oisín could only reminisce about his time as a fearsome warrior and did not convert to Christianity.

Patrick is said to be buried under Down Cathedral, Downpatrick, alongside Saint Brigid and Saint Columba, although this has never been confirmed. The number of myths and legends associated with Saint Patrick demonstrate his importance in Irish culture. March 17, believed to be the date of his death, is celebrated far beyond Ireland by millions of people.

The Queen's Bridge in Belfast, spanning the River Lagan at Belfast Lough, was opened in 1849 by Queen Victoria, after whom it was named. A replacement for the Long Bridge, connecting counties Antrim and Down, the bridge was a vital link for the growing city. At the time of the opening of the bridge, Belfast was experiencing an influx of workers from all over Northern Ireland, and the sectarian tensions which were to characterise the city for many decades were beginning to manifest themselves.

The bridge is now overlooked by the Thanksgiving Square Beacon, known locally as the Peace Monument, designed to reflect a move away from the city's troubled past. Designed by Scottish artist Andy Scott, with the patronage of Myrtle Smyth, it was fabricated by P F Copeland in Newtownabbey. It is one of the tallest artworks in the UK and an imposing sight on the banks of the Lagan. Made from stainless steel and cast bronze, she spirals upwards holding the 'Ring of Thanksgiving' above her head. The globe at her feet symbolises the universal philosophies of peace, harmony and thanksgiving, and has marks on its surface depicting the various parts of the globe to which the city exported its products and people ●



The Angel of Thanksgiving on the Queen's Bridge in Belfast, and St Patrick featured on an Irish stamp issued 11 February 2008. Photograph courtesy Paul Smyth.

Air displays A special issue celebrating 100 years of the spectacle of powered flight



SIX STAMPS featuring dramatic scenes from air displays go on sale at Post Office branches and philatelic outlets and at Royal Mail Tallents House on 17 July. The stamps, designed by Roundel, feature: Red Arrows display, 1st; RAF Falcons, 48p; spectator watching a Red Arrows display, 50p; Avro flypast, 56p; parachute display, 72p; and an air race, 81p. The 1st class will also be available in a '100 Years of Aviation' generic sheet, litho printed by Cartor.

FIRST DAY FACILITIES Orders for serviced FDCs must reach Tallents House by the day of issue. Collectors may send stamped covers on the day of issue to: Royal Mail Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB (Tallents House postmark), or to the nearest Royal Mail Special Handstamp Centre (Farnborough postmark) marking the outer envelope 'FDO817' or 'FDO818'. Covers can be posted or handed in at the main Post Office branches for the Farnborough postmark.

For details of sponsored handstamps and addresses of the Handstamp Centres see the *British Postmark Bulletin* – available on subscription from Tallents House (£12.25 UK/Europe; £24.95 elsewhere). For a free sample copy write to: the British Postmark Bulletin, Royal Mail, 35-50 Rathbone Place, London W1T 1HQ.

FARNBOROUGH MEDAL COVER This cover commemorates the centenary of Samuel Cody's first manned flight and the 60th anniversary of the Air Show, the world's premier showcase for over 1300 aerospace companies. The six Air Displays stamps are cancelled by a special Farnborough postmark; the Royal Mint medal features the first powered flight (obverse) and the air show (reverse). Limited edition of 15,000, price £14.95 •

Air Displays



Left: the first day cover.

The presentation pack, below, was written by Eugene Byrne and designed by Roundel. It features archive photographs and a timeline of highlights from 100 years of air displays.

(Pictures clockwise from top left): The King's Cup, 1925. Competitors raced a circular course around Britain starting from Croydon. The competition was established by King George V to "improve the breed of British light aircraft".

The Bristol Brabazon, one of the great postwar hopes of British civil aviation, made its first public appearance at Farnborough in 1950. The Brabazon was huge – similar to a modern 747 – and incorporated many groundbreaking technologies but airlines considered it too big and expensive and none were ordered. The project did, however, leave a legacy of equipment and expertise which was used to develop later aircraft at Bristol, including Concorde.

The day before the 1935 'RAF Pageant' at Hendon, thousands of children were invited in to watch the dress rehearsal. The star attractions were Hawker Fury and Bristol Bulldog fighters and the Boulton Paul Overstrand bomber, all biplanes which would be obsolete within just a few years.

Bournemouth, 1927. Huge crowds turned out in fine weather to watch military and civil aircraft competing in races, including one for a prize put up by local churches and residents after the organizers agreed not to race on Sunday. The trophy became known as The Killop Cup.

The trophy became known as The Killoj Cup.

The Aerial Derby, 1913. Flyers raced a 95-mile course around London, while thousands watched from Hendon and Epsom Downs. The winner was the glamorous and popular young British aviation pioneer, Gustav Hamel, who disappeared while flying the Channel a year later.

Hendon, 1911. Demonstration of military aviation, including 'bumping' of ground targets with sandbags. Guests included the top brass, politicians and a who's who of Edwardian Britain, together with, according to *The Times*, "thousands of less distinguished spectators who thronged every available standpoint in the neighbourhood of the aerodrome."

At early air displays planes often flew very close to the spectators, but as the machines got faster and the shows got more careful about safety, so the distance from the crowd grew further.

[illegible]

Farnborough was one of the first airfields in the UK – at the time of Cody's flight it was also being used to research the military use of balloons. It went on to become a crucial research site.



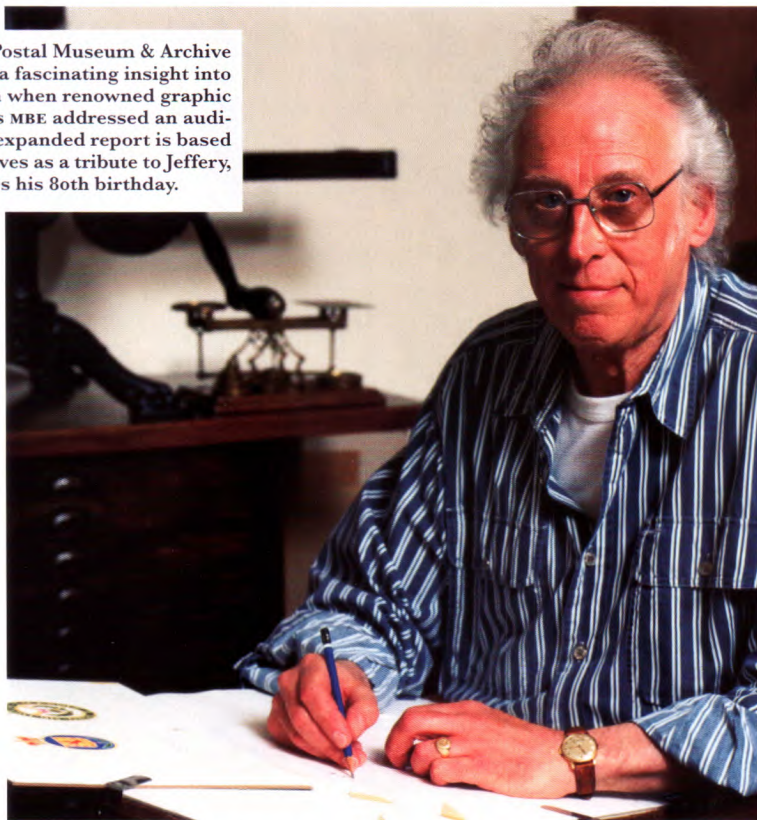
Air Displays Prices

Set of stamps	£3.43
Presentation pack	£3.95
FDC envelope	£0.30
Serviced FDC (UK orders)	£4.51
Serviced FDC (overseas)	£3.84
Stamp cards set	£1.80

The 1st class stamp will also be available in a '100 Years of Aviation' generic sheet, to be printed in litho by Cartor, price £7.75.

Jeffery Matthews, designer Part 1: Royal

Last autumn, the British Postal Museum & Archive October lecture provided a fascinating insight into the world of stamp design when renowned graphic designer Jeffery Matthews MBE addressed an audience of enthusiasts. This expanded report is based on his lecture and also serves as a tribute to Jeffery, who next month celebrates his 80th birthday.



TO BEGIN his lecture, Jeffery spent some time relating some of the stories behind his commissions for the Post Office, which had started with submissions in 1959. In 1965 his first accepted stamp designs appeared – the 20th anniversary of the United Nations issue. This began a lifetime's association with Royal Mail which has continued to this day. There can be few collectors of British stamps who are unfamiliar with his work and those seeking a further insight into his career may wish to consult my article published in the October 2005 *Bulletin*.

Jeffery explained that he had worked not only for Royal Mail, but had also designed the logos for the Inland Revenue and the Forestry Commission, produced a masthead for the *Sunday Times*, created the Millennium coin design for the Royal Mint and had undertaken many other projects, some of which involved calligraphy and heraldry, which are two of his favourite graphic treatments.

The lecture then focused on his stamp design work and all commissions were discussed and illustrated in chronological order, which is how I will treat the remainder of this report.

Mail stamp issues 1965-81, by Glenn Morgan



20th Anniversary of the UN Jeffery's first issue for Royal Mail.

British Bridges Just prior to submitting his designs Jeffery became concerned that the bridges might no longer be in service, so he telephoned the AA, who sent out patrolmen on bikes to check: fortunately they all were all still standing!

Postage Dues These designs exploit the tonal ranges which can be achieved with gravure printing.

20th Anniversary of the United Nations 1965 The apparently unsteady edges to both designs were intentionally done that way to assist the printer, who was still coming to terms with obtaining perfect registration of colours at that time. The large '20' and 'UN' were hand-drawn.

British Bridges 1968 Three designers had been commissioned to produce artworks for this issue. Unusually, Jeffery had two of his designs accepted (the 4d and 1s9d values) and the other two designers had one each, producing a set that was less cohesive than would have been the case had one designer produced all four stamps.

'To Pay' labels (Postage Dues) 1971 This set allowed Jeffery to exploit the tonal range possible with photogravure printing. The designs were created in monochrome, with the colour for each stamp added at the printing stage. The artwork was somewhat unconventional in that he cut the numerals out of masking film, stuck them onto white artboard, sprayed the tonal gradations, and finally peeled away the mask to reveal the white numerals. ▶



Regional definitives Details show the heraldic devices on the 1971 issues (top row) and on the lithographic stamps of 1980. These later issues were printed using artwork drawn for earlier presentation packs, as described on the opposite page.



Regional definitives 1971 The Regional stamps used heraldic devices that required repositioning and resizing of the Machin head. This was the first time Jeffery had used heraldry in stamp designs, creating white-painted devices on a mid-grey ground. This ongoing series proved complex, and this article is not the place to produce a catalogue of all the variations, but the four basic evolutionary stages are recorded in the table shown below. (Note that some changes cross-over, as new printings were often released as-and-when needed.)

Stage	Font	Year	Printer and process	Heraldry source	Head source
1	Perpetua	1971	Harrison, photogravure	Matthews original	Original Machin
2	Perpetua	c1980	Waddington/Questa, litho	Presentation pack	Unknown
3	Matthews	c1983	Questa, litho	Presentation pack	Rory Matthews
4	Matthews	1984	Questa, litho	Matthews revised	Rory Matthews



Royal Silver Wedding Anniversary 1972 Stamp-size sketches of these stamps had been produced, which were liked by the Post Office, who subsequently approached Her Majesty for permission to hold a photography session at the palace. Jeffery managed to convince The Queen to pose with and without a tiara. Seeing the finished photographs, he favoured the more informal approach, but the best image had included the tiara. When Her Majesty visited Harrison to see the stamps being printed, she queried why her hair looked as it did on the glass negative. Jeffery explained that the tiara had to be painted out, in order to utilise the best portrait. The Queen smiled and said: ‘Oh well, one cannot win them all’.

High value definitives re-design There was a desire by the Post Office to move away from the Castles high value stamps, and Jeffery was commissioned to produce at least 50 single and bicoloured colour trials for larger-sized Machin head stamps. The bicoloured stamps were selected as they offered greater security against counterfeiting.

25th Anniversary of the Coronation 1978 The Queen's head at top right of each stamp was intentionally produced larger than normal and a younger looking image was chosen to highlight how Her Majesty had acceded to the throne at such a young age. As these designs had dark coloured backgrounds, the white outer margins were made bigger than normal to ensure that there would be a strong phosphor reading by the automated sorting equipment.

British Architecture 1978 and Rowland Hill 1979 (miniature sheets) Around 1977 Jeffery had designed the logo for the London 1980 stamp exhibition, and was subsequently briefed about the three miniature sheets that were to be issued in the lead-up to the show.

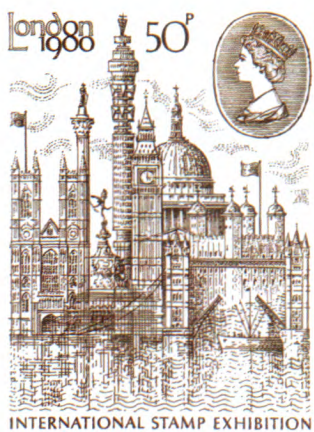
He produced the sheet margins for these two issues, and the 1980 London Landmarks miniature sheet, using a Letraset rub-down moiré effect, but he was not responsible for designing the actual stamps contained within the sheets.

Enschedé 8p definitive 1979 Jeffery was involved with a project that saw security printer Joh Enschedé of The Netherlands being invited to produce a test run of the 8p definitive stamp. He went over to Haarlem to set things up and to offer his considerable know-how in the field of stamp design and production.

The project had occurred because of Royal Mail's concerns about continuity of stamp supply if the British printing industry was to withdraw its labour force en-masse. Despite there never being any need to invoke such contingency arrangements, this printer was later to become a regular producer of stamps for Britain, a relationship that continues.

Country stamps by lithography 1980 In 1980, Royal Mail added Waddington and the House of Questa to its roster of stamp printers, both of whom utilised lithographic instead of gravure printing. When both of these printers came to print their first Regional stamp issues, they appear to have created their own stamp artwork. Back in 1976, the Harrison-printed revised tariff Regionals had appeared in presentation packs, for which Jeffery had created black-and-white drawings of the heraldry. These had been drawn to a different scale, and with a different degree of fineness than would have been used for stamp production. Despite this, the printers amazingly took the presentation pack artwork and reproduced it on the original printings of their litho stamps. This happened before Jeffery had been able to redraw the heraldry for this different printing process. The source of the Machin head used is also uncertain. ►





London International Stamp Show stamps & miniature sheet 1980

Jeffery was advised that this issue could be engraved and printed by intaglio instead of the more usual photogravure. Concerned that the Stamp Advisory Committee might not fully appreciate how the stamp might look by this process, he drew the artwork as if it was an engraving.

A London commercial engraver, Geoffrey Holt, did an exact facsimile of his rough without adding any interpretation. Unfortunately, the rendition of The Queen's head proved to be a disappointment to Jeffery, because the engraver had also slavishly copied what had only been intended to be a rough rendition of the head for the SAC. Jeffery was planning to redraw the head, but a shortage of time prevented this.

80th Birthday of The Queen Mother 1980

This issue depicted Her Majesty wearing a hat, a string of pearls and a broad smile – the three things that most people would associate with this popular old lady. The lettering surrounding the photograph was hand-drawn.

Christmas Decorations 1980 Jeffery received a specific brief for this issue, which was to produce a secular design. This did not prevent him including Christian elements, as close examination of each stamp will reveal.

New definitive stamps, early 1980s There was a growing desire in some quarters for a new definitive series, to update the look of the stamps and Her Majesty. The Post Office was prepared to consider everything from a totally new portrait and different formats, through to adaptations of the existing Machin head. A brief was issued to Jeffery, and others, and many printing trials were produced. One idea was to change the Machin head by cutting away the shoulders of Her Majesty and, as a courtesy to Mr Machin he was consulted over this work-in-progress. Suffice to say that he most definitely did not find favour with any of the proposed ideas.

In the end, none of the work was deemed an improvement to the existing design and the project was dropped. However, Jeffery's idea of turning the format to create a horizontal stamp did eventually lead in 1993 to the creation of the first Machin self-adhesive stamp in 1st class booklets.

Royal Wedding, Charles and Diana 1981 This is Jeffery's least favourite pair of stamps that he has been involved with. Roughs were produced using two separate photographs of Prince Charles and Lady Diana Spencer, which had worked fine, but then Lord Snowdon was commissioned to produce an image exclusively for these stamps. Unfortunately, only one photograph was ever made available, which included them both standing together, giving Jeffery no opportunity to construct a suitable composition.

Incidentally, all the time that roughs were being prepared for this issue, the name of Prince Charles's future wife was unknown, so she was referred to as 'the lady of his choice' until the Spencer name was made public. ▶

Photograph: Geoff Dann

Thematica 2005



Celebrating the work of Jeffery Matthews MBE

Souvenir sheet printed
by Royal Joh. EnschedéLimited edition of 5,000
Fourth sheet in a series

Stamps reproduced by kind permission of Royal Mail plc

United Nations to the present day



Jeffery Matthews

65/100

THEMATICA 2005 CARISBROOKE HALL LONDON W2 2HF



Harrison & Sons congratulate H.M. Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother on attaining Her 80th Birthday
We are proud to have the honour of printing the Commemorative Stamp to mark this Special Occasion

Thematica 2002



Conceptual ideas, created by Jeffery Matthews for the presentation
of the Machin portrait on British definitives,
reproduced courtesy of Heritage Services, Consignia.

The horizontal format was adopted
for Britain's first self-adhesive stamps.



Souvenir sheet printed by Walsall Security Printers Ltd. in a limited edition of 5,000

© Consignia plc 2002



Facsimile Machin head 1981 Royal Mail needed to standardise the artwork given to each printer, so Barry Robinson made requests of Harrison in 1981 to have the origination material for the Machin head, but was eventually told that it no longer existed.

Jeffery advised Barry that the image would have to be recreated, but there was no record of how the original Machin bust of Her Majesty had been photographed. The special lighting that had been used could not be replicated due to the complexities of the multiple angled lights, and so an alternative solution was needed. He suggested that an artist could recreate the image in tone so as to be an exact facsimile, claiming that no-one would ever spot that it was not a photograph.

In May 1982 Jeffery's son Rory, a consummate draftsman in his own right, set about drawing the facsimile Machin head in pencil. This image had the desired photographic quality to it and, as Jeffery had predicted, no-one was aware that the head had been hand-drawn until it was made known in 2002. This facsimile head was also understood to have been used on postal stationery.

The Rory Matthews facsimile head stayed in use until work started on the 150th Anniversary of the Penny Black series, when Barry again mentioned to Harrison that he needed a definitive head image and a chap went off and came back with a negative! Barry made haste to photographically copy this image and supplied it to each printer for their use on all reprinted Machin stamps henceforth.

Illustration from *Connoisseur Catalogue of Machin Stamps*, courtesy of James Skinner.

Definitive numerals before re-drawing

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 $\frac{1}{2}$ P

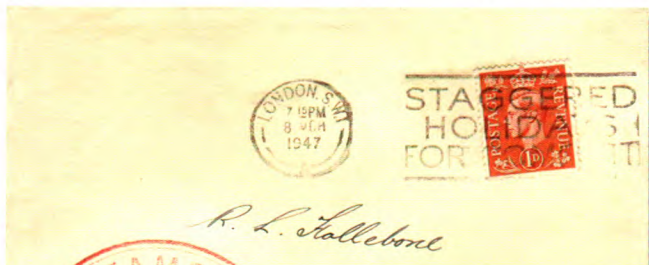
Definitive numerals re-drawn by Jeffery Matthews

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 $\frac{1}{2}$ P

Definitive numerals 1981 The 'Matthews Palette' is discussed next month, but collectors should perhaps also be referring to the 'Matthews Typeface'. The existing typeface, 'Perpetua', was designed by Eric Gill in the early 20th century, based on the designs of classical Roman lettering and Arabic numerals. Jeffery gradually redesigned each of the numerals (except the 9, which is simply an upside down 6), together with the £ symbol, making subtle changes along the way until we have those used to this day.

The zero in particular was in need of change, as it was very wide and perfectly round, resembling a letter 'O', and difficulty was being experienced in having to fit into the available stamp space values such as '20 $\frac{1}{2}$ p'. The 10p stamp was the first to use the new narrower zero. At a later time Jeffery also designed the service indicators '1st', '2nd' and 'E' used on the NVT stamps. His involvement with this process ceased just prior to the introduction of the new country definitive range • *Continued next month.*

Covers in my collection by Martin Robinson



Left: souvenir label printed by Bradbury Wilkinson as a souvenir of the National Stamp Exhibition held at the Central Hall, Westminster in 1947.

Below: the souvenir label issued for the 1947 National Philatelic Exhibition in Manchester features the Central Library, St Peter's Square.



PHILATELIC ACTIVITIES were largely suspended during the Second World War. The fourth annual London Stamp Exhibition had been planned for 7-14 October 1939 at the Central Hall, Westminster, but was postponed because of the outbreak of the war in September. Three exhibitions did take place during the war: the Stamp Centenary Exhibition at Lancaster House in London, from 6-14 May, the Adhesive Stamp Centenary Exhibition in Bournemouth, 6-11 May, and the Czechoslovak Philatelic Exhibition in Grosvenor Place, London, from 8-20 November 1943. A set of six stamps marking the centenary of the first adhesive postage stamp was issued on 6 May 1940 and these events no doubt boosted morale among collectors during those dark days.

As those of us who lived through this period well remember, after the war ended there was a time of austerity and recovery. Even so, the British Philatelic Exhibition was held at the Imperial Institute, South Kensington, from 28 December

1946 to 4 January 1947, and the National Stamp Exhibition re-opened at the Central Hall, Westminster from 3-8 March 1947. As a souvenir of the latter, a gummed and perforated label was produced by Bradbury Wilkinson & Co Ltd (see above left) depicting a Twopence Blue flanked by an heraldic Lion and Unicorn. As a matter of interest the label bears the dates 3-9 March 1947, but the red cachet is dated 3-8 March; the latter dates are believed to be the correct ones. The initials sca are an abbreviation for 'Stamp Collectors' Association'.

In November 1947 a further National Philatelic Exhibition was held at the Houldsworth Hall, Manchester. An imperforate, gummed label was issued in a sheet of four, inscribed 'Manchester 1947' and showing the Central Library, St Peter's Square, a building which loomed large in the life of a Manchester schoolboy. The cover bears the Royal Wedding postmark used nationally from 20-30 November •

Books A warm welcome to *Collect British Postal Stationery*

IT HAS BEEN a long time coming but this new title by Dr Alan Huggins and Colin Baker is worth the wait. In 1970 Dr Huggins published his much acclaimed book *British Postal Stationery*, and a new edition was eagerly awaited. However this new book 'is not designed simply as a replacement for the earlier work which contains a very considerable amount of additional background and specialised data that may not necessarily be of primary importance to all collectors.' Thus *Collect British Postal Stationery* is subtitled 'A Simplified Listing of British Postal Stationery 1840 to 2007', but don't let the word 'Simplified' make you believe it is not a major piece of work, skillfully distilling detailed study and research into a concise, well-illustrated and relatively easy-to-use book, sure to encourage interest in the subject as well as satisfy existing postal stationery collectors.

It opens with a short but worthwhile account of the Nature and Origins of Postal Stationery, followed by three pages explaining the Structure of Listing with a select bibliography, a list of relevant societies and organisations, and a note on the pricing system used. The listings are in broad categories such as Envelopes, Letter Sheets, Telegraph Forms, Postcards, Newspaper Wrappers, Certificates of Posting, Registered, Recorded & Special Delivery Envelopes, Letter Cards and Air Mail Letter Sheets (aerogrammes). Each includes sub-divisions, such as Post Office and Stamped to Order issues, and Envelopes covers Swiftair, Airture, Airpacks, Cassette Envelopes, and Mailpacks, as well as conventional stamped envelopes. Oddly, Letter Sheets – Official Issues are in the Newspaper Wrappers section, rather than in the Envelopes section with Post Office letter sheets.

Each section is well illustrated, showing entire items of stationery or imprinted stamps, or other important detail to aid identification, and the listings are clearly demarcated by reign. Each item is given a reference number, which will be useful for both collectors and dealers. Items are priced mint and used although much modern material is unpriced used, as commercially used items (as opposed to philatelic usage, often with a special

handstamp) rarely come on the market. Where modern material is priced used this often exceeds mint prices; for example the 8p envelope (EP128) of 1979 is priced £15 used compared to £2 mint. The four short-lived 1992 Mail Packs are priced £15 each mint, but unpriced used. Illustrations for the stamps on Stamped to Order Envelopes & Paper make four attractive pages, and the valuations indicate how scarce some of these now are. The listings of compound stampings will be closely scrutinised by specialised collectors to see what they are missing, or indeed if any in their collections are omitted from the listings.

Official postal stationery for use by government departments are popular and examples are listed for the Inland Revenue, Board of Agriculture & Fisheries, Crown Agents and others, as well as those of the Lords and Commons. Stamped telegraph forms continued into the early 1950s and are priced mint only, prices ranging from £15 to £200. The Postcard section includes a number of commemorative issues, such as the Wembley Exhibition 1924-25, 1993 London and Stratford scenes, 1994 Giant's Causeway and the latest 2007 Scout Centenary set. None of these recent issues is priced used. Official postcards include rare issues of Victoria, Edward VII, and George V for the Irish Land Commission, Patent Office, the Inland Revenue, Army and Admiralty. Forces (Field Service) postcards were issued in 1914. Post Office issues of newspaper wrappers ceased after 1938, although stamped to order issues continued until the 1970s, with compound stampings of up to six stamps known. Similarly, PO issues of stamped certificates of posting date only from Victoria's reign, but 1970s STO issues are recorded with pre-decimal and decimal Machin impressions.

The Registered envelopes section is especially interesting and includes modern 'plastic' Special Delivery issues which now carry a 'Paid' or PPI type indicia rather than a Machin head stamp. These Special Delivery envelopes, it is noted, also exist without pre-payment indicia and required adhesive stamps (or meter impressions) to be affixed. These 'fall outside the currently accepted



definition of postal stationery', so are not listed. Also noted are items 'used by the Post Office for their own mail'. A popular category of registered envelopes are those issued for Forces mail until 1984. Registered envelopes overprinted for the Admiralty in the reign of Edward VII are listed and valued at £300 mint and £500 used. Letter cards, once popular for short private messages, were discontinued in 1981. They were revived in 1997-98 as 'Aircards' in pictorial designs.

The final section deals with probably the best-known and most popular postal stationery area – Air Mail Letter Sheets, or aerogrammes, first issued in 1943. Of the standard PO issues, only those of George VI and pre-decimal QEII issues are priced used; decimal issues, although until recently used in large quantities, are rarely found in dealers stocks except for philatelic usage with special postmarks or flight cachets. Genuine used examples, for both business and social mail, are worth looking for. There are many special issues of aerogrammes, from the 1948 Olympic Games to Christmas 2006 (reissued in 2007). The stamps and pictorial front panels are all illustrated – a

most useful reference and a colourful seven pages of 171 illustrations. These include the Scottish and Welsh issues, Christmas designs, and occasional true commemoratives, such as the 1964 Shakespeare Festival, 1977 Silver Jubilee, 1981 Royal Wedding, and 1996 Olympic Games. A considerable number of STO aerogrammes are listed including PO issues with additional stamps added; although produced for philatelic purposes, they have a following. The book concludes with a comprehensive index. I spotted a few minor errors – the mis-spelling of Llangollen in the postnotes listing (pages 16-17), and a Elizabeth II envelope (for the 10th anniversary of the NPM, 1979) shown alongside a Mulready and 1890 Uniform Penny Post envelope in the Queen Victoria section (page 1). But the authors are warmly congratulated on a job well done; their surnames will be used as shorthand when referring to their work by postal stationery collectors for many years to come. JH ●

168 pages, hardbound with dustjacket. £30 (postage £4 UK, £7 Europe and elsewhere surface mail, £10 Rest of World air-mail) from Ian Harvey, 27 Landford Rd, Putney, London SW15 1AQ. Remittances payable to Great Britain Philatelic Society.

Philately online Ron Negus looks at a website devoted to a topic very popular with thematic collectors



THE POPULARITY of thematic collecting can be seen by the regular appearance of new subject-based catalogues. Stanley Gibbons adopted the idea initially in 1983, when they issued a volume entitled *Collect Birds on Stamps*. This catalogue is now into its fifth edition. The Gibbons website lists thematic subjects in order of popularity, and birds hold the number one position.

This Gibbons thematic catalogue, which includes details for more than 10,000 bird stamps, is an extract from their *Stamps of the World* volumes. Collectors of this theme will find the website (see address above) of considerable interest. Called 'Birds of the World on Postage Stamps', it has been operational since October 1998. In that time, it has developed into an excellent example of how this type of specialised information can be collected together on the internet, and then searched conveniently under different aspects of the topic.

In the centre of the opening screen, an alphabetic index to country names is provided. Selection of any particular letter opens up a full listing of countries with names that start with that letter and have issued bird stamps at some time in their history. Clicking on any chosen country's name reveals a new page which displays coloured images of each issued stamp and miniature sheet that includes a bird.

From this new page, which covers all the bird issues for the particular country selected, the user

www.bird-stamps.org The guestbook on this website invites visitors to leave a message to describe their view on its usefulness to thematic collectors of birds. The messages have been retained and make very interesting reading. Most comments are highly favourable, and the site has attracted more than 140,000 visitors.

can move the cursor over any specific stamp. A panel appears which gives the common name of the species shown in the design, its scientific name in Latin, the SG catalogue number and the date of issue. Single clicking on the chosen stamp then shows a new window in which the stamps from all the countries that show that same bird are displayed. There is also a sketch map that indicates those countries in which that particular bird is a native inhabitant.

Another good feature on this page is a link to a Google Image search with the name of the relevant bird already completed. A button is provided for the user to initiate this search. The results are Google selected images of the bird in question, displayed with the name of the websites on which the pictures appear. These are mostly non-philatelic sites, but many provide additional information about the birds, which can be useful when writing-up album pages.

At the bottom of this last screen an icon shows a card file. Clicking on this brings up an index to all the different species for the selected bird family which is currently being viewed. These index entries are hot links to the individual species, and selecting them gives an alternative means of access to the pages described above.

On the home page, a summary is given of the last six alterations made to the content, so that it is easy to find out whether new items have been added when visiting. There is also a set of pages called 'Identification Corner'. These list the reasons why certain stamps have been described in a particular way, when there is some doubt about the particular bird image given on a stamp. This listing is arranged under country names ●

A parcel handstamp rarity from 1978 by Richard West

DURING THE THREE decades that I edited *Stamp Magazine*, numerous items came into the office, invariably submitted in the hope of a mention in the editorial columns. One such item that arrived towards the end of 1978 immediately appealed, although it was not until more recent years that I have come to appreciate its real significance.

The occasion was the official opening of the new Milton Keynes headquarters of Volkswagen (GB) Ltd, being undertaken by the Chairman of Lonrho Ltd, Sir Duncan Sandys. The new building was constructed by a company called IDC Ltd, of Stratford-upon-Avon, who worked with Volkswagen to produce 1,000 gold-plated medallions to commemorate the opening. These medallions were struck by The Pobjoy Mint, which was then based in Sutton in Surrey. These medallions were sent out in parcels to which was attached a 'Commemorative Parcel Label', the design in blue featuring a drawing of the new building, along with the logos of Volkswagen, Audi and IDC. To these labels were attached two Machin definitives – a 20p and 50p, to pay the parcel post costs.

However, most significant was the cancellation: a commemorative parcel post handstamp, which, as well as the familiar inscriptions of 'Parcel Post' and 'Milton Keynes 27 Oct 78', also states 'Opening of Headquarters of Volkswagen (GB) Limited at Milton Keynes October 1978' within a hexagon, as used for the IDC logo. It was advised that this handstamp had only been used on the 1,000 parcels containing the medallions, and was not made available after 27 October 1978.

I have always liked this item, and have for many years included it in displays to philatelic societies. However, I only appreciated its true significance when I read *The Guinness Book of Stamps Facts and*



Feats by the late James Mackay. Jim illustrated the item, describing it as the largest commemorative postmark used in Britain and, at 117 × 35mm, the UK's largest handstruck datestamp. He added that while parcel handstamps had been used at temporary post offices at showgrounds and exhibitions, this was the first time such a handstamp had been used for just one day and not at a temporary post office. Apparently the Post Office realised too late the implications of the postmark and advised that in future, commemorative handstamps would be confined to normal letter or postcard use.

Collectors were equally upset at not being able to obtain an example of the mark, as there was no prior notice, not even in the *Postmark Bulletin*.

Jim Mackay concludes 'It is thus unique among parcel stamps and undoubtedly the rarest of the modern special events stamps.' ●

Special prize draw Win a copy of *Elizabeth II* stamps book

WE HAVE two copies of the new edition of *Elizabeth II* by Fay Sweet on offer this month. Four runners-up will each receive a Celebrating Northern Ireland miniature sheet.

To enter, simply send your name and address on a postcard to: Elizabeth II Prize Draw, British Philatelic Bulletin, Royal Mail, 35-50 Rathbone Place, London W1T 1HQ to arrive by 28 March. ●

Competitions Enter for a chance to win the 2007 Yearbook



December identify The detail was from the 6 1/2p Christmas stamp of 1975. The winner was R Skipp of Hertfordshire.

December knowledge The answers: 1) Faith Jaques; 2) 1984 London Economic Summit Conference; 3) Walsall. The winner was M Fitchett of Cornwall.

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

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

- 1 What was the colour of the George VI one shilling definitive?
- 2 Which stamp designer is 80 next month?
- 3 Who designed the 2004 Woodland Animals stamps?

Send your answer (addressed to either the March *Identify* competition or the March *Knowledge* competition), name and address on a postcard or back of a sealed envelope to: British Philatelic Bulletin, Royal Mail, 35-50 Rathbone Place, London W1T 1HQ. The senders of the first cards to be drawn in each competition on 11 April will each receive a 2007 Yearbook. Runner-up prizes of presentation packs, first day covers or stamp cards will be awarded in each competition. The competitions are not open to Royal Mail employees. ●

Events

Until 18 April 'A Timeless Classic – The Evolution of Machin's Icon' exhibition at British Postal Museum & Archive, Freeling House, Phoenix Place, London WC1. **Enquiries** 020 7239 2570.

27 February - 1 March Spring Stampex at Business Design Centre, Upper Street, London N1. Display by Austria PS. **Enquiries** Stampex 01252 628006.

8 March Streetly PS Annual Stamp Fair, Collingwood Centre, Collingwood Drive, Pheasey, Birmingham B43 7NF, 10.00-16.30. Dealers, members' displays, light refreshments, car parking. Admission 20p, children 10p. **Enquiries** Brian Hyner, 0121 357 5340.

29 March WESTBEX – Thatcham & District PS stamp fair and displays at Kennet School, Thatcham. **Enquiries** Graeme Stewart, 01635 866942.

12 April Maidstone & Mid Kent PS Stamp Fair at Grove Green Community Centre, Maidstone (close to Junc 7, M20 and opposite Tesco), 10.00-16.00. **Enquiries** Jill Stonestreet, 01622 675784.

2-3 May 8th National Philatelic Exhibition, Harrogate International Centre, Hall Q, Kings Road, Harrogate. See www.harrogate2008.org.uk for further details.

6 May UFN Regional Stamps 50th Anniversary exhibition at the BPMA, Freeling House, Phoenix Place, London WC1. **Enquiries** 020 7239 2570.

10 May WORPEX 2008 – Worcester Philatelic & Postcard Society annual stamp & postal history fair, at Oldbury Park Primary School, Oldbury Road, St Johns, Worcester, 10.00-16.00. 30 dealers. Further details: see www.worpex.com ●

Late news

Royal Mail update Cylinder numbers for the new definitives (1 April) are D1 (all values), and for the new country stamps: England – 50p D1 oak green D2 silver, 81p D1 purple D1 silver; N Ireland – 50p D1 olive-grey blue D1 black, 81p D1 bright magenta D1 greenish yellow D1 black; Scotland – 50p D1 bright lilac D1 deep lilac D1 silver, 81p D1 bright magenta D1 greenish yellow D1 new blue D1 grey-black D1 silver; and Wales – 50p D1 greenish blue D1 deep greenish blue D1 grey-black, 81p D1 violet D1 gold D1 silver D1 black. A phosphor D1 cylinder is on all sheets •

The 9p definitive has been reprinted from a new cylinder, still numbered D1, but with 'De La Rue' removed from the bottom left-hand sheet corner, and the colour designation ORANGE in the top left sheet margin. The background appears a slightly darker orange and The Queen's head lighter than on the previous printing •

Cylinders and colours of recent special issues are: Working Dogs C1 silver C1 yellow C1 magenta C1 cyan (blue) C1 black C1 phosphor; Houses of Lancaster & York C1 metallic grey C1 yellow C1 magenta C1 cyan (blue) C1 black C1 phosphor; Rescue at Sea W1 orange W1 yellow W1 magenta W1 cyan (blue) W1 black W1 phosphor; and Insects D1 grey D1 cyan (blue) D1 magenta D1 yellow D1 black. The year '2008' is to be found in the 'r' of '1st' on the Insects stamps •

Some readers have asked about the images on the 'I wrote to say...' generic sheet (15 January). The places that can be identified are: Gold Hill, Shaftesbury (No 1 top row), London Eye (2, second row), Stonehenge (2, third row), and Isle of Harris and Cambridgeshire (fourth row) •

The James Bond stamps attracted much press coverage, and even featured in the *Bangkok Post*. John Howe, a reader in Bangkok, sent us the cutting, adding: 'This is the first time I have seen British or other foreign stamps featured in Thailand's premier English language newspaper.' •

Events The 32nd North East Philatelic Weekend will be held at the Swallow Hotel, Gateshead, 16-18 May. Speakers will include Alan Green, Colin

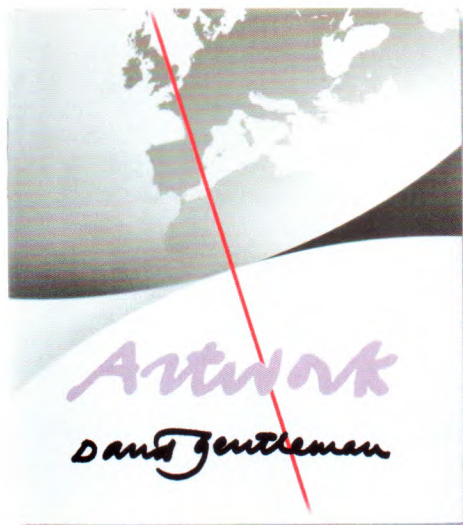
Campbell, Nick Wraith, Derek Lilley, and Max Melrose. The total cost of the weekend including accommodation and meals is £160. Bookings for this popular event should be addressed to Miss V Beeken, 162 Canterbury Road, Newton Hall Estate, Durham DH1 5XT, by 29 March •

The BPMA's 'Timeless and Classic' exhibition on the development of the Machin design is now on show at the Wedgwood Visitor Centre, Barlaston, Stoke-on-Trent. The Centre is open on weekdays 09.00-17.00, and weekends 10.00-17.00. Admission is £8.25 for adults, £6.25 concessions (£6.25/£4.25 weekends and Friday afternoons). The Machin exhibition can be seen in the Centre's reception area and is free to view. Enquiries: phone 01782 282 986 (Wedgwood), or 020 7239 2570 (BPMA) •

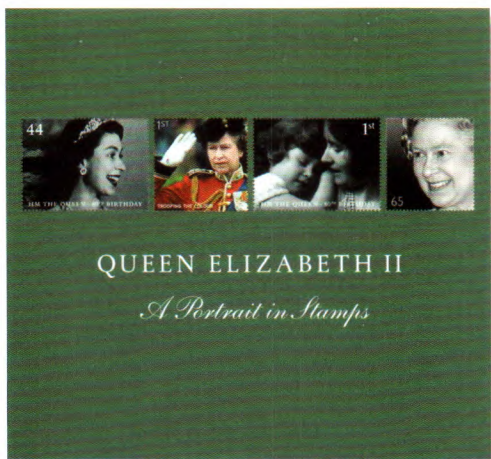
China 2009, an FIP General World Stamp Exhibition, is to be held from 10 to 16 April 2009 in Luoyang City, Henan Province, China to mark the 60th anniversary of the People's Republic of China. It is to be staged in collaboration with the Chinese State Stamp Bureau. To receive the first Bulletin and entry forms, send a large self-addressed envelope and £1 in postage stamps to: Richard West, 39 Waverley Avenue, Sutton SM1 3JX. Completed entry forms must be returned to Mr West by 11 April 2008 •

Auctions Cavendish's auction on 23-24 January included the all-world and specialised collections formed by the late James Mackay. His worldwide collection of perfins went for £2600 (est £1500), a collection of Robert Burns material for £550 (£500), and a 'remarkable thematic collection' relating to Scotland made £800 (£400). Amongst GB postal history lots, two specialised studies of Scottish Camp mail were sold for £480 (£400) and £550 (£200), and a group of Hebrides parcel post labels for £420 (£150). A collection of 18 scarce prepaid parcel stamps from the 1951 Festival of Britain went for £280 (£100), and two lots of Scottish islands postal history for £240 and £220 (£150 and £100). For details of future sales contact Cavendish on 01332 250970 •

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Artwork Design biography of David Gentleman, Britain's best-known stamp designer. Hardback. £27, order code PB363



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Stanley Gibbons Collect British Stamps The annual full-colour listing of all British stamps since 1840. 2008 edition. £9.95, order code PB404



A Timeless Classic: the Evolution of Machin's Icon Douglas Muir of the BPMA traces the development of the Machin definitive design. Paperback. £19.95, order code PB397



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