

BRITISH PHILATELIC

The ROYAL MAIL magazine *for stamp collectors*

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Bulletin

BBC on stamps • Christmas stamps • NPM exhibitions



Forthcoming issues and withdrawals



Cover photograph Marking the 150th anniversary of Christmas crackers, Royal Mail's Christmas stamps go on sale on 27 October. Photograph by Geoff Dann. Crackers courtesy of Tom Smith Group.

Late news Robson Lowe, one of the most respected philatelists of the 20th century died on 19 August, aged 92. An appreciation of his philatelic work will be published next month.

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, Trafalgar Square and Victoria Street), Manchester Newcastle upon Tyne, Norwich Nottingham, Oxford, Plymouth Portsmouth, Southampton Southend-on-Sea, Stevenage Stratford-on-Avon, Truro, Windsor and York.

1 October

Issue Horror souvenir book containing stamps of GB, Ireland, Canada and USA; The Golden Wedding Anniversary stamp cards

7 October

Issue The Golden Wedding Anniversary stamps, pack and philatelic numismatic cover; 1997 Christmas aerogramme

21 October

Issue 4 × 1st book with Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting commemorative label (Unfolded panes available only from Bureau)

27 October

Issue 1997 Christmas stamps, pack and stamp books (1st and 2nd class); 1997 Year Pack and Year Book (standard and leather bound editions)

27 October

Withdrawal 1996 Christmas stamps, pack, stamp books and stamp cards; 1996 Year Pack and Year Book

18 November

Issue 26p rust and 1st class NVI flame in sheets printed in gravure using EME cylinders. Printed by Harrison and Walsall respectively

18 November

Issue 10 × 1st NVI stamps flame colour printed in gravure using EME cylinders by Harrison and Walsall

24 November

Withdrawal 1996 Greetings book reprint (issued 25 November 96)

1 December

Withdrawal Definitives printed by Enschedé with blue fluor 1p, 2p, 4p, 5p, 6p, 10p, 30p, 31p, 37p, 39p, 43p, 50p, 63p, £1.00, printed by Harrisons using acid-etched cylinders 20p and 26p. Also £1.50, £2, £3 and £5 Castle high values printed by Harrison.

1 December

Withdrawal Country stamps N Ireland/Scotland/Wales 20p, 26p, 37p and 63p printed by Questa.

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Mrs J Robinson
200 Manorbier Road
Ilkeston
Derbyshire
DE7 4AB

Christmas stamp books

Books containing twenty 2nd class and ten 1st class Christmas stamps will be available from post offices, the Bureau, philatelic outlets and many retailers from 27 October, price £4 and £2.60 respectively.

Christmas books, containing definitive stamps, were introduced in 1978; books with Christmas stamps started in 1984.



Presentation pack and

stamp cards A presentation pack (price £2.20) and stamp cards (25p each) will be available from the Bureau, Post Office Counters philatelic outlets, and main post offices. The pack illustrates many cracker jokes, mottoes and puzzles.



Royal Mail news 1997 Christmas stamps • 1997 Year Book and Year Pack • Two new books • New Postal stationery

1997 Christmas Royal Mail's 32nd issue of Christmas stamps goes on sale at post offices and philatelic outlets on 27 October. The stamps feature Christmas crackers, 1997 marking the 150th anniversary of the introduction of crackers. The stamps depict: 2nd class Moon cracker, 1st class Ripping cracker, 31p Raining crackers, 43p Snowball cracker, and 63p Rooftop cracker. The values cover minimum inland 2nd and 1st class rates, basic weight letters to Europe (EU and non-EU countries), and the first and second weight steps for airmail letters elsewhere.

Crackers owe their origin to the French custom of wrapping sweets in a twist of waxed paper. In the 1840s a British confectioner Tom Smith, adopted the custom and included a small message and a charm with his sweets, set within a coloured card tube. In 1847 sparks from a smouldering log gave Smith the idea for the cracker that became a favourite of Victorian Christmases. His company, Tom Smiths Crackers Limited, is still a major manufacturer.



CHRISTMAS STAMPS Britain's first Christmas stamps, featuring children's paintings, were issued in 1966. To date, including the 1997 set, some 144 Christmas stamps have been issued. To this total can be added phosphor versions of the 1966 issue, and underprints on 13p values (1984, 1986, 1987) and 12p value (1985) from books or packs.

The 1997 stamps are the first depiction of Christmas crackers which is perhaps surprising as they are so much a part of many people's Christmas. The stamps also feature Father Christmas (Santa Claus) who has only previously been on two Christmas stamps – the 11½p and 26p values of the 1981 and 1987 sets.

Father Christmas and crackers also feature on the 1997 Christmas aerogramme which goes on sale at post offices and philatelic outlets on 7 October, price 45p.

The 1995 Christmas stamps, depicting robins, were voted the most popular set of the year by *Bulletin* readers. Last year's set came fourth in the 1996 poll but the 2nd class stamp was the third favourite individual stamp. We look forward to seeing how this year's set fares with readers in the 1997 poll – to be announced here in December.

THE DESIGNER The stamps were designed by John Gorham who also designed the Christmas aerogramme. The illustration of Father Christmas on the 1st class stamp and on the front panel of the aerogramme is by Mark Thomas. Mr Gorham also designed the 1990 Christmas set, using illustrations by Andrew Davidson, and worked on the 1987 Studio Pottery,

Technical details

Printers Harrison & Sons Ltd

Process Gravure

Size 41 × 30mm

Sheets 100

Perforation 15 × 14

Phosphor One band 2nd class, two bands others

Gum PVA





Cylinders and colours

2nd 1A (gold) ● **1B** (greenish yellow) ● **1C** (bright magenta) ● **1D** (new blue) ● **1E** (grey black) ● **P58** (phosphor)

1st 1A (gold) ● **1B** (greenish yellow) ● **1C** (bright magenta) ● **1D** (new blue) ● **1E** (grey black) ● **P59** (phosphor)

31p 1A (gold) ● **1B** (greenish yellow) ● **1C** (bright magenta) ● **1D** (new blue) ● **1E** (bright blue) ● **1F** (grey black) ● **P59** (phosphor)

43p 1A (gold) ● **1B** (greenish yellow) ● **1C** (bright magenta) ● **1D** (new blue) ● **1E** (grey black) ● **P59** (phosphor)

63p 1A (gold) ● **1B** (greenish yellow) ● **1C** (bright magenta) ● **1D** (new blue) ● **1E** (grey black) ● **P59** (phosphor)

Stamp book cylinders

1st class B1A ● **B1B** ● **B3C** ● **B1D** ● **B1E** ● **B15** (phosphor)

2nd class B2A ● **B1B** ● **B4C** ● **B1D** ● **B2E** ● **B14** (phosphor)

1990 RSPCA and Queen Mother, 1992 Wintertime, and 1995 Peace and Freedom (St Paul's and Liberation) issues. Born in 1937, he studied at Harrow College of Art before working as an apprentice in a silk-screen company, and for the *Daily Mirror* and *The Sunday Times*. Since 1968 he has run his own design studio and in the 1970s and 80s taught at the London Royal College of Art. He has received prestigious awards from the European Art Directors Club and the Design & Art Director's Association of Great Britain. His work includes packaging design, posters, book design, film graphics and direct mail as well as postage stamps.

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 27 October, price 25p.

Orders for the Royal Mail cover bearing the stamps, cancelled with a pictorial 'first day of issue' postmark of the Bureau or Bethlehem, price £2.57 (including VAT) to UK addresses, £2.19 overseas (no VAT), must be received at the Bureau by 27 October. Alternatively, collectors may send stamped covers, on the day of issue, to: British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, Edinburgh EH3 5TT, or Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, Penarth Road, Cardiff CF1 1AA (Bethlehem postmark), marking the outer envelopes 'FD9719' (Bureau), or 'FD9720' (Bethlehem).

First Day Posting Boxes will be provided at most main post offices for collectors to post covers to receive local (mostly non-pictorial) 'first day of issue' handstamps. Sponsored special handstamps will be announced in the *British Postmark Bulletin* – available on subscription from the Bureau (£10 UK/Europe; £21.75 rest of world).

Collectors may submit covers bearing just the 2nd class Christmas stamp for all first day, philatelic and sponsored handstamps in use on 27 October, the 1st class rule for special handstamps being waived for the day.

WITHDRAWAL OF CHRISTMAS STAMPS Any remaining stocks of 1997 Christmas stamps, stamp books and aerogramme will be withdrawn from sale at post offices on 24 December. All will remain on sale at the Bureau and philatelic outlets for one year from the date of issue, unless sold out earlier.

The 1996 Christmas stamps (£1.83 set), stamp books (20 × 2nd class, 10 × 1st class), presentation pack (£2.20), stamp cards (£1.25 set) will be withdrawn from sale at the Bureau and philatelic outlets on 27 October 1997 ●

1997 Year Book and Year Pack Volume 14 of the Royal Mail Special Stamps Year Book will go on sale on 27 October. This handsomely produced book contains background information about the development of all the 1997 special issues. The book is hardbound with a matching slipcase and includes sets of the following: The Great Tudor (Henry VIII and His Six Wives), Missions of Faith (St Augustine and Columba), Tales of Terror, Architects of the Air, All The Queen's Horses, Post Offices, Enid Blyton's Famous Five, The Queen's Golden Wedding Anniversary, and Christmas.

The 1997 Year Pack contains all special stamps mounted on a quality display board with an informative brochure in the form of a quiz about the stamp subjects.

The 1996 Year Book (£23.50, leather bound version £75) and Year Pack (£17.50) will be withdrawn from sale at the Bureau and philatelic outlets on 27 October 1997. The leather-bound Year Book is available only from the Bureau •

New Post Office Secretary Richard Adams who took over as Secretary of The Post Office last month steps into a prestigious job that dates back to 1694. Amongst his many predecessors was Sir Rowland Hill (1854-64), and he has in his Old Street office the desk once used by Hill. Mr Adams, age 52, joined the Post Office as a graduate trainee from Exeter University, has been a Head Postmaster, and in 1992 became Group Planning Director. He succeeds Richard Osmond, Secretary since October 1995, who becomes Director of the Confederation of British Industries Education Foundation •

Horror souvenir book A souvenir book, jointly produced by the British, Irish, Canadian, and US Post Offices is now available from the British Philatelic Bureau, price £8.95. It contains Royal Mail's Tales of Terror stamps, also Ireland's Bram Stoker stamps, a Canadian set and five US stamps showing the Phantom of the Opera, Dracula, Frankenstein, the Mummy, and Wolfman. It includes some interesting facts on terror legends and horror films, a poster mask and a board game •

1997 Year Book Price £23.50 from the Bureau, philatelic outlets and main post offices. A leather-bound edition, price £75, is available exclusively to Bureau customers.

1997 Year Pack Available from 27 October, price £15.95, from the Bureau, philatelic outlets and main post offices.





Definitive and stamp books update Readers are reminded that a book of four 1st class NV1 stamps (flame colour) with commemorative label for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting will be available from the Bureau and philatelic outlets from 21 October, price £1.04. Unfolded panes will be available only from the Bureau, price £1.04. Details of the book and label were published here last month.

New printings of the 26p (rust colour) and 1st class NV1 (flame) sheet stamps have been produced in gravure using EME cylinders. The stamps, printed respectively by Harrison and Walsall, will be available from the Bureau and

philatelic outlets from 18 November. They will go on sale at post offices as earlier stocks are used up. They are not regarded as new stamps by Royal Mail and no first day facilities will be offered. This completes the release, since April, of definitives printed in gravure by EME cylinders.

Also available from the Bureau and philatelic outlets from 18 November will be books of ten 1st class stamps (flame) printed by Harrison and Walsall. These will replace the books of gold stamps as they are used up. ●

New philatelic outlet A Postshop Plus outlet, offering the full range of stamps and philatelic products, is now open at 22-23 Westgate, Stevenage SG1 1QR. ●

Scottish aerogrammes 1998 The themes for next year's aerogrammes are Science and Technology in Scotland (to be issued March or April) and Nature of Scotland/Ornithology (June or July). Further details and exact date of issue will be announced here nearer the time. ●

Postal stationery news Last year Royal Mail International trialled four pictorial Airpacks at post offices in London (see January 1997 *Bulletin*, page 134). Similar packs will be available at main post offices nationwide from 13 October 1997. They feature: Christmas Trees and Tartan (both c3 size) and Christmas Snowmen and Tulips (c4 size). c4 size prepaid to 300g, price £3.99; c3 size prepaid to 500g, price £5.99.

New designs of RMT's standard Airpacks (c3 and c4 sizes for both Europe and rest of world) and Swiftpacks (DL, c4 Europe and rest of world and c5 sizes) will go into distribution at main post offices from late October. Please note that Airpacks and Swiftpacks are not available from the British Philatelic Bureau.

No further printings are to be made of the pale blue 1st and 2nd class prepaid envelopes first introduced in June 1983; post offices will sell current stocks to exhaustion. ●



Stamp book quantities Readers may be interested in the numbers issued for recent Christmas books, the 1996 prestige book and two earlier prestige books for which numbers had not been previously announced.

Christmas books

1993 (19p stamps)	4,979,325
1993 (25p stamps)	986,925
1994 (19p stamps)	5,182,650
1994 (25p stamps)	3,896,925
1994 (60p definitive stamps)	368,800
1995 (60p stamps)	381,150

Prestige books

1991 Agatha Christie	309,400
1993 Wales	290,750
1993 European Football	228,650

For numbers of 1995 books with 1st and 2nd class stamps see February 1997 *Bulletin*, page 169.

Golden Wedding commemorative book A handsomely-produced souvenir book containing many photographs of The Queen and Prince Philip during their 50 years of marriage will be available from 7 October, price £9.95. The photographs range from state occasions to informal studies of the Royal couple with their grandchildren. The book includes the 1st class gold definitive (issued 21 April), All The Queen's Horses stamps (8 July) and the Golden Wedding anniversary issue (7 October), also the Horses stamp cards, two stamp cards from the Golden Wedding set (20p and 26p values) and two other postcards featuring 1947 and recent portraits of The Queen and Duke of Edinburgh. It will be available from the Bureau and Post Office Counters philatelic outlets.

Readers are reminded that a Golden Wedding philatelic numismatic cover, jointly produced by Royal Mail and the Royal Mint, is also available from the Bureau, price £15.95. It bears the four stamps cancelled with special 7 October postmark and Royal Mint £5 Golden Wedding coin. These covers are extremely popular and early ordering is advised as the edition is strictly limited •

Bulletin binders and back issues Binders are available for this and the *British Postmark Bulletin*, designed to hold two and one years' issues respectively. The maroon-coloured *Philatelic Bulletin* binder costs £7, the green *Postmark Bulletin* binder £6.50. Order codes PB001 (Philatelic), PB322 (Postmark). Orders should be sent to British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, Edinburgh EH3 5TT.

The *Postmark Bulletin*, published fortnightly, gives information on forthcoming special handstamps and postmark slogans, and includes feature articles by top postmark collectors James Mackay and Colin Peachey. For a free sample copy, write to the Bureau or The Editor *Postmark-Bulletin*, Royal Mail, 22 Finsbury Square, London EC2A 1NL.

Back issues of the *Philatelic Bulletin* are available for one year from the Bureau, price 85p each. For earlier issues contact Mr Maynard Davies who offers bound reprints of vols 1 and 2, photocopies of issues from vols 3-6 and original copies of most issues from vol 7 onwards, also a limited stock of used binders. Mr Davies wishes to purchase issues from vols 3-6 but has adequate stocks of later issues. He regrets he cannot search for or provide copies of specific articles •

Golden wedding cylinders and colours

20p 1A (gold) • 1B (yellow-brown) • 3C (grey-black) • P60 (phosphor)

26p 1A (gold) • 1B (bistre-yellow) • 1C (magenta) • 1D (new blue) • 1E (grey-black) • 1F (greenish grey) • P62 (phosphor)

43p 1A (gold) • 1B (bluish green) • 3C (grey-black) • P61 (phosphor)

63p 1A (gold) • 1B (bistre-yellow) • 1C (magenta) • 1D (new blue) • 1E (grey-black) • 1F (lavender-grey) • P62 (phosphor)

Enid Blyton cylinders and colours

All values 1A (greenish yellow) • 1B (magenta) • 1C (new blue) • 1D (grey-black) • 1E (deep grey-blue)

Maynard Davies enquiries

(with stamped addressed envelope or international reply coupon) to: Casula, 3 Romans Way, Pyrford, Woking GU22 8TP

Stamp scene Philatelic Congress of GB • Stampa '97 • Sussex Autumn Convention • Midpex • British Library • Obituaries



Jane Moubray right, with other lady philatelists at the Stamp '97 exhibition, Wembley April 1997

Enquiries about the Philatelic Congress to: the Secretary, A J Griffiths, 1 Oakwood Road, Bricket Wood, St Albans AL2 3PT. Telephone 01923 673199

Philatelic Congress of Great Britain The 79th Congress, now organised by the Association of British Philatelic Societies, will be held at the De Vere Hotel, Coventry, 9-12 October. The weekend will include an interesting series of papers and philatelic displays culminating in the presentation of the Congress Medal, the signing of the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists and the traditional banquet on the Saturday evening. The first Congress was held in Manchester in 1909, this will be the first time it has met in Coventry.

The Roll of Distinguished Philatelists was started in 1921 with King George V as the first signatory. Over 300 people have now signed, a roll-call of some of the greatest philatelists of the century. Adding their signatures this year will be Jane Moubray (GB), Claud Delbecke (Belgium), Rolfe-Dieter Jaretzky (Germany), and Juliani Olamo (Finland).

Jane Moubray, currently President of the Royal Philatelic Society, London, was born in 1932 and comes from a philatelic family stretching over five generations. Her grandfather, father and son have all formed fine collections and her grandson James has just started. Her collections range over the traditional and postal history disciplines, with particular interests in early GB and all things Canadian from stamps to stationery. Her husband Michael is also a collector, and together they wrote *British Letter Mail to Overseas Destinations 1840-1875*, published in 1992. We congratulate all four new RDPS on this recognition of their philatelic work •

Enquiries Stampa '97, PO Box 2723, Dublin 1, Ireland

Stampa '97 The 26th Irish national stamp exhibition takes place at the Royal Dublin Society International Exhibition Centre, Dublin 2 on 7-9 November, open 11.00-18.00 each day. This being the 75th anniversary of independence and the first Irish postage stamps, there will be an extra impetus to the show, which also marks the 25th anniversary of the first Stampa. The exhibition, which attracts collectors from far beyond Ireland, is noted for its friendly atmosphere. It is supported by the Irish PO, Irish Philatelic Traders Association and Federation of Philatelic Societies of Ireland. Collectors wishing to combine a visit to Stampa with a holiday will find Dublin excellent for an Autumn break with many attractive and historic buildings, interesting shops, markets, theatres, pubs, and golf courses. Collectors are invited to become members of Stampa and receive a free season ticket to the exhibition, free show catalogue and exclusive miniature sheets. Membership costs IR£15, GB£14 or US\$25 •

Sussex Autumn Convention The Convention, at Hove Town Hall on 22 November, will be a specially enhanced event to celebrate in style the 50th anniversary of the formation of the Association of Sussex Philatelic Societies. Open from 10.00 until 16.30, it will incorporate exhibitions and a stamp fair with 40 dealers in stamps, postal history, postcards and associated material will be in attendance. The exhibition will include 16-sheet individual competitions in aerophilately, cinderellas, postal history, thematics, traditional philately and the new open class. The ASPS thanks the Cinderella Stamp Club for the presentation of a Glass Slipper Trophy for their Individual Cinderella class. There will be exhibits by the Sussex Postal History Society, British Society of Australian Philately, Scandinavian Philatelic Society and Helvetia Philatelic Society – all will hold meetings and welcome guests and potential new members during the day. There will an all-day Juniors Workshop and refreshments, including a special celebration buffet lunch with wine will be available at modest cost •

Enquiries L Jones, 0171 600 8918 (office hours)

Astro Space Stamp Society The Society invites collectors of all ages to participate in a friendly contest to define the 'Pathfinder-Mars-97-Space Project'. The winners selected will be sent a mint set of Fiji Marconi stamps (or others if supplies of Marconi stamps exhausted) donated by the Crown Agents. British entrants should include a large stamped addressed envelope; overseas readers should send addressed envelope and two international reply coupons •

All entries or enquiries about the Society to: Brian Lockyer, 21 Exford Close, Weston-super-Mare BS23 4RE

Railway letter stamps The Mid-Hants Railway issued a new 25p railway letter stamp, marking the 50th anniversary of the naming at Brighton of locomotive No 34067 *Tangmere*. The stamp, printed in sheets of nine, is available at face value. Two presentation packs, containing the six Locomotive series stamps issued between March 1991 and September 1995, and six commemorative stamps of the period June 1990 to May 1995 are now available, price £1.50 each. Postage 50p •

Orders and enquiries Postal Co-ordinator, Mid-Hants Railway, Alresford SO24 9JG

Midpex Further to the report last month, John Field writes. We were all hoping, of course, and with good reason considering the effort that had been put into it, that this year's exhibition would be a success. Despite the rain beating down on the roofs, a success it was with both dealers and collectors. Certain things had been given attention since 1995; a new security company proved worthwhile; the car-parking was handled more efficiently, and the frames went up with commendable speed thanks to Tony Finlayson and his team. Catering went ahead as planned. As a result nearly 1000 visitors enjoyed the opportunity to see well-prepared exhibits shown by the 66 special societies and philatelic associations, talk to the knowledgeable members of those societies, and look through the stocks of the 41 dealers present.

As with two years ago there was a definite buzz in the four halls of the exhibition and we have been pleased with the plaudits both by word of mouth and by letter. It is clear that the initiative of the Hungarian Philatelic

Midpex photographs anyone who would like copies should write, giving full details of who they are, where they were and who they were with, and payment of £1 per photograph (remittances payable to Midpex) to the Midpex Press Office, 37 Bow Street, Rugby, WS15 2GD.

Society of GB in putting forward the idea of this type of show, coupled with the enthusiasm of the people on the spot (Midland Philatelic Federation), has given UK collectors a new type of exhibition which can certainly be described as of national importance. Support from the British Philatelic Trust and the Association of British Philatelic Societies was most welcome.

One of the features of Midpex '97 was the seminar on 'Specialist societies in the future of British philately' which produced a wide-ranging discussion. The seminar, and a reception for the representatives of the specialist societies, were hosted by ABPS. The Organising Committee's thanks go to the enthusiastic and pleasant volunteers who put in a lot of effort to make the show a success. On the 'hard labour' side, the Committee and ABPS worked well in setting up and dismantling the societies' and dealers' areas. Particular thanks go to the gentlemen of the Coventry Philatelic Society for their after-hours efforts.

Visitors may have noticed a photographer doing his rounds. A large selection of colour prints is available; details opposite ●

For details and a sample magazine write to: Membership Secretary, PO Box 3484, Colchester CO4 4XX

Stamp club helps charity The Raflet Stamp Club recently handed over a cheque for £5,250 to the Royal Star & Garter Home. The money was raised by the Club's Special Covers Distributor, Colin Smith, who gets covers specially signed and then sells them to members. Raflet – the largest postal-only general stamp club in the UK – has 1200 members and is run on an honorary basis by about 30 officials. Membership costs £7 a year ●

All correspondence should until 30 November 1997 be addressed to: British Library Philatelic Collections, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3DG. Thereafter to: 96 Euston Road, London NW1 2DB. The phone number will remain 0171 412 7635/6.

British Library Philatelic Collections The Philatelic Collections move from Great Russell Street to the new British Library building at St Pancras starts in November. This is said to be the largest move of philatelic material ever and to achieve this all services will close until 2 February 1998. The displays of philatelic material will reopen with new exhibits and material at St Pancras in April.

The Library has recently published two philatelic postcards featuring the 'Post Office' Mauritius 2d blue (in the Tapling Collection) and the USA 1918 24c error with inverted centre (Fitzgerald Collection). They are available to personal callers at the British Library Book Shop, Great Russell Street, London WC1 or from philatelic or postcard dealers, price 40p each ●

Obituary: Faith Jaques (1923-97) Faith Jaques, who died in July, designed the 1960 General Letter Office 1s3d, 1961 Parliamentary Conference pair and 1978 Christmas set. She also prepared designs, unused, for the 1962 National Productivity Year, 1963 Lifeboat Conference, and 1964 Geographical Congress issues. Born and educated in Leicester, she served in the Wrens during the war and later resumed her studies at the Central School of Arts and Crafts in London. As a freelance graphic artist in the 1950s and 1960s she undertook much work for magazines, especially *Radio Times*. In 1967 she illustrated the English edition of Roald Dahl's *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* and she worked on many others up to her retirement in 1989 ●

Obituary: Roy Thompson Roy Thompson, who died on 11 May was one of the senior thematic collectors in Great Britain. He had a long career in the Solihull Philatelic Society and Midland Philatelic Federation, undertaking a major revision of the Federation's competition rules complete with marking system and guidelines in order to bring them into line with national and international rules. Despite all his work for organised philately, Roy still managed to pursue his own particular aspect of his hobby – thematic collecting with his special niche being 'Communications'. He pursued this with such keenness and skill that he was soon winning not only local and national medals but bringing credit to his country with international exhibits, eventually achieving a vermeil medal in Genoa in 1992. An enthusiastic supporter of youth philately, he ran his own junior club at a local school, joined the Melville Committee and in 1990 wrote a useful pamphlet *Thematics Without Tears*. The recipient of a BPF Award of Merit in 1991, Roy was always prepared to listen and throw himself totally behind a project once he was persuaded of its merit. His work for Kid's Korner at Stampex was mainly behind the scenes but always absolutely efficient and without any fanfares ● GEORGE R GIBSON

Obituary: Bruce Auckland Alexander Bruce Auckland, the doyen of Scottish philately and arguably the world's oldest philatelist, died on 20 July at the age of 102. Only in March this year he was in fine form and cracking jokes at a party in Edinburgh to mark his 102nd birthday. Two years earlier, his 100th birthday, was a gala occasion, when he made a speech without notes – and quipped about the latest addition to his collection, a telemesssage from HM The Queen. He was born in Glasgow in March 1895 and educated in the city. He left school at 16 and began studying for the Civil Service exam. While awaiting the results he secured employment as a sorting clerk and telegraphist at the GPO in George Square just before Christmas 1912 and took part in the famous strike of the Christmas casuals which became part of Glasgow's postal history. The following year he was sent to Dublin to join the Department for Agriculture & Technical Instruction. Called up in 1916 he was posted to the Royal Engineers and sent to the Western Front. Subsequently he was recruited into Military Intelligence where his proficiency in languages proved an asset. Demobbed in 1920, he resumed his civil service career and graduated, after studying part-time, from Glasgow University in 1925.

Bruce once told me that he began collecting stamps in 1899, steaming Penny Lilacs off envelopes and cramming them into a matchbox. Shortly after he acquired his first album but this juvenile pursuit eventually tailed off. In 1911 he attended the Lanark Aviation Meeting but did not think of sending postcards with the special postmark. His interest revived in Italy and the Balkans at the end of the First World War and he took full advantage of his opportunities to acquire many of the provisional issues from Fiume and the embryonic kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, as well as the occupation issues of Hungary and Rumania.

An interest in postal history began when he was employed on the inspec-

tion of the Poor Law offices in Scotland, ensuring that old files were cleared. In this way a vast amount of old letters, some from the early 1800s, came to light – but for the wrappers and envelopes addressed to sundry Inspectors of the Poor the existence of many Scottish postmarks, especially the rare ‘Scots Locals’, would not be known. As well as a deep love of all aspects of Scottish postal history (even contemporary machine postmarks), Bruce was an ardent student of travelling post offices and ship mail, and a stalwart of the Canadian Philatelic Society of GB as editor of its journal. He helped form the Scottish Postmark Group in 1952 and had a hand in all its publications. He will be chiefly remembered for the volumes on mile-age marks (1965) and the penny posts of Edinburgh (1972). At the age of 83 he himself published *Postal Markings of Scotland to 1808*, and at 90 brought out a larger and more ambitious work extending the record to 1840. He not only wrote these books but also drew the diagrams and made tracings of the postmarks himself. A second edition, in conjunction with Ron Stables, was published for his 100th birthday in 1995. Right to the end he was active and planning other projects, and at age 98 acquired his first computer.

Bruce was not just the doyen of Scottish postal history but a warm-hearted and generous friend. The number of people he encouraged and to whom he gave generously of his surplus material must be legion. More than anyone else, he raised the study of Scottish postal history to its present high level • JAMES MACKAY

Eminent early collectors 6 W D Beckton, by Ron Negus

On his 13th birthday, Walter Dorning Beckton's parents gave him some stamps and a two-volume *Imperial* album for a present. The year was 1879 and it started his lifelong connection with philately. On New Year's Eve the following year, the young collector wrote down on the flyleaf of his new albums how many stamps were in his collection. The figure was 1800. This started a habit that Beckton carried on until his death: he always recorded the number of stamps he owned in the front of these original albums every 31 December. The final entry – made at the close of 1930 – read 154,021. During his lifetime, it was said he had never sold any of his acquisitions.

The Manchester School Born in 1866, in Manchester, little is known about Beckton's early life except that he trained as a solicitor and entered the family firm of Hockin, Raby and Beckton at the age of 23. Two years later, in 1891, he was a

founder member of the Manchester Philatelic Society. It is claimed he was instrumental in establishing the so-called ‘Manchester School’ of philately. This collecting fraternity preferred multiples rather than single specimens, so that detailed attention could be given to production methods and plating studies. As a result, at the turn of the century, the Manchester group earned the nickname of the ‘Strip, Block and Sheet Society’.

A story is told of Beckton being at an exhibition in his later years when he was shown a block of four of a particular issue. The owner claimed this multiple was unique and tried to impress his listener by saying how much he had paid for the item. After he had left, Beckton turned to a companion and said ‘I was longing to tell him that I had a mint sheet of 50 of the stamp, but it seemed a pity to spoil his pleasure.’

Needed funds His own interests were general covering the whole world, but his albums only included specimens issued between 1840 and 1890. In addition, he also made detailed studies of specific countries including Greece, Romania and Italian States, and built up fine collections of Indian States and Kashmir. Much of his material was bought from the famous Continental dealer, JB Moens in Brussels, and on one occasion on vacation in the Belgian capital, Beckton had to send home for additional funds because he had spent his holiday money on specimens bought from Moens.

In the period between 1897 and 1904, Beckton entered material in every major international exhibition and won a total of 12 medals – four gold, seven silver and one bronze. The scope of his collection can be gauged from the fact that he never showed the same material twice in any of these prize-winning entries. After this concentrated competitive effort, he was in great demand as a judge at international exhibitions, and acted in this capacity at many of them until his death. He made it a personal rule not to exhibit at any show in which he was a judge, except in the invited non-competitive class.

He wrote extensively on the issues of many different countries including a number of articles on British Honduras. Part of Beckton's collection of this latter country was purchased after his death by King George V and added to the Royal Collection.

His involvement in organised philately was considerable. He joined the London (now Royal) Philatelic Society in February 1892, and was elected to the Council in 1896. In that same year, he had been elected as President of the Manchester Society, a post he held for 35 years until his death. At the Royal, he joined the Expert Committee in 1917 to fill the vacancy caused by the death of M P Castle, and was awarded the prestigious Tapling Medal in 1921 for his paper

on Romania. Two years after this, in 1923, he was appointed a Vice-President, and then in 1925 he won the Tilleard Medal for a display of Afghanistan. Finally, in 1929, Beckton became President of the Royal Philatelic Society, a position he still occupied when he died. Despite working in his busy solicitor's practice in Manchester, it was creditable that Beckton attended all the Committee and display meetings held at the Royal's London headquarters during his Presidency. In private, however, he admitted that the found 'the frequent long train journeys fatiguing'.



RDP He was the Chairman of the first Philatelic Congress of Great Britain, held in Manchester in 1909, and was one of the initial signatories of the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists on its inception at the Harrogate Congress in 1921. In 1931, he was awarded the highest Continental philatelic distinction, the Lindenberg Medal 'for conspicuous service to philately'.

Outside stamps, Beckton was very keen on growing orchids and was responsible for developing many new varieties. He served as Chairman of the Board of the Manchester Race Course Company. He never married and shared a house called 'Daisy Bank' in Manchester with his brother and sister for many years. The three of them were finally forced to leave because of a road widening scheme, and moved to Macclesfield just before Walter died.

On 18 March, 1931 Beckton had spent the afternoon discussing matters concerning Congress with a colleague, and they planned to meet again the following weekend to continue their work. He went to bed at 10 o'clock that night and died in his sleep of a heart attack. King George V sent a personal message of sympathy to the Royal Philatelic Society expressing his 'deep regret at W Dorning Beckton's death'. The bulk of his collection was bought by Stanley Gibbons in 1932 and sold in individual country lots ●

Cat's whisker to cable TV The 75th anniversary of the BBC

by James Mackay



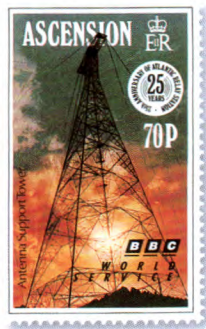
SEVENTY FIVE YEARS AGO 2LO announced the General Election results and commercial broadcasting in Britain was born. The British Broadcasting Company, which five years later became a Corporation by Royal Charter, was the outcome of over 25 years experimenting in the transmission and reception of wireless signals which, in turn, had resulted from the discoveries of the magical properties of electro-magnetic waves in the atmosphere.

We have come a long way in the past 75 years since the days of the crystal set and the cat's whisker, and the credit for the phenomenal development is due in large measure to BBC research and development. Yet, considering the enormous impact of radio and television on our lives, recognition of the BBC's achievements has been sparing to put it mildly. In the Autumn of 1961 the silver jubilee of BBC television was signalled by a slogan postmark used nationwide, but no stamps celebrated the occasion, and in September 1962 the 40th anniversary of sound broadcasting was completely overlooked, being squeezed out of philatelic recognition by the inauguration of National Productivity Year and the 'Export and Prosper' campaign.

The first stamps to honour the BBC, in fact, were issued by Ascension in December 1966 and consisted of a set of four marking the opening of the BBC's Atlantic Relay Station. The Queen's head and BBC lion emblem were die-stamped in gold foil, an early use of this medium. In 1982 the same island marked the 50th anniversary of the BBC's external broadcasting service with a set of four stamps depicting Bush House, London (5p), the Atlantic Relay Station (10p), Lord Reith, the first Director General (25p) and King George V making the first Christmas broadcast by the reigning sovereign in 1932 (40p). The 25th anniversary of the BBC relay station was celebrated in 1991 by four stamps showing broadcasting equipment.

Ironically, about the same time as the Beeb's 40th anniversary was being overlooked, France and the countries of the French Community, were issuing stamps to celebrate the inauguration of Telstar, the telecommunications satellite which facilitated the global transmission and reception of television pictures for the first time. It was on 11-12 July 1962 that pictures were first beamed across the Atlantic to Andover, Maine. The stamps of the French Community made much of the fact that they were transmitted from the station at Pleumeur-Bodou, quietly ignoring the fact that the BBC transmitter at Goonhilly Down in Cornwall also had something to do with it!

It is perhaps not surprising that the British scientists and inventors who contributed to the development of radio and television have so far had short shrift from their own country, and one has to look farther afield for stamps portraying them. Understandably Italy has issued a number of stamps since 1938 honouring Guglielmo Marconi and in 1994 took part in a five-nation joint issue (with San Marino, the Vatican, Germany and Ireland) to celebrate the centenary of Marconi's first successful transmission of wireless signals. In the run-up to the centenary, however, Italy and San Marino combined to issue a stamp apiece each year from 1991 honouring one or other of the pioneers who made Marconi's achievement possible. Significantly this series commenced in September 1991 with a 750 lire



The 25th anniversary of the BBC's Atlantic relay station, Ascension, 1991



Detail from meter for 75th anniversary of the BBC, 1997

Opposite BBC headquarters, Broadcasting House, London. Ascension issues: opening of the Atlantic relay station, 1966 (lower right); and Christmas issue showing Bush House, the relay station, Lord Reith and George V's Christmas broadcast, 1982.



Broadcasting Anniversaries

Stamps by David Gentleman for the 50th anniversary in 1972 show microphones of 1924 and 1989 (3p), a horn loudspeaker (5p) and the latest thing in television cameras (7½p).

stamp from San Marino portraying the Scottish physicist James Clerk Maxwell, alongside his formula of electro-magnetic radiation. Maxwell's brilliant studies of electro-magnetic waves inspired the German physicist Heinrich Hertz who demonstrated the production and reception of radio waves in the late 1880s. Hertz's birth centenary in 1957 was marked by stamps in both East and West Germany.

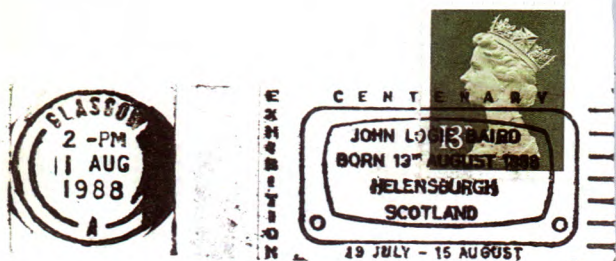
Hertz's experiments caused a worldwide sensation and several physicists simultaneously followed them up. In Russia Alexander Popov, then head of the physics laboratory at the Kronstadt torpedo school, developed a device for receiving electro-magnetic impulses, using an aerial wire suspended from a child's balloon and a receiver consisting of a battery connected to an electric bell. Popov, shown on many Russian stamps, invented the wireless aerial in 1895.

Meanwhile the young Marconi, son of an Italian aristocrat and an Irish mother, was also developing Hertz's discoveries and in 1895 succeeded in transmitting wireless signals over a distance of a few hundred yards. Royal Mail's contribution to the centenary celebrations of Marconi's pioneering work (in which the Post Office's engineering department had played a major role) was a pair of stamps engraved by Czeslaw Slania, showing Marconi as a young man and in middle age, with his early wireless and in connection with the sinking of the *Titanic* in 1912, on 41p and 60p respectively. Marconi failed to interest the Italian government and came to London where he was given considerable encouragement and assistance by Sir William Preece, George Kemp and other members of the Post Office engineering department in bringing his experiments to a practical conclusion.

In 1897 Marconi and Kemp made successful tests with transmissions across the Bristol Channel, and the 75th anniversary was marked by a 9p stamp of September 1972 showing the oscillator and spark transmitter

used at that time. By 1898 Marconi had bridged the English Channel with wireless communication and three years later had linked St John's, Newfoundland with Poldhu in Cornwall. Transmissions were made from Cabot's Tower on Signal Hill on the outskirts of St John's, a fact recorded on Newfoundland's 9c stamp of 1928-9.

Slogan postmark for John Logie Baird centenary exhibition, 1988



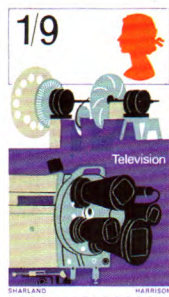
Marconi's Wireless Telegraphy Company became the leading exponent of radio in Britain and it was from Marconi House in the Strand, London that the BBC first transmitted its programmes in 1922. The 50th anniversary was celebrated by three of the four stamps in the Broadcasting Anniversaries set of September 1972. Following the early experiments from Marconi House public broadcasting started in earnest in November 1922 from Savoy Hill.

Marconi's earliest transmissions were of sounds produced by the make and break principle, so that communication was limited to the Morse code. Many years would pass before the undulatory wave principle discovered by Alexander Graham Bell and applied to his invention of the telephone in 1876 could be extended to wireless telegraphy. In the very year that public broadcasting started, Alexander Graham Bell died at his summer home in Nova Scotia, and fellow Scotsman John Logie Baird made his first transmission of pictures. Commercial television broadcasting by the BBC started in 1936 but was suspended on the outbreak of the Second World War. The BBC studios were located at Alexandra Palace, depicted on one of the 20p Europa stamps of 1990. Baird's mechanical system and the latest electronic television equipment were featured on the 19p stamp in the 1967 Discovery and Invention set.

A pictorial handstamp was used at Glasgow in 1988 to mark the centenary of Baird's birth but the 50th anniversary of his death (1996) was almost entirely ignored; the opportunity to issue a stamp, or at least a Scottish aerogramme, was lost and he has yet to receive personal philatelic recognition. It was some consolation, therefore, that a pictorial first day handstamp used at the Philatelic Bureau in September 1996 bore Baird's portrait. This was used in connection with the set of five stamps marking the 50th anniversary of children's television. Annette Mills with Muffin the Mule (20p) and Harry Corbett and Sooty (26p) were popular characters with children in the 1950s and 60s.

Arguably, the BBC's finest hour came during the dark days of the Second World War when the overseas service, broadcasting on short wave, provided a ray of hope to the oppressed nations under Nazi occupation. This is neatly alluded to in one of Guernsey's stamps of 1995 marking the 50th anniversary of the Liberation. It portrays Winston Churchill and shows an old-fashioned wireless set. Many islanders risked deportation or death by concealing such sets in order to listen to the BBC.

A prestige book commemorating the 75th anniversary of the BBC is now on sale. Several special handstamps were used on the day of issue, 23 September, and a commemorative 75th anniversary metermark is used on mail sent from some BBC offices •



1966 Christmas stamps designed in a *Blue Peter* competition entered by over 4000 children (top); 1967 television equipment, (middle left); 1990 Alexandra Palace, (middle right); and Churchill's wartime broadcasts recalled on 1995 Guernsey stamp.

The Wilding definitives What to look out for, by Matthew

BETWEEN August 1955 and May 1958 the Wilding definitives were issued on paper with a new style of watermark – St Edward's Crown instead of the old Tudor version. This was very similar to the Tudor design, but the crown is both different and bigger and the 'E2R' lettering is more ornate. The original 17 values to be affected by this change were the ½d (orange-red), 1d (ultramarine), 1½d (green), 2d (red-brown), 2½d (carmine-red), 3d (deep lilac), 4d (ultramarine), 5d (brown), 6d (reddish purple), 7d (bright green), 8d (magenta), 9d (bronze-green), 10d (Prussian blue), 11d (brown-purple), 1s (bistre-brown), 1s3d (green) and 1s6d (grey-blue).



St Edward's Crown, thought to consist of the old crown of Edward the Confessor. The St Edward crown watermark (top) and 1957 46th Inter-Parliamentary Union Conference stamp

Watermark varieties Firstly, many of the stamps were printed on the watermarked paper either upside-down, or sideways. This can, of course, be detected by the presence of the so-called 'inverted watermark' or 'sideways-inverted watermark', where it appears to be the watermark, as opposed to the design, which has been misplaced. It only occurs on booklet (inverted) and coil (sideways) stamps, and affected up to half of the copies emanating from booklets. Sideways-inverted watermark stamps can have the image facing either to the left or right, and all inversions and sideways-inversions are deliberate, resulting from the way the primary sheets of booklet panes were fed into the printing cylinders. Sometimes the left sideways inversions are slightly more scarce, and thus a little more valuable, than their right-sideways counterparts. The reverse can also be true.

Values existing with inverted watermark are the ½d, 1d, 2d, 2½d and 3d, whilst those bearing the sideways-inverted counterpart are the 1½d, 2d, 2½d and 3d. None of these is particularly scarce or valuable. There is, however, one sensational watermark variety which stands out from the crowd because it is so incredibly unusual. It occurred in November 1959 on the 2d value from a later series – the 'phosphor-graphite' Wildings – which was generally printed on paper with the Multiple Crowns watermark, but a number

of sheets were produced in error on the St Edward's watermarked paper. Examples with the wrong watermark can fetch over £100.

Shades The 6d exists in many shades. The two most commonly known are reddish purple and deep claret, and the variation was created deliberately. The 2d also exists in a lighter shade of red-brown. Both 2d shades exist with watermark sideways, and the lighter shade also with inverted watermark. The 2½d exists with the two different design variations – Type 1 with a broken diadem, and Type 2 with the diadem 'repaired'.

Tête-bêche Tête-bêche is another variety which affects the 1d, 1½d, 2½d and 3d from booklets. This is a term used to describe a horizontal pair of stamps, almost always definitives of one sort or another, where one stamp has been printed entirely inverted, in relation to the other. It can easily be faked, though, so beware if you are thinking of purchasing such an error. Approximate retail prices for the four errors are £250, £500, £700 and £800 respectively.

Imperf-ect stamps Problems with perforation techniques marred this series in a production

Hinton. Part 3, St Edward's Crown watermark issues



The two shades of 2d, red-brown and light red-brown. Centre, 6d reddish purple and deep claret. Right, graphite-lined stamps: one band on 2d stamp, two bands on other values

sense, but provided a wealth of imperforates for us collectors. Two values affected are the 2d and 2½d. They sell, when they appear on the market, for around £600 per complete booklet pane. Partially perforated examples also exist on the ½d and 2½d values. Those stamps which can be obtained perforated on one side only are the 3d and 6d (both shades). The slightly better off of you may be interested in an amazing error of the 3d value where the perforator has completely jumped one row, leaving several striking stamps completely imperforate on three sides. It remains intact to this day and hopefully will never be split. Good imperforates are usually costly, but near-perfect examples, where a tear extends slightly into the design, can often be acquired for much less.

Graphite lines In November 1957 six values were produced bearing lines of graphite on the reverse. Those values which were produced with graphite lines are the ½d, 1d, 1½d, 2½d (Type 2) and 3d (all with two lines) and the 2d (with one). This was done for the benefit of the sorting machines, so that they could tell between the printed paper rate and the other values.

There are a few good varieties to look out for

here – the two best known being copies of the 2d with the line at the left rather than the right and examples of the 1½d displaying both lines at the left. These both retail for several hundred pounds. Another good error to recently appear on the market is the 3d value with the lines well displaced: this sold for £325. Three more graphite-lined Wildings were produced on the St Edward's Crown watermarked paper and issued in November 1959. These also bear two phosphor bands on the front of the stamps. The three values were the ½d, 1d and 1½d. I have witnessed a variation on this where a marginal copy shows the two lines displaced on the stamp, and a third visible on the selvage. First day covers bearing the six graphite-lined values are worth around £30.

Conference stamp The 4d value was re-issued in September 1957 with the inscription **PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE** crammed in as well, to commemorate the 46th Inter Parliamentary Union Conference. (Obviously numbers 1-45 were not worthy of their own stamps!) The stamp itself is not particularly scarce or valuable, but a first day cover is worth around £50 in good, clean condition.

Flaws A nice variety is yielded on some of the ½d coil stamps, where a large white dot makes the inscription appear as **POSTAGE P.EVENUE**. Some of the sheet stamps of this value show The Queen with a scar on her cheek, and on some graphite examples there is an extra stem to the thistle.

On numbers of the 1½d, there is an extra jewel above the 'o' of **POSTAGE**, and a positional variety affects some of the 5d stamps such that either a bug appears on the daffodil, or The Queen has what appears to be a love-bite on her neck! I also like the 6d where the 'c' appears as a 'ç', and there is an extra pearl to the earring on certain examples of the 8d value. The daffodil is affected once again on the 10d when the stem looks broken, and there is an insect on the thistle on some copies of the 1s.

Perforations The perforation style varies on this issue, although it does not affect the individual stamps themselves. The three variations are Type A – where the horizontal sheet margins are not perforated, but the perforations extend by one perf into the verticals ones, Type B – where the vertical margins are left untouched, but the horizontal ones are perforated through and Type C – identical in appearance to Type B but with one perf in each row into the vertical margins.

Pack In 1960, a presentation pack was issued containing values 1½d and 11d with the St Edward's Crown watermark (as well as the ½d, 1d, 2d, 2½d, 3d, 4d, 4½d, 5d, 6d, 7d, 8d, 9d, 10d, 1s, 1s3d and 1s6d with Multiple Crowns), which sells for about £50. It is inscribed either '10s8d' or '\$1.80', depending on whether it was intended for sale at home or in the USA. A second pack, worth about four times as much, contains two of each of the phosphor-graphite values. These are the ½d, 1d and 1½d (St Edward's Crown) as well as the 2d, 2½d, 3d, 4d and 4½d (Multiple Crowns). The pack states that all values have the St Edward's watermark, and usually a label is attached to deny this, stating: 'CORRECTION. The ½d 1d & 1½d stamps bear the St Edward Crown Royal Cyper watermark.' Again, the price inscription is either '3s8d' or '50c'.

Booklet panes Collectors should note that, as with the sheets, the printing cylinder number appears on some panes and the dot (or absence of one) is also visible. This number increases the value of the pane considerably and different numbers can fetch (sometimes dramatically) different prices. A particularly interesting pane is the 6 × ½d with a dot inserted alongside the cylinder number of the no-dot cylinder. This gives, of course, the impression of a dot cylinder, but it can be exposed as an imposter by the narrower '4' in the number 'E4', and the fact that the number is closer to the letter. The dot is also less circular than the genuine one ●

Note The omitted shading variety on the Castle stamps affects the Queen's shoulder, not elbow, as stated in the August article

Decimal stamp books 35

Books of 10 gold stamps Both printers have introduced new colour cylinders. Those used so far on the Harrison books are B13/B12 and B14/B12, the latter combination having been first seen on 31 July. Walsall have used w1 w1 and w2 w2; the phosphor number is trimmed off during bookmaking. Both combinations can be found against either row 1 or row 2 of the pane.

Harrison print their gold stamps from a single colour cylinder but Walsall use two. For the printings from the w1 w1 combination, some black was added to the ink mix. This seems to have been omitted from the w2 w2 printing, and the stamps are a distinct shade.

On some Walsall panes the phosphor band which extends into the binding margin is only 6.5mm wide instead of the normal 9mm. These are known only on non-cylinder panes. If, as I suppose, these come from column 1 on the cylinder it must mean that the numbers are placed too far to the left to appear in the finished books. Cylinder numbers do, of course, appear in books from other columns.

The Harrison panes of gold stamps are sealed with a colourless varnish to aid receptivity of the metallic ink before the colour and phosphor are printed. This makes the phosphor fluoresce a greenish colour instead of the normal bright blue. However, the sealant does not extend the full width of the paper and books exist where only 6.5mm of the leftmost 9mm phosphor band is affected, leaving a 2.5mm band of the original blue colour visible in the pane binding margin. These bi-coloured bands come from column 1 of the cylinder and can be found both with and without cylinder numbers from both of the above combinations.

An interesting difference between the Harrison and Walsall panes is that they are printed in opposite directions. The ascertainment of the direction of printing of gravure stamps needs some practice and it cannot be done for those printed by lithography. The easiest way to be sure of the difference on the gold panes is to look at the back. Both firms use an APS perforator and

Specialist report by D G A Myall



this leaves small accumulations of powdered paper and gum at the holes. On the Harrison panes this is underneath the holes; on the Walsall ones it is at the top. To the specialist, stamps printed inverted (Walsall) are collectable varieties. In fact all the Walsall gravure stamps, whether from booklets or sheets, have this feature.

New books of four Four new books went on sale on 26 August. Each contained four stamps printed by Walsall in gravure from EME cylinders and on paper gummed PVA supplied by Tullis Russells Coatings Ltd. (formerly called Coated Papers Ltd). The stamps are the 2nd-class blue NV1, the 1st-class flame NV1, the 37p worldwide airmail postcard rate and the 63p second weight step in the worldwide airmail letter tariff. In each case, the cylinders used were W1 (colour) and W1 (phosphor). The colour numbers appear against row two of the pane but the phosphor numbers are engraved too wide to be seen. The phosphor ink contains the normal blue fluor designed to enable the presence of phosphor to be checked on the press. The covers are the post-Olympics design mentioned here last February, except for the postcard book which, for the first time, has an illustrated cover. This shows six of the most popular tourist attractions for visitors to London together with their street signs. One can envisage the cover itself being retained as a memento by overseas visitors. Who knows? Some of them

might become ardent collectors of GB booklets and read all about them in the *Bulletin*!

All four stamps have the enhanced Machin gravure image while those in the equivalent books with Olympics covers were lithographed. The 2nd-class stamp has a central phosphor bar 4.5mm wide and was issued in sheet form on 29 April. The other three have two bars derived from 9mm bands and are new to specialist collectors. The band which extends into the binding margin on these three panes is either 9mm or 6.5mm wide, compared with 4.25mm of the lithographed panes. The panes with 6.5mm bands probably come from column one on the cylinders and, unlike the books of 10 mentioned earlier, can be found both with and without cylinder numbers.

The Queen's head on the 37p stamps does not fluoresce yellow as that on the lithographed version did. It seems that Walsall's gravure rhodamine ink does not require the added brightener, mentioned here in August 1996.

The new books still have shiny covers but they no longer shoot all over the place if several are held together and it seems that a new kind of varnish has been used for these 'non-skid' covers.

Etiquettes The two books with value stamps also contain a pane of four airmail labels to use with them. Readers of this column will know that airmail labels, or etiquettes, first appeared in books

more than 60 years ago – see my article in the August 1992 *Bulletin*. A label is required for all overseas airmail, including that to Europe since the ‘all-up’ service was abolished in 1989. The design of these labels, available in sheet form from post offices, was changed last January. They now include the words Royal Mail. A version of this new design has been used for the books of 4 × 37p. The text is slightly smaller than that on the sheets and the labels do not have rounded corners. Rather surprisingly, the labels in the book of 4 × 63p are the old style. It seems likely that this book will be re-issued with labels in the new design so make sure of your books now.

BBC book This year’s prestige book marks the 75th anniversary of the British Broadcasting Corporation. Details were given in the August *Bulletin*, together with a table of the new stamps in it. The 20p right bar is a new stamp by any criterion and is bound to be catalogued. Side bar stamps are caused by printing one-bar stamps se-tenant with two-bar ones and there are three pairs of the new stamp se-tenant with the 26p rust, which is also a first from an EME cylinder. The bands producing the 2-bar stamps are either 9mm or, at the edges of the panes, 6.5mm.

The pane of nine has four gold 26p and four gold NV1 stamps arranged alternately round a label showing the television test card. To ensure that the label is non-phosphor, the bars on the surrounding stamps are either short or inset, providing the specialist with some new varieties. As with all Harrison gold printings, the paper was sealed, making the fluorescence appear greenish. Prestige books have always been an expensive source for collectors of se-tenant pairs, especially if both vertical and horizontal pairs are needed. Ignoring pairs which include the label, you can get all four pairs from a single pane but if you include the four label pairs, you will require four panes altogether. The pane with country issues yields three pairs of 26p plus 37p, one for each country. If you want the vertical pairs as well, you will need another two panes. The Wales stamps have no currency indicator.

The six country stamps are new. Like the Wal-

sall sheet equivalents, issued 1 July this year, they are printed in gravure from EME cylinders. They differ from the Walsall stamps in their direction of printing (see the item on books of gold stamps above). The country symbols are not the same as those used for the earlier Harrison photogravure printings. They are, in fact, derived from the same artwork devised by Jeffery Matthews for the later litho printings, known to specialists as type 2. This is seen most easily on the stamps for N Ireland. There are nine pearls on each side of the crown for both the current gravure stamps and the type 2 lithographed values; on the earlier Harrison stamps there were only seven.

The BBC book contains a pane of four of the Muffin the Mule stamp from the Children’s Television set of September 1996. That was printed by Enschedé, also from EME cylinders, but it is possible to distinguish singles from the two sources. The Harrison fluor is much brighter than that used by Enschedé but the principal difference is in the horizontal perforations – the Enschedé stamp has 28 complete holes; the Harrison 29. To the ultra-specialist, every stamp in the book is new because all four panes are printed inverted. To check this, use the ‘swarf’ method described earlier in this article.

Holiday promotion book Part of the outside cover of this book, containing 10 Harrison gold NV15 from cylinders B14/B12 and issued on 15 September, was illustrated in the August *Bulletin*. If two of these covers are sent with the final payment for a foreign holiday booked through Travelworld Direct a voucher exchangeable for travellers cheques or currency will be sent with the tickets. One has to spend a minimum of £11,000 on a foreign holiday booking to get a voucher worth £1100, or £1600 for one worth £175. Holidays must be booked by 30 September next year but the vouchers are valid for a further year. The currency will be issued commission free at participating Post Offices and is a reminder that many of today’s offices issue foreign currency as part of their expanded services. These books exist with the phosphor variations mentioned above for the normal Harrison books of 10 ●

Out of the Arc Post Office Home Savings Banks, described by Colin Bendall of the Post Office Archives

POST OFFICE HOME SAVINGS BANKS, or Home Safes, were lockable boxes supplied to customers of the Post Office Savings Bank (POSB), so small amounts of money could be saved at home and taken to the Post Office for deposit. Only Post Offices had keys to the boxes, which were opened for the customer on demand.

The Home Safes were introduced on 11 December 1911 in London, and became available nationwide on 1 May 1912. A 3s fee was charged, 1s being a registration fee with the remainder being a refundable deposit. The registration fee was abolished in 1929. The first type, the *Fiscus*, was an oval gunmetal box with a small handle. Another model, the *Purser*, was introduced which was larger in diameter but shallower. Not many of these were manufactured, however, and use of the *Fiscus* type was resumed until 1930.

In April 1930, the Book pattern safe was introduced in London, and then nationally the following month. It had a brass medallion on the front with a crown and the words 'Post Office Savings Bank', and was available in a choice of colours – red, blue or green. The safe could be opened by a hinged or removable side panel, and the coin slot was in the side. On 1 February 1934, a slightly smaller Book safe was introduced at a charge of 1s, returnable on its surrender. It had a cover bearing the Royal Arms, and the same wording as before. This design opened like a book, with the coin slot in the bottom of the safe.

Several commemorative Book safes were also designed. In May 1935, to mark George V's Silver Jubilee, a safe with a silver cover was introduced, bearing an impression of the King's head. Every child who opened a POSB account in May 1935 received this safe and a special letter – over ten thousand letters were issued. A design with a gold cover was prepared for Edwards VIII's Coronation but was never issued, due to his abdication. In 1937, another special safe, with a gilt finish, marked the coronation of George VI. This type bore an embossed impression of the heads of the King and Queen.

Between 1934 and 1938, 350,000 to 400,000 Home Safes were issued annually. In 1942, manufacture was suspended partly because the contract for production of the safes had ended and partly because of wartime shortages. By the end of 1943, stocks were exhausted. After the war, it was decided not to reintroduce the safes, because of the policy of simplifying Post Office savings and the high production cost. It was also believed National Savings stamps could meet the needs of the smaller saver ●



A range of the different types of Home Safes. Thanks to Lionel Jones for loaning some Safes from his collection.

Examples of Home Safes

are on display in the Public Search Room, Post Office Archives & Record Services, Freeling House, Mount Pleasant Complex (Phoenix Place entrance), London EC1A 1BB. The Search Room is open 09.00-16.15, Monday-Friday.

Competition Win mint 1840 1d black catalogued at £3000!

1st prize GB 1840 1d black letters HD. SG 2, attractive mint partially redistributed gum example, virtually four margins, small surface rub only with good colour, fine impression. SG cat £3000; GB Select-Direct selling price £300.



SPONSORED jointly by Omniphil and GB Select-Direct: win a mint 1840 1d black catalogued at £3000! Plus reply to Omniphil's offer and you can keep an 1841 2d blue, cat £40, plus a spacefiller quality example of a QV stamp cat £80 – a total of £120.

Most of us think earlier GB too expensive for us to afford – but it doesn't have to be. If we are prepared to compromise a bit on quality, then perfectly collectable examples of scarcer GB stamps can be purchased at a fraction of catalogue value.

2nd prize GB QV 1867-83 5s rose, letters BA, the scarce anchor watermark plate 4 on white paper, SG 134, sound average used example cancelled by two part oval registered datestamp. SG cat £1100; GB Select-Direct selling price £135.

But don't take Omniphil's word for it. They are prepared to prove it to you by putting money where their mouth is. Reply within 28 days of receiving your *Bulletin* and you will automatically qualify to receive a free 1841 2d blue catalogued £40, plus a spacefiller example of QV 1s cat £80 – a total of £120. Both of these high catalogued stamps are yours free to keep whatever you decide in order to introduce Omniphil's GB Home Approval Service.

3rd prize GB 1840 2d blue, letters CB, a good used fine colour margins example cancelled by large part black Maltese Cross. SG 5, cat £300; GB Select-Direct selling price £80.

Almost 40 years in the trade means they must be doing something right. And in addition to normal discounts off catalogue value you benefit from picking a further 33 per cent worth of stamps absolutely free of charge – and the catch? There isn't one if you can afford to spend just £12 nett or more. Spend just £12 nett only and you can pick a further 33 per cent worth of stamps. And all of this is in addition to normal discounts from SG catalogue price. So, pick £16 worth – send just £12, pick £20 worth for £15 or £40 worth for just £30.

They have over 1000 collectors participating in this approvals service. With discounts like these no wonder their service is so popular. So, if you haven't tried their GB Home Approvals Service before, drop them a line and request their free 120 offer. Tell them if you collect used and mint and any other countries collected too. **Omniphil Free 120 GB HA Service, PO Box 29, Stroud GL6 6RW**

To enter the competition answer the questions below and send, with your name and address, on a postcard or back of an envelope to: October Bulletin Competition, Royal Mail, 22 Finsbury Square, London EC2A 1NL to arrive by 21 November. Entries must be posted separately; multiple entries in one envelope will be disregarded.

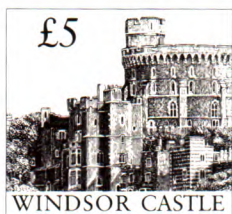
The winners of the July competition were D Allsopp of Derby, C Thompson of Birmingham, P Maryne of the Netherlands, P Hardman of Lancashire, and J Adams of Newport, Wales

The answers 1) Claridge's Hotel, London; 2) Painswick, Gloucestershire; 3) over 21,000; 4) Treasurer and Comptroller of the Household of the Prince of Wales; 5) Pure Design, Edinburgh. Our thanks to all who entered.

- 1 Who designed the 1997 Christmas stamps?
- 2 Who compiled the first edition of *Collect British Postmarks*?
- 3 How many home safes were issued annually between 1934 and 1938?
- 4 Which plants were grown by W Dorning Beckton?
- 5 What are the themes for the 1998 Scottish aerogrammes?

The answers will be found in this *Bulletin*. The competition is not open to employees, families or agents of Royal Mail or Omniphil/GB Direct-Select ●

Postbag



Mrs Inge Madle's drawing of the £1.50 Caernarfon Castle stamp. For further notes on the Enschedé printings, see June *Bulletin*, pp295-6 and July, pp330-1 for details of the engraver, Mrs Madle. Illustration courtesy *Stamp Magazine*.

New High Values The Enschedé Castles are easy to sort from Harrison printings – there are almost too many engraving differences, apart from shades! On all values, the cameo is now solid rather than cross-hatched, the elliptical perforation is set one hole higher – eight from the top and nine from the bottom. Harrison printings were the reverse. Watch out for inverted perforating from future printings! The £1.50 Enschedé shows that building alterations have been carried out: there are now three chimneys at left instead of one as on previous issues. On the £2 and £3 the 'u' is a rounded 'v' (without downstroke at right). The 'w' on the £5 is twin overlapping 'v's rather than a capital 'w'. LAURENCE CLARK, NOTTINGHAM

Machin debate G W Mitchell (July Postbag) questions whether the average young collector is attracted by the 'never ending flow of Machins'. May I respond with another question: Now that we have so many special issues and greetings stamps, do we need definitives at all? Wouldn't it better serve the cause of stamp collecting (and Royal Mail revenues) if all letters used special or greetings stamps, which covered the whole range of values and not just standard postage rates? Each special stamp could remain on sale for about a year (longer in the case of high values and shorter in the case of the more frequently used values) with all values gradually replaced on a rolling basis. R J A SMITH, RICHMOND, SURREY

Bulletin back numbers Mr J M Wallach of Crossways, Charleville Circus, London SE26 6NR (0181 778 9843) offers *Bulletins* from July 1974 to December 1996 for collection or the cost of postage. ●

Posting boxes 170

THIS MONTH'S ILLUSTRATIONS were submitted by Norman Atherden of Liphook Hants. The first shows a Elizabeth II wall box set in a brick column with pyramid-shaped concrete top at Petersfield, Hants. A Victorian box set in a brick and sandstone pillar at Nutley, Sussex, was shown here in May 1990.

The second photograph depicts a square-shaped box at the junction of the Causeway and Hyton Road, also in Petersfield. The box bears the maker's name, Carron Co, Falkirk. Square-shaped boxes were introduced in 1968 and a photograph of the last Postmaster General, John Stonehouse, with the first such box in London was published in the *Bulletin* of December 1968. However the Petersfield box appears to be the first square-shaped box shown in this 'Posting Boxes' feature. ●



Two boxes in Petersfield, Hants: Elizabeth II wall box set in a brick column, and square-shaped box made by Carron Co, Falkirk.



For details of the Letter Box Study Group send a stamped addressed envelope to the Membership Secretary: Sally Jones, 43 Miall Road, Hall Green, Birmingham B28 9BS.

National Postal Museum Exhibitions

Visitors to the NPM can now see a number of interesting new exhibitions and displays as well as the well-known permanent displays of stamps and postal artefacts.



Designs for 1953 Coronation stamps by M C Farrar Bell, far left, and De La Rue

The National Postal Museum reopened to the public on 5 August after a nine-month closure whilst King Edward Building was renovated as headquarters of Post Office Counters Ltd. Visitors can now see a number of interesting new exhibitions and displays as well as the well-known permanent displays.

Golden and Glorious The main new exhibition marks The Queen's golden wedding anniversary and shows the development of the 1953 Coronation and 1972 Silver Jubilee issues. The Coronation section begins with 1947 portraits of Her Majesty as Princess Elizabeth and Prince Philip with the Coronation edition of the *Illustrated London News* showing photographs of their wedding and honeymoon. Especially interesting is a design by Percy Metcalfe, for the proposed stamp to mark the birth of George VI's first grandchild (Prince Charles). Alongside is shown Gilbert Ledward's paste model for the new great seal for Elizabeth II.

Very soon after The Queen's accession, plans were made for new stamp designs and shown are heads of The Queen – photographs by Dorothy Wilding and a drawing by Edmund Dulac – considered for use. These are followed by some 82 designs for Coronation stamps by Mary Adshead, H W Bird, De La Rue, Dulac and many others. Some are attractive, others dull even by the standards of the time. Rather eye-catching are

11 stamp-size sketches, by Lance Thornton, to show his two-colour designs (black and red) of The Queen with the Royal regalia and Westminster Abbey. Also rather pleasing are heraldic designs by Hans Tisdall, together with his notes. There are about 70 essays and/or colour trials for the successful designs by Dulac, Goaman, Fuller, and Farrar Bell. Some of these have been reproduced on a set of postcards, available at the Museum shop or by post from the British Philatelic Bureau.

The Coronation display concludes with a cover bearing the 2½d value prematurely used at Brantingham, Hull on 1 June, Coronation aerogramme and greetings telegram, rare and unusual Coronation gift token and card produced by the National Savings Movement, and GPO postal information booklet produced for overseas visitors during the Coronation period.

The Museum's book on the Coronation issue (price £7.50) was reviewed here last month.

The Silver Jubilee display includes initial stamp sketches by Jeffery Matthews and almost 100 essays showing The Queen and Prince Philip and also the Royal Family. Norman Parkinson's photograph of The Queen and Prince Philip (as used on the issued stamps) is shown, together with Matthews's accepted design sketch of July 1971. This was only slightly modified before use. The final essays are shown, attached to a dummy first day cover which was submitted to The

Queen for Royal approval in May 1972. Jeffery Matthews is noted for his Royal stamps and has designed The Queen's Beasts set to be issued in February 1998.

Dead Letter and Greetings Cards In the display frames near the entrance to the main gallery is an eight-page display of mail from the Dead Letter Office which was established in the 1670s to examine letters that could not be delivered or had been missent and in certain cases to be returned. The wrappers and covers shown date from 1818-55 and include one bearing the printed frank of W L Maberley (Post Office Secretary) returning an underpaid letter addressed overseas. A factsheet about the Dead Letter Office has been produced by Lionel Jones, the NPM's Assistant Curator, Philately.

In Bank 19 of the pull-out frames at the far end of the gallery are some newly-acquired items of what is now termed 'social mail', including Victorian greetings cards, mourning stationery and illustrated paper and picture postcards of post offices of the early 20th century.

Artefacts The Museum has recently acquired the manufacturer's plate from the Transorma machine – the world's first successful letter sorting machine, built in the Netherlands, and installed at Brighton sorting office in 1935. It operated successfully for over 31 years until 1968 when it became too costly to keep in proper repair. A useful illustrated fact-sheet about the machine is available at the Museum. The Transorma plate is displayed with other postal artefacts including flintlock pistols used on the mail coaches.

Also on display are two works of art by Lynton Lamb (1907-77), best-known as the designer of the 1955 Castles stamps – a pen and ink drawing of a country postman, and an oil painting 'Telegraph Boy in the Underground', 1937 ●

The National Postal Museum in King Edward Street, London EC1, is a short walk from St Paul's Cathedral and underground station. Open Monday-Friday, 09.30-16.30, admission free. Enquiries: 0171 776 3636. The NPM shop sells a wide range of postcards, books, models and other souvenirs of interest to stamp collectors and postal historians.

Books

ABPS National & Specialists Society Handbook 1997/98

In his foreword to this useful publication, Brian Asquith Chairman of the Council of the Association of British Philatelic Societies tells us that the UK has more specialist philatelic societies than any other country in the world. These societies are for the most part well-run, produce excellent journals and other publications and are in the vanguard of philatelic research. They are fast becoming the backbone of philately in the UK. All are run by volunteers who give unstintingly of their time and expertise for the benefit of fellow collectors. This handbook lists the societies with details of their field of interests, meetings, subscription, publication and contact names and addresses. There is a helpful index of countries showing the relevant society, eg collectors of Benin should join the France & Colonies Philatelic Society. There is in addition much useful information of exhibitions, philatelic libraries and museums, specialist societies overseas, etc. Good value at £10 (£5 to members of ABPS affiliated societies), postage 75p UK, £1.50 overseas from J N Hammonds, 31 Wheatsheaf Close, Horsham RH12 5TH ●

Stamps of the Summer Isles Local stamps, or local carriage labels, were introduced for the Summer Isles, off the north-west coast of Scotland in September 1970. They are used on mail sent by the inhabitants of Tanera Mhor (the main island in the group) and by numerous visitors during the summer months. The island was made famous by the naturalist Sir Frank Fraser-Darling who wrote about his life there in the 1940s. This useful book, listing all the stamps, covers and postal markings, is dedicated to Sir Frank and his wife and to Mr and Mrs Frampton the owners when the stamps were first issued. Many of the stamps feature local fish, birds and plants and most have been well designed and printed. One set was designed by Gordon F Huntly, designer of the 1958 Scottish 3d, 4d and 5d regionals, another by Stuart Rose, Design Director of the British Post Office. Several sets

were printed by Moore & Mathes, one-time printer of this *Bulletin* and PO presentation packs, and others are from the House of Questa. The stamps and cancels are all illustrated in colour. 36 pages, card covers, spiral-bound. Price £4.90, postage 70p UK, £1.30 Europe, £1.90 elsewhere from: Summer Isles Philatelic Bureau, West Croftnuisk, Edradynate, Aberfeldy PH15 2JU •

Collect British Postmarks The 7th edition of this popular work, first published by the late Tim Whitney in 1979, has recently been published by the British Postmark Society. The editors, Colin Peachey and Brian Crooke, are to be congratulated on a job well done. Users of this book will appreciate their mammoth task in recording new postmarks as well as up-dating the sections on 'the classics' to keep abreast of new research findings. The work is sub-titled 'The Handbook to British Postal Markings and their Values' and serves as an admirable guide to current prices. It is clear that many modern postmarks, often short-lived, are already quite scarce and commanding rather more than the few pence normally associated with modern cancellations. As always the clearly-written introduction should be carefully read to understand the workings of the book and how to price covers. Then you can delve into whichever of the 28 sections most appeals. Every area is covered, from the General Post, London and Provincial Post markings prior to the issue of adhesive stamps to the latest ink-jet postmarks, meters and even printed postage impressions (PPIs) found on the so-called 'junk mail'. There are sections on free franks, machine cancellations and slogans, railway and maritime postmarks, aviation, islands, Royalty, tourist cachets, postal mechanisation, etc. Many of the sections have been revised by experts in their fields and the acknowledgements include most of the important names (collectors and dealers) in the postmark world. Each section is well-illustrat-

ed and the editors are to be commended for the quality of the illustrations. The typesize in some of the listings is rather small but this is a price worth paying for the wealth of information contained. Users of the earlier editions will have no hesitation in buying this new edition. It should be on the book shelves of every collector of British postmarks and of all serious collectors of British stamps. 352 pages, card covers. UK orders to: Colin Peachey, 19 Moorland Road, Hemel Hempstead HP1 1NH, price £18.50 postpaid. Overseas orders to: V B Crookes, 126 Gammons Lane, Watford WD2 5HY, price £19.50 postpaid (us \$31 by bank cheque, otherwise add £5 equivalent to cover bank conversion charges). The book is also available from Vera Trinder Ltd (London WC2), G Barrington Smith (Oadby, Leicester), H H Sales (Bradford), Sherford Stamp Co (Taunton) and others, price £16.50 •

COLLECT BRITISH POSTMARKS

THE HANDBOOK TO BRITISH POSTAL MARKINGS AND THEIR VALUES

by Dr. J. T. Whitney

SEVENTH EDITION

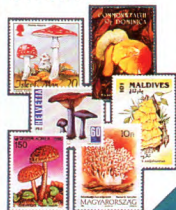
Edited by Colin G. Peachey and V. Brian Crookes

Published by British Postmark Society £16.

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COLLECT FUNGI ON STAMPS



A Stanley Gibbons Thematic Catalogue 2nd Edition

Stanley Gibbons Collect Fungi on Stamps The first edition of this popular thematic catalogue, compiled by J P Greenewich, was published six years ago. This second edition, revised by Eric H C McKenzie, lists some 14000 stamps depicting 575 different species of mushrooms and other fungi. The first such set of stamps was issued by Rumania in July 1958 and relatively few sets were issued for the next 25 years. However since the mid-1980s fungi has become a popular theme and

can be seen on the stamps of 140 countries. Several countries have issued stamps showing Sir Alexander Fleming, the discoverer of penicillin and some issues show the mould fungus *penicillium* from which the antibiotic was originally extracted.

The stamps are listed alphabetically by country, from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe. The British listing comprises eight stamps although only one (34p 1988 Linnean Society) has fungi as the main

part of the design. The country stamp listings are followed by a Fungal Species section or index to fungi by their systematic (mycological) name and a systematic classification by order and species, and a separate stamp listing and index for lichens. 96 pages, card covers. Price £7.95 plus postage. Available from SG Strand shop or by post from Stanley Gibbons Publications, Parkside, Ringwood, BH24 3SH ●

Events

3-5 October American Stamp Club of GB AGM and Philatelic Weekend at Ransdale Hotel, 30 Flamborough Road, Bridlington. Stamp and postcard fair on 4 October. **Enquiries** M Stockhill, 01262 677394 or K Walker, 01262 672488

4 October Redhill Phil Soc Diamond Jubilee Stamp and Postcards Exhibition and Fair at Harlequin Theatre, Warwick Quadrant, Redhill, 10.30-16.00. Displays, 30 dealers. Free admission. **Enquiries** B Gowers, 4 Montfort Rise, Salfords, Redhill RH1 5DU

9-12 October 79th Philatelic Congress of Great Britain at De Vere Hotel, Cathedral Square, Coventry. Organised by Association of British Philatelic Societies. **Enquiries** A J Griffiths, 01923 673199

11 October Colchester and District Phil Soc Stamp and Postcard Fair at Stanway Village Hall, Villa Road, Stanway, Colchester. 10.30-16.30. Dealers, refreshments, free admission and car parking. **Enquiries** D F Sapsford, 24 Thurlston Close, Colchester CO4 3HF

12 October Hinkley and District Phil Soc Stamp, Postcard and Coin Fair and Exhibition at St John Ambulance Hall, Brunel Road, Hinkley, 10.00-16.00. Admission free, parking nearby, refreshments. 10 dealers. **Enquiries** C J Smith, 26 Orchard Close, Witherley, Atherstone CV9 3LX

17-26 October Moscow '97 International stamp exhibition at Manezh Exhibition Hall, Moscow

18-19 October London Cinderpex (cinderella, revenue and poster stamps) at International Students House, Great Portland Street, London W1, opens 10.00. **Enquiries** T Williams, 01709 548187

18-19 October Big Stamp show at Town Hall, Church Road, Hove. **Enquiries** 01279 871110

24-26 October Collect '97 – International Collectors Fair for stamps, coins, postcards, phone and cigarette cards, models, memorabilia, etc, at Olympia 2, Exhibition Centre, London. **Enquiries** Stanley Gibbons Ltd, 01425 472363

25 October HAMPEX (Hampshire Federation Convention) at Kings School, Romsey Road, Winchester

25 October Clacton Phil Soc and Association of Essex Phil Socs Autumn Stamp Day at the Princes Theatre (Town Hall), Station Road, Clacton-on-Sea, 10.00-16.00. Admission free. Stamp fair & displays. Commemorates Clacton Phil Soc 50th anniversary. **Enquiries** Alan Norman, 01255 222284

26 October International Stamp Fair at Festive Hall, Leopold II Avenue, Sint-Nicklaas, Belgium. Near station. 09.00-17.00. **Enquiries** A de Commynes, Nieuwstraat 94, B-9100 Sint Niklaas, Belgium

30 October-1 November London International Stamp and Cover Show at Royal Horticultural Hall 2, Greycoat Street, London SW1 ●

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GIFTS FOR YOURSELF OR A FELLOW COLLECTOR



The lavishly-illustrated Royal Mail Year Books provide authoritative background stories on each issue of special stamps based on interviews with the stamp designers. Stamps are supplied on stock cards ready for mounting in the book. Each book supplied in a matching slip-case.

The **1996 Year Book** contains the nine sets from the Robert Burns to Christmas Nativity, available whilst stocks last, until 27 October, price £23.50 (£75 luxury leather-bound edition). The **1997 Year Book** including the 39 special stamps from the Great Tudor (Henry VIII) to Christmas Crackers, goes on sale on 27 October, price £23.50 (£75 leather-bound).

Collectors Packs contain stamps on stock cards with an informative brochure about the stamp subjects. **1996 Year Pack** available until 27 October, price £17.50. **1997 Year Pack** on sale from 27 October, price £15.95, at Bureau, philatelic outlets and main post offices.

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



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