

February 1995



Royal Mail

British Philatelic Bulletin

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British Philatelic Bulletin

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Royal Mail and Philately 160

Mr John Tew, Director & General Manager of Royal Mail National, talks to the Editor about the British Philatelic Bureau, National Postal Museum, and promoting the hobby of stamp collecting. Your views will be welcome.



Mr John Tew

Artwork for George V stamp, National Postal Museum

Royal Mail and Philately

The Editor talks to John Tew

Last month I reported my discussions with John Tew, Director & General Manager of Royal Mail National, on special and definitive issues, stamp books and the possible future development of stamps for specific uses. This month our discussions concern the British Philatelic Bureau, National Postal Museum, Special Handstamp Centres, and Royal Mail's general promotion of the hobby.

The Bureau

The British Post Office was very much a "johnny-come-lately" to the philatelic world. Not until 1963 did the then GPO finally decide to get involved in philately: an unprecedented number of special stamps was issued, the Bureau set up and the *Bulletin* started life. In recent years the workload and nature of the Bureau has changed. The staff in Brandon Street are now involved in several Royal Mail (RM) business activities, of which the provision of services for stamp dealers and collectors is but one. To begin with, Royal Mail Retail despatches millions of stamp books to over 50,000 retail outlets which sell them in shops, garages, tourist offices, etc., etc. Royal Mail Business Mail Order process orders from companies and organisations for 1st and 2nd class NVI stamps (in sheets), and certain items of stamped (postal) stationery. The same section also handles orders for postcode products and additional copies of the recently-launched *Royal Mail Address Book*. Thus, says Mr Tew, the name "Philatelic Bureau is becoming increasingly a misnomer" as it gradually changes its role from simply "fulfilling orders for philatelic products". It is now a "fulfillment house for a wide range of Royal Mail products".

The existing service for collectors will remain, essentially catering for "standard-order type customers" – first day covers, gutter pairs, etc. A "good personalised service" can be provided for the vast majority of customers, but the size and complexity of the operation means that orders for highly specialised material cannot always be accommodated. "We are", says Mr Tew, "essentially providing a commodity service rather than a specialist service".

He recognised the problems some collectors are facing as a result of the reducing number of philatelic counters and the change in status of others, bringing them under the post shop umbrella. It is no longer so easy for collectors to "come in to browse, seek advice, discuss and select" their specialist requirements and material. It is difficult to provide such a level of service on a nationwide basis – the number of specialist collectors and their level of purchase has to be set against the "cost of retailing". Post Office Counters have to adjust their retail arrangements to suit changing patterns of demand in the same way as any shopkeeper or department store manager.

With the changes to post shop status, some collectors are turning to the Bureau seeking a specialist service – for example the supply of specific sheet cylinder or plate blocks, or stamp books with particular cylinder or plate numbers, etc. At present the Bureau is not geared up to provide a specialist service of this kind. Mr Tew suggested that we seek *Bulletin* readers' views on the likely demand for setting up a specialist service. A premium might be charged for provision of any additional services – to cover, for example, the cost of production and mailing to interested collectors of a specialist listing of cylinder and plate numbers currently in stock at the Bureau. RM could not guarantee to supply every cylinder/plate number or combination, but would at least be able to tell collectors what was available. If stocks were limited, it might be necessary to restrict supply to just one or two blocks/books per collector. No consideration has yet been given to this so all views (briefly expressed please) would be welcome. The address to write to is given at the end of this article.

Mr Tew agreed that it is important that some staff "with some philatelic knowledge" should be employed at the Bureau and at Royal Mail National HQ in London. This will be taken into account when future appointments are made. It is his intention that this "expertise should be available to act as a focal point to give advice to non-specialist staff working in philatelic areas". Mr Tew acknowledged the different expertise and knowledge required in marketing stamps (and related products) to the three main groups of customers: general public for postal use, collectors and philatelists for collecting and study; and "gift-givers" – customers seeking unusual and interesting products for themselves or others.



National Postal Museum

The Museum, first opened in 1966, is recognised as the custodian of one of the finest stamp collections in the world. The philatelic importance and value of the collections are inestimable. The unique proof sheet of the Penny Black is alone valued at £9 million – should it (but it won't) ever come on the open market! In recent years the Museum has developed to become less a specialised stamp museum and more a general museum telling the story of the postal service up to the present, some displays even looking into the future. The number of visitors is increasing – by 25% over the past year – at a time when many other museums are recording falling attendances.

Mr Tew is reviewing the NPM, recognising that “to have national status, it needs upgrading in access and facilities”. In the longer term a new museum is needed to house and display many items now in basement stores. Whether expansion is on its present site or elsewhere has still to be decided. In the short term, however, it is intended to expand the displays at King Edward Street – taking over the area formerly occupied by the London Chief Post Office counter. Some of the many artefacts now stored in the basement will be put on show and, Mr

Not just stamps – a painting from the NPM collection

Tew also hopes, similar displays from the Museum's artefact collections could be arranged in various parts of the country if suitable locations and resources are available. This would provide an “outreach facility” away from the capital which I am sure will be welcomed by many readers.

The NPM collections include large items such as letter boxes, vehicles, and sorting machinery and smaller objects such as datestamps, badges, lamps, signs, scales and mail-bags. Many will be familiar to the general public – seen in local post offices or used by postmen in the delivery of letters and parcels. Mr Tew stressed that the NPM is the museum for all aspects of the services provided by Post Office Counters Ltd and Parcelforce as well as Royal Mail.

The Post Office's heritage is also preserved in the Post Office Archives at Mount Pleasant and some *Bulletin* readers will know first hand of the wealth of philatelic information that can be found there. Already the Archives and the NPM work together – for example when NPM exhibitions are being planned and researched. The benefits of the coming together of the two institutions, either physically or organisationally,

Interest in genealogy, local, social and economic history has never been greater and John Tew clearly believes that the Museum and Archives should promote "postal history as a mirror of social history". The NPM's recent displays, and the activities of the Friends of the Museum, are already working towards that end.

Postmark Services

The Handstamp Centres were set up in 1990 and generally welcomed by collectors as they provided a better service than was possible from most local sorting offices. Changes in RM's organisational structure and the proliferation of handstamps for certain special stamp issues has caused some difficulties over the past year and the running of the Handstamp Centres was under review at the time of this interview. Mr Tew is eager that the level of expertise in these centres be maintained – staff must appreciate the special requirements of collectors and ensure the quickest possible processing of their covers. It is intended that long delays, as experienced for the D-Day issue, will become a thing of the past.

Postmarking Guide

A GUIDE TO ROYAL MAIL'S
PHILATELIC POSTMARKING SERVICE

Royal Mail

Greater efforts are to be made by RM to promote the hobby of stamp collecting and not just the collecting of modern British stamps. It is recognised that it is a worthwhile family hobby and it is hoped that more women will become collectors and encourage their children. Thematic collecting is seen as a key factor in attracting women and young people into stamp collecting. The value of TV advertising in making the public aware of new stamps is proven. RM hope that TV programme makers will see the hobby as worthy of their consideration, and would be pleased to cooperate, if invited, in the making of such programmes.

British Philatelic Bulletin - Vol. 32, February 1995



Part of the NPM/Post Office Archives display at Spring Stampex 1993

"National Stamp Day" and various events were staged in London in the 1970s and 1980s. In a paper presented to the British Philatelic Congress in 1987, Colin Pawson, a senior RM Philatelic Marketing Manager, suggested that more should be made of National Stamp Day. Mr Tew would be interested in collectors' views as to whether "NSD" should be reinstated and the sort of activities they would like to see. He suggested that some activities could centre around the Collectors' Club, one of the special issues could be released on NSD, and the opportunity taken that day to announce the following year's special stamp programme. Royal Mail would encourage displays in public buildings such as libraries and museums.

Philatelic and Postmark Bulletins

Mr Tew, I am pleased to report, enjoys reading the *Philatelic Bulletin* each month. It has developed over 32 years under seven editors, and now provides a wide range of regular and special features on most aspects of GB philately. Mr Tew sees no reason to drastically alter the magazine and does not want to see it take outside advertising or change to A4 format. Subscriptions have remained unchanged now since November 1993 and there are no plans to increase them in the immediate future. Careful management of production costs has enabled us to increase the number of pages although subscription revenue still does not cover all *Bulletin* production and distribution costs.

To help offset the additional cost of the *Commemorative Covers Review*, cover producers may in future have to pay for the announcement of their covers.

It is a sign of the times that the editorial staff

of the two *Bulletins* is now just one person, compared to three not so many years ago. The *Philatelic Bulletin* has more pages to cater for the growing number of stamps, books and new services to be announced and for more articles by specialist writers.

The *Postmark Bulletin* has been improved and expanded to provide information on changes to operational postmarks, feature articles, and occasional book reviews. The resulting increase in the number of subscribers has enabled us to hold subscriptions at their current level since September 1992.

Further development of both *Bulletins* will depend on increasing the number of subscribers and subscription revenue, and on additional editorial staff. Mr Tew is supportive of the Editor's wish to one day see this *Bulletin* generally recognised as the best philatelic magazine published in the UK.

Your Views Welcome

If you wish to comment on matters raised in this interview with John Tew, in particular the introduction of a specialist service at the Bureau and rejuvenating National Stamp Day, please write to: The Editor, British Philatelic Bulletin, Royal Mail, 22 Finsbury Square, LONDON EC2A 1LN. Please keep letters as brief as possible and arrange your comments under appropriate headings, e.g. Bureau, Museum, Handstamp Centres, National Stamp Day, etc.

We regret it will not be possible to enter into correspondence but all letters will be carefully read and suggestions passed on to relevant managers. Mr Tew will be supplied with a summary of your views.

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The Rôle of the National Postal Museum in Philately

DOUGLAS N MUIR *Curator, Philately*

The National Postal Museum is the foremost philatelic institution in this country – a large claim perhaps, but one which is in my view fully justified because of the wealth of its collections and the variety, scale and importance of its activities. It has many rôles – advising and assisting other Royal Mail or Post Office departments, for example, and in the promotion of awareness of Post Office history everywhere. This article is confined to its rôle, or rôles, in philately.

Founded in 1966 with the great gift to the nation of Reginald Phillips's collection of Victorian GB it has since expanded considerably in terms of its collections, its staff and the space it occupies. Its rôles have also increased in number and, like the rest, continue to do so.

Preservation & Conservation

The main philatelic collections consist of at least one sheet of virtually every stamp ever issued under the aegis of the British Post Office, although some of the earlier registration or imprimatur sheets had some stamps removed in the 19th century. These sheets are a unique and extraordinarily valuable archive.

Added to this is nearly every piece of artwork submitted to the PO for postage stamps and other items. This is particularly true for the period from George V to the present day. Not only is this unique and essential to any understanding of how our stamps came about but it includes a remarkable number of works by famous artists. Hidden in the vaults, for example, we have seven Graham Sutherlands, and a lot of the excellent typographical work of Eric Gill.

There are also major collections of other types of material – such as essays, proofs of various kinds, and a wide range of issued material (postal stationery, postal orders, fiscals and so on) with all the production processes towards the final item. To this we have added a constantly, and rapidly, growing collection of postal history in all its aspects from mail coach to postal markings.

Our primary rôle is thus the *preservation* of this national heritage for present and future generations to enjoy, use and learn from.

To do this we must house our collections with great care and effect repairs where necessary. However, there is a problem – all paper deteriorates in time. The most that we can do is retard that deterioration as much as possible. To that end the Museum has set up its own paper conservation studio and appointed a full-time conservator, Krystyna Koscia, after a number of years using outside consultants. A programme has been instituted to remount and conserve all our Victorian registration sheets and this will take a number of years to complete.

Housing is perhaps the most basic aspect of this and one which can be immediately applied to all collections, private or public. It is vital that anything in contact with the stamps, letters or envelopes in a collection should be of archival quality, i.e. acid-free and inert. This means album pages, protectors, binders and even slip-in cases. Details have been published frequently in our *Annual Reviews* (Ref. 1). I suggest all collectors demand of suppliers that they label their products as to their precise nature. Proper housing and due care will help to keep items in good condition.

Arresting deterioration is another matter. Today, it is considered good practice to do as little as possible in the way of active treatments which may prove harmful in the future. Rather, removal of any agents causing decay is preferred. This means, at times, de-acidification of paper and ink and can be a costly process. Removal of surface dirt is always advisable but never bleaching or anything similar merely to enhance appearance. Unsightly stains may just have to remain if greater damage later is to be avoided.

I believe that we are the first postal museum to have a paper conservation studio devoted entirely to the problems (paper, ink, printing, photographic) of philatelic items. Results of work carried out have already been published and further research into particular problems will continue. Some, such as modern paper coatings and the affects of phosphor ink have never been investigated and these will form the basis of future reports which will at least alert collectors to any possible problems.

The second rôle of the National Postal Museum is thus that of *conservation*.

Research & Publication

It is not enough that the Museum has a wonderful collection. That collection must be properly described and catalogued. To do that, of course, one needs to know what the items are. With issued stamps this is relatively easy – the information is normally to hand in published catalogues or specialised monographs. However, with artwork and essays and all unissued material details have often become detached from the items. Isolated research into one or two issues had taken place but this was piecemeal and of variable standard. Therefore, in 1992 we began a systematic programme of research into how the special stamp issues came about. A project team of three was appointed to investigate thoroughly the files in Post Office Archives and write “histories” of each issue, providing the accurate details required to describe the collections. A surprisingly vast amount of new information has come to light and some 90 “histories” have so far been written (Ref. 2). Our collection of modern issues is now being completely rewritten and the opportunity is being taken to remount it (on conservationally sound materials) and catalogue it on a computer which combines images with text. In the future this will enable any researcher to find the items and information that they want at the touch of a button and print a colour photograph to refer to later. The histories can already be consulted at the Museum or at PO Archives.



Overall view of the new conservation studio

Research is not restricted to that project. A great deal is done for every exhibition. The present, major exhibition at the Museum is entitled “Addressing Postcodes” and marks the 20th anniversary of the completion of the allocation of postcodes in the UK. It combines

the development of the postcode from early, virtually non-existent, addresses with the modern application of the postcode on envelopes in the form of phosphor dots. A great deal of research preceded this exhibition, both into early addresses and modern aspects of postal mechanisation. We published in handouts the essence of the research for visitors and more detailed versions will appear elsewhere.

This is true of most exhibitions. Brochures are normally published both to inform visitors and to make sure that research is not lost when the exhibition closes.

Another form of research, and one which may have greater importance in the future, is where we reconstruct (from patent drawings and other available information) machines or structures of the past. This we did in 1991 with the original Pearson Hill cancelling machine of 1857, the world's first. In doing this we discovered the answers to a number of problems which had mystified students of that area of postal history, such as why the canceller was constructed in three parts (it needed the flexibility to produce an even impression).

Our third rôle is therefore that of *research*, “original” research as demanded of exhibitors in competitive exhibitions.

Research is of minimal use unless it is applied and published so our fourth rôle is that of *publication*. We publish our full-colour *Annual Review* (since 1988), brochures for exhibitions, articles in the philatelic press and up to 20 postcards annually. The Association of Friends of the Museum also publishes a magazine – *Cross Post* – to which we regularly contribute. In 1994 we published our catalogue of GB stamps, the *NPM Chronolist* in computer disk format under the aegis of “StampMaster” and a video *Postboy to Postcode* in conjunction with the “Addressing Postcodes” exhibition. These are two new ventures for us in new media. In a more traditional medium we have also published a number of books over the years and, despite the effort this entails, I hope this will continue and expand.

Dissemination of information also takes the form of exhibitions. Here we strive to inform and entertain putting material into its context. Letters, stamps, engravings, posters, postal markings all become illustrations of a wider story, brought to life by imagination.

In these and in our printed works we strive to achieve the highest quality possible – not only in terms of content but also of design. Properly

controlled, good design enhances content and attracts attention. I have heard it said, by quite advanced philatelists, that standards can be too high and that the resulting exhibition, or publication, is somehow off-putting to the majority of collectors. This, I do not believe. We, as a national museum, should provide the highest standards possible but clearly in a way that is meaningful to all visitors, both collectors and those with only a passing interest. A raising of general standards should form part of our rôle. The current vogue phrase "centre of excellence" comes to mind.

Publicity & Encouragement

Our very existence and activities, gains good publicity for the hobby of philately. We also actively encourage collecting and act as a source of information for a wide range of people, from specialist collectors to journalists and the general public. A surprising number of theatres and acting groups ask us about the format and colour of telegrams in particular, but also envelopes and stamps from the period relevant to their production. Information is thus given not only in the form of publications and exhibitions but in our replies to many written, telephoned and, nowadays, faxed enquiries. Another of our rôles is thus to *inform* and *encourage*.

A Change of Thinking

In a number of areas I believe it is the rôle of the Museum to attempt to change attitudes and the approach of people to philately and postal history. This applies to collectors of all hues and academics alike.

Taking collectors first. Most collectors rely on published catalogues for their information and as a result tend to mount their stamps in "sets" according to the established catalogues. This, however, often obscures what is actually happening at any one time. With a change of tariff, for example, a whole range of stamps and other material is issued by the Royal Mail. In the Museum we have re-arranged our display of GB stamps on strictly chronological lines and thus brought back together stamps which have been otherwise sundered. This provides a completely different result and one which, in my view, is more logical and more informative. It explains the "why" as well as showing the "what".

The same applies to postal historians, or rather those who specialise in the typological study of postal markings. "Postal History" can be better defined as the "History of the Posts" and it is our, perhaps lofty, purpose to rescue it from its

present narrow field and bring it to the attention of historians in general. This entails using Post Office Archives and the myriad of files that contain much more than most conventional "postal historians" ever look at.

Even typological studies can be radically improved. We intend to publish a new catalogue of Penny Post markings based upon types covering the whole country (i.e. GB and Ireland) and taking together groups of types produced and issued at the same time. This catalogue based on our collection, should act as a standard uniting other disparate, if valuable, works. Trained as an archaeologist, I well know the value of such studies but equally know that if they are studied too narrowly or taken in isolation they can remain very dry and lacking in perspective.

Having produced the basis of a catalogue for Penny Post markings we then intend to use our collection to illustrate particular penny posts – remembering that this means, for example, the Exeter Penny Post with its many constituent offices which used the word "Penny Post" in their handstamps. There was no "Rockbeare Penny Post" despite the marking. It formed part of the Exeter system. In the same way that we seek to change thinking in the listings of GB stamps so we shall try to put postal markings into better more logical and informative systems.

Our rôle is then that of *pioneer* and resource to the wider world of scholarship.

The Future

What the future holds for the Museum is at present unclear, though our rôle in philately will continue. Of one thing I am certain we are not content to sit back and congratulate ourselves on our collections (Ref. 3) or past achievements. We are constantly seeking ways to improve, build, expand, do more and do it better!

© National Postal Museum 1995

References:

1. NPM *Annual Review*, 1988 (pp.6-8), 1989 (21-23), 1991 (13-15), 1992 (10-11) and 1993 (16-17).
2. Histories for the 1935 Silver Jubilee and 1965 Lister issues were published in the *Annual Reviews* 1992 (pp.12-16), and 1993 (18-21), the unissued George V Memorial Issue in *Cross Post*, Spring 1994.
3. The Museum also includes fine collections of overseas stamps – see Stan Goron's article "The World Before You", *British Philatelic Bulletin*, October 1993, pp.46-49.

Decimal Stamp Books - 19

Specialist Report

D G A MYALL

Retail books design change

On 10 January 1995, a major re-design of retail ("window") book covers occurred; the stamp content is unchanged. The most obvious change is the replacement of the illustration of a single stamp at the right with a cropped block of 12 at the left, shown at an angle. The position of the single stamp was determined by the design of the first window books, issued in August 1987, where a transparent window revealed one of the actual stamps from the pane inside. The new design is much more eye-catching, especially for the books of 2nd-class stamps, providing a mass of contrasting colour. The new design is to be applied to the international books, so even more distinctive covers are in the pipeline.

The other major change is the introduction of a new typeface, Stempel Garamond. This means that the large figures of content are no longer in Royal Mail's own distinctive in-line fount. Claude Garamond (1480-1561) was a celebrated designer. The original face bearing his name first appeared in books printed in 1532. It belongs to the group of faces classified by typographers as "old face" or "old style". The family is a large one and includes faces such as Bembo (used to print the *Bulletin*) and Caslon. It marks a development from faces which are calligraphic in origin to those owing more to the shapes formed by a chisel. There are many models of Garamond, and the Stempel foundry produced their version in 1924. The original numerals were non-lining, i.e., they did not align on the baseline. In these, the figure 1 looked like a capital letter I. The set used for the new books are known as lining numerals with a modern-looking numeral 1. These numerals will eventually be used on the covers of the machine-vend books.

Marker bars

The two Harrison books (4 x 2nd; 10 x 1st) have a black marker bar on the spine of every 25th book. This is to make it easy for packers to extract the right quantity from the chute, as the books are packed in 50s with half facing the opposite way to the others. Marker bars have



10 x 1st Harrison with black marker bar at left

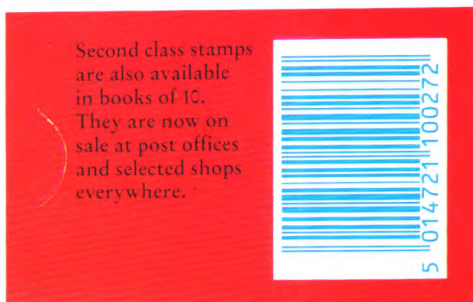
long been used on the covers of machine-vend books and the former counter books but this is the first time that they have been printed on window books.

Barcodes

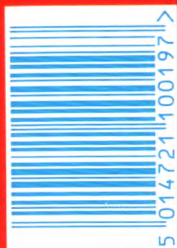
The blue barcodes on the outside back covers have unchanged numbers, whichever printer they come from, but are now printed in a much larger size and are set vertically instead of horizontally. The bundles of 50 books now have their own barcodes, to facilitate the handling of orders. These are printed in black on white labels stuck onto the clear plastics used for shrink-wrapping the bundles.

What is especially interesting about these barcodes is that they enable the printer of unopened books to be identified, despite the fact that they all use the same barcode number for the same product. Some specialist collectors purchase bundles of books and by a process of

Bar codes on 4 x 2nd Harrison



Look out for our greetings stamps. They are now on sale at post offices and selected shops everywhere.



10 x 1st Walsall (with > symbol at right of number)

elimination you can tell which books from the bundles are from which printer without opening the books. The secret involves what is known as a light margin indicator, the >-shaped symbol which sometimes appears at the right of the number. The 12 barcodes for the six new books and the six bundles are given in the following table, showing which have a light margin indicator. Only the changeable part of the numbers is quoted.

	Harrison	Questa	Walsall
4 x 2nd – book	100272	—	—
4 x 2nd – bundle of 50	101200	—	—
4 x 1st – book	—	—	100180 >
4 x 1st – bundle of 50	—	—	101187 >
10 x 2nd – book	—	100265	—
10 x 2nd – bundle of 50	—	101194 >	—
10 x 1st – book	101197	101197	101197 >
10 x 1st – bundle of 50	101170	101170 >	101170 >

It can be seen that Harrisons do not use the > symbol at all; Questa use it only on the bundles; Walsall use it on both books and bundles. So a bundle without the symbol must contain Harrison books. Bundles with the sign but containing books without it are Questa's. The rest are Walsall's.

The cylinder or plate numbers seen on the January books are:

Harrison – 4 x 2nd B6 phosphor B95; 10 x 1st B5
Questa – 10 x 2nd Q17 Q17 phos Q2; 10 x 1st
Q4 Q4 phos Q2

Walsall – 4 x 1st W20 W29 W29 and W21 W29

W29; 10 x 1st W35 W23 W28 While on the subject of barcodes, readers might like to know that the 4 x 60p sample book (the non-Christmas version) has been printed with a barcode and found its way into retailers' shops. The number is 101897> and is printed in blue. It is the large, horizontal, type.

Tab cuts

Another way of distinguishing the work of the three printers of the new type of retail book is by the size of the rounded tab cuts. Those on Questa books are small; on Harrison books they are mid-size; on Walsall's they are large.

Validity, postcode and other messages

The wording of the validity message varies slightly to cater for 1st- and 2nd-class NVIs but their overseas validity is now officially extended 'to any country, provided the full cost of postage is paid for the item'. (The full text of these messages was reproduced on page 100 of the December 1994 *Bulletin*.)

All six new books carry the revised postcode message first introduced in the Questa books of last August.

The outside back covers inform the public about the availability of other stamp books. The 4 x 2nd-class book states: "Second class stamps are also available in books of 10. They are now on sale at post offices and selected shops everywhere" The 10 x 2nd-class book states: "First class stamps are also available in books of 10. They are now on sale at post offices and selected shops everywhere." The same message appears on the covers of the 4 x 1st-class book. The three books of 10 x 1st-class stamps carry an identical message: "Look out for our greetings stamps. They are now on sale at post offices and selected shops everywhere."

New Walsall 4 x 2nd

Due for release on 6 December but available from shops from late November, a new book of 4 x 2nd-class stamps printed by Walsall made an unexpected appearance. It was printed from plates W11 W13 and was the first Walsall printing of this book since June 1993. It has the "edition No. 2" validity and postcode messages set out here in December 1994. This book must

Front cover – 10 x 2nd Questa





Plate number pane – 4 x 2nd Walsall (6 December 1994)

be regarded as a short-lived expedient, prepared for the Christmas period; it has now been overtaken by the Harrison book mentioned earlier in this article.

Primary sheets

These are sheets produced by one complete revolution of a printing cylinder or plate, even if the stamps are not issued in sheet form. They are normally marked by an arrowhead etched into the left and right margins, to make it easy to select a complete sheet from the printed web. One of the main purposes of a primary sheet is to provide a record of new printings and one is usually registered and sent to the National Postal Museum for retention. These registration sheets are currently being re-mounted at the Museum and may be seen by appointment. Of particular benefit to students, is the ability to take a photocopy of such sheets.

Registration sheets often solve problems for collectors who are puzzled by some aspects of production. As an example, I was asked recently what was the ratio of cylinder to non-cylinder books for some of the special issue books. Since the registration sheets show not only the cylinder numbers used but also their position and frequency (some occur more than once on the cylinder and these can be of different sizes) it was a simple matter to provide the answer. Here are the primary sheet sizes used for Christmas and Greetings books for the past two years or so. In each case, except the 1994 book of 1st-class Christmas stamps, there was only one cylinder book per sheet. All consisted of a single column of panes except where noted.

Book	Number of rows	Notes
Greetings 1992, Memories	9	
Christmas 1992, 20 x 18p	9	

Greetings 1993, Gift Giving	10	
Christmas 1993, 10 x 25p	8	1
Christmas 1993, 20 x 19p	8	
Greetings 1994, Messages	8	
Christmas 1994, 10 x 25p	8	2
Christmas 1994, 20 x 19p	8	

Notes

1. There were two columns on the cylinder but the right-hand one consisted only of blank labels overprinted with black bars
2. There were two columns on the cylinder, each with a set of cylinder numbers; those in the right-hand column had a dot after each number.

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Forthcoming Issues

Listed below are the proposed issues for the next six months. Any changes to dates will be notified in the Bulletin.

7 Feb	50p book Sea Charts 1
7 Feb	£1 book Inspiration for Victory 1
7 Feb	£2 book Rowland Hill 1
14 Feb	10 x 1st book, W Chocolate Promotion
7 Mar	Springtime stamp cards
14 Mar	Springtime stamps & pack
4 Apr	Scot aerogramme – Glasgow School of Art
4 Apr	50p book Sea Charts 2
4 Apr	£1 book Inspiration for Victory 2
4 Apr	£2 book Rowland Hill 2
4 Apr	National Trust stamp cards
11 Apr	National Trust stamps & pack
11 Apr	NT gift pack
25 Apr	NT Prestige Stamp Book
2 May	Peace & Freedom stamp cards
5 May	NPM postcards (Victoriana)
9 May	Peace & Freedom stamps & pack
16 May	£1 machine book – R J Mitchell
16 May	4 x 1st book – R J Mitchell
16 May*	4 x 35p book New Style
16 May*	4 x 41p book New style
16 May*	4 x 60p book New Style
30 May	Science Fiction stamp cards
6 Jun	Science Fiction stamps & pack
6 Jun	50p book Sea Charts 3
6 Jun	£2 book Rowland Hill 3
18 Jul	Aerogramme – Prehistoric Scotland

Notes:

- H = printed by Harrison & Sons
 Q = printed by House of Questa
 W = printed by Walsall Security Printers
 * = date to be confirmed.

Royal Mail News

Springtime Stamps

Five stamps on the theme of Springtime will go on sale at post offices, and philatelic outlets on 14 March. This completes the "Four Seasons" series begun with the Wintertime stamps in 1992, and continued with Autumn in 1993 and Summertime in 1994.

The designs are based on photographs of unusual but impressive 3-D sculptures by Andy Goldsworthy – created in situ during the season of Spring. The **19p** stamp (inland basic 2nd class rate) depicts Dandelions; the **25p** value (basic inland 1st class and EU rate) features Sweet chestnut leaves.



Garlic and Hazel leaves are respectively depicted on the **30p** and **35p** values which cover the basic rate for European, non-EU countries and overseas postcard rate.

The subject of the final stamp, **41p** (basic airmail letter rate) is Spring grass.

The sheets now include the inscription "SALE DATE 14-03-95" twice in the top and lower sheet margins. This innovation began with the Cats issue in January.

This is the second issue devoted to the Spring season – four stamps issued in March 1979 featured Spring Wild Flowers (SG 1079/82). A posy of Spring flowers was depicted on the 3d value in the 1963 National Nature Week issue (637).

Technical Details

Printers: Harrison & Sons Ltd

Process: Photogravure

Size: 41 x 30mm

Sheets: 100

Perforation: 15 x 14

Phosphor: 19p – one phosphor band
25p-41p two phosphor bands

Paper: OBA free (OBA =
Optical Brightening Agent)

Gum: PVA Dextrin

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 14 March, price 25p.

The Bureau will provide a first day cover service – collectors may order the Royal Mail cover bearing the stamps, cancelled with a pictorial "First Day of Issue" postmark of the Bureau or Springfield, Fife, price £2.18 (including VAT) to UK addresses, £1.86 to overseas addresses (no VAT). Orders for first day covers must be received at the Bureau by 14 March 1995.





Mrs J Robinson
200 Manorbier Road
ILKESTON
Derbyshire
DE7 4AB

Collectors may send their own stamped covers on the day of issue, for the Bureau or Springfield cancels, to: British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, EDINBURGH EH3 5TT or Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, George Square, GLASGOW G2 1AA (for Springfield postmark). The outer envelope should be endorsed "FD953" (Bureau), or "FD954" (Springfield).

First Day Posting Boxes will be provided at most main post offices for collectors who wish to post covers to receive the standard, non-pictorial "First Day of Issue" handstamps.

Details of other special handstamps, sponsored by Royal Mail, stamp dealers and others, will be found in the *British Postmark Bulletin* – the Royal Mail's magazine for postmark collectors. It is available on subscription from the British Philatelic Bureau:

£10 UK and Europe; £21.75 Rest of World (Airmail).

Collectors are reminded that it will be in order to affix just the 19p Springtime stamp to covers to receive all special cancels ("First Day of Issue", sponsored and philatelic counters), in use on 14 March. The minimum 1st class rule is suspended on this day as the Springtime set includes a 2nd class rate stamp. It should be noted that this concession applies only to the 19p Springtime stamp; covers bearing other than Springtime stamps must bear at least 1st class postage.

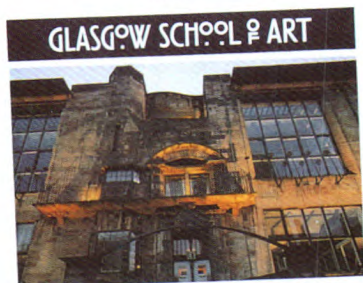
Presentation Pack and Stamp Cards

The usual pack (price £1.85) and stamp cards (25p each) will be available from the Bureau, Post Office Counters philatelic outlets and main post offices.

Glasgow School of Art Aerogramme

The first Scottish aerogramme of 1995 marks the 150th anniversary of the Glasgow School of Art. Designed by Richard Smith, the aerogramme will be available from post offices in Scotland, the British Philatelic Bureau, and Post Office Counters philatelic outlets, from 4 April. Price 45p. An article on the School of Art will be published in next month's Bulletin.

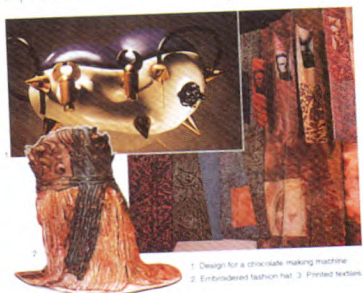
Drawing of Glasgow, capturing everything. Great aerogramme is based on this wonderful activity.



At the heart of the campus is the Glasgow Tenesse Macintosh Building



The Glasgow School of Art was founded in 1845 as a Government School of Design. Towards the end of the 19th century, the study and practice of Fine Art and Architecture joined the curriculum. The School has occupied its present site since 1899.



1. Design for a chocolate-making machine. 2. Embroidered fashion hat. 3. Printed text.



Detail of workroom at front of the school



Painting studio

Design in steel plate and encaustic aluminium



1. 100 refrigerators

Designed by Michael Peckers
Printed by McEwan and the Edinburgh Printers
for the British Post Office

TELEPHONE 0141 801 1111 FAX 0141 801 1112

By air mail
Par avion
Aerogramme

An airmail letter
Lettre a l'air



RECEIVED BY THE ROYAL MAIL

Sender's name and address (Name is essential in registration)
Please enclose a return address (if any)

Postmark
and a place

An aerogramme should not contain
any enclosure. No post date. No return
in the back of the card.

With thanks to the staff and students
of The Glasgow School of Art whose
work is featured in this aerogramme
is the copyright of the individuals.



Designed by Michael Peckers
Printed by McEwan and the Edinburgh Printers
for the British Post Office

TELEPHONE 0141 801 1111 FAX 0141 801 1112

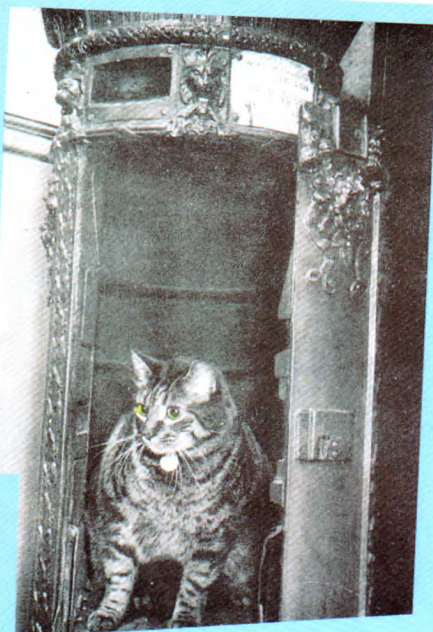
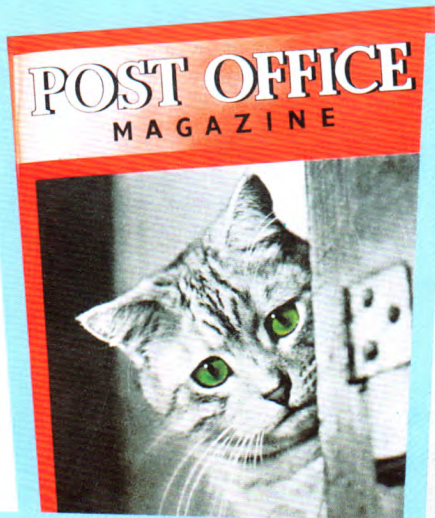
The School continues to provide a central role in
the education of inventive and highly creative
artists, designers and architects.
The School has been a significant
influence on the renaissance of
Glasgow as a cultural centre,
and remains one of the few
independent art
schools.



1. 100 refrigerators

NPM "Postal Cats" Postcards

Shown here are the four "Postal Cats" postcards issued by the National Postal Museum on 17 January. The cards are available to callers at the Museum shop, price 25p each, or by post from the British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, EDINBURGH EH3 5TT, price £1 per set. The Museum, situated in King Edward Street, London EC1 (near St Paul's Cathedral) is open Monday-Friday 9.30am-4.30pm. Admission free.



BRITISH STAMP DESIGN 1993

The Work of the Stamp Advisory Committee



1996 Stamp Programme

The Post Office Board has recently approved the subjects for special stamps in 1996.

These will be:

Robert Burns	January
Wildfowl and Wetland Trust	March
To be announced	April
European Football Championships	June
Olympic Games	July
POSTEUROP: Women of Achievement	August
Children's Television	September
Cars	October
Christmas	October/November

Please note that the months of issue, given above, are subject to change. Further information will be published in this magazine later in the year.

The Robert Burns stamps commemorate the bicentenary of the poet's death. The 1996 European Football Championships are being staged in England, culminating in the final at Wembley in June. Two 50th anniversaries are being commemorated – the broadcasting of special programmes for children and of the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust.

Bulletin readers who wish to submit ideas for special stamp issues in 1998 and 1999 should write to: The Secretary, Stamp Advisory

Committee, Royal Mail, 22 Finsbury Square, LONDON EC2A 1LN. Please remember that events/anniversaries suggested should be of national or international significance. The criteria for issue of special stamps was published here in October 1994, page 38, where a list of the members of the Stamp Advisory Committee was also published. Baroness Dean has now left the Committee, being replaced by Mr Simon Heffer, Deputy Editor of *The Daily Telegraph*. All designs selected by the SAC go before HM The Queen for Royal approval before issue.

The work of the SAC on the special issues of 1992 and 1993 has been published: *The Royal Mail Stamp Advisory Committee* (1992 issues) costs £9.87; *British Stamp Design 1993* (1993 issues) price £4.99. Both are still available from: British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, EDINBURGH EH3 5TT.

New Stamp Books

Collectors of new stamp books are reminded that three new machine-vended books will be available from the Bureau and Post Office Counters Ltd philatelic outlets from 7 February. These begin new cover design series: 50p Sea Charts, £1 "Inspiration for Victory", £2 Sir Rowland Hill. Readers may be interested in some background information about the people to be featured in the £1 series.

Violette Szabo (1921-45) was a noted heroine, working with the French Resistance to save many lives. She was born in Paris, of a British father. She was shot in 1945 and posthumously awarded both the George Cross (the highest civilian honour for gallantry) and the French Crois du Guerre Palm.

Reginald Joseph Mitchell (1895-1937) was born at Stoke on Trent and worked as an aircraft designer in the supermarine factory in Southampton. He was awarded the Silver Medal of the Royal Aeronautical Society in 1927, in recognition of his share in the British Schneider Cup seaplane victory in Venice, and the CBE in 1932 for his services to aviation. He is best remembered as the designer of the Spitfire, the most famous plane in the Battle of Britain.

Dame Vera Lynn was born in East Hampstead in 1917 and is still remembered with great affection as the "Forces' Sweetheart"; her name is synonymous with the songs "We'll Meet Again" and "The White Cliffs of Dover". She was given the freedom of the City of London in 1978 and created DBE in 1975.

Sir Archibald McIndoe (1900-60), a highly regarded plastic surgeon, was born in New

Zealand. He is best known for his work at the Queen Victoria Hospital in East Grinstead Sussex where he carried out pioneering work in plastic surgery on some 600 airmen. He founded the Guinea Pig Club for his patients, some of whom still meet annually.

Royal Mail tests new vending machine

Shown here is a prototype vending machine selling stamp books, first day covers, presentation packs, etc. Six machines were tested at sites in London between April and October 1994. The trial sites were at four post offices – St John's Wood, NW8 Ealing Broadway, W5; Broadgate Circus, EC2; and 54 Great Portland Street, W1 – and two outside locations – Whiteleys of Bayswater (department store), W2 and Earl's Court Exhibition Centre, SW5

A new prototype machine will be tested during 1995 and if this proves satisfactory for customers and Royal Mail, a national launch of such machines may go ahead in 1996.



High Value Plate Numbers

New printings have been made of the Castle High Values giving an "enhanced image". Illustrations showing the differences in the £5 printings were published here in October (page 37). Lionel Jones of the National Postal Museum reports the following plate numbers for two of the "enhanced" stamps in the Museum's collection:

£1.50 – 2DD, 2EE, 2FF, 2GG
£5 – 5B, 5C, 5F, 5G, 5O, 5P



Priority Services

Priority Services introduced on Islands

Royal Mail launched its Priority Services – Special Delivery, Registered, Registered Plus, and Recorded Delivery – in June 1993. A series of new service labels and envelopes were introduced and are available at post offices. The envelopes are available to collectors from the British Philatelic Bureau.

The Guernsey, Jersey and Isle of Man postal administrations have now adopted the Royal Mail priority services, using the same labels as on the mainland. Some of the labels used on Guernsey are rubber stamped on the reverse: PLEASE NOTE NOT ALL ADDITIONAL SERVICES AND GUARANTEES ARE AVAILABLE FROM THE GUERNSEY POST OFFICE.

Guernsey have introduced three sizes of "Priority Service" envelopes, sold at 20p, 25p and 30p each. Stamps to cover the postage and priority service fee have to be affixed. These envelopes can be ordered from the Guernsey Philatelic Bureau, Postal Headquarters, St Peter Port, GUERNSEY, Channel Islands, GY1 1AB. Jersey and the Isle of Man are using the Royal Mail priority service envelopes although Jersey plan to issue their own envelopes in due course.

We are obliged to N J Creed, A R White and P A Clucus of the Guernsey, Jersey and Isle of Man post offices and to *Bulletin* reader Arthur Roberts for the information in this report.

New Swiftpacks

New printings of the Royal Mail International DL and C5 size Swiftpacks have recently gone into distribution and should now be available at all main post offices. These packs are now produced in a "plastic" material, similar to the large C4 size pack. The packs now bear a redesigned Swiftair label. The packs cost £3 (DL), £3.25 (C5) and £4 (C4) and prepay postage and Swiftair fee up to 50, 100 and 150g respectively. Please note that Swiftpacks are not stocked by the British Philatelic Bureau or Post Office Counters Ltd philatelic outlets.

New "StampMaster" computer software for stamp collectors

"StampMaster GB", the computerised stamp database and data management programme for philatelists, was launched early last year and is extremely popular with collectors. The programme was reviewed here in April 1994 (pages 218-9).

An enhanced version 2.0 is now available from the British Philatelic Bureau. This includes full details of all the 1994 stamp issues, a 1200 question philatelic quiz (compiled by Dr Jack Goodwin), revised values for mint and used stamps, additional customisation possibilities (six user-defined fields on the stamp details screen), the ability to export reports to word-processing files and easier backups, searching and reporting, including wants and swap lists. A few mistakes noticed in the original version have been corrected. The DOS-Version 2.0 costs £49.95 – the same price as the original.

Collectors who want to update and upgrade their existing programme can purchase an update disk which contains all 1994 stamp issue details and NPM data, the quiz, the revised values and programme enhancements for just £14.95.

At the same time a new product "StampMaster General" will be available. This is a collection management programme without any preprogrammed data. This product will be especially suitable for collectors of stamps of other countries. It will enable collectors to enter their own records and provide the same full reporting and searching facilities as on "StampMaster GB". "StampMaster General" is only available as a DOS-version and will retail at £39.95.

Another new product is the Macintosh version of "StampMaster GB" which will work on the same principle as the DOS version of "StampMaster GB". It too will cost £49.95.

All orders for "StampMaster" products should be sent to: British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, EDINBURGH EH3 5TT. "StampMaster" is produced in conjunction with Royal Mail by Philatelic Software Ltd. to whom general enquiries should be addressed: Philatelic Software Ltd., Valley View, Coleman's Lane, NAZEING, Essex EN9 2EA, Helpline Tel: 0992-893086, Fax: 0992-892729.

It is hoped to have a demonstration model of "StampMaster" with stamp illustrations available for viewing at Spring Stampex (28 February-5 March).

Stamp Pyramids available at Post Shops

Stamp Pyramids, containing a current British stamp set in Crown quality optical glass, were introduced in 1992 and have proved popular gifts for philatelists and non-collectors alike. Up to now purchasers have had to order from the British Philatelic Bureau in Edinburgh. Now stamp pyramids can be seen at and ordered through Post Shops Plus and Collections, run by Post Office Counters, in 30 main post offices (listed below).

Orders taken at these Counters outlets will be forwarded to the Bureau and the pyramid posted to the Post Shop for collection.

Pyramids can be made up to collector's requirements – containing any current British stamp, as available from the Bureau.

Pyramids cost £24.95 each and can be produced with any current Definitive (except £10), Country, Special or Greeting stamp. Special stamps currently available include all 1994 issues (except Age of Steam). The £10 stamp is available as a "Britannia Paperweight", price £39.95, from the Bureau.

Orders can, of course, still be sent direct to: British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, EDINBURGH EH3 5TT.

Post Shops Plus and Collections

New Bond Street PO, BATH BA1 1AJ
25 Castle Place PO, BELFAST BT1 1BB
51 Ship Street PO, BRIGHTON BN1 1AA
1 Pinfold Street PO, BIRMINGHAM B2 4AA
The Galleries PO, Castle Galleries, BRISTOL BS1 3XX
9 St Andrews Street PO, CAMBRIDGE CB2 3AA
2 Hills Street PO, CARDIFF CF1 2ST (C)
2 St John Street PO, CHESTER CH1 1AA
19 Head Street PO, COLCHESTER CO1 1AA
Hertford Street PO, COVENTRY CV1 1AD
10 High Street PO, CROYDON CR9 1HT
33 Silver Street, DURHAM DH1 3RE
George Square PO, GLASGOW G2 1AA
Kings Square PO, GLOUCESTER GL1 1AD
North Street PO, GUILDFORD GU1 4BB
City Square PO, LEEDS LS1 2UH
4 Bishops Street PO, LEICESTER LE1 6AJ
Whitechapel PO, LIVERPOOL L1 1AA
Trafalgar Square PO, William IV Street, LONDON WC2N 4DL
26 Spring Gardens PO, MANCHESTER M2 1BB
24 Sidgate PO, Eldon Square, NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE NE1 7AB
Queen Street PO, NOTTINGHAM NG1 2BN
5 St Andrews Cross PO, PLYMOUTH PL1 1AB

Slindon Street PO, PORTSMOUTH PO1 1AB
64 South Street PO, ROMFORD RM1 1RL
12 High Street PO, SOUTHAMPTON SO14 2PH
199 High Street PO, SOUTHEND ON SEA SS1 1LL
2 Henley Street PO, STRATFORD UPON AVON
CV37 6PU
Peascod Street PO, WINDSOR SL4 1AA
22 Lendal PO, YORK YO1 2DA

Please note that Royal Mail accepts no liability for stamps lost or damaged in the manufacture of pyramids and no stamp of more than £10 in value will be accepted.

NPM Postcard Programme

The National Postal Museum will issue five cards on 5 May to coincide with the opening of its Victorian exhibition. A set of four featuring Uniforms (Guarding the Mail) will follow on 8 August, day of issue of the Shakespeare stamps, with a final set of four coinciding with the issue of Christmas stamps on 31 October 1995.

Priority Services Competition

Until the end of March, customers purchasing a Special Delivery, Registered or Registered Plus item at a post office can enter a competition to win a two week holiday in Mauritius, or one of 1000 disposable cameras. Watch out for leaflets and/or posters at your local post office.

Post Office Archives Postcards

The Post Office Archives & Records Centre has available the following postcard sets:

Issue 2 – Four Second World War savings bank posters showing the three main services in action along with the home front.

Issue 3 – Four “Fores’s Coaching Recollections” – mail coach scenes of the 1840s by Charles Cooper Henderson.

Issue 4 – Four 1935 John Armstrong posters issued by the Post Office to schools.

Issue 5 – Four 1948 Grace Golden posters depicting the work of Post Office staff in London.

Issue 6 – Four poster designs by J Ramsey Wherrett depicting the activities of PO staff.

Issue 7 – Novelty postcard – reproduction Edwardian novelty card to commemorate the centenary of the picture postcard.

Note: issue 1 – seven cards on general postal history (uniforms, airmail and pillar box) is now sold out.

Price £1 per set, issues 2-6; issue 7 single card, price 85p. Please add 60p handling charge on all orders; remittances payable to “The Post Office”.

Allow 28 days for delivery. Orders/enquiries: Post Office Archives & Records Centre, Mount Pleasant Complex (Phoenix Place entrance), LONDON EC1A 1BB.

Details of PO Historical Miniatures and Steel Engravings available from PO Archives will be given next month.

Stamp designer exhibition

Andy Goldsworthy, designer of the Springtime stamps, is currently participating in “The Time Machine” exhibition in the Department of Egyptian Antiquities at the British Museum in London. His installation, using 30 tons of sand made into a serpent-like shape which wound its way around the ancient Egyptian sculptures, was constructed in one night and before being dismantled two days later, was photographed for the exhibition poster. “The Time Machine” exhibition closes on 25 February.

Presentation Packs and First Day Covers from W H Smith

Readers may wish to note that Special Stamps presentation packs and first day covers will be available from 240 selected branches of W H Smith. These Royal Mail philatelic products made their first appearance with the Cats stamps last month. The Cats presentation pack is priced £1.85, as it is in post offices. The first day cover is fully serviced (i.e. with stamps already affixed and cancelled with the Kitts Green pictorial postmark) and is priced £2.95. Both are enclosed in a protective outer sachet.

As with Gift Packs, introduced on trial last year, the objective is to bring philatelic products (and therefore the hobby) to a wider audience by making them available through a “mainstream” retailer and packaging them so that they can be displayed on a self-service shelf, just like any other product. Royal Mail see this as a very important development if we are to attract more people (particularly youngsters) into the hobby.

Record Christmas for The Post Office

Royal Mail handled the largest ever number of Christmas letters and cards in 1994 – by Christmas Eve some 1¼ billion items had been delivered – 64 million more than in 1993. The busiest single day was 12 December when 124 million items were posted – nearly double the normal daily total. Parcelforce handled some 64 million parcels, and Post Office Counters Ltd’s 200 postshops sold some 4 million Christmas cards and over 200 miles of gift-wrap.

Stamp Scene

Spring Stampex 1995 – Austrapex

Spring Stampex 1995, the National Stamp Exhibition, will be held from 28 February to 5 March in both halls of the Royal Horticultural Society in Westminster. The show will be dedicated to the stamps of Australia, under the title "Austrapex".

The show is being supported by Australia Post, Crown Agents Stamp Bureau, British Society of Australian Philately and Stampex Ltd. Rare archival material will be on display from the Royal Philatelic Society and the British Library. The famous Western Australia "Inverted Frame 4 Penny Blue Swan" will be on show at Austrapex. Only 14 examples are known to exist, if one came up at auction it would be expected to fetch over £30,000.



THE BRITISH NATIONAL STAMP EXHIBITION



SPRING STAMPEX — AUSTRAPEX 1995 28TH FEBRUARY — 5TH MARCH

THE ROYAL HORTICULTURAL HALLS, GREYCOAT STREET SW1
THE BIGGEST AND BEST SHOW HELD ANNUALLY
FOR COMPLIMENTARY TICKETS PLEASE CALL 0171-490 1005

An Australian pavilion is planned where Australian States governments in London will participate with displays related to their territories. Companies in this country who specialise in the distribution of Australian produce will also attend, and a wine tasting from leading wholesalers, Hardy Wines, is planned for the weekend.

In recognition of our Australian theme, Stampex Limited is sponsoring an extremely rare Leadbeater Possum at London Zoo, and a display of photographs of the possum will be on view at Stampex. London Zoo has been outstandingly successful in its captive breeding programmes of Australian Marsupials.

Many events are being planned and it is hoped that Rolf Harris will open the show on the first day. Other dignitaries will be attending Stampex.

Over 120 stamp dealers and postal administrations will be present at Spring

Stampex. Royal Mail will cancel all mail posted at the show with a special exhibition handstamp. Dealers will be happy to offer advice on any aspect of stamp collecting and visitors are invited to bring stamps to the show for free evaluations.

For complimentary tickets and further information please contact Lindsay Towle at the Stampex office on 071-490 1005. Tickets also available by sending stamped self-addressed envelope to: STAMPEX, 107 Charterhouse Street, LONDON EC1M 6PT.

Stampex Standholders

Hall One

194 John Auld	227 Michael Hale
196 A & D Philatelics	228 Alan Rothwell
205 Lindner Publications	233 Prinz Publications
206 Ian Perry	234 Tom Green Associates
207 Alan Berman	235 Jacques C Schiff, Jr.
208 Steven Scott	236 Wolfgang de Souza
210 Barry Oliver	237 Muscotts
211 Alan Cooper	239 Continental Stamp Supplies
213 Werner Wetzell	240 Philat O.M.
214 Webster Stickney	242 Bath Postal Museum
215 E & F Stamps	243 Carmichael & Todd
216 Paul Styllis Ltd	245 Post Office Archives
217 Grahame Mann	246 Afinsa
218 Derek Fulluck	247 Gibraltar Post Office
219 Enfield Stamp Co.	249 Cyprus Post Office
220 Bushell & Wright	250 G Robbe Ltd
221 Richard Arundel Ltd	252 Andrew Lajer
222 Wimbledon Stamp Co.	253 Scojo Stamps
223 Wharfedale Stamps	254 National Postal Museum
224 L D Mayo, Jr.	255 Harry Allen
225 Peter Mollett	270 Crown Agents Stamp Bureau
226 Mark Grimley	

The "Australian Pavilion" will be in Hall One.

Hall Two

1 Vera Trinder Ltd	31 William Carson
2 David Loffstadt	32 Scotia Philately Ltd
3 Goran Fredriksson	34 Postal History Sales
4 M & S Stamps	35 Rowan S Baker
5 The Classic Collector	36 Ronald G Shelley
7 Stephen Murray	37 Hendon Stamp Co.
8 Isle of Man Post Office	38 John Rouse
9 Colonial Stamp Co.	39 Interstamp
11 Embassy Philatelists	40 Royale Stamp Co.
12 Ian Cameron	41 John M Deering
13 T Gates Postal History	42 Willard S Allman
15 Ross-Shiells Ltd	43 Beckett Philatelics
16 Candlish McCleery Ltd	44 J A L Franks Ltd
17 Cover Boys	45 H & B Philatelists Ltd
18 Murrey Payne Ltd	46 Victoria Stamp Co.
19 Martin Townsend	47 Safe Albums Ltd
20 Mike Holt	48 Argyll Etkin Limited
21 Stuart Warne	49 Amateur Collector
22 Peter C Rickenback	50 Stewart Harris
23 Rowland Hill Stamps	51 J M A Gregson Ltd
25 Ritchie Bodily	52 Peter Singer
26 Chris Rainey	53 Dale Forster
27 Stamp Magazine	54 Stanley Gibbons Ltd
28 Warwick & Warwick	55 Stanley Gibbons Ltd
29 Richardson & Copp	56 Stanley Gibbons Ltd
30 D G Forbes Smith	57 M & N Haworth

59 Livio Penco
60 Mills Philatelics
61 Harmers of London
62 Leo Baresch Ltd
63 Will Payne
64 Trevor Davis
65 Derek M Bolton
66 Phillips
67 Michael Jackson Ltd
68 Robert Danzig
69 Healey & Wise
70 Cameo Stamps Ltd
71 Holtz Internationa
72 A J H Stamps
74 House of Antiquity
75 Euro-Yu Stamp Collecting
76 Rushstamps (Retail) Ltd
77 John F Schley

78 R F Stamps & Postcards
79 Jersey Post Office
80 L W Martin, Jr.
81 Simon Andrews
82 Lighthouse/Hawid UK Ltd
84 Heiner Zinoni
85 Compass Philatelic Agency
86 Guernsey Post Office
87 Dauwalders
88 Christoph Gartner
89 Tony & Judith Bellew
90 Rushstamps (Retail) Ltd
91 Royal Mail
92 A G Bond
93 W P Bird
94 Stephen J Sayer
95 Folkestone Stamps
96 Michael Chipperfield

Stamp '95

Work is now at an advanced stage on the Stamp '95 exhibition to be held in the spacious Hall 3 of the Wembley Exhibition Centre, 27-30 April 1995. At the time of writing over 50 dealers and postal administrations had booked stands. Royal Mail will be there, as will the Crown Agents and representatives of post offices from as far afield as Vietnam and Tuvalu. Admission to the exhibition will be free and ample cheap car parking will be available nearby. The opening hours are 12.00-20.00 27 April, 10.30-19.00 28-29 April, and 10.30-17.00 30 April. The Exhibition Centre is a short distance from Wembley Park underground station but for those who dislike walking, a free shuttle bus will run from the station to the exhibition.

Auctioneers will be on hand to identify and value stamps and leading experts will give seminars. A charity stamp auction is being arranged for the last day.

Children – whether stamp collectors or not –

will be most welcome at Stamp '95 and the organisers are arranging a supervised children's area and free junior visitor packs. Hopefully some youngsters will be recruited into the hobby.

The organisers have not stinted on promotion of the exhibition with advertisements in the philatelic press and mailings to many thousands of known collectors. Over 150,000 complimentary tickets will be available for mailing to interested collectors in mid-March. If you don't get such a free ticket, don't worry – simply turn up at the exhibition as entry is free to all.

Already many clubs and societies have expressed an interest in the exhibition and the organisers hope they will take advantage of the seminars being arranged. The exhibition is to be promoted by a London poster campaign and by a postmark slogan. By April all collectors should be aware of Stamp '95.

It is hoped to organise local radio broadcasts, possibly with a phone-in. The organisers feel it is very important that the media be encouraged to cover more philatelic events which should lead to bigger attendances.

A die cast replica 1920 Model "T" Ford van with the Stamp 95 logo on the side panels has been produced in a limited edition of 2500. Each is supplied in a presentation box with numbered limited edition slip. Price £7.95, postage £2.50. Orders to: Stanley Gibbons Ltd, Parkside, RINGWOOD, Hants, BH24 3SH, Tel. credit card orders: 0800-611622.

Wembley is of sporting and philatelic significance. The 1948 Olympics and 1966 World Cup final were staged here – both commemorated by special stamps. Of even

greater importance to GB collectors was the 1924/5 Empire Exhibition which gave rise to our first special stamps – issued on 23 April 1924, almost 71 years to the day before the opening of Stamp 95. Nicknamed "the Wemblies", these stamps, and related postal stationery and postmarks, are still popular with many collectors and are the subject of numerous specialised collections and published works. Parts of some of the Empire Exhibition buildings survive and a video "Walk round Wembley" to be shown at Stamp '95 will point out places of interest in the vicinity. Hopefully the late April weather will be good and encourage visitors to look round



Wembley once they have toured Stamp '95.

The excellent facilities of the Wembley Exhibition Centre make this a good location for a new style exhibition. It is hoped that the trade, philatelic societies and individual collectors will rally to make it a success and the first of many.

St Kilda Mailboats

Alan Knowles wrote following publication of Richard Beith's article on St Kilda in the November 1994 *Bulletin*. He reminds us that in emergencies inhabitants of this remote island sent off messages in a "mailboat" constructed out of driftwood in the shape of a ship and attached to an inflated sheep's bladder to keep it afloat. The boat was greased to keep it waterproof and "Please Open" burnt into the wood to alert the finder to the letter(s) enclosed within. The boats were launched into the ocean and landfall could be anywhere in the Western Isles, Orkney, Shetland or even Norway.



Mr Knowles writes: "I was privileged to be a member of a working party to St Kilda in 1981 organised by the National Trust for Scotland. On that working party the leader, Dr Peter Raine of Glasgow, decided to reconstruct a mailboat, a plastic bottle taking the place of the sheep's bladder. Members of the party, including myself, placed stamped letters in the boat and duly launched it – and sure enough it was picked up off Strathy Point, half way along the north Scottish coast and over 200 miles from St Kilda. My wife received the letter at our home some four weeks after the launch. Dr Raine had launched mailboats on several previous occasions, always with complete success."

The photograph, submitted by Mr Knowles, shows this 1981 mailboat. The cover he mentions was launched on 8 August 1981; recovered by a lobster fisherman and posted near Thurso on 2 September 1981.

Down under...

The *Southern Cross* newspaper for Australasians

abroad reports that stamp lover Bev Andrew of Timaru, New Zealand licked 217 stamps in just four minutes in the Christchurch section of the national stamp licking finals in October 1994. She out-licked Glen Patchett of Auckland by 29 stamps!

The same newspaper reports a pre-tax profit of A\$287 million by Australia Post in 1993/4 – nearly 7% up on 1992/3. Chairman Maurice Williams said profits were rising, even with the 45c freeze on stamp prices until January 1997, because the group was diversifying into other profitable areas and improving productivity. Some 40% of revenue and 50% of profit now comes from areas where Australia Post competes with the private sector.

Railway Letter Stamps

The Nene Valley and North Yorkshire Moors railways are hosting a seminar on Railway Letter Stamps at the Great Northern Hotel, Peterborough on 25 March. This will provide an opportunity for operators of the service and collectors of their stamps to meet and exchange ideas. There will be a number of guest speakers, and displays of railway letter stamps and covers.

Railway letter stamps were first issued in 1891 as a result of an agreement between the Post Office and over 70 railway companies. The service continued after the grouping of railways into the "Big Four" companies in 1923 and nationalisation in 1948. British Rail withdrew the service in 1984 but it is still operated by a number of preserved railways, members of the Association of Independent Railways Ltd. Under the agreement with Royal Mail, letters of up to 150g can be carried by train. In addition to the relevant postage a railway letter fee is payable, 25p, 50p or 75p depending on weight. The railways operating the service issue 25p stamps. These stamps have a dedicated following and new issues are reported here from time to time. The Nene Valley Railway introduced railway letter stamps in 1986, the North Yorkshire Moors Railway in 1981.

Readers interested in attending this seminar should contact Phil Jones, Nene Valley Railway, Wansford Station, Stibbington, PETERBOROUGH PE8 6LR, Tel. 0733-266839 (evenings).

Both the NVR and NYMR will be issuing stamps to coincide with this seminar. The NYMR stamp will feature Schools class locomotive "Repton", reproducing a photograph taken by Martyn Fry. For details of NYMR stamps and covers write to: Mrs M Atkins, 5

Tiber View, Brinsworth, ROTHERHAM, S Yorkshire, S60 5EA.

Use of Victorian stamps

Mr Buerdell's cover bearing a Victorian 1d stamp posted in 1935, illustrated here in September 1994 (page 11) generated a lot of interest. According to Vol. 2 of the Stanley Gibbons *Great Britain Specialised Stamp Catalogue* (9th edition, p.1), Victorian stamps were invalidated on 1 July 1915.

Anthony Price of London sent in a photocopy of a cover he has bearing ½d stamps of Victoria, Edward VII, George V, Edward VIII and George VI all clearly postmarked LONDON WC on 13 May 1937, day of issue of the George VI ½d stamp (SG 462).

Johannes Fritzsche of Leipzig, Germany sent in a photocopy of a cover he posted home whilst on business in London in 1955. The cover bears a George V 1d "Downey Head" definitive, 1d Silver Jubilee commemorative, George VI 1d Channel Islands Liberation commemorative and Elizabeth II 1d Wilding definitive. The last two were machine cancelled London, 12 July 1955 but the two George V stamps missed cancellation in the UK. Somewhat unusually they were cancelled on arrival in Germany with a Leipzig handstamp. As Herr Fritzsche points out a "cover curiosity" indeed.

Astro Space Stamp Society Contest

The Astro Space Stamp Society again offers prizes, donated by the Crown Agents, for a friendly contest for readers with an interest in words. Simply make as many words of at least seven letters each (and listed in standard dictionaries) from (A) "Astro Space Stamp Society" and (B) "British Philatelic Bulletin". Send your entries, giving your name and address to: Words Friendly Contest, Astro Space Stamp Society, 20 Princess Park Avenue, LONDON NW11 0JP. Please state number of words submitted for (A) and (B) and date your entries. Prizes will be awarded each month for first, second and third best entries. The contest is operative for three years.

Competitors who would like details of the Society and its activities should enclose a stamped self-addressed envelope or two international reply coupons.

Philatelic Research Seminar

The Philatelic Writers Society will hold a seminar entitled "Techniques of Philatelic Research" at the Ifor Evans Hall, 109 Camden Road, London NW1 on 22 April. The speakers

will be: David Beech, Head of the Philatelic Collections, British Library; Jean Farrugia, MBE, Chief Archivist The Post Office; Tony Gammons, Research & Exhibitions Officer National Postal Museum; George Henderson, Librarian of the Portuguese Philatelic Society and the British Society of Russian Philately; and Major R W Pratt, author of *Imperial China: History of the Posts to 1896*. Each speaker will present a paper up to ½ hour long, to be followed by discussion. Short presentations will be given about the Society and the Stuart Rossiter Trust Fund – a charitable trust devoted to the study of postal history. A Philatelic Research Literature Pack will be supplied to each person attending.

Tickets for the seminar will cost £15 which includes refreshments and a buffet lunch. Overnight bed and breakfast accommodation is available at additional cost. Application forms for tickets from: A P Berry, 24 Irwin Road, GUILDFORD, Surrey, GU2 5PP.

The Philatelic Writers Society has recently made two awards – the Ronnie Spafford Trophy to Douglas Myall for his *Complete Deegam Machin Handbook*, and the Nugent Clougher Award to Richard Pratt for *Imperial China: History of the Posts to 1896*. Our congratulations to both authors.

New Large Size Stamp/Stationery Albums

Stanley Gibbons have recently launched two new albums for collectors of large size items and postal stationery. The *Sterling Stamp Album* is supplied with 50 large 328 x 250mm heavy, acid-free cartridge leaves, each printed with a feint quadrille. These pages can accommodate larger covers, blocks, postal documents and up to 35% more stamps per page than other albums. The *Sterling Stationery Album*, designed to meet the needs of the increasing number of postal stationery collectors, contains 25 giant, 346 x 274mm, polyprotec pockets with acid-free insert cards with a feint quadrille to enable easy positioning and writing up. This album houses most unfolded aerogrammes.

These albums have four-ring locking mechanism and blue leather-effect PVC padded covering. Price £29.95 each. Packs of 25 extra stamp album leaves cost £6.95, packs of 10 Stationery Album leaves £7.95. Available from Stanley Gibbons Strand shop, SG stockists and by post from Stanley Gibbons Publications, Parkside, RINGWOOD, Hants, BH24 3SH. Postage £3 UK, £6 overseas. Credit card mail order phone line: 0800 611622.

Varieties of Yesteryear – 4

1862-64 Small uncoloured corner letters: The “Hair Lines” Varieties

FRED GEE

In the previous articles in this series I have described some of the more easily collectable varieties amongst the GB issues of King George V. For the varieties which are the subject of this article we go back another half century, to the early surface-printed issues of Queen Victoria's reign.

The four groups of low value definitives issued between 1855 and 1882 are usually classified according to the type of check letters in the corner of each stamp – or, in the case of the first group, by the absence of corner letters. The second group (1862-64) had small uncoloured corner letters; the next group (1865-67) again had uncoloured letters, but much larger than those of the 1862-64 stamps; while the fourth group (1873-82) had large letters, but the same colour as the stamp against an uncoloured background.

In the last two groups, printings from different plates can immediately be identified because (as with the 1d reds and 2d blues from 1858 onwards) the plate numbers were incorporated into the designs. But, of the 1862-64 group (small uncoloured corner letters), only the 1s. value had a plate number clearly incorporated into the design, the figure 1 denoting that the issued stamps were printed from plate 2. I will resist the temptation to digress into an explanation of the logic of that numbering, but by the same logic, plates 3 and 4 of the 4d of that group (the plates from which the issued stamps were produced) had the Roman numerals I and II incorporated into the

respective designs – but these Roman numerals are not always easy to pick out.

However, with this 4d, and also with the 6d and 9d of this group, there is another, more obvious, way of identifying which plate your stamp is printed from – namely, the presence, or absence, of “hair lines”. These hair lines appear as a fine white line cutting diagonally across the outermost corner of each of the boxes framing the check letters. In the printing of each of these three values two plates were used – plates 3 and 4 for the 4d and 6d, and plates 2 and 3 for the 9d – and the hair lines appeared on the second plate used for each value, but not on the first.

I must acknowledge that the 9d with hair lines cannot be classified as one of the “easily collectable” varieties – indeed, if you find this stamp in your collection, you could have hit the jackpot. Although some sheets were printed from plate 3 (i.e. the second registered plate) of the 9d, these were probably only the half dozen back-up sheets for registration and no sheets from this plate were printed for general issue. So the known copies of this variety are “abnormals” and were presumably issued (or at least, used) unofficially.

But the 4d and 6d with hair lines are *not* “abnormals”: considerable numbers of sheets were issued and used and, while they are likely to be priced a little more highly than the George V varieties described in my previous articles, they nevertheless should not be too expensive. They are not rarities, and stamps from the “hair line” plates of these two values should not cost much more than stamps from the plates without the hair lines.

While you may never come across the 9d with hair lines (except in a National Postal Museum display!), it is certainly worth looking out for the two types of the 4d and 6d – that is, with and without the hair lines.

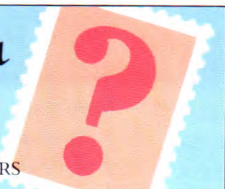
© Fred Gee 1995



Even a heavily cancelled stamp will usually have at least one corner clear enough to show the hair line, e.g. the two stamps on the right. The 6d stamp on the left does not have hair lines.

Competition

SPONSORED BY:
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* 1st prize: Great Britain 1902 King Edward VII 10s. ultramarine, attractive MINT hinged, well-centred, original gum example, SG 265, catalogued £325.

* 2nd prize: Great Britain 1840 1d black, letters RJ, fine used, 3 margins, red Maltese Cross example on small 4 October 1840 cover from Maldon to London, apparently ordering bushels of double sacks for farmers. Cat £250 on cover by SG.

* 3rd prize: Jersey 1969 10s definitive, a lovely unmounted mint example of this key value, SG 28, catalogued £30.

* 4th prize: Czechoslovakia 1961 "Praga 1962" 5k International Stamp Exhibition unmounted mint, key value, SG 1270, catalogued £24, popular with flags and thematic collectors.

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To enter the competition answer the questions below and send, with your name and address, on a postcard or back of an envelope to: February Bulletin Competition, Royal Mail, 22 Finsbury Square, LONDON EC2A 1NL to arrive by 24 March. You may submit as many entries as you like but each must be posted separately; multiple entries in one envelope will be disregarded.

1. What is the new typeface used on 1st/2nd class books issued on 10 January 1995?

2. Where might you come across a Queen Victoria 9d stamp with hair lines?

3. Who is author of the Deegam series of books?

4. Who, in 1987, suggested more should be made of National Stamp Day?

5. Which company printed the Springtime stamps?

The answers will be found in this *Bulletin*.

The competition is not open to employees, their families and agents, of Royal Mail or Omniphil/Classics without Tears.

The winners of the November competition were:

G M Hood of Dorset (Canada \$2 Jubilee); J Morris of Nottinghamshire (Berlin 1929 2m); R Chu of Australia and L Senior of Norfolk (Zimbabwe 2s 6d/25c); and J Rapley of Somerset (Zimbabwe 1966 10s). The prizes were donated by One Country Bag Approvals.

The answers were: 1. Wallsend; 2. Sir Lewis Morris; 3. Kensington Town Hall; 4. David Aggersberg; 5. St Kilda. *Note: Answer 5 – the 1995 BIPEX was to have been held at Kensington, as stated in November Bulletin. The venue has now been changed to Royal Horticultural Society Halls, Westminster. Both answers accepted.*

Machin Definitives – Jeffery Matthews Colours

J K BIRD

A two-part article in the January and February 1993 *Bulletins* by Angela Reeves of Royal Mail described how Jeffery Matthews created a range of 31 colours for Machin Definitive stamps. Usage of the range began in 1988, and was completed in October 1993. We hope that the following listing of Low Values and NVIs issued since 1988 will prove useful. It supplements the listing in the September 1991 *Bulletin*. It is stressed that Royal Mail's descriptions of colours may differ from those used by publishers of stamp catalogues.

Low Values

Colour	Year	Notes
1p dark maroon	1991	1
2p dark green	1988	1
3p shocking pink	1990	1, 2
4p light blue	1988	1
5p ask pink	1988	1
6p lime green	1991	
10p light tan	1990	
14p dark blue	1988	
15p bright blue	1989	
17p dark blue	1990	
18p light green	1991	
19p flame	1988	
19p olive green	1993	
20p sea green	1988	5
20p black	1989	4
22p flame	1990	
23p light green	1988	
24p terracotta	1989	
24p rust	1991	
25p salmon pink	1993	
26p stone	1990	
27p rust	1988	
27p mauve	1990	
28p sand	1988	
28p slate blue	1991	
29p purple	1989	
29p light grey	1993	
30p sage green	1989	
31p ultramarine	1990	
32p dark turquoise	1988	
33p emerald green	1990	
34p slate blue	1989	
34p purple	1991	

35p dark brown	1988	
35p old gold	1991	
36p ultramarine	1993	
37p red	1989	
38p red	1993	
39p rhododendron	1991	
41p stone	1993	
50p sand	1990	1
60p slate blue	1994	
75p dark grey	1988	1

Non-Value Indicators

Colour	Year	Notes
1st black	1989	4
1st flame	1990	
2nd bright blue	1989	3, 5
2nd dark blue	1990	



Notes

- 1 No first day of issue facilities.
- 2 Issue year refers to stamps in sheets: colour first used in a 1989 Readers Digest coil.
- 3 Colour not illustrated in Angela Reeves article.
- 4 Special colour for "Penny Black" anniversary.
- 5 Not included in the 31-colour range.
- 6 Reissued 1991.

Editor's Note: I am obliged to Mr Bird for supplying this listing which I am sure will be of use to many readers. I regret Royal Mail is unable to engage in correspondence on this listing. The colour descriptions as listed here are those generally in use within Royal Mail at present. A few supersede the colours listed in the *Bulletin* of September 1991.

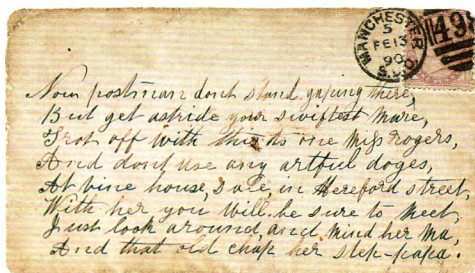
Out of the Arc . . .

Curiosities from the Post Office Archives

8. Valentine's Card, 1890

This month we feature a Valentine's card posted in Manchester, 1890. This serves as proof, not only of the Post Office's skill with obscure addresses, but also of the fact that it had a sense of humour!

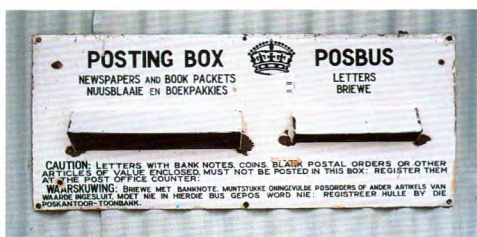
Simon Bates,
Information Manager



Posting Boxes

No. 153 Overseas Boxes

Our photographs this month are of two boxes far apart. The first, submitted by Dr Peter Goldschmidt of South Africa, shows a box, inscribed in English and Afrikaans, at the old post office in the town of Pilgrim's Rest, Eastern Transvaal. This town owes its origins to the discovery of alluvial gold in 1873. During the 1880s and 90s the mining settlement developed to include shops, hotels, school, hospital, and five churches. When mining activities ceased in 1971 the Transvaal Provincial Administration bought the town for conservation as an important part of the country's cultural, historical and natural heritage.



The second photo shows a Victorian wall box used as a shop letter box (for delivery, not posting of mail), in a side street in Honfleur, France. The photo was sent in by Mrs C A Dent of Bedfordshire who commented on the box: "it certainly contributed to an attractive door feature for the shop."

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



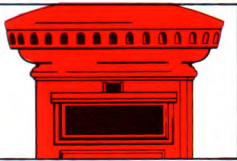
The 1994 Age of Steam stamps featured photographs by Colin T Gifford, considered by many as the father of progressive railway photography. Railways have always fascinated him, especially their relationship with landscape, topography and the people who work and use them. Readers who liked his stamps and share his fascination with railways, will be pleased to know that nearly 240 of his railway photographs are included in a recently published book entitled...**and gone for ever**. In his preamble, the author writes: "Whilst compiling this book, I came to realize that it is not only the steam locomotive that has disappeared from everyday life but also the way of life itself. It may well be that affection for these scenes is derived as much by evocations of the period as it is from the steam train and its environment."

The scenes featured range from tiny country stations such as Appin in the Scottish Highlands to the busiest of them all - Clapham Junction in south London, from express trains hauled by named locomotives to local services and freight trains hauled by "tank engines". Nearly every photograph is fully captioned giving the details of the service and locomotive, the date the photograph was taken. Many were taken in stations or along the trackside, others in engine sheds, goods sidings, and even the breakers' yard. The dirty, routine and hard work of driving and maintaining steam locomotives is portrayed, as well as the glamour and romance. Most were taken in the 1960s, in the last years of steam on British Rail, yet many could have been in pre-nationalisation days. It is quite amazing to reflect on how the railways have changed over the past 30 years. Not only have the steam trains gone forever, so too have so many of the country stations and even those that remain are but a shadow of their former glory. Appropriately the final photographs in the book witness the end of steam on British Rail - a special train from Liverpool to Carlisle in August 1968. One features the train on the famous Ribbleshead Viaduct on the Settle to Carlisle line - an almost sacred place for many railway enthusiasts. A book for all lovers of locomotives, railway

stations and industrial archaeology to cherish. Published by Oxford Publishing Co, an imprint of Haynes Publishing, Sparkford, YEOVIL, Somerset, BA22 7JJ. Available through good bookshops. ISBN 0 86093 526 4. Hardback, large format. Price £25.

The name Myall is now almost synonymous with Machin. Douglas Myall is well-known to collectors of modern British definitives for his regular specialist reports on stamp books in this magazine and for the award-winning *Complete Deegam Machin Handbook* (reviewed here in September 1993). This was number 1 in his "Deegam" series, the second - **The Deegam Priced Catalogue of Elizabethan Coil Leaders 1954-1994** (4th edition) - is now available. This covers both Wilding and Machin issues, a period of over 40 years. Every known leader is listed and priced, with check squares provided to enable a record of acquisitions to be kept. Leaders are listed in alphabetical order of stock code letter, making it easy to locate and identify them. In addition, this book contains an account of roll production, an explanation of Royal Mail's system of allocating stock letter codes, illustrations of the alphabets used on the Wilding rolls, a complete list of coil join pairs, an account of the packaging labels used for decimal rolls, and advice on displaying leaders for exhibition.

A skilfully-written and well-illustrated Introduction is followed by listings of pre-decimal single value rolls; decimal single value vertical (lengthwise delivery) and horizontal (sideways delivery) rolls; multivalued rolls; and commemorative and test labels. Five appendixes cover Wilding stock letter alphabets; Tables of stock letters by value; Method of allocation of stock code letters for single value decimal rolls; Coil join pairs; and Packaging labels for decimal stamp rolls. The prices quoted reflect the scarcity of much of the material listed - a valuation of £1000 given to one coil leader from the 1957 Boy Scout Jamboree issue. This work is for the specialist collector, a distillation of many years of research. The 3rd edition was awarded the prestigious National Postal Museum medal for research at Autumn Stampex 1991. 180 pages, card covers. Available from: D G A Myall, 2 Elizabeth Avenue, BRIDPORT, Dorset, DT6 5BA. Price £12.50, postage £1.25 UK, £1.75 overseas (surface mail outside Europe), Airmail to Canada/USA £3.50, to Australia/NZ £4.



Postally Valid Souvenir Sheets

Our contributor James Negus writes:

"As a postscript to my article in the July 1994 *Bulletin*, the question of which souvenir sheet was the first to have postal validity appears now to be settled. It was the one for the 1974 Festival of Stamps. The 'Tax Free Stamp Collecting Gone Forever' (anti-VAT) sheet of 1973 never qualified because of the way it was issued. I am grateful to Mr Derrick Byatt of Haywards Heath for clarifying what had long been a puzzle.

"The pages of *Stamp Collecting* contemporary with the sheets provide the background. On 2 August 1973 (Vol.120 p.913) a letter from Alan Finch disputed the promoters' claim that the anti-VAT sheets were fully valid for postage'. To this was added a Note from the Editor: 'The Post Office confirm that these miniature sheets in their present form are without postal validity. The printed stamps were supplied on plain paper but the addition of the wording and the frame renders letters or packets bearing them "embarrassing packages" under current Postal Regulations.'

"In spite of this, covers are known which travelled without surcharge, as is often the case. To the one illustrated in my article Mr Byatt can add one posted in Brentwood on 31 March 1973 (establishing the first-day date, incidentally) and another from Reigate. But he also has a Brentwood cover of 31 March 1973 addressed to London EC2 that invoked the official displeasure. Here the postmark cancelling the impressed stamps has its date obliterated with marks by hand. This affects the souvenir sheet alone; additional postage stamps making up the registration fee had their postmark left undefaced. The cover also bears an official form (P460G) initialled and dated 3 April 1973 requesting return of the envelope for official purposes' to the 'Inspector of ECRLD'.

"Undeterred, Express Stamp Auctions continued to insist that their anti-VAT sheet was the first to be postally valid. The appearance the following year of the Festival of Stamps sheet saw them insert a full-page advertisement in the issue of 9 May 1974 (Vol.122 p.505) with bold headlines: 'Have you just bought No. 2? You must have No. 1!'. For good measure they

pointed out their No.1 'looks like a sheet too, not like an envelope like [the Festival] No. 2'.

"A withering response came from Sidney V. Leverton, Chairman of the Festival of Stamps, on behalf of the Stamp Collecting Promotion Council. His detailed letter, published on 8 August 1974 (Vol.122 p.1089), showed that the Festival sheet had been fully approved as postally valid and had been designed in consultation with the Post Office to conform with the relevant regulations. He concluded: 'However appealing it may seem to some people, as far as the British postal authorities are concerned the [Anti-VAT] sheet is certainly not, and never has been, valid for postage'. To which Editor Ken Chapman added a Note: 'Incidentally, the Festival of Stamps souvenir sheet, mint and used, has been accepted by the Queen for inclusion in the Great Britain section of the Royal Philatelic Collection.' This seems a fitting tailpiece to this forgotten controversy over priority."

Summertime Stamp

The Venerable T Barfett of Truro comments:

"Has anyone drawn your attention to the fact that the inscription AMSER HAF on the 19p stamp of the Summertime series is intended to be Welsh which indeed it is, but that it is also Cornish? Can we see in this a recognition that Cornwall does exist down in our little corner of these islands and that the Royal Mail has at last discovered us? This is I think the first time that the Cornish language has appeared on a British stamp."

Christmas stamp club

Ed. Abbing of the Netherlands wrote to give information on a club for collectors of Christmas stamps and postmarks:

"Every month I get your *British Philatelic Bulletin* and read it with pleasure. With great interest I have read in the November issue the article by James Mackay: 'Christmas in the Stamp Album'. I am an enthusiastic collector of Christmas stamps and stamps concerning Epiphania. The problem was to obtain these stamps from the different countries.

"I found out, that in Germany a club existed of people who collected stamps and items concerning Christmas. I joined this club, called *Motivgruppe Weihnachten*, which is very active. It has, for example, published a very complete catalogue about all stamps, postmarks and postal stationery concerning Christmas from all over the world. The contact address is: Mrs B Wagner, Secretary Motivgruppe Weihnachten, Weberstrasse 8, 8660 Münchenberg, Germany."

February/March Digest

To be issued in February/March/early April

7 February: Vended stamp books: 50p – Sea Charts No. 1; £1 “Inspiration for Victory” No. 1; £2 Rowland Hill No. 1

14 February: 10 x 1st class book, printed Walsall. Cover features Chocolates promotion.

7 March: Springtime stamp cards

14 March: Springtime stamps and presentation pack.

4 April: Scottish aerogramme – Glasgow School of Art. On sale at post offices in Scotland, Bureau and Post Office Counters Limited philatelic outlets.

Note: Some items are available only from the British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, EDINBURGH EH3 5TT and from Post Office Counters Ltd philatelic outlets (Collections, Post Shops Plus, Philatelic Counters) at main post offices in: Bath, Belfast, Birmingham, Brighton, Bristol, Cambridge, Canterbury, Cardiff, Chester, Colchester, Coventry, Croydon, Durham, Edinburgh, Exeter, Glasgow, Gloucester, Guildford, Leeds, Leicester, Liverpool, London (Lombard Street & Trafalgar Square), Manchester, Newcastle upon Tyne, Nottingham, Oxford, Plymouth, Portsmouth, Romford, Southampton, Southend on Sea, Stratford upon Avon, Truro, Windsor, and York.

To be withdrawn in February/March

14 February: 1982 To Pay labels 3p-£5 values. Note: 1p and 2p values and presentation pack sold out at Philatelic Bureau.

21 February: Walsall 10 x 1st and 10 x 2nd NVI books, issued 22 February 1994.

28 February: Prince of Wales Investiture stamps, presentation pack and stamp cards.

21 March: Scottish aerogramme – R L Stevenson.

Events – February/March 1995

until April 1995: “Addressing Postcodes” exhibition at National Postal Museum, King Edward Street, London EC1. Open Mon-Fri 09.30-16.30. Enquiries: 071-239 5420.

28 February-5 March: Spring Stampex at Royal Horticultural Society Halls, London SW1. Open 28 Feb 12.00-19.00; 1-4 Mar 10.30-19.00; 5 Mar 10.30-17.00. Includes “Austrapex 95” exhibition

of Australian philately. Enquiries: Stampex office, Tel. 071-490 1005.

18 March: Scottish Philatelic Congress. Hosted by Glasgow Phil Soc. Enquiries: J A Morgan, 10 Cluny Ave, Bearsden, GLASGOW G61 2JQ, Tel. 041-942 0080.

25 March: Rayleigh Stamp Day at Mill Hall, Bellingham Lane, Rayleigh, 10.00-17.00. Dealers, displays, refreshments.

25 March: Kent Federation Spring Rally at Village Hall, Dymchurch. Hosted by Romney Marsh Phil Soc.

Postal Memorabilia Displays

David Harrop will be displaying his collections of postal related toys at the following events:

5 February – Telford International Toy & Train Collectors Fair, Telford Exhibition Centre, St Quentin Gate, Telford, Shropshire, 10.30-16.00.

19 February – Doncaster Racecourse Toy Fair, Doncaster Exhibition Centre, Leger Way, Doncaster, S Yorkshire, 10.30-16.30.

5 March – Hooton Park Toy Fair, North Road, Ellesmere Port, South Wirral, 10.30-16.00.

Enquiries: David Harrop, 15 Hawthorn Road, Heaton Mersey, STOCKPORT, Cheshire, SK4 3DQ.

Mr Harrop will also be arranging a display of postal memorabilia from his extensive collection at the Stamp '95 exhibition at the Wembley Exhibition Centre, 27-30 April.

Late News

We are pleased to record that Mr Peter Howarth, Managing Director of Royal Mail, received the CBE in the New Year's Honours List.

We regret delay in despatch of this Bulletin and apologise for any inconvenience caused.

