

BRITISH PHILATELIC

Bulletin

The ROYAL MAIL magazine *for stamp collectors*

Volume 38 Number 4

DECEMBER 2000 • 85P

Vote in our 2000 stamp poll
• The story of pantomime



This month: the final, 25th
set in Royal Mail's two-year
series of Millennium issues

The final set, *The Future*, will go on sale 16 January



Forthcoming issues and withdrawals



Cover The subject of the last Royal Mail Millennium issue is The Future, embodied in the world's children. The stamps are previewed on page 112. Photograph: Getty One Stone.

Sound and Vision stamps

Alternative first day of issue postmarks for this issue are Cardiff, not London WC1 as stated in November's *Bulletin*. Covers for Cardiff postmarks (FD0032 and FD0032 NP) should be sent to the Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, Penarth Road, Cardiff CF11 8TA. We regret any confusion caused.

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

5 December	Issue Millennium Sound and Vision stamps and presentation pack.
5 December	Issue 2000 Yearpack.
29 December	Withdrawal £10 Britannia stamp and presentation pack; Customised Christmas stamps with greetings labels (see page 106).
1 January	Issue The Archers philatelic medallic cover.
1 January	Withdrawal Millennium Moment miniature sheet, pack, stamp cards, commemorative document and coin cover.
9 January	Issue Millennium The Future stamp cards.
16 January	Issue Millennium The Future stamps & presentation pack.
29 January	Issue Retail stamp books: 12 x 1st (Questa/Walsall), 12 x 2nd (Questa); 6 x 1st, and 6 x 2nd (Walsall); 10 x 1st and 10 x 2nd (Questa/Walsall). Label stamp book: 6 x 1st and Queen Victoria/Albert Memorial label. All contain self-adhesive stamps.
1 February	Withdrawal All 1999 Millennium stamps, presentation packs and stamp cards; 1999 Yearbook and Yearpack; and 2000 Above & Beyond and Fire & Light stamps, presentation pack and stamp cards.
6 February	Issue Cats and Dogs stamp cards.
13 February	Issue Cats and Dogs stamps and presentation pack.
14 February	Withdrawal Stamp Show 2000 prestige books: 1999 Profile on Print and 2000 Special by Design. Note: the 1998 Definitive Portrait book is now sold out.

The 1999 Solar Eclipse miniature sheet is now off sale at the Bureau; the 1 February 2001 withdrawal date given in November's *Bulletin* should, therefore, be disregarded.

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The *British Philatelic Bulletin* is published monthly by Royal Mail, 2-14 Bunhill Row, London EC1Y 8HQ • **Editor** JR Holman • **Price** 85p for single copies, from Post Office Counters philatelic outlets • **Annual subscription** £9.50 in UK and Europe, £13.50 rest of the world. Subscriptions should be sent to: British Philatelic Bureau, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB • **Binders** to hold 24 issues, price £7, are available by post from British Philatelic Bureau (address above) • Royal Mail also publishes the fortnightly *British Postmark Bulletin*, giving details of forthcoming special handstamps. Available on annual subscription from British Philatelic Bureau (address as above) UK and Europe £10, rest of the world £21.75 • **Copyright** Unless copyright is attributed to a specific author, any articles or features may be reproduced without formal permission, but acknowledgement should be given to *British Philatelic Bulletin*. Requests to reproduce copyright articles should be addressed to the Editor, 2-14 Bunhill Row, London EC1Y 8HQ • **Design** by Robert Maude • **Printed** in Great Britain by The White Dove Press • **ISSN** 0953 8119

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2000 Bulletin writers

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Fred Gee September,
November

Peter Johnson February

Lionel Jones January,
February, March, June, July,
August, November

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May, June, July, September,
October, November

Dorothy Martin December

Douglas Myall February,
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August, October, December

Ron Negus March, June, July,
August, September, October,
November, December

Colin Peachey September

Franceska Rapkin November

Tony Walker March, April

Brian Warren September

Richard West each month

Derek Williams February,
June

ONCE AGAIN we invite you to vote for your favourite stamps and *Bulletin* writer of the year. The special stamps issued during 2000 are shown on pages 116-117. Tell us your top three sets and favourite individual stamp on the enclosed voting form. All forms will be entered in a prize draw: the first 'out of the hat' will win £400 with £100 to each of the next three drawn. Remember to return your voting form by 19 January. The favourite set of 1999 was Scientists' Tale, with the 64p Hubble Telescope stamp in that set the most popular individual design. I await with interest your decision on this year's stamps.

We are also asking you to vote (on the same form) for your favourite *Bulletin* writer – listed opposite, with the months their articles were published. All voting forms go into a second draw, the sender of the first drawn wins £150. The favourite author will also receive £150. Last year's winner was James Mackay, the winner for the previous three years being Douglas Myall. Please note that articles by Royal Mail staff are excluded.

Details are given this month of the final set in our 25-set Millennium series. Whereas the 1999 stamps commemorated history and the 2000 issues featured current and forthcoming Millennium projects, the last set in January has the Future as its theme. These issues have been somewhat controversial, their designs prompting strong debate in the *Bulletin* Postbag pages and in other stamp magazines. After the Future issue, the stamp programme returns to its usual mix of issues. Stamps featuring cats and dogs, to be issued in February, will be previewed next month.

On behalf of Royal Mail I wish all *Bulletin* readers a happy and peaceful Christmas and New Year. JOHN HOLMAN •

Stamp scene ABPS Awards • GB Societies publications • GB stamps at auction

Awards nomination forms

From N M Russell, 59 Granby
Avenue, Harpenden AL5 5QP.
Forms are to be returned by
30 April 2001.

ABPS Awards Nominations are invited from local, national and specialist philatelic societies, associations and federations affiliated to the Association of British Philatelic Societies for the Congress Medal and Awards of Merit in 2001. The silver Medal is awarded for outstanding service to British philately at national level to a member of an organisation affiliated to the ABPS. There is only one recipient of this prestigious award each year; in 2000 it was Brian Asquith (see June *Bulletin*, page 292). Up to 15 Awards (framed certificates) are given for outstanding service to philately at regional, specialist and local society level. Outstanding service includes work to advance philately at Congress, the ABPS, conventions or exhibitions and association, federation or society activities carried out on a voluntary basis over a considerable period of time. Excluded are philatelic research, the formation of collections, giving displays, and philatelic writing. Nomination forms are available from the address opposite •

GB societies publications A new (third) edition of the popular Machin Collectors Club specialised Machins catalogue has recently been published. It has been completely redesigned and includes many new features to appeal to the beginner and advanced collector alike. Containing over 830 pages in an A5 loose leaf gold foil printed burgundy binder, the catalogue has 18 sections covering all aspects of Machin collecting: Pre-decimals, singles, errors, coil issues, cylinder and warrant blocks, high values, castles, stitched books and panes, machine, counter, Christmas, greetings and window books, country stamps, postage dues and training stamps. Each section has been edited by an expert in his own field and is fully illustrated throughout with hundreds of pictures and diagrams. Each item has been priced with genuine retail prices (where known), including all issues to June 2000. Price £29.95 available from stamp shops or £33.95 postpaid UK (£37 overseas) from the address opposite •

The September/October issue of *The GB Journal*, published by the Great Britain Philatelic Society, contains interesting articles on the Downey Head ½d Perf 14 Control Copy; Surface Printed 2s Brown on Cover; Neale's Steam Press Experiment 1854-56 (continued from previous *Journal*); reviews of *De La Rue's QV Revenue Heads* by Peter F Mansfield (published by the Revenue Society of GB) and *Mails under London* by L C Stanway (Association of Essex Philatelic Societies), and a profile of W P (Bill) Bird the specialist GB dealer who has recently retired to take up academic studies. E L Smith responds to Harry Dagnall's earlier article on whether or not stamps should be photocopied and John Bohn's *cri de coeur* questions the FIP ruling that Mulready caricatures and pictorial offshoots have no place in major competitive exhibitions. His display of such material was much admired at the non-competitive Rare Stamps of the World exhibition. He should take heart from the fact that probably less than 1 per cent of collectors have ever heard of FIP (Fédération Internationale de Philatélie) let alone care about its somewhat perplexing regulations for stamp exhibitions. He illustrates two of the attractive covers from his collection. Sent out with the *Journal* is the *GBPS Newsletter* with news and views from the Society's membership, a reflection on Stamp Show 2000 and report of the Society meeting there, a report of a recently found George VI variety, and a comment from Society President, Chris Harman, on exhibiting and judging. Under the editorship of Tony Walker the *Newsletter* is developing into a really useful publication, beginning to rival the main *Journal* •

The July *News Letter* of the BDSSC (British Decimal Stamps Study Circle) contains comment on Stamp Show 2000, updates on recent window books and commemorative stamps, articles by Edgar Smith on 'Fluorescence and Phosphorescence: Ultra-Violet lamps and the interpretation of results' and on the differences between the Machin high values printed by Enschedé and De La Rue, letters to the editor and Circle business. Enclosed is an auction catalogue of over 500 lots of stamp book varieties and the Circle's News Sheet giving details of new cylinder and warrant (SSO) numbers reported by members. It all makes interesting reading for specialist collectors of current issues •



Machin Collectors Club
Orders for the catalogue, and requests for a copy of the Club's latest Newsletter and details of its activities should be sent to: 8 Jannys Close, Aylsham, Norwich NR11 6DL.

GBPS For details contact A Lajer, The Old Post Office, Davis Way, Hurst, Reading RG10 0TR.

BDSSC For details contact S Van Kimmenade, 32 Beaufort Heights, Beaufort Road, St George, Bristol BS5 8JX.

Studiegroep Britannia For details contact P S Gimberg, Duivesteijnstraat 16, 2272 AN Voorburg, Netherlands.

Enquiries Contact Bernhard Weiss, Florianweg 57, 47574 Goch, Germany.

Insurance and Banking Philatelic Society Enquiries to J Payne, Kelso, Devonshire Avenue, Amersham HP6 5JE, enclosing SAE. The annual subscription is £2.50.

The September issue of *Britannia News*, journal of the Dutch Studiegroep Britannia, contains features on the Victorian line-engraved ½d and 1½d stamps, a listing of recent Machin issues, postpaid postmarks, a report on Stamp Show and a review of recent Irish issues and articles on the stamps/postal history of Aden and Cyprus. Attached are catalogues for two Group auctions of GB stamps and other material •

The September issue of *Rundbrief*, published by the German GB study group, Forschungsgemeinschaft Grossbritannien eV, contains useful articles on Victorian stamped to order envelopes, the Fire & Light stamps, the Smilers greetings stamps (1990, 1991 and 2000 issues), a detailed write-up of the Queen Mother sheet and prestige book, and other interesting reports and notes •

The September *Newsletter* of the Insurance & Banking Philatelic Society of Great Britain contains articles and news as well as details of the Society's activities. Pete Shaw records an interesting pictorial wrapper sent by the Mailort service, and Sheila Foster provides useful guidance to using a computer to write up your collection. Membership of the Society is open to anyone employed in, or retired from, the financial services industry. Meetings are held in London, Manchester, and Toronto, Canada •

Cavendish auctions For details of future sales contact Cavendish Philatelic Auctions Ltd, 153-157 London Road, Derby DE1 2SY.

GB at auction The Cavendish auction on 9 September included the Bob Murton Collection of British Postage Dues. Die proofs of the 1d and 5d stamps (1914) realised £1380 and £1610 respectively and a collection of control strips for the period 1924-31 went for £1035. Pride of place went to two covers. One sent unstamped from Belgium to Birmingham and bearing a 5d Due cancelled on the first day of use, 20 April 1914, realised £2530, and a cover bearing a George VI 1d definitive overprinted 'POSTAGE/DUE' used as a provisional at Bury St Edmunds in 1951 went for £2070 against an estimate of £200! The Wembley Exhibition cancels section of the auction also brought enthusiastic bidding •

Grosvenor auctions For details of future sales contact Grosvenor Philatelic Auctions Ltd, 22 Woodstock Street, London W1R 1HF.

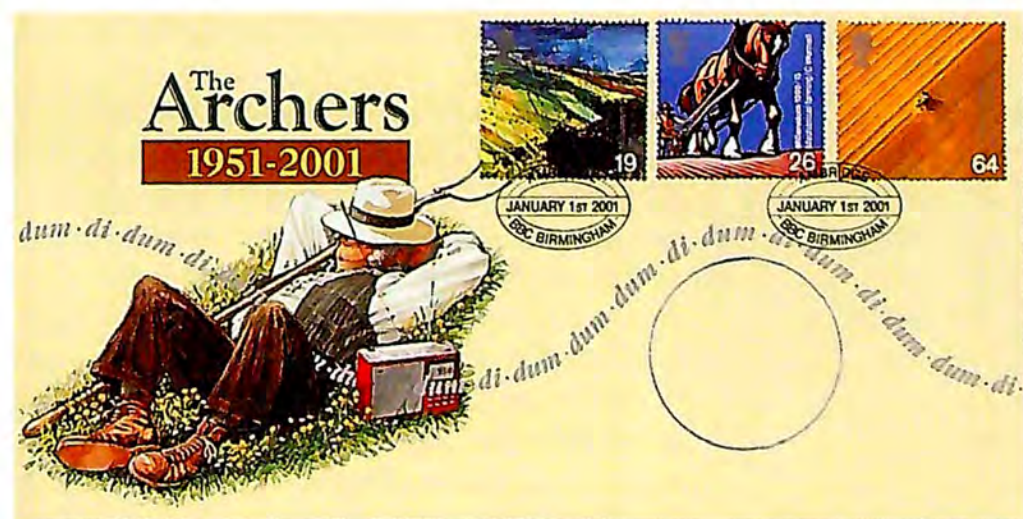
Grosvenor's GB and All World sale on 13 September included some wonderful material from an award-winning collection of Wilding definitives, such as essays and errors. An ink and pencil signed artists' drawing by Enid Marx of her 'Elizabethan Spray' concept (design used for the ½d to 2d stamps) realised £600 as did an advanced state 'floral spray' pencil drawing for the 1½d value. A stamp-sized photographic essay of unadopted shape for the 1½d made £400 and a similar photographic essay for the 8d with values in all four corners and signed Enid Marx went for £460. A block of the 2½d (SG 519) with spectacular inking variety leaving the stamps on horizontal rows 4, 5 and 6 completely unprinted made £850. An imperf imprimatur block of the 1d Tudor Crown comprising two blocks of four arranged tête-bêche taken from booklet sheet (panes of six) realised £3600. This is a unique item in private hands. The sale included many imperf and part imperf errors, some used on cover. Of more modern material a book of the 1995 Greetings in Art stamps with silver (Queen's head and value) omitted made £3000. It is believed that only four examples are known. Realisations quoted are exclusive of buyers premium •

Scottish Rail booklet A new book in a series illustrating Scottish postmarks, commemorative covers, and postcards has recently been published by Stanley Brown and Ken Norris.

This gathers together the philatelic material associated with the railways of Scotland over the past 30 years. Shown are postmarks and covers of TPO services, marking the last passenger trains from Montrose to Brechin and Stanley Junction to Forfar (1981-82), 150th anniversaries of the Edinburgh, Leith & Newhaven and Dundee & Arbroath Railways, centenary of the famous and scenic West Highland Railway, inauguration of the electric train services from London to Glasgow, and much, much more •

Scottish Rail booklet Price £1. Postage: 30p UK, 50p overseas. From S Brown, 14 Buchan Drive, Perth PH1 1NQ.

Royal Mail news New PMC • Self-adhesive books • Queen Victoria label book



Archers PMC A new philatelic medallion cover commemorating the long-running BBC radio show *The Archers* will be available from the British Philatelic Bureau from 1 January, price £12.95. The cover, which marks the 50th anniversary of the show's first broadcast on the old *Light Programme*, features an idyllic country scene. It bears the 19p, 26p and 64p stamps from the 1999 Farmers' Tale set and a specially produced medal showing an old radio set and part of the Archers theme music on one side and a country scene with signpost for Ambridge on the other. The stamps are cancelled by a special 'Ambridge, BBC Birmingham' handstamp •

Rowland Hill Awards The October and November *Bulletins* included a form for readers to nominate the post office they consider provides the best philatelic service to its customers. From nominations a short-list will be prepared for final judging in the Post Office Excellence section of the Rowland Hill Awards. The criteria are set out on the nomination form.

If you have not yet returned the form, there is still time to do so. All forms will go into a draw, the winner to receive £100 worth of Royal Mail philatelic products •

Nominations Please return completed forms by 7 January to John Whittaker, Stamps and Collectibles, Royal Mail, 2-14 Bunhill Row, London EC1Y 8HQ.

Enquiries about the Awards should be sent to John at the above address, or phone 020 7847 3317.



The back cover of the book gives Customer Service and Postcode helpline phone numbers and postcode web-site address.

Queen Victoria label book A book containing six 1st class self-adhesive definitives (flame colour) and pictorial label featuring a bust of Queen Victoria and the Albert Memorial in London will go on philatelic sale on 29 January 2001, to mark the centenary of the death of Queen Victoria on 22 January 1901. No first day facilities will be available.

In addition to the numerous stamps issued during her long reign, Queen Victoria has featured on stamp centenary and sesquicentenary stamps in 1940 and 1990 and on the 1st class double-head stamp in the Jeffery Matthews prestige book issued last February. She also features at different

times during her reign on the four Victorian Britain stamps issued in 1987 to mark the 150th anniversary of her accession. Prince Albert features on the 22p stamp of this set, his Memorial is shown on the 31p denomination, also on the 12p stamp of the 1990 London Landmarks set •

Retail books	Price	Printer
12 x 1st	£3.24	Questa and Walsall
12 x 2nd	£2.28	Questa
6 x 1st	£1.62	Walsall
6 x 1st (Queen Victoria label)	£1.62	Walsall
6 x 2nd	£1.14	Walsall
Vended books		
10 x 1st	£2.70	Questa
10 x 2nd	£1.90	Questa

New self-adhesive stamp books A new series of retail and vended stamp books will go on sale at the Bureau and philatelic outlets from 29 January. All will contain self-adhesive stamps printed in gravure; the 1st class are flame (orange) colour. The stamps can be peeled directly from the inside book cover, as the first self-adhesive book in 1993.

The retail books will go on sale at post offices and retail outlets as supplies of the books of four and 10 stamps are exhausted. The two vended

books are for issue in a limited number of machines vending books of 10 stamps. The £1 and £2 vended books will continue unchanged. No first day facilities will be available for these new books •

New postbus service Rural communities in Lincolnshire have welcomed their fourth postbus in the county. The Boston to Kirton Marsh service is being financially supported by the county council, the Countryside Agency and Royal Mail which is providing the vehicle and the manpower. There are over 230 postbuses in service across the UK offering a vital transport link in rural areas, collecting mail and passengers en route • *From Courier, Post Office staff newspaper*

Send your name and address on the reverse of a postcard to Back Issues Draw, British Philatelic Bulletin, Royal Mail, 2-14 Bunhill Row, London EC1Y 8HQ.

Bulletin back issues Thanks to Mr C Garside of the Durham Philatelic Society we can offer a near complete run of back issues from January 1983 to August 1991 with a few earlier ones (1970s and early 1980s) and later issues of 1992-94. These will be sent to the sender of the first postcard drawn on 5 January. A second, fairly complete, run of *Bulletins* from July 1984 to February 1989 plus May 1990 and October 1992 will be sent to the sender of the second card drawn •

2001 stamp programme Special issues for next year are given below with dates of issue and place for the alternative First day of Issue postmark. The weather and Buses issues include miniature sheets, denoted 'MS'.

A new country set for Northern Ireland, a prestige book and books with mixed definitives and special stamps are also planned. Details to be announced in due course •

Date	Subject	Alternative postmark	Date	Subject	Alternative postmark
16.01	The Future	Hope, Hope Valley	19.06	Hats	Ascot
13.02	Cats and Dogs	Petts Wood, Orpington	10.07	Pondlife	Oundle
13.03	Weather (+MS)	Fraserburgh	04.09	Puppets	Blackpool
10.04	Submarines	Portsmouth	02.10	Nobel Prizes	Cambridge
15.05	Buses (+MS)	London WC2	06.11	Christmas	Bethlehem Llandeilo

2000 Yearbook and Yearpack The 2000 Yearbook, now on sale, contains information and spaces for all issues up to the last Millennium set, The Future, to be issued on 16 January 2001. The book contains all stamps up to the Spirit & Faith set plus a card to be returned in order to receive the Sound & Vision (5 December) and The Future sets when they are issued. Bureau standing order customers for the Yearbook need not return the card; they will be sent the stamps automatically. As always the book gives interesting background stories to each issue with details of the designers. Price £25.95 standard version or £75 de luxe leather-bound edition. The latter is available only from the Bureau.

The 2000 Yearpack containing all the special stamps of the year will be available from 6 December, price £20.50. Both book and pack contain the Queen Mother miniature sheet •

Christmas posting dates Recommended last posting dates for Christmas mail are: airmail outside Europe 7 December, Europe 14 December, UK 2nd class 18 December and UK 1st class 21 December. For further details contact Royal Mail Customer Services on 08457 740 740 (local call) •

Coming off sale The £10 Britannia stamp will be withdrawn from philatelic sale on 29 December and the Millennium Moment miniature sheet, commemorative document and coin cover on 1 January 2001. All 1999 Millennium issues (Inventors' to Artists' Tale) and the 2000 Above & Beyond and Fire & Light sets will be withdrawn on 1 February; also the 1999 Yearbook and Yearpack. The Stamp Show 2000 prestige books - 1999 Profile on Print and 2000 Special by Design - will be withdrawn on 14 February; the 1998 Definitive Portrait book is now sold out •

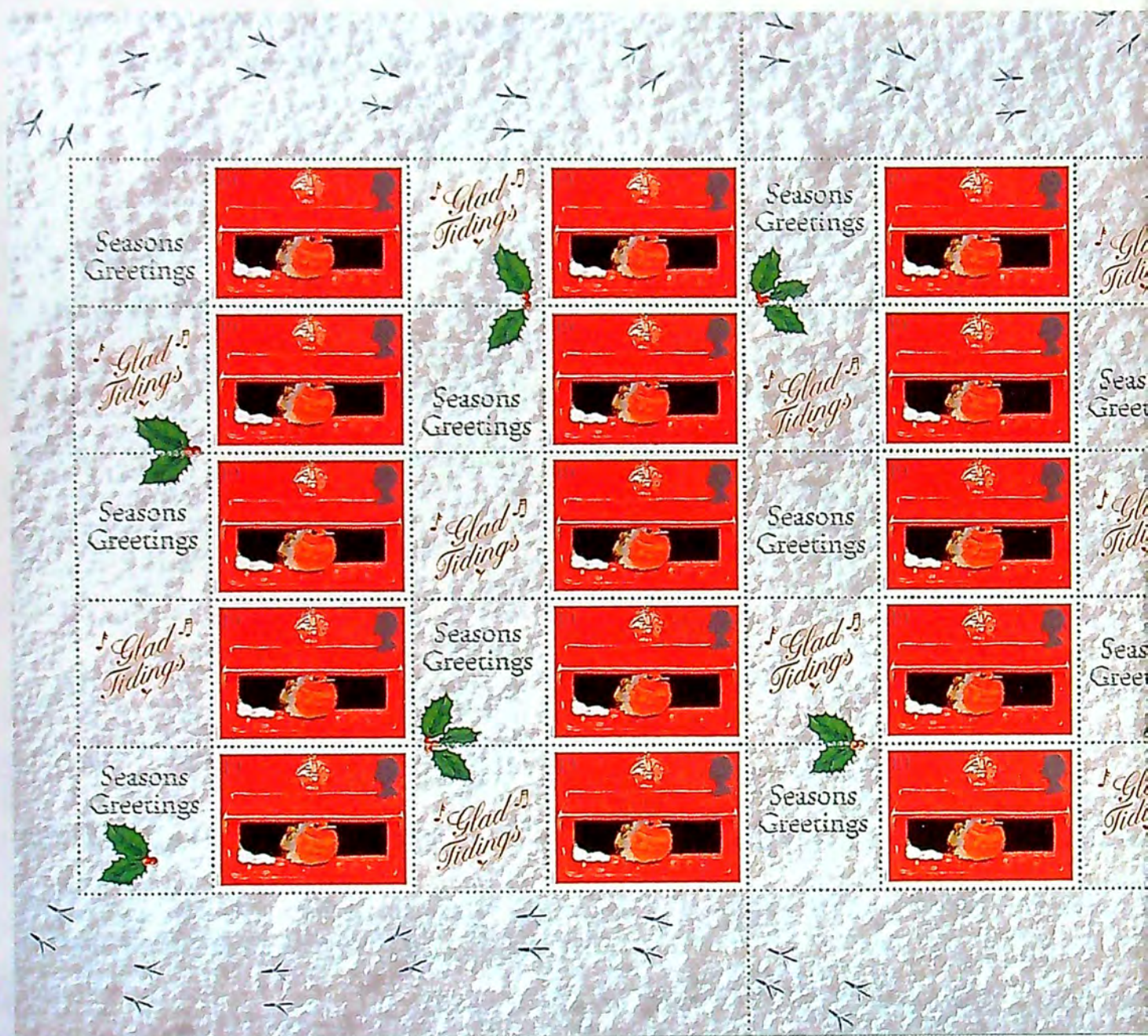
Collect British Stamps The 2001 (52nd) edition of the ever-popular Stanley Gibbons *Collect British Stamps* colour checklist will be published on 1 December, price £7.95. It will be available from the British Philatelic Bureau as well as from Stanley Gibbons Strand shop and Publications centre at Ringwood, and stamp and book shops •

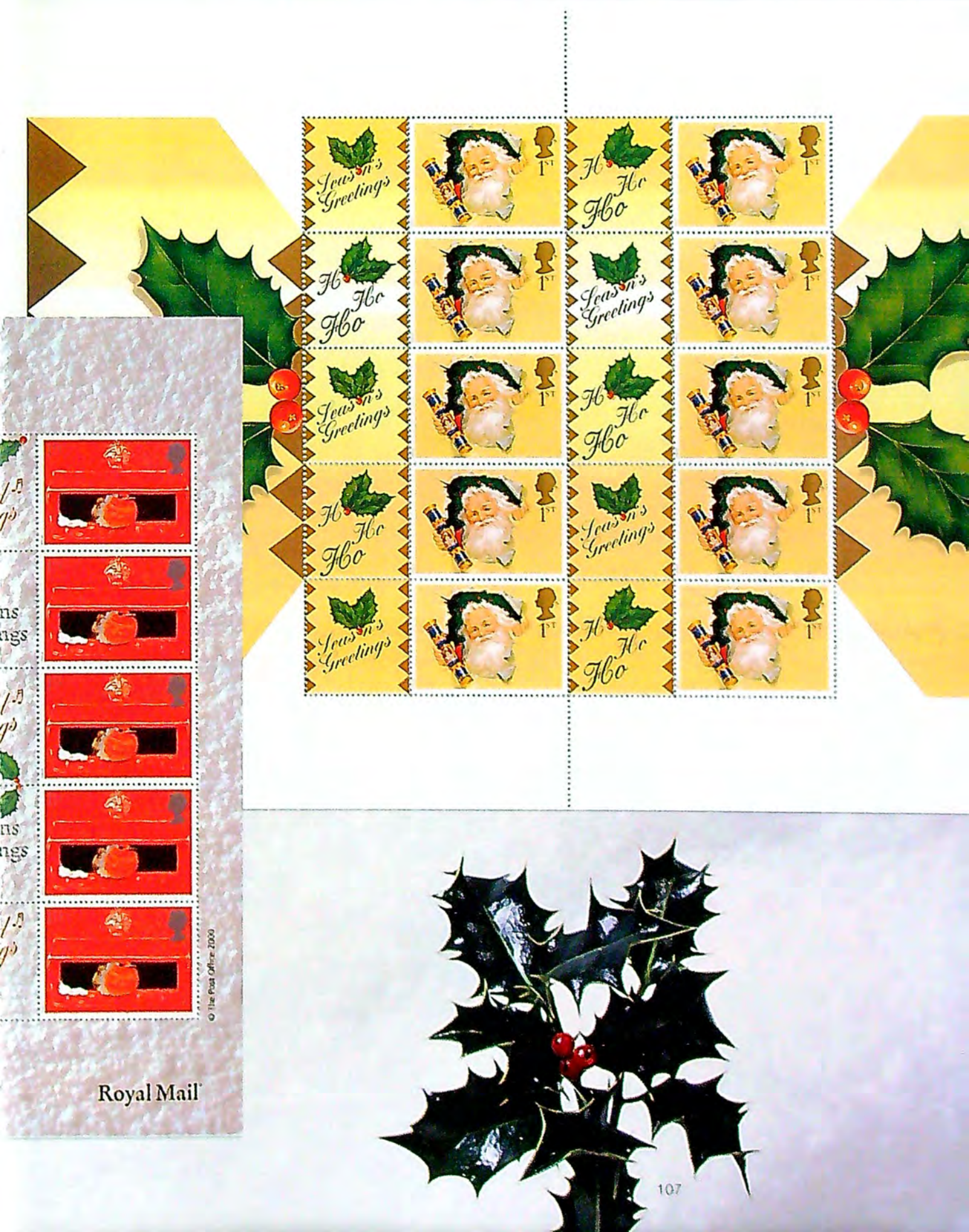
Customised Christmas stamps

Prices Sheet of 20 2nd class stamps £3.99. Sheet of 10 1st class £2.95.

SHOWN HERE are the sheets of customised Christmas stamps now available from the British Philatelic Bureau and about 240 postshops at main post offices throughout the country. The sheets will be available at postshops until 23 December. Specialist collectors will note subtle differences in the gum and phosphor between the stamps from these sheets and the original printings. In addition the printed image of the new printings is slightly narrower, Father Christmas's beard lacks the black outlines, and the robin has a smaller eye.

Sheets with customers' photograph in place of the greetings labels can be ordered by 29 December from the Bureau – phone 0845 074 2000 (UK) or +44 131 316 7489 (from overseas), or see the Royal Mail website: www.royalmail.com •

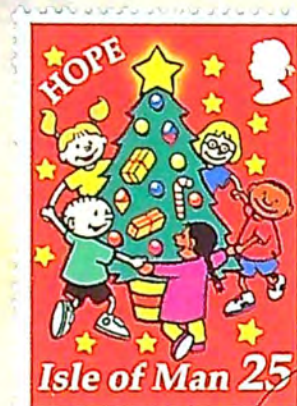
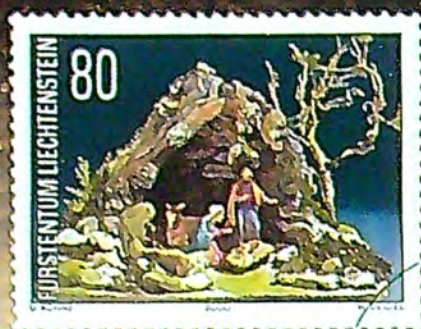




Royal Mail

Christmas stamps Shown here are some of this year's issues from around the world

ROYAL MAIL'S CONTRIBUTION comprises the Spirit and Faith set, in the Millennium series, issued on 7 November. Pages from Dorothy Martin's Christmas stamp collection are shown on the following three pages •



The pantomime story

Featuring a selection from Dorothy Martin's Christmas Collection

BEFORE the 18th century, the nobility enjoyed the masque and burlesque, also the Mummers Plays which were for adults with the traditional figures of Harlequin, Pantaloon and Columbine, but were not specifically a Christmas entertainment or a performance for children. Pantomime was a combination of seriousness, comedy, drama and fairy tale. Speech was also introduced.

In the early days Harlequin and Clown appeared as the main players. Companies toured the European towns, eventually arriving in England. Sheridan put on the Grand Pantomime Robinson Crusoe in 1781, which was a popular panto until the Victorian era. Aladdin originated as a story from Arabian Nights and was first performed as a panto in 1788 on Boxing Day at Covent Garden.

Guiseppe Grimaldi came to the Garrick Theatre in London from the fairgrounds of Italy and France in 1758 with his family. His son Joseph became the greatest Clown ever, and played Clown in hundreds of pantomimes. Mother Goose starring Joseph opened on 29 December 1806 at the Theatre Royal in Covent Garden and marked a turning point in the history of pantomime because it established the Clown as principal character. Clowns are still called Joey after Joseph Grimaldi to this day. The historical story of Dick Whittington was first taken as a pantomime subject on Boxing Day 1814 when it was staged at Covent Garden under the title of Harlequin Whittington with Grimaldi as the Dame.

Another turning point in the history of pantomime took place in 1819 when the role of Jack in Jack and the Beanstalk was played by a girl in the Theatre Royal production. By 1865 it was generally accepted that actresses should take on the role of principal boys.

Enter the Dame During the 19th century pantomime gradually changed beyond all recognition into an entertainment specifically for children with well known characters and familiar stories. Little Red Riding Hood is reputed to be the oldest of pantomime stories. By the mid 19th century the music hall comedians were introduced, and by 1840 male comedians were generally accepted appearing dressed in women's clothing as the Dame. By this time the Panto Animal had also made its appearance on stage.

Sinbad the Sailor, a story from Arabian Nights which was first produced as a pantomime in 1814, The Pied Piper of Hamelin which was immortalised as a poem by Robert Browning, Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves which is thought to have originated from Egypt and first performed as a panto in 1846, Robin Hood which was seen at Covent Garden in 1867, along with Goldilocks and the Three Bears of Russian origin, have not survived the passage of time.

The word 'pantomime' is of Greek origin, from the word *pantomimos* meaning 'imitator of all', and was used to describe a dumb show with dancing and music. It travelled well and was popular in Roman times, being performed throughout the year. After gradually disappearing, pantomime re-emerged during the 15th century in Italy. The comic element can be traced back to the 16th century *Commedia dell'Arte*.



Harlequin dominated the early English pantomime, and was the principal performer in the first pantomime to be held at Lincoln's Inn Field Theatre in 1723. Harlequin the Lover was the leading role, with Clown acting as the trusted servant playing practical jokes. Clown soon became the best-loved character in pantomime.



Little Red Riding Hood was recommended as a story for pantomime as early as 1754, but the first panto version was not written until 1803.

Brothers Grimm By 1846 pantomimes had become Christmas entertainment usually based on popular children's stories. Fable mixed with facts, combined with catchy songs and clowning, children being especially catered for. Jacob and William Grimm spent many years collecting Fairy Tales, and their first English translation was published in 1853. Many of these stories were staged as pantomimes and are still as popular today as they were in days gone by. Sleeping Beauty originates from Hesse and the story has been used since 1812 for pantomime. Cinderella was first seen at Drury Lane in 1864, it was an import from France and the story is centuries old but it remains one of the favourite pantomimes. Hansel and Gretel originated in Germany and is better known as an opera, but has been staged many times as a panto. The story of Puss in Boots, of Italian origin, is popular worldwide. It was immortalised by the French writer Charles Perrault and translated into English by the Grimm brothers.

There are many versions of Babes in the Wood which is based on a true story of what happened to two infant children whose wealthy widowed father, on his deathbed, left them everything and placed them in the care of their uncle. Determined to get the money, the uncle ordered two ruffians to take the children into Waylands Wood in Norfolk and kill them. One of the ruffians took pity on the children, killed his partner in crime and left the youngsters to fend for themselves. They died of hunger and robins buried them with leaves.

Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm were born in Germany in 1785 & 1786 respectively. The German brothers spent years collecting Fairy Tales. The first English translation was published in 1853. Many have been staged as Pantomimes: Puss in Boots; Cinderella; Red Riding Hood; and Hansel & Gretel.



Puss in Boots produced in 1832 has 175 known variants. Cinderella is the most popular of all pantomimes, was first seen at Drury Lane in 1864. It is an import from France and is centuries old. Red Riding Hood has 150 known variants.



Hansel and Gretel originated from Germany. Though better known as an opera, is not so well known as a pantomime but has been staged many times.

Pantomime Cat
in a galaxy of
stars.

Special pictorial
cancellation
used at
Bethlehem
Llandello
dyed.



Family entertainment During the 1880s spectacular ballets were introduced into pantomimes. Performances at provincial theatres became very popular through their outstanding productions and pantomime trip trains were run from London to Leeds, Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham and many other places. In Victorian times, pantomime was recognised as a family entertainment and quite an exciting Christmas ritual when the whole family dressed up and trooped off to the theatre, particularly on Boxing Day when the panto season began. Fantastic masks and elaborate costumes were worn by the players and the scenery was complicated and spectacular.

In a 1908 production of *Dick Whittington*, a cockney music hall comedian introduced the song 'She sells sea-shells on the seashore' and established a fashion for tongue-twisting lyrics. In December 1956 a version of *Aladdin* was produced with Aladdin's mother played by a man and known as Widow Twankey. Four years later in *Cinderella*, Mr Cinders became known as Buttons. These names are still used in present times.

Advertising has appeared in modern pantomimes, for example in the 1920s the *Babes in the Wood* appeared dressed as the 'Bisto Kids'; in 1929 one scene in *Sleeping Beauty* was set in Meccanoland. Our own age will be mirrored in such songs as 'I'm on the Dole' sung by a 1983 Dame; and an Ugly Sister who glanced heavenwards and commanded 'Beam me up Scottie!' Allusions to current events both national and international are included in the present day pantomimes as too are the humble occurrences of everyday life, and the fads and fashions of the day.

The question is: 'Is pantomime dying?' 'Yes it is' or 'No it isn't'. The answer positively is 'No it isn't'. So all the familiar tales will continue to be enjoyed by children worldwide when they visit the theatre every Christmas. The Dames will continue to entertain in their own inimitable style. The Principal Boys delight their audiences in an electric atmosphere of the live theatre where children noisily join in the fun and laughter! •

Mrs Martin, above left, with
two of her album pages



The chosen subject of the last Millennium issue is 'Hopes for the Future', embodied in the next generation – the world's children. The issue is inspired by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, with each of the images connected to a different right of children.

The Future is the last set in the series of 25 issues of Millennium stamps which started with *The Inventors' Tale*, back in January 1999. The 1999 issues concentrated on past achievements, ideas and events whereas the issues during 2000 have taken as their inspiration Millennium projects across the UK. The entire series consists of 100 stamps in all; the Royal Mail Millennium Collection was granted the status of a Millennium Product by the Design Council in December of last year.



Technical details

Printer De La Rue

Process Gravure

Size 37 x 35mm

Sheets 100

Perforation 14 x 14.5

Phosphor One band 2nd class, two bands others

Gum PVA

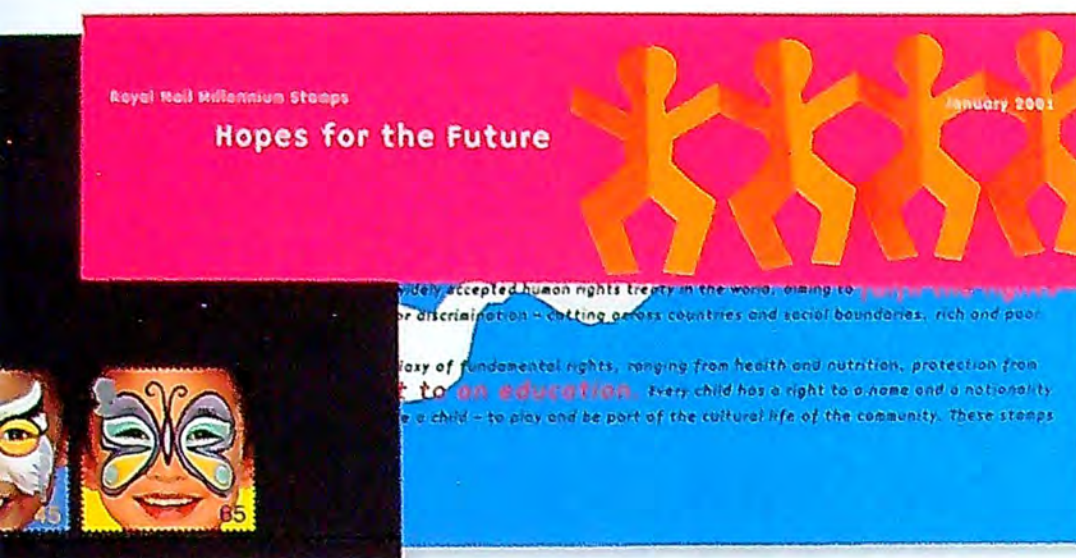
Gutter pairs Horizontal

For the design of the stamps, a broad base of creative talent was invited to submit ideas in response to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The short-list included photographers, illustrators, fashion designers, artists and graphic designers. Some 16 responded with initial visual ideas and more than 100 amazingly diverse images were presented to the Stamp Advisory Committee.

The SAC narrowed the field down to five images – all by graphic designers – which were further developed. One of the most direct solutions was by London-based design practice Why Not Associates: a close-up of a child's face with text overlaid that suggested children's rights. The simplicity of the idea swayed the Committee and Why Not Associates were asked to develop an entire set of photographic close-ups of children. Each of the faces was to be painted to render a disguise, as living people other than Royalty should not be featured on stamps, as well as to inject fun into the set. Each painted creature or object has a subliminal connection to a different right of the child.

The children's faces are painted as a flower on the 2nd class (19p), a tiger on the 1st class (27p), an owl on the 45p, and as a butterfly on the 65p. The two top rates cover the basic and 1st weight step rates for international air-mail letters. The children who feature on the stamps are four and five years old; the photographs were taken at several sessions at a London studio by Welsh photographer Sandro Sodano in August 2000. Care was taken to match the features, complexions and eye colours to the painted subject. The stamps are captioned 'Millennium/2001' followed by letters spelling HOPE (over the four values) and 'Nature children' (2nd), 'Listen to children' (1st), 'Teach children' (45p) and 'Ensure children's freedom' (65p). The captions and The Queen's silhouette are printed in silver ink.





A well-illustrated presentation pack (above, price £1.95) and stamp cards (price 25p each) will be available at main post offices and philatelic outlets.

ROYAL MAIL MILLENNIUM FIRST DAY COVER



Hopes for the Future



Mrs J Robinson
200 Manorbier Road
Ilkeston
Derbyshire
DE7 4AB



Royal Mail 21 South Gyle Crescent Edinburgh EH12 9PB

Cylinders and colours

2nd 1A bright violet • 1B greenish yellow • 1C cerise • 1D new blue • 1E rosine • 1F grey-black • 1G silver

1st 1A lemon • 1B greenish yellow • 1C cerise • 1D new blue • 1E emerald • 1F grey-black • 1G silver

45p 1A orange-yellow • 1B greenish yellow • 1C cerise • 1D new blue • 1E pale violet-blue • 1F grey-black • 1G silver

65p 1A bright violet • 1B greenish yellow • 1C cerise • 1D new blue • 1E lemon • 1F grey-black • 1G silver

Phosphor cylinder P98 2nd class, P99 others

FIRST DAY FACILITIES Unstamped Royal Mail FDC envelopes will be available from main post offices and philatelic outlets about a week before 16 January, price 25p. Orders for FDCs with the stamps cancelled by a pictorial first day postmark of the Bureau or Hope, Hope Valley must reach the Bureau by the day of issue. Price £2.25 UK (including VAT) or £1.92 overseas (no VAT).

Collectors may send stamped covers on the day of issue to: British Philatelic Bureau, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB, or Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, Fore Street, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 1AA (Hope postmark), marking the outer envelope 'FDO101' (Bureau), or 'FDO102' (Hope). Covers can be posted or handed in at main post offices for the Hope postmark. A non-pictorial Hope postmark is also available from the Special Handstamp Centre, request 'FDO102 NP'.

Details of sponsored handstamps for 16 January will be announced in the *British Postmark Bulletin* – available on subscription from the Bureau (£10 UK/Europe; £21.75 elsewhere). For a free sample copy write to: The Editor, British Postmark Bulletin, Royal Mail, 2-14 Bunhill Row, London EC1Y 8HQ •

Children p113, Getty One Stone

Post Office Heritage Collections The 1966

David Gentleman design album

IN THE MID-1960s David Gentleman was asked by the new Postmaster General, Anthony Wedgwood Benn, to produce ideas for a range of stamps quite different from those seen hitherto. Gentleman created an album of essays and designs based on themes all of which were to prove extremely influential. Perhaps the best-known, even notorious, aspect was the proposal to remove The Queen's head and replace it with a Royal Cypher.

At the same time he submitted designs for the 1966 Landscapes issue, larger in format than before, which were not accepted. For this Album, however, he arranged for Harrisons to essay these designs both with a small version of the new cameo head (adapted by Gentleman from the Mary Gillick coinage head and first used on the issued Landscapes stamps) and also with the Royal Cypher.

One of the designs featured a 'Hebridean Coast', shown here essayed with the Royal Cypher. This intriguing item was part of the Post Office Heritage display at the Glasgow 2000 exhibition last month. *Douglas Muir, Curator Philately, Post Office Heritage* •

The Post Office Heritage Collections can be seen by appointment: Freeling House, Phoenix Place, London WC1X 0DL. Telephone enquiries 020 7239 2570.



BY APPOINTMENT
TO HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN
PRINTERS

HARRISON AND SONS LIMITED

7, Cavendish Square, London, W.1.

PHOTOGRAVURE STAMP SPECIALISTS



2000 Favourite stamps poll

FOR THE 15TH YEAR running we are inviting you to vote for your favourite stamps. shown below are the special stamps of 2000. Tell us your top three sets and favourite individual stamp (numbered 1-54) on the enclosed voting form. Remember to return your form by 19 January for entry in our £500 prize draw •

The stamps in each set are numbered from left to right

Above and Beyond

1 2 3 4



Fire and Light

5 6 7 8



Water and Coast

9 10 11 12



Life and Earth

13 14 15 16



Art and Craft

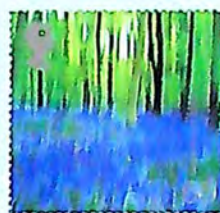
17 18 19 20



People and Place

21 22 23 24



**Stone and Soil**

25 26 27 28

**Tree and Leaf**

29 30 31 32

**Mind and Matter**

33 34 35 36

**Body and Bone**

37 38 39 40

**Spirit and Faith**

41 42 43 44

**Sound and Vision**

45 46 47 48

**Queen Mother**

49 50 51 52

Decimal stamp books 54 Specialist report by D G A Myall

Royal Mail
Wishes You a
Very Merry
Christmas
and a Happy
New Year

The last Christmas
posting date for
first class mail is
21 December

B1A
B1B
B1C
B1D
B1E
B1F
B1G



Cylinder pane of the 1st class Christmas stamp book, above, and cover of the 2nd class book, right.

SINCE MY LAST ARTICLE was published in the October *Bulletin*, there has been a welcome break in the number of new books issued. This time, there are only the two Christmas books to deal with.

These comprise the usual book of 10 1st class stamps and 20 2nd class ones. The stamps, which were printed by De La Rue Security Print, are pictorial non value indicators (NVIS). The concept of NVIS was introduced to definitive postage stamps in 1989 and extended to some special issues from 1992. The first Christmas pictorial NVIS appeared in the 1996 books. They featured the Annunciation and the Star in the East. The 1997 stamps were also NVIS. The 1998 and 1999 issues were value stamps. So it seems that there is no discernible policy governing whether Christmas stamps should be NVIS or value stamps. Christmas stamps are usually on sale for a limited period so that there would not normally be any reason to make them NVIS, unless a rate change were in the offing and there is no sign of that.

This year's stamps are taken from the Millennium series and are very colourful, like miniature Christmas cards. The 1st class stamp features Church floodlighting (Millennium 2000/42) while the 2nd class one shows a stained glass window from St Edmundsbury Cathedral (2000/41). Cylinder numbers seen for the 1st class stamps are: B21 (phosphor) above B1A (gold), B1B (greenish yellow), B1C (cerise), B1D (new blue), B1E (bright blue), B1F (black) and B1G (grey-black). Because the panes contain only 10 stamps, half the width of the printing cylinders, these numbers exist both with and without stops. The phosphor cylinder printed two vignetted bands on each stamp which taper off at the sides. The cylinders used for the 2nd class stamps were: B20 (phosphor) above B2A (gold), B1B (greenish yellow), B1C (cerise), B1D (new blue) and B1E (grey-black). The phosphor cylinder printed a 4.5mm band positioned more or less centrally on each stamp. Because the panes contain 20 stamps, the whole width of the cylinders, only 'no stop' numbers exist.



DE LA RUE



Top, a barcode on the back cover of the 2nd class book, with a bundle label. Barcodes on the labels are black whereas those on the books are blue.

Left, author Douglas Myall.



The books are packed in bundles of 25 with 24 facing one way and one book facing the other. These bundles are shrink wrapped in clear plastic and have a special barcode label stuck onto them. These barcode numbers are, naturally, different from those which are printed on the back covers of the books, to distinguish the bundles from single books for placing orders and recording sales. For example, the 2nd class books carry the number 110479 (I quote only the part of the number which changes with each Royal Mail product), while that on the bundle label is 110493.

Self-adhesives Next year will see a major change to the content of retail books. All such books containing NVIs will contain self-adhesives. Apart from books sold through special vending machines such as those at the Trafalgar Square office in London, they will contain either six or 12 stamps. The special machine books will contain only 10 stamps. Books sold through the normal vending machines and costing £1 and £2 each will not be affected. I will report more fully next time •

Focus on revenues Richard West writes from the Philatelic Congress of Great Britain

THE PHILATELIC CONGRESS of Great Britain meets each year. The 82nd meeting this year was held in London. As is obvious Congress has a long, proud history, at one time a separate organisation until its amalgamation with the British Philatelic Association to form the British Philatelic Federation. Following the demise of the Federation, and the birth of the Association of British Philatelic Societies (ABPS), Congress has been held under the auspices of the Association.

At one time Congress could well be described as the Parliament of Philately, with papers, often controversial, being presented and voted upon. In all honesty, what influence the decisions made had on the hobby is hard to tell. Today the emphasis is more on presenting fascinating talks, often nevertheless with a clear message, and providing an enjoyable social break.

One highlight remains, however: since the 8th Congress in 1921 it has been the occasion at which the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists is signed. Each year three to five international collectors are invited to sign the Roll in recognition of their research and learning, and all-round achievements within the hobby. Congress is also the occasion at which the Congress Medal is presented: instigated in 1959, one medal is presented each year for outstanding service to British philately.

This year, Congress was hosted by The Revenue Society of GB, and was admirably chaired by Francesca Rapkin. Pride of place must go to Heather Johnson, Mayor of Camden who, despite obvious physical pain, performed the opening ceremony, attended the signing of the Roll and hosted a Mayor's Reception.

The Congress events were held at the new British Library, the Shaw Park Plaza Hotel, and Camden Town Hall. A recent feature of Congress has been the Kay Goodman Lecture, instigated in 1989 in memory of Kay who gave so much to the hobby.



Far left, Keeper of the Royal Collection Charles Goodwyn, and Franceska Rapkin, who chaired this year's Congress.

Left, two from Great Britain who received awards: Brian Asquith (on the left) received the Congress Medal, and Prof John West signed the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists.

A thought-provoking lecture This year's lecture was given by David Springbett who demonstrated how as much enjoyment can be had from the study of revenues as from the traditional study of postage stamps. He also pointed out, several times, how high denomination stamps are priced far more modestly when used for revenue purposes compared with postal usage. He questioned how catalogues could indeed quote used values for many stamps which would only have enjoyed revenue usage. Several members of The Revenue Society provided displays, including material shown by gracious permission of HM The Queen.

Congress is not all philately: tours were provided of the British Library, and of the nearby Midland Grand Hotel (frequently incorrectly referred to as St Pancras Station). This derelict hotel, while looking stunning from the outside, is still in need of much refurbishment inside. But hopefully, this will be achieved, creating a new hotel, and superb private accommodation.

Saturday opened with presentations given by two of the new signatories to the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists. Michael Madesker from Canada spoke of the work of encouraging younger collectors, while Egil Thomassen of Norway demonstrated the scope possible when collecting airmails.

The work and future of the Fédération Internationale de Philatélie (FIP) was explained by F Burton (Bud) Sellers, who spoke of how competitive philately is changing to meet the needs of today's collector with the advent of the Open Class, Social Philately and one-frame exhibits. He foresaw that the future would see fewer international exhibitions, and these would be shorter, and include fewer competitive classes.

Nations Cup He introduced the forthcoming Nations Cup (which will be featured at Spring Stampex in 2001) at which exhibitors, rather than representing themselves, compete on behalf of their country, mirroring the spirit of the Olympic Games. He also spoke of the closer links between FIP and the UPU in an endeavour to have more control over illegal stamp issues.

Saturday afternoon provided a rare insight into the work of The Stamp Office, given by its Director, Mrs Linda Martin. Late afternoon, in Camden Town Hall, it was the occasion of the signing of the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists. In addition to Michael Madesker and Egil Thomassen, this year the Roll was signed by Sven Gunnar Dahlvig of Sweden, Ladislav Dvoracek of the Czech Republic and Professor John West of Great Britain. The occasion also included the presentation of the Congress Medal, which this year was awarded to Brian Asquith. As has become traditional, after the signing ceremony came the Mayor's Reception and the Congress Banquet.

Sunday morning saw Congress draw to a close, with a review of the work of the National Youth Stamp Group by Richard West, the plans for Glasgow 2000 (held in November) by David Watson, and regrettably little time for some 'entertainment' from John West. But at least John was able to recount one or two of his stories, such as encountering 'a man of few words, but he gave me the benefit of two of them'.

Congress closed with a visit to the Philatelic Collections at the British Library. David Beech, Curator of the Philatelic Collections, provided a sobering thought: the cost of the British Library was about half that of the Millennium Dome •

Philately on-line Returning to album pages, by Ron Negus



www.stampalbums.com A CD-ROM disk containing the album pages available from this site can be obtained from William E Steiner, 5254 Faye Court, Carmel, IN 46226, USA. On the site itself, a full listing is given of the individual country pages with the dates covered where they have not yet been completed for all issues.

MANY collectors restrict themselves to the basic issues of a particular country and have no desire to extend into very specialised areas. The availability of printed album pages is a great help to these people, with provision of outlined spaces and details of all major catalogued issues. There are a number of commercial sources which satisfy the demand for them. The ability to print the pages yourself, if you have a computer, is also appealing and I mentioned the existence of a website for this purpose in my booklet, *New Technology for Stamp Collectors*, which was issued with the April 2000 *Bulletin*. The site is run by Bill Steiner, a former systems programmer with the US Department of Defence, who claims that he now has more than 20,000 pages completed covering the whole world.

I have recently re-visited this site (address above) and there have been some minor changes to it. Previously, Bill had offered any pages freely from his list with a request for a voluntary annual donation of \$5 if you found the site useful. Since payment of this relied upon collectors' honesty, Bill has felt the need now to make the project a little more businesslike. From January 2001 it will be necessary to enrol on the site as a member and pay \$10. This will allow access for a year and will include the issue of a password for use in future visits during that time.

For collectors who do not want to download the pages directly from the internet, Bill can pro-

vide the same information on a CD-ROM disk at a cost of \$20. He points out that the CD-ROM version is only updated once per month. One advantage that the CD-ROM offers, however, is that it contains the album pages in the original format as they were constructed using the well-known publishing program called PageMaker. This means modifications can be performed by anyone who has access to this particular software package. The website contains information about PageMaker to help those collectors who want to design their own pages.

Another recent innovation has been the provision of the finished printed pages via a network of licensees. Bill says he has found this service welcomed by those website users who do not own a quality printer, who have trouble finding suitable paper or who simply do not want the hassle of printing out the pages themselves. He finds this additional facility has also been helpful for those collectors who like his pages but have not yet taken the plunge and embraced the Internet. Only one licensee will be appointed in each country, and one of the sections of the site gives details of the current license holders.

The site is well constructed and easy to navigate. It also contains a useful 'Frequently Asked Questions'.

Mr. Negus's booklet New Technology for Stamp Collectors is available from the British Philatelic Bureau, price £2.95.

Varieties galore A remarkable collection is to be auctioned



Neill Granger of Spink's Stamp Department, above left, examines one of the items to be offered in the Peak collection. The Spink building in Southampton Row, London WC1, above right, was formerly a post office.



Proofs of Machin stamps (left to right): imperf block of four of 12p emerald; 1/2p in green and unvalued in lilac; and rare plate block of 1970 £1, plate 2. For a sale catalogue, telephone 020 7563 4000, asking for the Stamp Department.

THERE ARE THOSE who dismiss modern stamps as not worthy of attention. Yet, as those who have studied the Great Britain definitive of the present reign can testify, there is far more to research than most can cope with.

For some the Wildings have their fascination, not so much as a result of the errors to be found, but thanks to the changes of watermark, and the introduction of phosphor, plus the appeal of the stamp booklets.

The Machins, of course, are a very different kettle of fish. In the 30 plus years the design has been in use, the complexities of the issue are such that someone starting today would probably concentrate on just one aspect of this issue.

The special issues are also of considerable interest, as the use of more colours initially brought about a wealth of missing colour errors, now far less often encountered as printing techniques have improved.

A labour of love But what would one think of a collector who managed to keep abreast of all aspects of the present reign – Wildings, Machins and Specials – with the vast majority of the varieties, not in singles but usually in blocks, often cylinder blocks?

On 6 December the auctioneer Spink will offer a collection formed over 20 years by an avid collector who has sadly now died. This was an enthusiastic collector, not only of stamps, the material being gathered for the pleasure it brought, not for display or exhibiting. Nevertheless, much was carefully written up, and occupied some 32 volumes. The 'Peak' Collection is truly remarkable.

It is impossible here to record all the magnificent pieces the collection contains. But it is possible to mention a few highlights. For example, the Wilding section has each of the low values (up to 1s 6d) overprinted 'CANCELLED'. There are dry prints, double perforations on the 1/2d and a paper join on the 2d. The booklet section includes a complete set of 13 dummy 2s 6d booklets. There are part-perforated booklet panes for all values. Plus a 2 1/2d mis-cut booklet pane.

In the Machin section, there are virtually all the known cylinder combinations in blocks, including scarce ink and phosphor cylinders, and examples of displaced phosphor cylinder numbers. Indeed, most of the known varieties are included, and in the majority of cases presented as cylinder blocks. There are uncoated papers, paper folds, perforation shifts, imperforates and missing phosphors. There is also some proof material.

at Spink, writes Richard West



£100

2

Of pre-decimal Machins there is the 8d carmine with missing phosphor, the 3d and 4d sepia in imperforate pairs, and the 5d from cylinder 15, plus the same value with phosphor coating plus two phosphor bands. The decimal Machins include the 1/2p in an inter-sheet gutter pair, and the 3 1/2p in deep olive-brown in a corner block of four.

Mis-cut errors Booklet and booklet panes are again included, with examples of the 50p booklet with error of contents as a result of mis-cut panes (one booklet containing eight 3p stamps, and the other containing two 1/2p and eight 2 1/2p). A very unusual £3 Wedgwood booklet has the pane of six 2p stamps upside down (and mis-cut for good measure). Particularly spectacular is a mis-cut 1p/1 1/2p se-tenant pane from a 10p booklet showing a tête-bêche arrangement.

High values include the original Castles designs with the famous offset on the 2s6d, and the 5s printed on the gummed side. The Machin high values have the 20p from plate 31, and the very scarce £1 from plate 2.

The collection also features special issues, including a missing colour of which I have not been previously aware. It is the 2d from the 1961 CEPT set with orange omitted. Other eye-catching items

are the Birds se-tenant block of four with four colours omitted, and the EFTA 9d also with four colours omitted (and another example with three colours missing). There is a block of the 1s6d Concorde stamp on which several stamps have just the Queen's portrait printed, the rest of the design being omitted. Equally there is the Cottages 9d and the Declaration of Arbroath 5d, both with the Queen's portrait omitted. There is a large block of the 5d Cathedrals imperforate, and a fascinating block, also of the 5d Cathedrals, where the reel of paper has split before printing, been repaired using blue tape, with the stamp designs and phosphor bands printed over the tape.

More recent is the 1979 Rowland Hill miniature sheet with colours, including The Queen's head, missing. Also there is the superb 1990 miniature sheet on which the 20p 'double head definitive' is imperforate, and a second sheet on which all the engraved design (Seahorse and Penny Black) is inverted.

This can only be a small sample of what the collection contains. If you are seeking a modern variety, or a particular cylinder has been elusive, it might well be on offer at this Spink sale •

Richard West is Editor-at-Large, Stamp Magazine.

Postbag Letters to the Editor

Trees Prestige Book I have now examined the Millennium retail and Treasury of Trees prestige books issued on 5 and 18 September respectively. Some of the differences between the stamps in these books and previous sheet or book printings were noted in the August *Bulletin*. I also note the following.

In the 5 September book there are good shade differences between the Sunflower stamp in the book and sheets, most noticeably in the background blue (duller on sheet stamp) and the central green part of the flower (much deeper green in book). The colours are well-matched between the two Horses stamps. The book stamps have 'white' as opposed to the tinted gum of the sheet printings.

On to the prestige book. I can detect no appreciable shade difference between the book and sheet 65p Groundwork's Changing Places stamps, but the phosphor application is very different – solid on the sheet stamp and gradated on the book version. The 2nd class Tree stamp from the book is darker in shade and again there is a significant phosphor difference – band right of centre as opposed to centre. The 45p Seed Bank sheet stamp is brighter (more orange) than the book stamp which looks flat and dull in comparison. On both the phosphor is not easy to see. The 65p Forest of Scotland stamp from sheets has a more greyish appearance, lacking the warmer hues of the book printing – look especially at the trees to the left of the silver caption and the mountain-sides beyond the loch. The phosphor is more solid on the sheet stamp. All the book stamps have 'white' as opposed to tinted gum.

Finally, the pane of Millennium and Welsh stamps. The chief difference is the Welsh stamp has band at right in the book, where it is at the centre on sheets. There is no noteworthy difference in shade or gum colour to the sheet stamp. The Millennium 1st class stamp is a good colour match to other Walsall printings. Both these stamps are perf 14, a new gauge for the Welsh stamp. These new books certainly keep us collectors on our toes! **KEN MARKS, PORTSMOUTH** ●

Stamp design I am relieved the Millennium series is nearly over. I like a few of the stamps such as David Hockney's Mill and the Owl in the Above & Beyond set, but in general they are a bit of a mish-mash. The 1999 stamps are often based on images not really prepared for reproduction on stamps and this year's photographic approach has only worked on occasion. One cannot simply take a photo, slap on the Queen's head and value and hope it is a good stamp. This 'scissors and paste' approach was tried, with varying success, in the 1960s and 1970s. I was recently re-reading the debate over the merits of the 1974 Christmas stamps published in the letters columns of the *Bulletin* at the time. Gerald Davis, writing in the May 1975 issue, hit the nail on the head: 'leave out scissors and paste and have all essays drawn stamp size'. Stamps need to be designed as stamps, hopefully with a dash of flair as well as a measure of dignity. **M S FORD, WINCHESTER** ●

Where are the special stamps? Back in June 1998 you published a most interesting letter by George Howell in which he analysed the type of pre-payment of postage on his mail. He found that only 45% carried an adhesive stamp, and just 13% special stamps. I haven't the patience to emulate his task but have noted the number of special stamps used on my mail so far this year, to 30 September. Of a total of 578 items of mail posted in the UK, only 30 (approx 5%) bore special stamps: 1999 Christians' Tale 11; 2000 Above & Beyond 3, Fire & Light 1, Water & Coast 4, Art & Craft 2, People & Place 2, Stone & Soil 1, and Mind & Matter 2. I received no letters bearing Life & Earth, Tree & Leaf or Queen Mother stamps. Four letters bore older specials. This makes me ask: who uses the special stamps, and what happens to them all? Several people at work, knowing I am a collector, asked me if there was a stamp commemorating the Queen Mother's birthday. I told them about the miniature sheet showing The Queen Mother with other members of her family. None had seen it or stamps from it. **P J JACKSON, PLYMOUTH** ●

Use commemorative stamps Some time ago I read a comment to the effect that the writer considered there were now too many commemorative issues in a year. It's certain that the number of commemorative stamps issued in Britain seems to be increasing each year, that some of the events seem perhaps unworthy of commemoration, and to some the stamps unworthy even of issue. However, I should like readers to perhaps consider a non-philatelic aspect of commemorative stamps: the pleasure factor. It is far more pleasurable to receive a letter with a commemorative stamp than one with a common definitive; somehow one has the feeling that there's going to be something rather special inside. Here in France commemorative stamps seem to be the exclusive domain of collectors; indeed they are known as *timbres de collection*. I try to use these stamps instead of the standard boring Marianne issue, but my nearest post office at one point refused to sell me 40 commemorative stamps in one go, commenting that

such a quantity was obviously not for the purpose of collecting! I've since found another post office that's only too happy to sell me *timbres de collection*, in any quantity I want, and even to order them if they don't have what I require. That's service, from a sub-post office that understands that stamps are something more than just a piece of gummed paper. If we all made an effort to use commemorative stamps, it would benefit our correspondents, the post office staff who collect, sort and deliver our post, the recipients, and those charitable organisations that collect used stamps. MRS JACQUE HULLAH, AMPONVILLE, FRANCE •

Theatrical greats Can I put in a plea for a set of stamps honouring our great knights of theatre – Laurence Olivier, John Gielgud, Ralph Richardson, and Alec Guinness. I think they are rather more deserving of a set of stamps than the rather frivolous subject of hats. DOROTHY HARRIS, WORTHING •

Posting boxes 200

WE BEGIN THIS MONTH north of the border, with a box of the present reign with the Scottish crown below the posting aperture. This box at a petrol station exit in Craighleith Road, Edinburgh was submitted by Mr L I Fletcher of that city, who thought we might appreciate the humour of the NO ENTRY sign alongside the box. Our second photograph is a Victorian box set in the wall of the Rectory at Gawsworth, Cheshire. As can be seen on the photo, sent in by Mr R Blades of Leeds, the box is entirely surrounded by ivy.

Our third photograph, by David Cole of London, is an Edward VII box photographed in Penrith. Other Edward VII boxes featured here in May 1980, February 1986, and June 1998. Finally, from R J Barnett of Chelmsford, we have a Victorian wall box situated on a green outside the White Hart pub at Margaretting Tye, reputedly the oldest public house in Essex •

For details of the Letter Box Study Group send a SAE or IRC to the Membership Secretary, Mrs V Scott, 38 Leopold Avenue, Handsworth Wood, Birmingham B20 1ES.



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



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

- 1 Who designed the 1973 Inigo Jones stamps?
- 2 Which set of Millennium stamps features King James I/VI?
- 3 Who is the current President of the Royal Philatelic Society London?



September identify The detail is from the 1984 Greenwich Meridian 28p stamp. The winner was C R Haite of Devon.

September knowledge The answers: 1) Sally Stiff; 2) Fire and Light; 3) George V. The winner was M J Kemp of Staffordshire.

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

Send your answer (addressed to either December *Identify* competition or December *Knowledge* competition), name and address on a postcard or back of a sealed envelope to: British Philatelic Bulletin, Royal Mail, 2-14 Bunhill Row, London EC1Y 8HQ. The senders of the first cards drawn in each competition on 19 January will each receive £100. Ten runner-up prizes of presentation packs or FDCs will be awarded in each competition.

The competitions are not open to Royal Mail employees •

Special draws Stamp Show 2000 video and miniature sheet

THERE ARE two special draws this month. Firstly we have 10 copies of the Royal Mail video about Stamp Show 2000 to give away – to the senders of the first 10 cards drawn on 5 January. The video features many of the Show's attractions with comments from leading figures in the philatelic world. Simply write your name and address on the back of a postcard and send it to: Video Draw, British Philatelic Bulletin, Royal Mail, 2-14 Bunhill Row, London EC1Y 8HQ.

Secondly we have a supply of the Her Majesty's stamps miniature sheet containing the £1 stamp in the design of the 1953 Coronation 1s3d and four Millennium definitives. The sheets are affixed to a card and cancelled with the first day postmark. The card measures 162 x 96mm. To obtain one of these sheets, send a suitable size stamped addressed envelope (UK readers) or addressed en-



velope and international reply coupon (overseas readers) to: Coronation Card, address as at left, by 5 January. Please allow up to 2 months for delivery and note that only one card is available per application. The offer is subject to stock so early application is advised •

Late news

New Editor for Stamp! Magazine The November issue of the Royal Mail Collectors Club magazine is the first from new Editor Simon Eddy. Simon, age 27, joined the Stamps & Collectibles unit last January, and has worked on Club activities and the Royal Mail stands at Stamp Show 2000 and Autumn Stampex. He introduces himself to Club readers: his sporting and musical interests will endear him to the young readers of his lively magazine. Given his passion for sport, we were surprised to see that his favourite stamp is the Eden Project stamp in the Tree and Leaf set, and his favourite food 'pizza and Mars bars'!

The November issue previews the Spirit & Faith and Sound & Vision sets (7 November and 5 December), gives details of writing to Santa, and how to make Christmas crackers and Christmas tree decorations that are fit to eat. There are the cartoon adventures of Sammy the Stamp Bug and a competition to win a micro skate scooter. The Club is the only one aimed solely at young collectors up to age 14. New members receive a fun starter pack of stamps, badge, membership card, information on collecting, and *Stamp!* magazine six times a year. A supplement includes members' swaps and pen pal requests, puzzles, and an order form for items from the Club shop •



Simon Eddy The new Editor of *Stamp!*, the magazine of the Royal Mail Collector's Club for young collectors.

Membership is just £5 (or £7 overseas) for two years. For a membership form, contact Collectors Club, Freepost NEA1431, Sunderland SR9 9XN.

Stampex The dates for future exhibitions have been announced: 28 February-4 March and 19-23 September 2001 and 13-17 February and 18-22 September 2002. The Spring 2001 show will include the first FIP Nations Cup and displays by the George VI Collectors Society and Insurance & Banking Society •

The Royal Collection buys Penny Black FDC The Royal Philatelic Collection is to acquire a first day cover bearing 10 copies of the Penny Black used on 6 May 1840, the first date of the use of the world's first adhesive postage stamp. The envelope bearing the stamps is being purchased from Stanley Gibbons Ltd, having been available to the international collector market. The purchase of the envelope, worth £250,000, is to be funded by the sale of surplus duplicate material from George V's collection at public auction. Independent advice is being taken to ensure that the duplicate material being sold to fund this purchase can be disposed of without detriment to the collection. Any surplus will be spent on further enhancing acquisitions.

Commenting on the purchase, the Keeper of the Royal Philatelic Collection Charles Goodwyn said: 'This 6 May 1840 cover is one of the finest and most important covers in British philately, and the Royal Philatelic Collection is very pleased to be able to keep this first day cover in this country. The Collection is continually being improved through various purchases and sales, and this cover will be a superb addition to the Collection. It will be put on public display at the first opportunity, at an exhibition in the UK.' •

Obituary: Alfred Lammer Alfred Lammer, whose photographs were featured on the 1987 Flowers stamps, died in October, aged 90. *Bulletin* readers voted the stamps their favourite set of the year. An Austrian aristocrat, Lammer sought refuge in Britain after Anschluss and subsequently served with the RAF in the Battle of Britain. From the late 1970s he taught photography to graduate students at the Royal College of Art and was made an honorary Fellow of the College •

New PO director The Post Office has appointed Marisa Cassoni as Director of Finance to succeed the late Richard Close. According to press reports, Ms Cassoni will be paid £295,000 a year – more than the Post Office Chief Executive. *The world's gone mad!* ED •

MAKE SOMEONE'S CHRISTMAS WITH THE BOOK OF THE YEAR



These special Royal Mail Yearbooks offer you a really impressive way to enjoy a whole year in stamps for just £25.95 each. Both contain comprehensive data and background on each Special Stamp issue, plus transparent mounts in which to store and display stamps.

Buy both the 1999 and 2000 Yearbooks together for only £49.95, a price specially available to *Bulletin* readers (quote reference 00 ECA).

British Philatelic Bureau, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB
UK telephone order line 08457 641 641, overseas +44 131 316 7483



Review

The information service *for*
collectors and cover producers

DECEMBER 2000

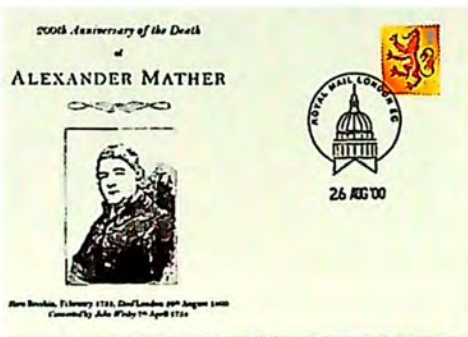
Special announcement to cover producers The number of requests for announcements in this Review has grown rapidly in recent months. Regrettably we must now restrict announcements to one cover per producer per month •

TPO 814 Group Didcot Railway Centre A Mail by Rail weekend was organised by the Group and the Nene Valley Railway, 9-10 September. Four covers were serviced bearing NVR railway letter stamps and the Group's 30p Letter Exchange Fee label. Two feature a drawing of TPO Van 814, with a pair of NVR stamps and Exchange label or one NVR stamp showing a restored TPO coach and Exchange label. Two other covers show the restored TPO coach and bear railway letter stamps and label as above. Price £2.50 per cover or £9 the set of four, postage 50p UK, £1 overseas. The covers all bear Royal Mail 1st class Millennium definitive cancelled by a TPO date-stamp applied by the Nene Valley Railway. The covers were all addressed 'To be called for at Wansford' and carried on the NVR, they did not enter the Royal Mail system •



Orders and enquiries TPO 814 Group, 51 Abingdon Road, Drayton, Abingdon OX14 4HW.

Methodist Philatelic Society serviced a cover on 26 August to mark the bicentenary of the death of Alexander Mather, born in Brechin in 1733 and died in London in 1800. He was converted to Methodism by John Wesley in 1754. The cover, showing a portrait of Mather, bears a 1st class Scottish stamp cancelled with the Royal Mail London EC philatelic datestamp showing St Paul's Cathedral dome and dated 26 August. The insert card gives details of Mather's life. Price £1.50 plus postage, remittances payable to Methodist Philatelic Society •



Orders and enquiries R J MacMillan, Cluny, 11 Cullaloe Court, Dalgety Bay, Dunfermline KY11 5NW.

A G Bradbury serviced covers bearing the customised Christmas stamps which went on sale on 3 October. The cover features a robin and Christmas cracker and bears the 19p robin and 1st class Father Christmas and cracker stamps each with pair of Christmas greetings labels attached. The stamps were cancelled with a special Bethlehem, Llandeilo handstamp showing a robin. Limited edition of 1000. Price £12.50 postpaid •

Orders and enquiries A G Bradbury, 3 Link Road, Leicester LE2 3RA.

Cambridge Stamp Centre The unique air defence system used during the Battle of Britain under the guidance of Air Chief Marshall Dowding was controlled at Bently Priory. It became the home of Fighter Command Headquarters in 1936 and by the summer of 1940 had become the hub of the entire air defence system. To commemorate the headquarters and the Battle of Britain Cambridge Stamp Centre has produced a collection of illustrated covers reproducing a painting by military artist Tony Jackson. Each cover bears a special pictorial postmark for 31 October 2000. Each cover bears two signatures of remaining veterans who flew the skies and defended the people of the UK. Price £15 each plus postage •

Orders and enquiries Cambridge Stamp Centre Ltd, 9 Sussex Street, Cambridge CB1 1PA.

Dawn Cover Productions After 77 years of outstanding football events at Wembley, the last match was played beneath the 'Twin Towers' between England and Germany on 7 October 2000. A special painting was officially produced to commemorate 'The end of an Era', in which a number of outstanding events were captured superbly. This was reproduced on the Official covers and postcards. The covers sold out rapidly but 8 'Specials' (first and last day cover as illustrated) have been reserved to be given away free to readers of *Covers Review*. A small number of postcards have been handstamped with the special postmark and have varying cachets added (some last day cover, some with match result).

These are offered together with a mint postcard at £4 per pair – post free. We regret we have no covers left for purchasing but whether you purchase the postcards or not, you can send your name and address to go into the draw. If you include two 1st class stamps a list of 'winners' will be forwarded together with one of the mint Wembley postcards. The draw will take place on 2 January 2001 •



Orders and enquiries Dawn Cover Productions, 27 Ashfield Road, Davenport, Stockport SK3 8UD.

P M Payne's latest limited edition multiple-dated cover, with the Sydney Olympics in mind, commemorates Jesse Owens, winner of four gold medals at the Berlin Olympic Games of 1936 and who also encouraged Carl Lewis in his training to equal that same feat in 1984. In addition to the Stone and Soil stamps and a specially sponsored handstamp for Owens Way, London SE23, this cover bears the US Summer Sports stamp with First Day of Issue postmark together with the French stamp for Carl Lewis and the Sydney Olympics, both the First Day special handstamps. Price £27.50 postpaid, overseas please add £1. Sterling or Euro cheques only please •



Orders and enquiries P M Payne, 16 Rue Berthollet, 75005 Paris, France.

Bluebell Railway The 1996 25p railway letter stamp showing locomotive *Blackmore Vale* was reissued on 26 August overprinted 'RETURNED TO/PASSENGER SERVICE'. 300 FDCs were serviced bearing the overprinted stamp tied by a special Sheffield Park Station datestamp and Royal Mail Millennium definitive cancelled by special Bluebell Railway East Grinstead sponsored handstamp. The cover design shows the locomotive and the Bluebell Railway crest. Price £2.50, postage 40p or send 9½ x 7in stiffened stamped envelope. Remittances payable to P A Forrestier Smith •



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

Woodford Sports Covers A souvenir cover for the Round Norfolk road running relay 2000 features a map of Norfolk showing each of the 17 stages and a special runner handstamp. The appropriate stamp is the recently issued Norfolk and Norwich 1st class in the Mind and Matter series. Richard Nerurkar who came fifth in the 1996 Olympics marathon started the relay and he has signed some of the covers. Price £5 post-paid, remittances payable to Woodford Sports Covers •

Orders and enquiries Woodford Sports Covers, 43 Jennings Road, St Albans AL1 4NX.

Mid-Suffolk Light Railway Museum held a one-day special event on 17 September which included an exhibition about the railways of Suffolk past and present. 100 covers were serviced for the event and six different carriage labels were prepared depicting the three logos of British Railways, the arms of the GER and LNER railways together with the modern logo of Anglia

Railways. The covers were carried on the East Anglian TPO UP with the Royal Mail Millennium definitive cancelled by the TPO datestamp for 15 September. Price £3; the six labels cost 25p each, postage 50p UK, £1 overseas •

MSLR Celebrates Suffolk Railways 17.09.2000



Orders and enquiries B R Reynolds, 24 Thirlmere Drive, Stowmarket IP14 1SE.

M Tanner Set of two maximum cards (6 x 4) for the Queen Mother's 100th birthday celebrations is available at £7.99 UK, £8.99 overseas. Artist Brian Partridge features portraits of the Queen Mother coupled with London landmarks, chess figures, and teddies. Each of two Queen Mother 27p stamps are cancelled with a different Clarence House/QM pictorial gold/silver handstamp. Visa/Mastercard credit cards accepted with 30p handling charge. Other Royalty covers, including Princess Diana/Elton John/Prince William with 1998 and 2000 postmarks available – enclose two 27p stamps or reply coupons for list and state interests •



Orders and enquiries M Tanner, 180 Whitehorse Road, West Croydon CR0 2LA.

Royal Naval Covers Group The latest thematic official FDC (limited to only 50) from the RNCG commemorates the 100th birthday of HM The Queen Mother. The cover features various age photos and titled '100 Glorious Years' using the miniature sheet and our own sponsored hand-stamp. The covers are handmade and DL sized. Price £15 plus £1 post and packing, overseas £17.50 (post and packing £1.50), remit in sterling. SAE appreciated. Further covers of this type produced for each issue, donations to Naval Charities •



Orders and enquiries Chris Hockaday, RNCG, 37 St Gabriels Avenue, Peverell, Plymouth PL3 4JQ.

Fourpenny Post The Fourpenny Post FDC for the Sound and Vision stamps (5 December) features a colourful lute player design by Mel Harris. Blank (unserviced) covers cost £1, fully serviced with the four stamps and special postmark £5.12. Postage 75p UK, £1.50 worldwide •



Orders and enquiries Fourpenny Post, 30 Dinsdale Avenue, Wallsend NE28 9JD.

Leighton Buzzard Railway A cover was serviced on 5 September using the Railway's Royal Mail 'Steaming into 2000' postmark on the 'Mind and Matter' stamp issue. The cover features the pair of Kerr Stuart 'Wrens' based on the Railway. The same cover was serviced on 3 October with the Body and Bone stamps. Prices £5.95 with four stamps, £4.95 with 45p/65p stamp and £4.45 with 19p/27p stamp, UK postpaid, overseas add £1. Remittances payable to LBR Limited. Send SAE for colour illustrated list of covers •



Orders and enquiries The Treasurer, LBR Limited, 8 Dover Close, Winklebury, Basingstoke RG23 8EG.

Steven Scott Covers were serviced in May to commemorate the 40th anniversary of Britain's longest-running 'soap opera' *Coronation Street*. They feature Bet Lynch (played by Julie Goodyear), the landlady of the Rovers Return inn, and Maxine Peacock (played by Tracy Shaw). The covers bear quotes by the late Russell Harty and Sir John Betjeman, devotees of the programme, the 65p Lowry stamp from the Art and Craft set with special Coronation Street postmark, and are signed by the actresses. Price £9.50 each, postage £1 •

Orders and enquiries Steven Scott, Stamp Centre, 79 Strand, London WC2R 0DE.

Cover collectors For details of the GB First Day Cover Association write to: GB FDC Association, 2 Chaffinch Close, Horsham RH12 5HA •

Cover producers wishing to announce a **recent** or **forthcoming** cover should submit typed copy of up to 100 words. Please follow the style above: the text should give a brief description of the cover, state the stamps and postmarks it will bear and give retail price and address to which collectors should send orders or write for further information. Announcements are published on a first-come-first-served basis, and may be modified or shortened at the Editor's discretion. Copy for consideration for the February 2001 *Review* should be sent to The Editor, *British Philatelic Bulletin*, Royal Mail, 2-14 Bunhill Row, London EC1Y 8HQ by 4 December. Copy for the March issue should arrive by 8 January. The Editor regrets he cannot enter into correspondence or telephone conversations with collectors or cover producers concerning covers announced in this *Review*.