

BRITISH PHILATELIC

The ROYAL MAIL magazine *for stamp collectors*

Volume 34 Number 6

FEBRUARY 1997 • 85P

Bulletin

Missions of Faith stamps •
The early postbus services



Forthcoming issues & withdrawals



Cover photograph Celtic cross, seen from the tower of Iona Abbey. By Peter Cattrell, whose photographs appear in the Missions of Faith presentation pack and on pages 164 and 182-3 of this *Bulletin*.

Late news: February stamp books Cylinder/plate numbers seen so far are:

3 Feb Greetings book Win a Bouquet promotion W6W6 W10W5W5W8;

4 Feb Harrison 10 × 1st B11 phos B99, 10 × 2nd B3 phos B8, Questa 10 × 2nd Q26Q26 phos Q2, Walsall 4 × 1st W50 W53W62, 10 × 1st W55W42 W45, 10 × 2nd W16W21;

12 Feb 4 × 1st Walsall with Hong Kong label W49W52W61

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 Cardiff, Chester, Colchester Coventry, Croydon, Durham Edinburgh, Exeter, Gatwick Glasgow, Gloucester, Grimsby Guildford, Harrogate, Leeds Leicester, Liverpool, London (Lombard Street, Trafalgar Square and Victoria Street) Manchester, Newcastle upon Tyne, Nottingham, Plymouth Portsmouth, Southampton Southend-on-Sea, Stratford-on-Avon, Windsor and York.

3 February

Issue Greetings book (Flowers) with promotional cover (Win Flowers Bouquet) *Note: Stamps as in book issued 6 January*

4 February

Issue Books with amended covers – removal of Olympic/Paralympic logos and revised text: 10 × 1st, 4 × 1st, 4 × 2nd Walsall; 10 × 1st, 10 × 2nd Harrison; 10 × 2nd Questa; 4 × 37p, 4 × 63p Walsall • £1 and £2 machine books with amended copy on covers

5 February

Withdrawal Books with Olympic logos: Walsall 4 × 1st, 4 × 2nd & 10 × 1st; Harrison 10 × 2nd; Questa 10 × 2nd

12 February

Issue 4 × 1st NVI stamp book with Hong Kong pictorial label; also stamp card of label

13 February

Withdrawal National Postal Museum Valentines Day postcards (ref 96/1-4) *Note: to be withdrawn at Bureau but remain on sale at NPM shop*

18 February

Withdrawal Disney Promotional book, 10 × 1st

19 February

Withdrawal £2 book, Sir Rowland Hill No 4 (stamps with blue fluor)

28 February

Withdrawal £5 Windsor Castle stamp with Dextrin gum *Note: PVA gum version remains on sale*

3 March

Issue Scottish aerogramme: Alexander Graham Bell

4 March

Issue St Augustine and St Columba stamp cards

11 March

Issue St Augustine and St Columba stamps and pack

11 March

Withdrawal Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust stamps, pack, and stamp cards

18 March

Issue 1st and 2nd class NVI stamps, self-adhesive rolls of 100 and pack (containing one of each stamp)

18 March

Withdrawal Stamp books with Olympic logo: 10 × 1st Harrison, 4 × 35p, 4 × 41p and 4 × 60p

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Royal Mail postbus service

This month marks the 30th anniversary of the British postbus. Martin Robinson recalls the early services and the postmarks, postcards and tickets that can form an interesting collection **173**

The British Philatelic Bulletin is published monthly by Royal Mail, Royal London House, 22 Finsbury Square, London EC2A 1NL. ● **Editor** JR Holman ● **Price** 85p single copies from Collections, philatelic counters, and National Postal Museum ● **Annual subscriptions** UK and Europe £9.50, rest of the world £13.50. Subscriptions should be sent to British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, Edinburgh EH3 5TT. ● **Binders** to hold 24 issues, price £7. Available by post from British Philatelic Bureau (address above) ● Royal Mail also publishes the fortnightly *British Postmark Bulletin*, giving details of forthcoming special handstamps and postmark slogans. Available on annual subscription from British Philatelic Bureau (address above) UK & Europe £10, rest of world £21.75. ● **Copyright** Unless copyright attributed to specific authors, all articles and features may be reproduced without formal permission, but acknowledgement should be given to *British Philatelic Bulletin*. Requests to reproduce copyright articles should be sent to the Editor, 22 Finsbury Square, London EC2A 1NL. ● **Design** by Robert Maude ● **Cover photograph** © Peter Cattrell ● **Printed** in Great Britain by The White Dove Press ● **ISSN** 0953 8119

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ST AUGUSTINE AND ST COLUMBA

MISSIONS OF FAITH

Royal Mail Mint Stamps



ST AUGUSTINE AND ST COLUMBA

MISSIONS OF FAITH

Royal Mail First Day Cover

Mrs J Robinson
200 Manorbier Road
Ilkeston
Derbyshire
DE7 4AB

CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL - FORMER SEAT OF AUGUSTINE'S FIRST WELSH PILGRIMS AND FOUNDATION OF THE FAITH



ISLE OF THISTLE - FORMERLY A PILGRIM'S STOPPING PLACE, AUGUSTINE WAS BAPTIZED BY THE KING, SO JOURNEYED THE ISLAND TO CANTERBURY



ISLE OF IONA - THE SAINTS AND CATHOLICISM WERE BAPTIZED BY THE KING, SO JOURNEYED THE ISLAND TO CANTERBURY



CUNELLY BAY - THE SITE OF COLUMBA'S LANDING ON THE NORTH SHORE OF IONA FOR CATHOLICITY, THE SOVEREIGN FROM THE KING



in spreading the
of people make

CANTERBURY
by St Ninian
from his native
On his return
crossed by the
start to pray:
born in 397,
converted

PILGRIMAGE WILL TRAVEL WESTWARD TO THE CATHEDRAL
D'S - the patron saint of Wales was a contemporary
Three routes will cross the Irish Sea and converge on
Derry on his feast day, 9 June.

THE CONCEPT OF GOING ON PILGRIMAGE IS AS OLD AS RELIGION
though we're supposed to live in an increasingly secular
world, the concept of pilgrimage has never been more
relevant. Modern pilgrims journey along the ancient routes of the
saints to do so in memory of the great saints who handed down
the faith which Christians today celebrate and bear witness to
the saints Way.

Royal Mail news Missions of Faith stamps

• Self-adhesive stamps re-launch • Scottish aerogramme • Great Tudor album page • NPM postcards and *Cross Post*

St Augustine and St Columba: Missions of Faith Four stamps commemorating these noted Christian saints go on sale at post offices and philatelic outlets on 11 March.

The 26p stamp (1st class inland & EU rate) shows St Columba sailing to Iona; the 37p value (airmail postcard rate) depicts Columba the scribe. The design of the 43p value (basic airmail letter rate) features St Augustine blessing the king of Kent; on the 63p denomination (airmail letters, second rate step), he is shown as the founder of Canterbury Cathedral.

The stamps mark the 1400th anniversary of the death of St Columba and the arrival of St Augustine in Britain. The first archbishop of Canterbury, Augustine, was welcomed by the King of Kent and his Christian queen in 597. The King was converted to Christianity starting the process of uniting the feudal kingdoms into one English, Christian nation. Canterbury became the centre of the faith in England and in medieval times thousands travelled annually to Canterbury to the shrine of the martyred St Thomas Becket.

In the same year as Augustine landed, an Irish monk named Columba died on the Scottish island of Iona. For over 30 years Columba had used Iona as his base for his mission in spreading God's word in western Scotland.

A feature article on Saints Augustine and Columba, by James Mackay, is published in this *Bulletin*.

Opposite St Columba's Bay, Iona, by Peter Cattrell



THE DESIGNER The stamps were designed by Clare Melinsky who was born in 1953 and studied at the Central School of Art in London, specialising in Theatre and Costume. On leaving college in 1975 she took up block-printing with lino-cuts on fabric. Commissions for book jackets and magazine illustrations followed and led to her becoming an illustrator, still using lino-cuts. Her technique is self-taught by studying early English chap-book illustrations and the work of other traditional English block-printers. Some work is black and white, some a single block print coloured in; some is printed with four or five different coloured blocks. Her lino-cuts are used

Technical details**Printers** Joh Enschedé Security Printing**Process** Photogravure**Size** 35 x 37mm**Sheets** 100**Perforation** 14**Phosphor** Two phosphor bands, blue fluor in phosphor**Paper** OBA (Optical Brightening Agent) free**Gum** PVA

for logos, labels and leaflets as well as record covers, book jackets and packaging. She works at home in the Scottish countryside with her husband and two children. These stamps were her first commission from Royal Mail.

FIRST DAY FACILITIES Unstamped Royal Mail first day cover envelopes will be available from main post offices, the British Philatelic Bureau and Post Office Counters philatelic outlets around a week before 11 March, price 25p.

The Bureau will provide a first day cover service – collectors may order the Royal Mail cover bearing the stamps, cancelled with a pictorial ‘first day of issue’ postmark of the Bureau or Isle of Iona, price £2.40 (including VAT) to UK addresses, £2.05 to overseas addresses (no VAT). Orders for fdc’s must reach the Bureau by 11 March.

Collectors may send their own stamped covers on the day of issue, for these cancels, to: British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, Edinburgh EH3 5TT, or Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, 57 Queen Street, Glasgow G1 3AZ (for Iona postmark). The outer envelope should be endorsed ‘FD9705’ (Bureau), or ‘FD9706’ (Iona).

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

Details of other special handstamps, sponsored by Royal Mail, stamp dealers and others, will be found in the *British Postmark Bulletin* – the Royal Mail’s magazine for postmark collectors. It is available on subscription from the British Philatelic Bureau: £10 UK and Europe; £21.75 rest of world (airmail).

PRESENTATION PACK AND STAMP CARDS A presentation pack (price £2.05) and stamp cards (25p each) will be available from the Bureau, Post Office Counters philatelic outlets, and main post offices. The pack has been written by Bernard Jackson, and designed by Graven Images Limited •



Carrickfergus stamp wins top award The current £3 definitive has won a top European philatelic trophy, awarded by the President of France. The stamp features Carrickfergus Castle in Northern Ireland which has played host to King John, William III, and the present Queen. The photograph used as the basis of the design was taken by HRH The Duke of York and first used on the £1 stamp in 1988. Adam Novak, Director & General Manager of Royal Mail National, went to France to receive the prestigious Sevre vase award – the Prix de l’Art Philatelique Européen – for the best designed European stamps issued within the past 18 months. The judges made the award for British stamps in general and for the Carrickfergus Castle stamp in particular. This is the second time the French award has been made for British stamp design. The first was 50 years ago at the initial presentation of the award •

Self-adhesive stamps relaunch Following a trial issue of self-adhesive 1st class NVI stamps in books (October 1993), Royal Mail will issue boxes containing coils (rolls) of 100 1st and 2nd class NVI stamps on 18 March. These will be available from 300 post offices in Scotland and Northern Ireland and from the Bureau and Post Office Counters philatelic outlets.



SELF-ADHESIVE STAMPS
Royal Mail First Day Cover



Mrs J Robinson
200 Manorbier Road
Ilkeston
Derbyshire
DE7 4AB

These self-adhesive stamps in First and Second Class are in rolls of 100, contained in boxes. This format has been offered business users convenient stamps for the mail. As the stamps peel automatically from the backing paper as they emerge from the box, and the pressure-sensitive adhesive means that no moisture is required to affix them.

The design of the stamps retains the traditional elements of the Royal Mail definitive stamp. This year the definitive itself celebrates its 30th birthday in its present guise – the bas relief portrait of Her Majesty by the sculptor Arnold Machin. The 'Machin definitive' is universally renowned as a design classic, recognised throughout the world. Machin himself was inspired by the Penny Black,

ROYAL MAIL MINT STAMPS *Self-Adhesive Definitive Stamps*



difference in the new definitives is that the '1st' Non Value Indicator is larger than previously, and that the stamps are printed by photogravure, unlike the previous issue which was in lithography. Indeed, 1997 sees the return to photogravure for the printing of the vast majority of low-value definitive stamps.

So, the new self-adhesives combine state of the art stamp manufacturing technology and ease of use with the

Presentation pack A pack, containing one of each stamp, will be available from the Bureau and philatelic outlets, price 85p.

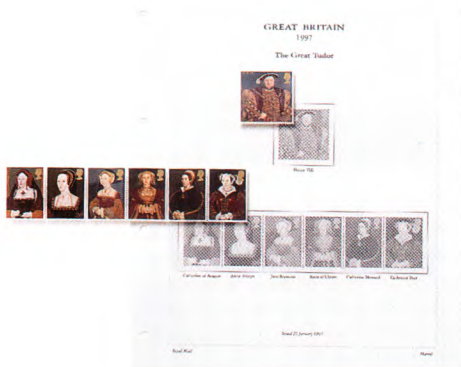


The coil stamps have been printed by Joh Enschedé Security Printers in photogravure and bear 2 phosphor bands (1st class) and one band (2nd). Boxes cost £26 (1st class stamps) or £20 (2nd class); collectors will be able to buy singles or strips from the Bureau or philatelic outlets. The stamps peel automatically from their backing as they are pulled from the box. Apart

from the change in printing process, collectors will see a difference in the size of the value on the new 1st class stamp compared to that issued in 1993.

The stamps have been designed by Jeffery Matthews, size 24 × 20mm, and are kiss-diecut to simulate a conventional stamp perforation, gauge 14, which includes an elliptical perforation on each vertical side replacing three perforations.

FIRST DAY FACILITIES A Royal Mail fdc envelope will be available about one week before 18 March, price 25p. Two pictorial first day postmarks will be provided, for the Bureau and Glasgow. The Bureau will provide a cover service – price 96p (including VAT) for UK customers, 82p (no VAT) overseas. Orders must reach the Bureau by 18 March. Collectors may submit covers bearing one or both of the self-adhesive stamps for these postmarks to: British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, Edinburgh EH3 5TT, or Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, 57 Queen Street, Glasgow G1 3AX (for Glasgow postmark). The outer envelope should be endorsed FD DEF9700A (Bureau) or FD DEF9700B (Glasgow). Details of the provision of first day posting boxes will be announced in next month's *Bulletin* ●



Special Offer: Great Tudor stamps album page

Royal Mail in association with Marini Albums are pleased to offer *Bulletin* readers a printed album page for The Great Tudor (Henry VIII and his six wives) stamps. The page measures 246 × 288mm and bears transparent mounts for housing the Henry VIII stamp and the strip of six wives stamps. The names of the wives are printed beneath each stamp.

To obtain this page send 60p in unused British stamps or two international reply coupons with your name and address to: Bulletin Reader Offer, 8 Teasel Way, West Moors, Ferndown BH22 0PQ. Offer closes 27 March 1997 ●

Royal Mail stamp album continuation pages The 1996 supplement, containing pages for definitive, country, greetings, and special stamps issued during 1996, is now available from the British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, Edinburgh EH3 5TT, price £11.95 ●

New members of the SAC Two new members have recently joined Royal Mail's Stamp Advisory Committee. David Abbott began his advertising career in 1963, working in various companies in London and New York before joining Abbott Mead Vickers BBDO Ltd in 1977. When the company went public in 1986, Mr Abbott became Chairman of the PLC which controls or has an interest in nine other communications-related businesses. He has recently stepped down as Chairman of AMV and left the PLC Board but stays on as Chairman and Creative Director of the agency.

Michael Wolff, born in London in 1933, entered the world of design in the mid-1950s and started Main Wolff & Partners with James Main in 1964. Wally Olins joined Michael Wolff in 1965 and Wolff Olins became the leading European company in 'corporate identity'. During the 1980s Mr Wolff was a member of the SAC for five years and an External Assessor to the Royal College of Art. In 1990 he became a founder member of Prince Philip's Designer of the Year Award Jury, and designed the 1996 Cartoons Greetings stamps ●

Membership of the SAC

Adam Novak Chairman,
Director and General Manager,
Royal Mail National

David Abbott design
consultant

Dr Jean Alexander food
scientist and philatelist

Floella Benjamin television
presenter

The Hon Gwyneth Dunwoody
Member of Parliament

Mary Lewis director of design
consultancy

Prof A G Livingston Principal
of Falmouth School of Art and
Design

John McConnell design
consultant

Lauretta Morris Secretary,
Project Controller, Design
Division, Royal Mail

Dick Negus design consultant

Barry Robinson Design
Director, Royal Mail

Jane Ryan Design Manager,
Royal Mail

Elisabeth Santry
representative of Department
of Trade and Industry

Alistair Sharp Head of
Philatelic Marketing and
Production, Royal Mail

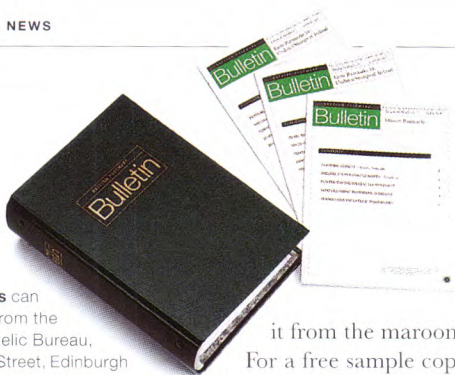
M Jean Varga stamp dealer
and catalogue publisher

Michael Wolff design
consultant

1995 special stamp quantities

Cats		National Trust		Science Fiction		Rugby	
19p	26,040,000	19p	26,325,000	25p	28,000,000	19p	22,452,300
25p	27,842,500	25p	27,608,900	30p	5,700,000	25p	24,060,100
30p	5,395,000	30p	5,710,800	35p	5,524,900	30p	5,122,800
35p	5,135,000	35p	5,446,800	41p	5,759,600	35p	4,917,600
41p	5,810,000	41p	5,760,100	Stamp cards sets	72,895	41p	5,253,400
Stamp cards sets	74,127	Stamp cards sets	70,040			Stamp cards sets	40,282
Springtime		Peace & Freedom		Shakespeare's Globe		Christmas	
19p	25,327,900	19p Crowds	17,511,100	25p (total, of 5)	42,636,500	19p	286,726,200
25p	26,636,100	25p St Paul's	18,479,400	Stamp cards sets	63,976	25p	146,896,900
30p	5,846,700	19p Hands	17,425,700			30p	16,210,900
35p	5,763,200	25p Hand & Dove	18,235,500	Communications		41p	17,254,700
41p	5,923,400	30p	6,221,600	19p	24,041,200	60p	16,000,000
Stamp cards sets	73,068	Stamp cards sets	78,152	25p	25,314,600	Stamp cards sets	69,468
				41p	5,241,500	Stamp book (1st)	4,086,850
				60p	5,303,400	Stamp book (2nd)	5,515,025
				Stamp cards sets	66,295	Aerogramme	775,025

Scottish aerogramme The first of this year's Scottish aerogrammes will go on sale on 3 March, commemorating the 150th anniversary of the birth of Alexander Graham Bell. The aerogramme, price 45p, will be available from all post offices in Scotland, the British Philatelic Bureau, and Post Office Counters philatelic outlets. It has been designed by Graven Images Limited of Glasgow and printed by McCorquodale Envelopes Limited. A feature on Alexander Graham Bell will be published next month ●



Both binders can be ordered from the British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, Edinburgh EH3 5TT. Price £7 *Philatelic Bulletin*, £6.50 *Postmark Bulletin*. Please state clearly which is required.

it from the maroon used for the *Philatelic Bulletin* binder.

For a free sample copy of the *Postmark Bulletin* write to either the Bureau (address at left) or The editor, *Postmark Bulletin*, Royal Mail, 22 Finsbury Square, London EC2A 1NL. The annual subscription is £10 UK/Europe, £21.75 rest of world •

Postcards will be on sale at the NPM shop, and by post from the British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, Edinburgh EH3 5TT.

NPM postcards for 1997 The National Postal Museum will issue four sets of cards during 1997: Prototype Letterboxes (25 March), Queen's Silver Wedding, 1972 (21 April), Aircraft Aviators (10 June), and Sub-Post Offices (12 August). The Letterboxes cards feature: 97/1 Combined Stamp Vending and Posting Unit, designed 1995, prototype made of wood by IDEO Models. Production model made of glass reinforced plastic for key locations such as airports; 97/2 Combined Stamp Vending and Posting Unit, designed 1994. Prototype made of wood by IDEO Models, unadopted; 97/3 Business Box, designed in 1994 for franked mail pouches. Production model made of zinc coated steel. Located on industrial estates and business parks; 97/4 Free-standing box and Pedestal box, designed c1991 for conference and exhibition use. Prototypes made of sheet steel, unadopted.

Getting Going with Postbuses

Royal Mail's Postbus services have been in operation for nearly 30 years. Today there are more than 260 vehicles providing transport for passengers and mail in the most landlocked country in Europe. In fact, it was the first trial was deemed a failure and some less (remote parts of Great Britain). The writer describes the obstacles that had to be overcome and how, in developing the service, he learned the basic principles for such a successful operation. Many of these principles, he thinks, have still not been applied to other operations. Many of these principles, he thinks, have still not been applied to other operations.

The boys back to the negotiating table. Five boys were released and largely as a result of political pressure from the United States. The remaining 10 were sent to prisons in a number of European countries, mostly Austria and Switzerland. While these innocent prisoners did not receive any trial, the foreign governments considered "prisoners" which also carried little weight, while if they proposed we send them to carry prisoners, a different country altogether. They are sent across the border to the United States, and they are sent to the United States.

and although they quickly became popular in the area they served as the last vestige of public transport, they proved very expensive and it did not take the Post Office long to decide that the experiment was a failure and would not be repeated. One is surprised to wonder why, in its lack of enthusiasm for the idea, the Office had in fact made -

disposal and giving it much more interest from the collector than it would attract the Post Office -
out of necessity.

The Association of Friends
of the Postal Museum

Journal of the
of the National

ROSS
POST

Volume 6 Number 3 Autumn 1996

- Rural Pasts in the 19th Century • Giving Gains
- Mineral Marks & Woodland Postal History • Jersey Postal Links
- Terenure's Report and 1996 Announcements
- Wild Doves and Netherlands Postal Museums

Cross Post is available to members, price £2. To order or enquire about membership of the Friends, write to: Ray Pottle, Friends of NPM, PO Box 40, Uckfield, TN22 2SP. Telephone 01825 766546.

Friends of the NPM The Association of Friends of the National Postal Museum publish an excellent journal, *Cross Post*, edited by Allan Daniell. The Autumn 1996 issue, now available, contains several articles of value to postal historians: Rural Posts in the Nineteenth Century (by Tony Gammons), 'Missent' Marks & Westmorland postal history (Michael Bament), Recent Museum Acquisitions – artefacts (Christine Jones and Zara Matthews), Jersey Postal Links with France via Granville (Tony Peters), and Tercentenary of Cross Posts (Norman Atherden). For collectors/students of more modern stamps, postmarks, and postal services, Jim Hall writes on 'Getting Going with Postbuses', Jack

Peach reports on a visit to meter machine manufacturers Pitney Bowes, and Robert Hill and Cyril Macey recall visits to postal museums in Vyssi Broad (Czech Republic) and The Hague (Netherlands). This issue of *Cross Post* also includes a tribute to Stan Goron who retired in October after 10 years as Manager of the NPM. •

Stamp scene

British actors on Guernsey stamps To commemorate the centenary of cinema on the island the Guernsey Post Office issued five stamps on 6 November 1996. These feature great screen detectives, three played by British actors and an actress. The 24p stamp features Peter Sellers as Inspector Clouseau, Basil Rathbone as Sherlock Holmes appears on the 35p, and Dame Margaret Rutherford as Miss Marple on the 41p denomination. The other two feature Humphrey Bogart as Philip Marlowe (16p), and Warner Oland as Charlie Chan (60p). The stamps are also available in an attractive £7 prestige stamp book entitled *The Case of the Strange Bedfellows*. Narrated by each of the five detectives in their own distinctive style, the story tells how the sleuths are lured to Guernsey to solve a philatelic mystery. A prize is offered to the purchaser who correctly deduces the solution to the mystery •



The stamps and book are available from Guernsey Philatelic Bureau, Postal Headquarters, St Peter Port, Guernsey GY1 1AB.

Bristol Philatelic Society centenary As part of the celebrations the Society staged an impressive 600-sheet display at the Royal Philatelic society, London on 21 November 1996. Events during 1997 will include a Centenary Dinner at Jury's Hotel, Bristol on 13 March, an exhibition of stamps with a 'Bristol' flavour at the Central Library, College Green, Bristol (1-14 April) and a 'Bristol Stamp Day' at the Tyndale Centre, Whiteladies Road, Bristol on 21 June. This has been designed to attract newcomers, and to appeal to all philatelists. James Grimwood Taylor of Cavendish Auctions will be present to assist in valuations and advice.

Two books – *History of the Bristol Society* and *Introduction to Bristol Postal History* will be published and there are plans for a commemorative postal item •

Enquiries John Tovey, 36 Northville Road, Bristol BS7 0RG. Telephone 0117 969 3665

18th century postal map reproduced In 1994 the British Library purchased a quite remarkable postal map entitled *A Map of the Postroads of England and Wales Divided by different Colours into six Roads* and at a scale of seven miles to the inch, it is beautifully executed in ink and watercolour and is approximately 4ft 6in square. Apart from a little staining and damage at the top, it is in fine condition. It distinguishes post towns and receiving houses established at the expense of the Revenue and towns where no (salaried) offices are established. It also identifies roads (and thus places) where the London post is received on 'general' days and bye-days, roads leading to places where the inhabitants' letters are carried from the nearest post towns at their own expense and all the cross posts. Research undertaken suggests that the map is from about 1770; postal maps of that period are almost unknown.

The Midland (GB) Postal History Society has the permission of the British Library to make a small number of photographic reproductions of this map – colour prints, measuring 3ft x 2ft 6in. They have been produced with the help of the Stuart Rossiter Trust, and are offered at £25 each plus £3 postage (mailed loosely rolled in tube) •

Remittances payable to 'The Midland (GB) Postal History Society' should be sent to: John Calladine, 21 Abbotsbury Road, London W14 8EJ.

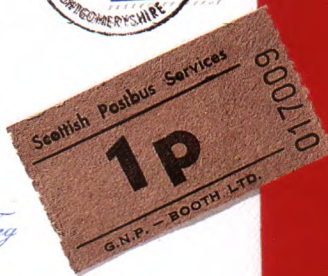


CARRIED ON THE INAUGURAL RUN OF
BRITAIN'S FIRST MAIL BUS

LLANGURIG TO LLANIDLOES
 20th FEBRUARY 1967.



N. Walker
 Castle View, Pant Teg
 Llandudno Junction
 Caerns., G. B.



The Royal Mail postbus service The early services

by Martin Robinson

Thirty years ago this month the first of Royal Mail's postbuses began running a regular service in Wales. Two other buses came into operation in Devon and the Lake District in October 1967 and a fourth in Scotland in June 1968. The term 'postbus' didn't come into general use until the service expanded in the early 1970s, and my attention was first drawn to what were originally called 'postal mini-buses' by a short news item in *Stamp Collecting* in February 1967: 'Mail by Welsh Mini-bus. Britain's first postal mini-bus begins in Wales on February 20th, when a modified mini-bus will carry seven passengers on its mail run between Llanidloes and Llangurig, Montgomeryshire. Postmen drivers will collect fares and handle mail in the usual way. The postal mini-bus (a Post Office vehicle) will run a five-day service. The experimental route is one normally served by buses on Saturday only'.

The first vehicle was a Morris J2 7-seater minibus KVB 103D with a headboard inscribed POSTAL BUS and, by 1970 after a respray, bilingual lettering on the sides. The bus shown on one of the cards from the first Wales the Marches Postal Board set in August 1974 was a similar Morris from the national reserve. A later bus, Commer PB2000 11-seater OFO 192N, is pictured like its predecessor by the Old Market Hall in Llanidloes on one of a set of six postbus view cards (WMPB9-14) issued in January 1979.

Along with the three other experimental routes, the Llanidloes service at first used a second-hand TIM ticket-printing machine believed to have been purchased from Bolton Corporation, and now in the National Postal Museum. This became obsolete with decimalisation in 1971 and an Almex machine with serial number 0004 was introduced, but from 26 February 1979 this was replaced by white card tickets with bilingual heading and crossed posthorns printed in red and spaces for up to three stamps to be affixed to pay the (newly restructured) fares.

At first the postbus went out from Llanidloes in the morning, on a mail run, and only picked up passengers on its return from Llangurig at 12.15, returning to base 15 minutes later; there was a return trip to Llangurig at 16.15. The service operated Monday to Friday only as other transport was available on Saturday. In October 1967 the route was extended to two trips a day with loops west and south of Llangurig, and nowadays there is a Saturday service as well.

It has often been remarked that the idea of carrying mail in combination with passengers is nothing new, and that examples abound of similar arrangements. Parliamentary and public pressure in the 1960s for British



White card tickets, 1979

Stamps were cancelled in black by an undated self-inking rubber handstamp BWS Y POST BRENHINOL / ROYAL MAIL BUS / LLANIDLOES - LLANGURIG. On the first day of these new tickets (top) a dated handstamp was used, inscribed bilingually 'First British Postbus/First Day of Issue', and this can also be found used as a cachet on mail posted locally on that day.

Opposite first Penrith card (top), souvenir cover for inaugural run of first Welsh postbus 20 February 1967 (centre), 1974 WMPB card showing Llanidloes reserve vehicle (bottom), and Scottish tickets (sides): two different titles and Setright; no title, imprint but no title, another different title.

postbuses cited well-established postbus services in European countries like Austria, Finland, Sweden and Switzerland. It is however important to distinguish between two main kinds of postbus network: one a passenger bus service which includes some elements of mail collection and delivery, and the other principally a postal service which can also accommodate some passenger transport. European postbuses are of the first kind, as were arrangements entered into over many years by the Post Office with private transport contractors, mainly in Scotland.

The introduction to the first edition of the *Scottish Postbus Timetable*, published by the Scottish Postal Board in October 1973, gave the criteria for considering the establishment of a new service.

1 The service must not compete with an existing bus service or contractor. **2** The service must meet the demonstrable requirements of the local community. **3** Alterations to existing mail services – eg modification and timing – can be considered if this would be acceptable to the community.

The guide listed by then 26 services in Scotland (with another 15 under consideration) together with five – soon to be six – in England and Wales.

The British model under consideration here is of the second kind, and at its simplest works like this: a mail van makes an outward early morning delivery run, then takes up the first collection on its way back to base; in the afternoon an outward and inward run is needed to make the second collection. Passengers can be transported from village into town on the mid-morning inward run, have a few hours for shopping or visiting, and get back home on the afternoon outward

run. Many of today's services offer variants on this basic model, although some have early morning and late afternoon return trips to accommodate schoolchildren, for example, or other more complicated arrangements to suit local requirements.



New style tickets bearing stamps cancelled by a black dated handstamp inscribed HONITON POST BUS/THE FIRST IN ENGLAND.

To return to the experimental services of 1967: the second started on 23 October when the south-west got its first service, running from Honiton in Devon and serving Duneswell, Luppitt and other nearby villages. The vehicle was another Morris J2 registration NYV 975E with headboard HONITON POSTBUS. Tickets followed a similar pattern to those used at Llanidloes: printed paper ones from Setright and TIM machines until decimalisation, then an Almex until September 1978, when stamped cards were introduced. South West Postal Region issued a collector's pack on 20 September 1978 containing a picture postcard (SWPR6) showing a Commer bus standing outside Duneswell post office (a special handstamp was available on the day), a timetable/faretable, information sheet and examples of the old and new style tickets. Different cards, similar to those used in the South East Region, and paper Almex and Setright tickets were used again later. The 25th anniversary of the service was marked by a new card and special handstamp on 23 October 1992.

On 30 October 1967 the third of the experimental services began operating between Penrith and the village of Martindale with morning and afternoon services Monday to Friday, and a morning run on Saturday. Someone wishing to



shop in Penrith could leave Martindale at 11 30, getting into Penrith an hour later, and would have to catch the return bus at 14 45, which would be back by 16 00. The original timetable has hardly changed over the years. The first vehicle, another Morris J2 registration NYV 974E, was shown, climbing the winding road to Martindale with Ullswater in the background, on a North West Region postcard issued in April 1974. There were no first day of issue arrangements. A second card with five views was issued on 4 June 1979. Again there was no special handstamp, and used cards have a Penrith packet stamp and cachet. Both these cards went through several printings which are of interest to specialist collectors. The Penrith service has only ever used printed paper tickets from TIM, Almex and Setright machines.

The last of the four original postbus services started in Scotland on 4 June 1968. It is based at Dunbar in Lothian, to the east of Edinburgh, serving the nearby villages of Spott and Innerwick. The Morris J2 NYV 976E ran morning and afternoon services Monday to Friday and a morning service on Saturday, and the current timetable is almost identical to the original one. A small timetable/faretable dated 11/76 mentions the Scottish local goods delivery service, which had been introduced in 1971 and enabled householders to have groceries and prescriptions delivered. Printed roll tickets of various colours and values were produced, as for most Scottish postbus services, by the Glasgow Numerical Printing Company, later GNP-Booth. The first tickets had no title or imprint, whilst later ones appeared with title SCOTTISH POSTBUS SERVICES and imprints in half a dozen styles. Most Scottish services now use Setright machines, thus obviating the need for the driver to carry tickets in rolls of different values.

Surprisingly, not one of the ten postbus cards issued by Scottish Postal Region in 1979 and 1980 featured the Dunbar service, and whilst there have been a few special handstamps commemorating, for example, the 25th and 30th services, none had been devoted to its first, until the special cover and handstamps celebrating 25 years of Scottish postbuses on 4 June and 10 September 1993 and machine postmark slogan of the same year. The 21st anniversary in 1989 had been celebrated with suitable decoration for the vehicle and a postbus-shaped cake.

The earliest postbus services operated at a loss until it was realised that when the Post Office became a corporation in 1969, it was eligible for grants towards the capital cost of vehicles, a fuel tax rebate and subsidies towards running costs from county councils or development boards. This made a great difference in that postbuses could now cover costs or even run at a small profit. From 1972 a growth in services began which continued throughout the 1970s, died away in the 1980s and began again in the 1990s. There are now 82 postbus services in England and Wales and 145 in Scotland; and there are plans to introduce more. The postbus has proved its worth to the Post Office and community alike and is here to stay ●



Please leave 10mm space above this line for postal franking

Used cards are found with a Penrith machine cancellation and undated black circular cachet with a silhouette of a postbus in the centre surrounded by the inscription POSTED ON THE ROYAL MAIL BUS/PENRITH TO MARTINDALE.



Edinburgh 25th anniversary handstamp

Another article on postbuses by Mr Robinson was published here in June 1993.

Hong Kong '97 Exhibition

The first international stamp exhibition of 1997 will be held at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, 12-16 February. This will be the first international held in Hong Kong and follows a very successful regional exhibition there in 1994. This attracted some 220,000 visitors, making it one of the most successful stamp exhibitions held anywhere in the last 30 years. Hong Kong '97 is under the patronage of the Federation of Inter-Asian Philately and has been organised by the Hong Kong Post Office, the Philatelic

Society, and three other clubs. The organisers are hoping that some 330,000 people will visit the exhibition, including 15,000 from overseas.

Miniature sheets To promote the exhibition the Hong Kong PO has issued three miniature sheets showing the changing skyline of Hong Kong since the 1850s. Each sheet incorporates a \$10 Machin head definitive stamp. Fourth and fifth sheets, for issue on 12 and 16 February 1997, bear a \$10 stamp showing the Hong Kong skyline.

Various hologram postcards have been issued, also a prestige stamp book. The Hong Kong Philatelic Society will issue a philatelic passport at the exhibition. Stamp collecting is hugely popular in Hong Kong and it is not uncommon to see long queues outside post offices on the first day of issue of special stamps.

Collecting Hong Kong stamps The first Hong Kong stamps were issued in 1862 – seven values featuring the head of Queen Victoria in the centre, with colony name above, value below and Chinese characters in the side margins. Further values followed and many stamps were subsequently surcharged. Many of the Victorian definitives are now scarce and highly priced, but a few are still catalogued at £5 or less. New designs were introduced for



The first miniature sheet, issued in February 1996, reproduces an early oil painting depicting the Victoria Harbour and the Peak in c1855; the second, May 1996, a photograph of the same scene in c1920. The third sheet, issued October 1996, shows the current skyline of the northern shore of the Hong Kong Island, from Wanchai to Central. The postmarks reproduced on the sheet date from the period 1945-94.



the Edward VII definitives and used again during the reign of George V. Most of the lower values are still available quite cheaply in used condition.

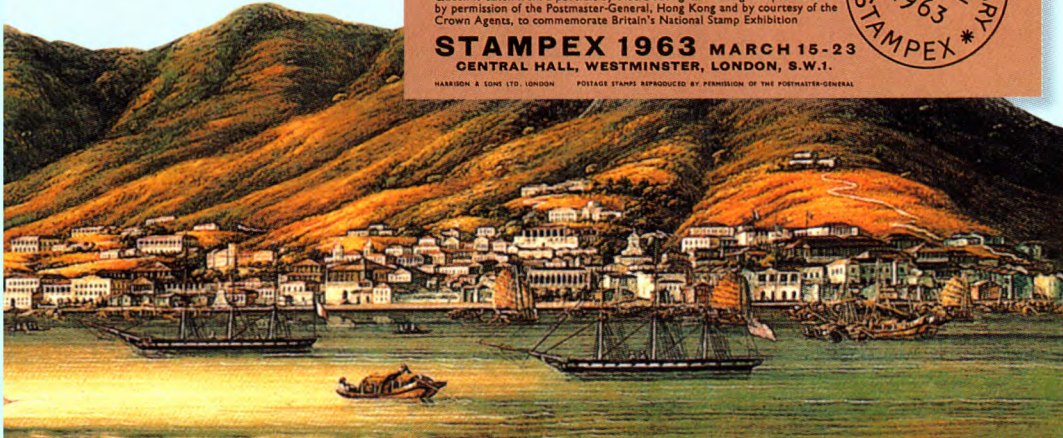
The Victorian design was reintroduced for the George VI definitives and the first set of the present reign. The famous portrait of The Queen by Pietro Annigoni was used for the second definitive series, introduced in 1962. The lower values were printed in single colours but the multicoloured high values are rather splendid. The third, fourth and fifth Elizabethan definitive series, all featured the decimal coinage head of The Queen. The 1973 set featured the head at right with a floral design left; the \$10 and \$20 stamps included embossing in the stamp production. On the 1982 (watermarked) and 1985-7 (unwatermarked) issues The Queen's head was set between representations of the lion and dragon. Embossing was used on the four highest values and each stamp included a fluorescent security marking. The 1987-88 (undated) and 1989-91 (dated) series positioned the Queen's head above a drawing of the skyline of central Victoria. The current issue, which commenced in 1992, shows the Machin head of The Queen, with Chinese characters. Recently some values have been issued overprinted with phosphor bands.

Commemorative stamps were introduced in 1891 with an overprinted 2¢ definitive marking the 50th anniversary of the colony. This stamp was on sale for three days only. Even the basic stamp is now scarce, examples with overprint varieties or doubled overprint are highly catalogued. The centenary of British occupation was marked by six attractive pictorials in 1941 and an impressive design used for the Victory pair in 1946. Most commemoratives of the present reign have included the E II R royal cipher rather than the Queen's portrait.

Special issues commemorating royal links began with the George V silver jubilee issue in 1935. This and subsequent sets for George VI's coronation, 1948 silver wedding and 1953 coronation were in the standard colonial omnibus design. Two colourful stamps marked the Royal

The second definitive series

was printed by Harrison who produced a handsome souvenir sheet for the 1963 Stampex showing 'progressives' making up the design of the \$20 stamp. The souvenir sheet is still offered from time to time at modest price, the \$20 stamp is now catalogued mint at £100.



There is a thriving society of collectors of Hong Kong issues. For details write to the Membership Secretary, P V Ball, 37 Hart Court, Newcastle, Staffs, ST5 2AL.

Visit to Hong Kong in 1975 and this was further recalled by one of three Silver Jubilee stamps in 1977. The design of the coronation anniversary stamps of 1978 was based on the Victoria, George VI and first Elizabeth II definitives.

Many of the issues have featured local scenes – for example the 1980 Parks and 1983 Hong Kong by night, and 1985 Historic Buildings sets, and several sets have depicted flora and fauna. Stamps for the Chinese New Year were introduced in 1967. A single Christmas issue was made in 1990, with a Greetings set in 1992. The first miniature sheet was issued in 1974, marking the Arts Festival. Since 1991 such sheets have been issued in connection with a number of major stamp exhibitions, the sheets incorporating definitive stamps. The sheets for Hong Kong '97 were mentioned above.

The 150th anniversary of the Hong Kong PO was commemorated by stamps in 1991 and a miniature sheet two years later. The stamps feature pillar boxes bearing the ciphers of Victoria, Edward VII, George V, George VI and Elizabeth II together with covers of the period. Hong Kong boxes were featured in the *Bulletin's* Posting Boxes series in April 1986, January 1991 and April 1992.

Hong Kong will revert to Chinese rule in July 1997 and new stamps will be introduced. The British colonial issues are already in great demand and prices have risen considerably over the past year or so. Now is the time to fill any gaps in your Hong Kong collection or to assemble a representative collection of these interesting issues.

Royal Mail exhibition souvenirs Royal Mail will have a stand at Hong Kong '97 where it will sell two exhibition postcards, one featuring Hong Kong, the other commemorating the 70th birthday of HM The Queen, price £1.50 each.

A book of four 1st class NV1 stamps and pictorial Hong Kong label will also be issued on 12 February. The book will be available in the UK from the British Philatelic Bureau and Post Office Counters philatelic outlets, and main post offices, also at the Royal Mail stand at the Hong Kong exhibition. Price £1.04. A stamp card will also be available, reproducing the design of the label, price 25p. Details of special postmarks will be announced in the *British Postmark Bulletin*, Royal Mail's companion publication to this magazine ●



Newcastle '96 By Michael Furnell, Editor of *Stamp Lover*

The first national exhibition outside of London provided visitors with a wide variety of activities



The commemorative cover franked with a special hand-stamp. Illustration of the Civic Centre by Marion Rothnie.



NOV 29 '96

The first national exhibition to be organised outside London, under the auspices of the Association of British Philatelic Societies (ABPS), was held at the Civic Centre, Newcastle upon Tyne from 30 November to 1 December. This was in conjunction with the British Aerophilatelic Federation and the North-East England Philatelic Association.

The impressive venue in the centre of the city, enabled the organisers to provide visitors with a wide variety of activities which were much appreciated.

An outstanding attraction was a display of early airmail material from the Royal Philatelic Collection, which included flown covers for the 1911 First UK Aerial Post addressed to King George V. With these was a letter to the King from the Directors of Grahame White Aviation Ltd, who arranged the flight, forecasting that the development of airmail would revolutionise communications between peoples of the world. This letter was also signed by the pilots. The eight frames contained many other unique and

interesting covers from the collection, including a more recent addition comprising pioneer air mail flights of Canada.

The Interfederation Competition provided a fine series of displays in nearly 50 frames, from 14 Philatelic Federations whose territories stretched from Cornwall to Scotland. The Competition winners were the Federation of Surrey Philatelic Societies with displays of Nyasaland, 'Go By Cycle' and aspects of mail between France and Latin America. Runner-up was the Hampshire Philatelic Federation.

Another major feature was the Aerophilatelic Competition which attracted entries from over 40 collectors from the UK and abroad. Four gold medals were awarded and there were five special prizes, plus a Court of Honour.

The National Postal Museum presented a display depicting 'The Genesis of the Machine', which was most interesting as it outlined the creation of our current definitives.

Encouraging the young stamp collector was a major feature of the show with an Inter-Federa-

tion Youth Competition. The judges reported that the standard of entries was good, with all 15 individual entrants reaching 'medal standard'. In class B for 12 to 16 year olds, Scott Ferguson of Newcastle upon Tyne won the first ever UK Large Silver medal with his 'They travelled Great Waters' display. There were also five competing Federations and the winner was the host Association NEPA. Wessex and Sussex Federations were joint second.

It was very satisfying to see so many families with children visiting the show and participating in the youth events which included a 'design an airmail stamp' competition. The two day Stamp Fair in the Banqueting Hall was well supported by 35 dealers offering a wide selection of material and their stands were busy throughout the show. On the lower ground floor nearly 20 national and specialist societies displayed the type of material collected by their members and services available to members.

Other features included a display of Newcastle Postal History and the Post Office Counters stand. Six workshops on a variety of subjects were arranged and a Council meeting of the ABPS was held.

An attractive commemorative cover was produced franked with a special handstamp, and because aerophilately was an overall theme for the exhibition, a limited number of covers were flown on a Gill Air flight from Newcastle to Belfast and back. These were signed by the Captain of the aircraft. The well-produced 64 page Exhibition Handbook was full of information on all aspects of the event. It was included in the admission price of £1, for adults.

On the first day alone about 1000 keen collectors passed through the doors and it is certain that this new event was a resounding success. These exhibitions involve an immense amount of voluntary work and all concerned should be very pleased with the results.

Editor's note: The commemorative covers mentioned by Mr Furnell are still available from the organisers, see *Commemorative Covers Review* November 1996 for details ●

The 1925 British Empire Exhibition 1½d imperforate stamp by Alan Sabey



Readers will recall that when Stanley Gibbons launched their new stamp exhibition at Wembley in 1995, I was invited to display my collection on the British Empire Exhibition which everyone knows was a Wembley event. Much of the collection had never been shown all together in one place. Another famous collector was also invited to show his collection of artists' drawings, die proofs and the issued stamps overprinted 'cancelled' or 'specimen' along with some spectacular varieties.

In April 1996 this other collection was broken up for sale and I bought the overprinted stamps and a couple of the artist's pencil sketches. In the collection was an imperforate stamp – the 1925 1½d – which did not sell, probably because its exact status was not known as it is not in the Stanley Gibbons Specialised catalogue of Great Britain. The stamp is mounted on a small piece of cream card by its own gum. It was later put into auction but again did not sell. At this time, it was thought by several philatelists to be a colour trial.

I suggested that the stamp be submitted to the Expert Committee of the Royal Philatelic Society London for their opinion in the hope of obtaining their certificate to confirm what had already been suspected it was. The Expert Committee is the top body in this country for giving a certificate on any postage stamp of the world, not just on Great Britain. In fact, over the years they have had many different 'patients' as they call them submitted to them.

In September, just before Stampex, the stamp was returned to the person who had sent it in, together with the Committee's certificate stating that the stamp was in fact one which had been cut from the registration sheet of this value and year. It had been removed many years before, and before the rest of the sheet had found its way into the Collection of King George V at Buckingham Palace. The Chairman of the Expert Committee has the privilege of being able to compare stamps put before them with the stamps in the Royal Collection at the Palace as well as with stamps at the National Postal Museum in London.

I was given first option on purchasing this stamp and quickly realised that it was too good an opportunity to miss, knowing that no other stamp would ever be removed from a sheet of stamps in the Royal Collection. This stamp is and always will be the only one in private hands. A photocopy of the back of the sheet at the Palace was provided with the certificate which shows the typing and signature of a Post Office official confirming that the sheet is in fact a registration sheet for the issue. The copy was marked that it cannot be shown without the permission of the Keeper of the Royal Collection. As a Fellow of The 'Royal' (the Keeper of the Collection is a Past President of the Society), I quickly wrote for that permission which was granted. I was also afforded the rare honour of being able to go to Buckingham Palace to the Stamp Room to see the sheet from which this stamp had been removed, as well as looking at other items in the Collection.

I was received by the Keeper of the Collection, Mr Charles Goodwyn, and shown all four

registration sheets for both years of the Exhibition and of course the two values issued for each year. The 1924 1d and 1½d sheets and the 1925 1d sheet were all complete, but the 1925 1½d sheet had one stamp removed at the beginning of the seventh row. (For those who may not be aware, the 'Wembley' sheets were 10 rows of 6 stamps to each row.) Although it was the first stamp in the row which had been removed, the sheet had not been cut into through the margin, but it would seem that the stamp had been cut out with a razor blade or similar cutting device. I was able to lay my prized possession on the table and lay the rest of the sheet over it, when it could be seen that this stamp fitted into the space on the sheet exactly. As it had been already stuck down onto the cream card, the typing on the back could not be seen, but showed up on the application of benzine. It was fortunate that the stamp had been removed from a part of the sheet where there was typing on the back, otherwise the true identity would have been much more difficult to determine. I was pleased to see that no other stamps were missing from the sheets. I was also shown the red album containing the collection of stamps and covers for the British Empire Exhibition. It was noticed that while there were several die proofs in black and in red or brown for the 1924 issue, there were none of these proofs for the 1925 issue. None of the varieties such as 'Tail to X of Exhibition' or sheet numbered corner copies were in the Collection, but shade differences and a coil join pair of 1½d stamps were on the pages.

Asked if there was anything else I would like to see, I enquired about my other collecting interest – The Olympic Games of 1948. A box was then brought from the Strong Room containing stamp size essays for the Olympic Games stamps, some of which were like the issued stamps but with other values shown on them. These of course were changed before the final printing of the stamps.

It was a wonderful experience that I never dreamed would come my way, and is a memory that will remain with me for a very long time ●

Missions of Faith by James Mackay

A SET OF FOUR STAMPS ON 11 March celebrates the 1400th anniversary of two events, widely separate in place and context, yet closely related



St Columba in stained glass, Iona Abbey. His epic voyage is the subject of the 26p stamp.

Text © James Mackay 1997;
Background photograph (north
shore, Iona) © Peter Cattrell;
Stained glass © Royal Commission
on the Ancient and Historical
Monuments of Scotland

ON 8 JUNE 597 Columba, who Christianised the Picts and Scots, died at Iona off the west coast of Scotland. In the same year Augustine landed at Thanet to begin his mission to the English. Between them, however, they brought Christianity back to those parts of Britain which had reverted to paganism as a result of the Anglo-Saxon conquest.

It is a popular fallacy that Britain was pagan prior to the missions of Columba and Augustine. The Romano-British church survived in Wales, Devon and Cornwall, Cumbria and Strathclyde. Through Patrick, the Britons of Strathclyde had converted the heathen Irish in the 5th century, and it was from Ireland that missionaries went out to Dalriada (modern Argyll) and other parts of what is now Scotland and the north of England, as well as farther afield, to Switzerland and southern Germany.

Columba was born on 7 December 521 at Gartan in Co Donegal. His father, Feidlimid, belonged to the Hy Neill, the reigning house of Ulster and Dalriada, and his mother Eithne was descended from the kings of Leinster. Columba studied for the priesthood under Finian of Moville and Finian of Clonard and was ordained about 551. Over the ensuing decade he founded churches and monasteries in various parts of Ireland, but in 563 Columba with 12 disciples sailed in an open-decked boat across the sea and landed on the island of Iona where he erected a church and a monastery.

Eventually he reached Inverness, the Pictish capital, and the court of King Brude. When the king refused to open the gate to the warrior saint, Columba made the sign of the cross and the gate flew open of its own accord. After a miracle-working contest with the local pagan priests, Columba convinced Brude that his was the true religion. Brude converted to Christianity, and his Pictish subjects dutifully followed suit. As statesman and administrator Columba played a notable part in the foundation

of Scotland, but it is as a cleric renowned for his sanctity that he is best remembered and this aspect is conveyed by the 37p stamp.

By contrast, nothing is known of St Augustine before his emergence as abbot of the monastery of St Andrew at Rome in the late 6th century. In 595 he was summoned by Pope Gregory I to lead a mission to England, but turned back owing to the misgivings of his followers. Gregory, who had been told that the English wished to convert to Christianity, then gave Augustine letters of commendation and ordered him to proceed forthwith.

Accompanied by 40 monks, he landed at Thanet and was favourably received by King Aethelberht of Kent who was already familiar with the Christian religion as his wife, Queen Berta, was a Christian Frankish princess and had with her her own bishop Liudhard to whom had been assigned a church, dedicated to St Martin, which had survived from the days of British Christianity. The Venerable Bede also mentions Saxons with Columba at Iona a generation before Augustine's mission, so Augustine had a relatively easy task. Shortly before he died, Augustine consecrated Mellitus and Justus as bishops of London and Rochester respectively.

Although half a century would elapse before a king of Kent banned pagan worship, and another half century before this was made a serious offence, Augustine's mission is regarded as the foundation of modern England. In fact, Christianity made little headway beyond Kent until the 620s, and eventually other parts of England were converted not from the Roman mission in Kent but mainly by the Celtic missionaries from the North. Differences in the practice of religion and the calculation of Easter continued till 663 when Roman rule was accepted by the Synod of Whitby. The monks of Iona held out, however, and did not accept the Roman Easter till 716 •



King Aethelberht, whose conversion by Augustine on Christmas Day 597 is the subject of the 43p stamp, granted the missionary a see in Canterbury. The 63p stamp shows him with a model of the great cathedral which was consecrated in 603, a year before his death.

The stamps have been designed by Clare Melinsky using wood block engravings to simulate the style of medieval woodcuts. This technique has lent itself well to gravure reproduction by Enschedé of Haarlem.

Out of the Arc Curiosities from the Post Office Archives by Barbara Stephenson

Please contact Post Office Archives if you have seen a plate like this before, or if you can give us any more information about it.

Post Office Archives is located at Mount Pleasant (Phoenix Place entrance), London EC1A 1BB. Telephone 0171 239 2570. The searchroom is open 09.00 – 16.15 Monday to Friday.



The GPO, St Martin's le Grand

This building was designed by Sir Robert Smirke, who also designed the British Museum. It was constructed with brick, faced with Portland stone in Grecian Ionic style and the basement was granite. It was built on the site of a former monastery and college and stood until 1912.

In our possession at Post Office Archives is a plate that is proving very difficult to find out any information about. The Royal Crest on the plate dates from 1816 to 1837 and it is marked 'Best Goods' on the underside. Can you tell us more about it?

We think the plate is connected to the GPO, St Martin's le Grand, later known as GPO East. It is possible that the plate is part of a whole set made

for a banquet that may have been held to mark the 1829 opening of this building. Certainly such a magnificent structure would have been worthy of an opening banquet.

Having scanned the records of incidental payments made to tradesmen for the period, there are several entries for the purchase of 'Turner's Wares', or pottery. Unfortunately, these records are not detailed enough for us to be certain that any entry concerns this plate.

Furthermore, it seems that the style of the plate would have been old-fashioned by 1829 and that it was probably made in the earlier part of the 19th century. The plate is similar in style to the plates made for seamen's use ●

Books Clyde and Fife philately • Decimal Machin postal usage • American Topical Association handbooks

The Clyde and Philately and **Fife and Philately** Stanley Brown has added, to his works on Aberdeen, Dundee, Perth and Shetland, two more interesting little books which tell, through modern postmarks and covers, the story of the district concerned. He describes his Clyde book as a 'philatelic cruise of modern postal history from Glasgow down the Firth of Clyde, past Dunoon and as far south as Turnberry and Girvan.'

The Fife book begins with the PO first day cover for the Forth Road Bridge stamps of 1964; a temporary philatelic bureau in Edinburgh cancelled covers with North Queensferry (Fife) and South Queensferry (West Lothian) special hand-stamps. Attractive Fife harling houses and the famous St Andrew's Clubhouse featured on stamps in 1970 and 1994. Amongst interesting covers and cancels recorded are ones commemorating the 900th anniversary of the landing of Queen Margaret in Fife, 1969 (she featured on a Scottish aerogramme in 1993), the 250th anniversary of the birth of economist Adam Smith, 1973, and the decommissioning of HMS *Fife*, 1987.

Both books 28 pages, available from Stanley Brown, 14 Buchan Drive, Perth PH1 1NQ. Price £1.20 each, postpaid. Books on Perthshire and Angus and Highlands in preparation •

Postal usage of the decimal Machin series 1971-

1996 Martin Nicholson is to be congratulated on a labour of love in compiling a listing of all the postal rates of the Machin period. He comments: 'the long-running Machin series presents a formidable challenge to the postal historian. The frequent rate changes intended to be covered by these definitives have meant that any given value of stamp could have pre-paid a wide diversity of rates. For example there are no fewer than eighteen quite distinct uses for a 24p franking.' His book is published in two volumes, covering respectively Inland and European rates. For each rate he quotes the service, weight and dates covered. In vol 1 he lists no fewer than 1600 'differ-

ent items' ranging from 2½p, 2nd class inland letter rate up to 20z, 6 March 1972-9 September 1973, to 575p as the current 1st class registered inland letter rate to 1000g. Details are also given of the dates and issue and withdrawal of stamps. Many rates did not have single stamps to cover; they needed to be made up by the use of two or more values. Vol 1 includes three illustrations although it is to be hoped that more can be added if the work goes to a reprint or 2nd edition. The author first produced the work as a check list he took with him to stamp fairs when looking for covers for his collection. His personal favourite rate cover is the short-lived 49½p covering first class inland letter to 500g between 20 August 1979 and 3 February 1980. The only inland rate of this amount he has traced, he has located just one example in 10 years of searching. A minor error noticed refers to the latest postal rate increase from 8 June rather than 8 July 1996.

Vols 1 and 2, also a companion volume on the Pre-Decimal Machin series, 1967-71, are all available, price £6 each (includes UK postage) from M P Nicholson, 3 Grovelands, Daventry NN1 4DH •

Topical Time: Knowledge Through Stamp Collect-

ing The ATA's 131st handbook comprises a reprinting of 26 significant articles published in *Topical Time* magazine in 1979-80. These have been carefully selected for their permanent reference value and cover archaeology, birds, cancellations, chemistry, Churchill, Columbus, communications, costumes, exhibiting, fairs, games, Rowland Hill, history, Judaica, lighthouses, maximum cards, medicine, murder, opera, religion, ships, space, sports, stationery and women. Donald Brenke gives good advice on collecting and preparing maximum cards – in particular treatment of a glossy card to ensure the stamp stays in place and the postmark does not smear. 64 pages, card covers. Available from American Topical Association, PO Box 65749, Tucson AZ 85728, USA. Price \$8 postpaid •

Decimal stamp books 31 Specialist report by D G A Myall



Plate numbers in gutter between stamps and greetings labels

Say it with flowers This year's Greetings book was issued on 6 January and continues the annual delivery of these popular books. As usual, the contents are 10 different 1st-class NVIs attached to a panel of colourful labels. The stamps feature various flower heads and have two equal width 9mm blue fluor phosphor bars from 18mm bands. The phosphor does not extend to the labels making the band at the right of the pane only 9mm wide. The stamps were printed by Walsall; they and the cover were designed by Tut-sells. One of the set, the gentian, has been used for the front cover; and very striking it is. To my eye the cover flower is more like the eponymous gentian blue than the rather reddish version on the stamp. The colours and plate number seen are: w5 (greenish yellow) w5 (new blue) w9 (magenta) w4 (black) w3 (blue green) w7 (gold).

There are 20 labels with some of the flowers reproduced in an overall design. There are also a couple of beautiful moths, but thankfully no caterpillars so the flowers are safe. Some new texts are included, such as 'Don't open until' (one writes the date underneath), 'Well done', 'Get well' and the very direct 'I love you' as well as two of the usual 'With love's. These are well in keeping with the theme of the book since flowers have long been a means of conveying messages. In her book *The Language of Flowers*, Kate

Greenaway gives hundreds of examples of the meanings of single flowers and explains that a whole range of sentiments can be conveyed by a carefully chosen bouquet. However, not many of those featured in the Greetings book are included. In fact, the flowers chosen for the book are perhaps a little too exotic for this purpose but if the theme is repeated in a future year with a different set, which I hope will happen, may I suggest the forget-me-not, a single red rose (an expression of love), rosemary (for remembrance) and perhaps an olive branch, as carrying messages which will be likely to be generally understood. There are some to be avoided, of course. A narcissus (egotism) may not be well received by the addressee and I do not think that a young lady would like to be sent a wallflower.

Olympics books addenda It seems that books of stamps without the defacing bars across the stamp designs on the front covers of the Olympics books were not intended to be issued until the new series to replace them. However, only the Walsall books of four by first-class were corrected and those without the bars continue to be in short supply. I understand that a plate book with combination w42 w47 w52 is now fetching a sum well into four figures.

When new value-bearing books for worldwide mail were issued last July, the text on the yellow strip was enlarged and the small black triangle below it, which pointed to the thumb tab, was dispensed with. Presumably, the public are now believed to know how to open and close a retail book and this is why the triangle, and the words 'pull open' on the NV1 books, are no longer considered to be necessary.

Design change for window book covers The books featuring the 1996 Olympic logos on the back covers first appeared on 6 February last year and some of the design changes during its term were mentioned in my previous column. The series is scheduled to end on 4 February next and the designs to replace them (apart from special

promotional covers) will revert to the pre-Olympic sets with a few changes. These are as follows, although some further changes may occur between the time this article was written and the books being printed.

10 × 1ST CLASS Front cover: no defacing bar, 'First Class Stamps' ranged left. Back cover text: 'Look out for our greetings stamps. They are now on sale at post offices and selected shops everywhere'. The printer's initial appears near the barcode. There is no printing on the yellow tab strip, ie 'Pull Open' has been removed.

10 × 2ND CLASS Front cover: no defacing bar, 'Second Class Stamps' ranged left. Back cover text: 'First class stamps are also available in books of 10. They are now on sale at post offices and selected shops everywhere'; the printer's initial appears near the barcode. There is no printing on the yellow tab strip, ie 'Pull Open' has been removed.

4 × 1ST CLASS Front cover: no defacing bar, 'First Class Stamps' ranged left. Back cover text: 'First class stamps are also available in books of 10. They are now on sale at post offices and selected shops everywhere'. The printer's initial appears near the barcode. There is no printing on the yellow tab strip, ie 'Pull Open' has been removed.

4 × 2ND CLASS Front cover: no defacing bar, 'Second Class Stamps' ranged left. Back cover text: 'Both first and second class stamps are also available in books of 10. They are now on sale at post offices and selected shops everywhere'. The printer's initial appears near the barcode. There is no printing on the yellow tab strip, ie 'Pull Open' has been removed.

4 × 37p Front cover: no defacing bar, 'Worldwide Postcard Stamps' ranged left. Back cover text: 'Valid for sending postcards to anywhere in the World by Airmail. Books of 63p Worldwide Airmail Stamps are also on sale at post offices and selected shops. The printer's initial appears near the barcode. 'For Worldwide Postcards' appears on the yellow strip, reading downwards.

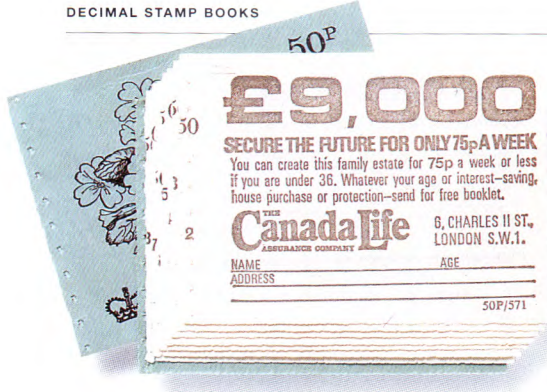
4 × 63p Front cover: no defacing bar; 'Worldwide Airmail Stamps' ranged left. Back cover text: 'Valid for sending items up to 20g to any-

where in the World by Airmail. Books of 37p Worldwide Postcard Stamps are also on sale at post offices and selected shops'. The printer's initial appears near the barcode. 'For items up to 20g' appears on the yellow strip, reading downwards.

Marks & Spencer books A brief reference was made in December's *Bulletin* of a special 'hook and hang' packaging being trialled at Marks & Spencer shops for a period of three months. Only normal retail books of 10 × 1st class and 10 × 2nd class are involved. The trial is being conducted at about a dozen selected branches. The packaging is quite substantial and was commissioned by Royal Mail.

The books are completely sealed behind a transparent bubble pack forming part of the card backing. Without opening a pack, one cannot tell which version of the covers is being used, but, having opened a few I can tell you that they are Harrison books with the printer's initial and the Olympic logos. As the trial started on 4 November, they are unlikely to be replaced with the successors to the Olympic design which are due for issue on 4 February by which time the trial should have ended. However, since books and packaging have to be completed well in advance of release dates, it is possible that other designs could be used. Although the initial H on the back covers of the enclosed books is not visible, you can be sure that an unopened pack has a Harrison book inside if you select one with the black marker bar at the left. This bar appears on every 25th book; it does not appear on books from other printers.

Because the books are sealed the barcode on the back covers cannot be read by the store's machines. Instead, the card carrier itself has an M&S barcode to indicate the contents and price. Interestingly, the till roll shows the sale as stationery and not as postage stamps. I do not know what quantities of the two books have been packaged in this way, but books of 10 × 2nd were soon in short supply at several of the stores, possibly because of the increased demand for this value for sending Christmas cards.



Book Value Digits A reader recently purchased a collection of decimal stamp booklets going back to the first issues of 1971. Among them he found some books with stitched covers which have numbers printed on the interleaves. He states that these usually indicate the order of the interleaves in the book (although some are out of sequence). Occasionally, however, an interleaf has some additional numbers, and he has observed that these are the same as the face value of the book, ie 25 in 25p books, 30 in 30p books and so on. He asks why they were used.

My correspondent is correct in assuming that the sequential numbers are to ensure that the interleaves were assembled into the book in the right order. They appear on every interleaf. The other numbers are known to collectors as 'Book Value Digits' (BVDs), and served a different purpose. They first appeared in the April 1971 edition of the 25p book ('80 Years of British Stamp Books' cover) and were extended to 30p books in the June 1971 edition ('Lapwing' cover) and to the 50p May 1971 edition ('Primrose' cover). At the time, the 25p book contained stamps for the 2nd class service, 30p was for users of the more popular 1st class service while the 50p contained stamps for both services. They also appeared in the 45p books of September and December 1974 with the Gold Crown cover, No 3 in the British Coins series.

BVDs were introduced to reduce the risk of putting an interleaf into the wrong book. Interleaves contained commercial advertisements and, since the print runs for books of different denominations (and editions) varied consider-

ably, and were targeted at different types of customer, an advertiser would be none too happy to see his advertisement in the wrong edition especially if it had a smaller print run than the one he had paid for. The BVDs made it clear which value book the advertisement was meant for. They were printed, as a separate operation, twice on the uncut printer's sheet for every interleaf. They thus appeared in one in every 40 books but on every interleaf in that book; on half of these they were inverted. In some later editions of the 30p and 50p books, BVDs appeared on the back cover as well, when these carried advertisements, although, since the covers were colour coded, there should have been no real necessity for them.

Page numbers also appeared on interleaves in the 10p machine-vend books. These were smaller than the interleaves for the counter books and there was no possibility of one being assembled into a counter book by mistake. BVDs were not, therefore, necessary for the 10p books. Nevertheless, some did appear in few editions, eg the June 1973 edition ('Pillar boxes No 8' cover).

These interleaf numbers continued until the end of the stitched book era in 1974 and there were many variations of position, size and font in that time. Some were inverted in relation to the page numbers; others were sideways on. With the advent of books with folded covers the need for interleaves and their advertisements ceased and this interesting episode came to an end.

Private vending machines The machines on Post Office premises which vend the *Questa* £1 and £2 red books are made by Hillday Ltd. The same company makes machines for private firms for the same purpose. Maybe you have seen one, with its distinctive red front, in your local shop or Safeway store. These employ the same coin testing and stamp issuing mechanisms as are incorporated into the official machines. (The coin tester is to ensure that a book is not vended in exchange for a foreign coin or some other invalid token.) The issuing mechanism is electrically operated and vends one booklet at a time. There are no knobs or levers to pull and the booklet glides automatically and silently out of



the aperture. The machines are convertible to accept one, two or three £1 coins per vend, so can be loaded with either £1 or £2 booklets. There are two models, known as the Marquis and Premier. They are very similar in appearance but the Premier is larger and has a little window through which a booklet can be seen. Each model holds 190 books and is fitted with a non-resettable counter which clocks up one unit every time a booklet is issued so that the cash taken can be seen to be equal to the number of books sold. On both machines a light tells the customer that the machine is working. This goes out when it is empty and a bar comes up preventing any more coins from being inserted. One of these machines is often seen side by side with one vending BT phonecards in exchange for two £1 coins; these are also made by Hillday Ltd.

Booklet vending machines for private use are also made by Coinage (Bristol) Ltd. Their current model is known as Stamp Master PIB and holds 200 booklets. Like the Hillday machines, it is electrically operated; it can be adjusted to take any number of £1 coins up to eight. It vends the standard £1 or £2 Questa books •

Corrigenda Alert readers will have noticed that groups 3 and 6 of the Olympic retail books mentioned here last December appear to be the same and judged solely by the three criteria set out there, they are. However, collectors treat books containing NVIs differently from those with value-bearing stamps, especially as the latter also include a sheet of airmail labels. Nevertheless, I should have made the difference clear and apologise for any confusion caused.

While I am eating my humble pie, I must help myself to another slice. A reader in Germany has kindly pointed to an error in the table of phosphor layouts which accompanied the article published here last June. The two books of 4 x 60p issued in 1994 have layout 2 and not layout 1 as stated.

Posting boxes 165

Overseas boxes Our photographs this month show boxes on two islands, thousands of miles apart. The first shows a yellow-painted British box in the Greek part of Cyprus. The photograph was taken by Julian Stray. A box in the Turkish part of the island was shown here in December 1985.

The second photograph is of an ornate box outside the Old Fort at Oranjestad, the main town on the island of Aruba in the Dutch Antilles. The photographer this time is David McGirr. The box appears to have two posting apertures – one below the pediment and another about half way down, above the second white decoration, protected by a rain-shield bearing the inscription DRUKWERKE. Tourism is the mainstay of the Aruban economy, with over ½ million visitors in 1993. In 1986 the island became an autonomous country within the Kingdom of the Netherlands; it began issuing its own stamps in 1980 •



A British postbox in the Greek part of Cyprus, left, and an ornate box in Oranjestad on the island of Aruba

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

Competition Win valuable Edward VII £1 stamp



This month's competition is sponsored by New World Philatelic. In order to launch their Specialists Register Service, New World Philatelic are offering *Bulletin* subscribers the first year's registration worth £20 free of charge. You will not be sent anything upon approval unless you request it. Registration places you under no obligation whatsoever. The first year is free.

1st prize Great Britain Edward VII 1911 £1 deep green, SG 320, premium quality example, quite magnificent colour and superb small Guernsey AP 28 1912 cds postmark. SG cat £350 + 50% premium. Far scarcer than the 1902 printing. Classics without Tears retail price £275. A credit to any collection.

2nd prize GB 1840 1d black, letters IL, fine large to very large four margins, cancelled by large part well positioned red-brown Maltese Cross. SG 2, cat £150. Classics without Tears price £75.

3rd prize Barbados 1938-47 4d black left-hand marginal mint example showing excellent 'Flying Mane' variety, well centred, slightly toned gum. SG 253a, cat £60. Classics without Tears price £27.50. Scarce and desirable variety.

How the Register works Simply write and tell New World which country or countries you specialise in, maximum of eight countries. In return for your registering your collecting interests you will receive: Exclusive, advance, periodically updated stocklists, as available, containing scarce difficult and elusive stamps from the countries that you collect • Forthcoming catalogues offering 100s of scarce stamps from £10 to £100s each • £25 worth of free discount vouchers that you can utilise at any time • Access to some of the largest stocks of fine GB, British Commonwealth and foreign in existence • Postfree service • Interest free extended payment (credit cards too!) • 14 days no quibble refund guarantee on any item ordered (approval against pre-payment) • Free five years authenticity guarantee • Benefit from our experience of over 30 years in the trade • Absolute confidentiality to our company • Add or delete countries collected with your maximum of eight at any time.

After the 12 months free no obligation trial period your registration will lapse and you will be invited to continue by annual subscription (currently £20) – however, you can extend free registration automatically by up to 12 months from the date of any purchase you make.

New World Philatelic (NWPJ) Ltd Specialist Register PO Box 99 Market Harborough LE16 8ZR

To enter the competition answer the questions below and send, with your name and address, on a postcard or back of an envelope to: February Bulletin Competition, Royal Mail, 22 Finsbury Square, London EC2A 1NL to arrive by 27 March. You may submit as many entries as you like but each must be posted separately; multiple entries in one envelope will be disregarded.

The winners of November's competition were Kathleen Holmes of USA (1st prize); B Raschkes of Cheshire (2nd); and R G Warren of Essex (3rd)

The answers 1. Georg Dionysius Ehret; 2. Pat Rothnie; 3. Lord Montagu of Beaulieu; 4. 1855; 5. 09.30-16.30 (Monday-Friday). Our thanks to all who entered.

- 1 What was the registration number of the first British postbus in 1967?
- 2 Who was born on 7 December 521?
- 3 How many keen collectors passed visited Newcastle '96 on the first day?
- 4 Who wrote *The Language of Flowers*?
- 5 Which society gave a 600-sheet display to the Royal Philatelic Society, London in November?

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

Postbag

Bulletin interviews I have read with interest the interviews with Francis Kiddle (January 1996), Chris Harman (May), Franceska Rapkin (October), and James Mackay (November). Each has made very worthwhile comments on the state of collecting today. In particular Harman and Mackay argue against too great a degree of specialisation, or at least for those building specialist collections to be aware that there is much else equally worthy of collecting and study. I like Dr Mackay's idea of 'concentric philately'. Mr Harman hits the nail on the head with his perceptive comment on the significance of some of the Machin variations so much in vogue today. Will future generations be so enthusiastic about OCP, PCP, yellow or blue fluor? As a former Machin collector, I suggest Mr Harman's comments should be carefully discussed by the relevant Machin study groups.

Mrs Rapkin makes the telling point that today's youngsters face many pressures and that childhood and adolescence is probably not as easy as in the past. We cannot go back to the gentler, less stressful days, but stamp collecting should be promoted in schools and by grandparents, parents, aunts and uncles as a way of relaxing and unwinding from day-to-day pressures. Like James Mackay, I find soaking off and sorting stamps is 'very therapeutic and relaxing'. I enjoyed this as much now as I did when a child collector, nearly half a century ago.

I can but admire the dedication of philatelists such as Francis Kiddle who give so freely of their time in running societies and events. I agree wholeheartedly with him that postal history and philately should be regarded as one and the same. It always grieves me when a collector turns away a cover bearing a stamp that fulfilled its proper function as 'I only want a used single to fill a gap in the album, what would I do with a whole envelope?'

I look forward to many more *Bulletin* interviews – one of the best features you have introduced in recent times. COLIN WESTWOOD, NORWICH ●

Events

National Postal Museum Please note that the Museum is currently closed for rebuilding work. The date of reopening will be announced as soon as possible. Royal Mail regrets any disappointment or inconvenience caused by the closure.

Now showing Postal Memorabilia display, by David Harrop, at City Square Post Office, Leeds. Enquiries: D Harrop, 15 Hawthorne Road, Heaton Mersey, Stockport SK4 3DQ

Until 4 May 'Keeping You Posted' exhibition, marking 60th anniversary of Preston & District PS, at Museum of Lancashire, Preston. Open 10.00-17.00 (except Thursday & Sunday). Admission £1 adults, children free. Enquiries: P Gaywood 01772 684302, or J Rayment 01722 264061



Pat Botham, Secretary of the Preston and District Phil Soc with the famous 'Hen & Chick' parcel cycle, loaned by the National Postal Museum, at the 'Keeping You Posted' exhibition at the Museum of Lancashire, Preston

12-16 February Hong Kong '97 International Stamp Exhibition at Hong Kong Convention Centre, Wan Chai. 1200 frames of non-competitive and competitive exhibits. Enquiries: Hong Kong '97, Room 201, Post Office HQ, GPO, 2 Connaught Place, Hong Kong

1 March Scout and Guide Stamps Club annual exhibition at Baden-Powell House, Queen's Gate, London SW7, 11.00-16.30. a wide variety of Scout/Guide stamps, covers, postcards and other philatelic material will be available. Enquiries: Peter Duck, 0181 891 5746 ●

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