

BRITISH *PHILATELIC*

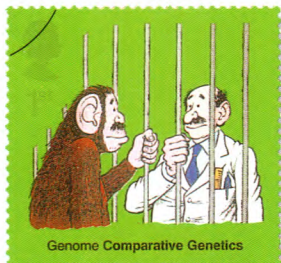
The ROYAL MAIL magazine *for stamp collectors*

Volume 40 Number 5

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Bulletin

New Occasions stamp issue
• Review of 2002 Yearbook



The Secret of Life: Royal Mail's latest issue of special stamps and a prestige book exploring DNA are previewed this month.



Forthcoming issues and withdrawals



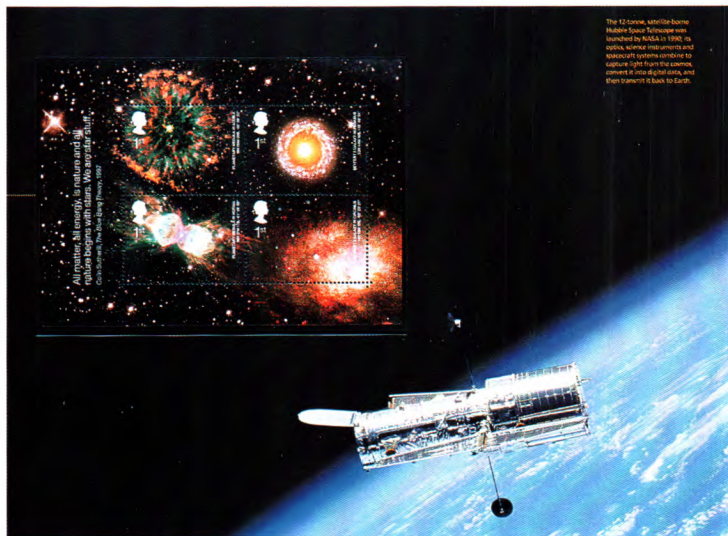
Cover Computer-generated artwork of part of a molecule of DNA, the genetic material found in all living cells. DNA encodes inherited characteristics of living organisms and is responsible for all genetic traits. Royal Mail's Secret of Life stamps are previewed on page 144.

Alfred Pasieka/Science Photo Library

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

1 January	Withdrawal £1 and £2 machine vended booklets (£1 and £2 of April 2000 and £1 of April 2001).
7 January	Issue Birds of Prey stamp cards.
14 January	Issue Birds of Prey stamps and presentation pack.
14 January	Withdrawal Kipling stamps, presentation pack and stamp cards.
21 January	Issue Flowers greetings stamps in Smilers sheets (generic and personalised versions).
21 January	Issue 2nd and 1st class (gold) definitives in rolls of 500 printed by Enschedé (availability postponed from October 2002).
28 January	Issue Ingot cover for Pillar to Post stamps (first in series) • Occasions stamp cards.
4 February	Issue Occasions stamps, presentation pack and Smilers sheet (generic and personalised versions).
5 February	Withdrawal Golden Jubilee stamps, presentation pack, and <i>A Gracious Accession</i> prestige book.
18 February	Issue Secret of Life stamp cards.
25 February	Issue Secret of Life stamps and presentation pack; <i>Microcosmos</i> prestige book, Secret of Life coin cover.

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The British Philatelic Bulletin is published monthly by Royal Mail, 148 Old Street, London EC1V 9HQ • **Editor** JR Holman • **Price** 85p for single copies from Post Office Limited philatelic outlets • **Annual subscription** £9.50 in UK and Europe; £13.50 rest of the world. Subscriptions should be sent to Royal Mail Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB • **Binders** to hold 24 issues, price £7, are available by post from Royal Mail (Edinburgh address above) • Royal Mail also publishes the fortnightly *British Postmark Bulletin*, which gives details of forthcoming special handstamps. Available on annual subscription, from Edinburgh address above: UK and Europe £10, rest of the world £21.75 • **Copyright** Design and text Royal Mail Group plc, unless attributed to a specific author. All requests to reproduce any article should be sent to the Editor, British Philatelic Bulletin, Royal Mail, 148 Old Street, London EC1V 9HQ • **Design** by Robert Maude • **Printed** in Great Britain by the Perivan Group Limited • **ISSN** 0953 8119 • Royal Mail is a trading name of Royal Mail Group plc. Registered in England and Wales, number 4138203, registered office 148 Old Street, London EC1V 9HQ

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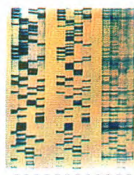


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Stamp scene Exhibitions • New literature • Centenary convention • Machin pub

Stampex enquiries 020 7490 1005.

Philatex enquiries 020 8946 4489 or 01793 513431.

Exhibitions Spring Stampex (26 February - 2 March) at the Business Design Centre, London N1 will include invited displays by the British Aerophilatelic Federation and the Czechoslovak Philatelic Society of Great Britain •

Philatex will be held at the Royal Horticultural Hall, Greycoat Street, London SW1 on 27 February - 1 March. Open 27 February 11.00-19.00, 28 February 10.00-18.00; 1 March 10.00-17.00 •

The main overseas exhibitions will be in St Petersburg (9-16 September) and Bangkok (4-13 October). A FIP World Philatelic Exhibition will be held in Barcelona, 21-30 May 2004. Bulletin 1 and provisional entry forms can be reserved by sending five 2nd class or four 1st class UK mint postage stamps (to defray postage costs) to K B Fitton, 50 Firlands, Weybridge KT13 0HR •

The British Stamp Study Circle of the Japan Philatelic Society took part in the country's annual stamp exhibition, Japex 02. The Circle's exhibit showed British stamps from the Penny Black to the centenary of the first adhesive stamps. A souvenir sheet was prepared (left), comprising an overprint on the 1994 'Boots' pane with 1st class Machin definitive. It was sold at the exhibition for 300 yen. UK readers interested in obtaining



one of these sheets should send current mint British stamps to the value of £3 (to include postage and packing) to: Michihiko Yokohagi, 11-4 Shimorenjaku 2 chome, Mitaka-shi, Tokyo 181-0013, Japan. Please note that the overprinting was a private venture, and the overprinted pane was not sold by Royal Mail •

Czechoslovak Forces Postal History Available from Richard Beith, 14 Middlecroft, Guilden Sutton, Chester CH3 7HF. Remittances to Czechoslovak Philatelic Society of GB.

New literature The Czechoslovak Philatelic Society of Great Britain has recently published *The Postal History of the Free Czechoslovak Forces in Great Britain: 1940-1945* by Richard Beith, who has written on the subject in this *Bulletin*. The book not only describes the Czechoslovak Army's postal services but also relates to the Army's deployment during their stay in Britain and is thus a valuable insight into a significant part of the Czechoslovak Army's history during the Second World War. In 13 sections, Mr Beith deals with the varied escape routes from France in the summer of 1940, gives a detailed look at the locations of the forces while in the UK, both the soldiers and the airmen, and discusses incoming and outgoing overseas mail, and mail censorship. Seven appendices include details of known patriotic postcards, souvenir folders, patriotic labels, etc. The work is well illustrated with a good mix between photos of the period and philatelic material. Of particular interest to *Bulletin* readers will be the illustrations of British George VI stamps cancelled by Czechoslovak Field Post postmarks. Price £14 postpaid UK, £14.50 elsewhere by surface mail, and £17 airmail outside Europe •

The November/December issue of *The GB Journal*, published by the Great Britain Philatelic Society, contains features on the Beaufort House Printing (1857-1d), Joshua Bacon (printer of the first postage stamps), Advertising Rings, the 4p Machin colours, the first paper contract for qv line-engraved stamps, revision of the One Penny, Die 2 Transitional Period, and the 'L4' Late Fee Mark. The magazine also includes an index to Volume 40. The accompanying *Newsletter* begins a series on Abbreviations in the British Posts, a new issue guide, reports on Amphilex, and details on GBPS activities. In the same despatch was a nicely produced, illustrated brochure relating to the Society's display at the Chester 2002 exhibition (29-30 November). The display featured Elizabeth II stamps as a golden jubilee tribute •

The Autumn 2002 issue of *Cross Post*, the magazine of the Friends of Postal Heritage, includes a good mix of articles: Penny Black centenary issue, Novelty postal cards of irregular shape, the Norwood (Middlesex) Post Office, Newark-on-Trent early postal history, additional services offered by the Post Office during the First World War, OHMS picture telegram, inside information (pre-stamp covers), and the Prague Postal Museum which fortunately survived the flooding in the city last August •

The November Newsletter of the Letter Box Study Group reports that over 90 members attended the Autumn meeting and AGM in Cheltenham on 19 October. Several members featured in the media in early October when Royal Mail and English Heritage announced their joint policy statement for the conservation of post boxes. There is the usual mix of news about letter boxes, the Group's Photograph Archives, and information about new letter box postcards, models and other memorabilia. Sent out with this issue was a well-produced history of the Group to mark its 25th anniversary. This sets a standard for other groups intending commemorative anniversary publications. It is clear that the LBSG keeps good records of its activities •

GBPS For details contact Debbie Harman, Greylands, Melton, Woodbridge IP12 1QE.

Friends of Postal Heritage

For details contact Mrs A Harms, 13 Amethyst Avenue, Davis Estate, Chatham ME5 9TX.

Letter Box Study Group For details contact the Membership Secretary: Val Scott, 38 Leopold Avenue, Handsworth Wood, Birmingham B20 1ES.

Centenary convention The North East of England Philatelic Association was founded in 1903. Its centenary year convention will be held at the Holiday Building, University Boulevard, Thornaby, Stockton-on-Tees on 12 April, opening at 10.00. The convention features static displays, competition entries from the member societies, a dealers' hall, and a prestigious display. The associated philatelic societies are: Berwick & District, Consett, Darlington, Durham City, Gateshead, Germany & Colonies (Tyne Tees Regional Group), Hexham, Middlesbrough & District, Newcastle upon Tyne, North East Thematic Group, Postal History and Aerophilatelic Group, Redcar and Cleveland, Reyrolle, Shields, Stockton-on-Tees, Sunderland, and Tynemouth •

Enquiries NEPA, 3 Welland Close, Brookfield, Middlesbrough TS5 8JG.

Auction news Forthcoming Spink auctions include: Single Vendor (London, 12 February), British Empire (London, 20 March), World Stamps (New York, March/April), World Stamps (London, 4 June), and Stamps & Covers of South East Asia (Singapore, 21/22 June) •

For details of future auctions Contact Spink, 69 Southampton Row, London WC1B 4ET. Telephone 020 7563 4000.



Arnold Machin pub A former post office in Ironmarket, Newcastle-under-Lyme has been named 'The Arnold Machin' after the famous sculptor whose head of 'The Queen' has been used on definitive stamps since 1967. Machin was born in nearby Stoke-on-Trent in 1911 and died in 1999. Our photograph shows pub manager David Gregg with a display frame showing Machin's original designs for new definitives. One (bottom left) closely resembles the Penny Black •

Wetherspoon News

Bulletin back issues Mr A Buckmaster has for disposal *Bulletins* from 1968 to the 1990s. Offers for these should be sent to him at: Jonette, Patixbourne Road, Bridge, Canterbury CT4 5BL. Telephone 01227 830239 •

Royal Mail news 2003 issues • New Smilers • Albums • Ingot covers • 2001 quantities

2003 Special issues The dates of issue of this year's stamps are listed below. First day of issue postmarks will be available for Tallents House Edinburgh and the alternative places indicated. Note some of set titles have changed from those previously announced. The Birds of Prey stamps were previewed in last month's *Bulletin*, and the Occasions and Secret of Life in this issue. The Fun Fruit & Veg set (25 March) will comprise ten 1st class stamps, printed in a se-tenant block, showing fruit and vegetables. They will be issued with stickers which children can add to the stamps to make faces and designs on the fruit and vegetables. This set will be previewed next month; meanwhile we show some of the stamps •



Date	Subject and number of stamps	Alternative place
14.01	Birds of Prey (10)	Hawkshead, Ambleside
04.02	Occasions: Multiple-Choice (6)	Merry Hill, Wolverhampton
25.02	Secret of Life: DNA & Genome (5)	Cambridge
25.03	Fun Fruit & Veg (10)	Pear Tree, Derby
29.04	Extreme Endeavours (6)	Plymouth
02.06	The Coronation: 2 June 1953 (10)	London SW1
17.06	Prince William's 21st birthday	Cardiff
15.07	Beauty of Scotland (6)	To be announced
12.08	Pub Signs (5)	Cross Keys, Hereford
18.09	Transport/Toys (5)	Toye, Downpatrick
07.10	British Museum 1753-2003 (5)	London WC1
04.11	Christmas (5)	Bethlehem, Llandello

Updates The date of issue of the Transport/Toys stamps has been changed from 9 to 18 September 2003 (see below left). The order code for the new Smilers album is PA668, not PA665 as stated on page 127 last month. The album costs £16.50 •

Smilers sheets A new sheet will be available from 21 January, containing two of each of the 10 colourful Flowers greetings stamps first issued in books in January 1997. On the generic sheet the labels adjoining the stamps will feature further illustrations of the flowers shown on the stamps. The stamps and labels are surrounded by a lush, verdant background design. The stamps and labels will be ideal for use on Valentine's Day and Mother's Day cards, as well as for birthdays and other social occasions. The Smilers sheets are printed by Questa whereas the 1997 greetings stamps were by Walsall. Generic Smilers sheets can be ordered from Royal Mail Tallents House, or purchased at Post Office philatelic outlets, price £5.95 each. Personalised sheets, price £14.95, are produced to order and available only from Tallents House •

Smilers For further details phone 0845 074 2000 (UK) or +44 131 316 7483 (overseas).

Royal Mail album slipcasses Luxury padded pvc slipcasses are available for the range of Royal Mail philatelic albums: First Day Cover (burgundy colour); Presentation Pack (brown); Postcard (tan); Stamp Album (red); Universal (dark brown); and new Smilers (black). Each slipcasse is covered and lined in matching pvc to the relevant album, with thumb-cut on open edge. They provide all-round protection for your album and stamps. Price £9 each postpaid UK; enquire for overseas prices. The relevant Royal Mail albums are available from Royal Mail Tallents House, Edinburgh and selected Post Office outlets; slipcasses only from Complete Collections Ltd, 8 Teasel Way, West Moors, Ferndown BH22 0PQ; telephone 01202 872315. *Bulletin* readers can order two or more of the slipcasses at a special price of £8 each postpaid UK only. Orders should be sent to Complete Collections by 30 January •



Album continuation pages The 2002 continuation pages for the Royal Mail de luxe album are now available from Tallents House, price £9.99. Order code PWO24 •

Ingot covers A series of five covers incorporating silver ingots of the Pillar to Post stamps is in preparation. The covers feature artwork relating to the postal and social history of the time of the postbox shown on the ingot, ranging from the 1850s to the 1980s. The first cover, available from 28 January, will include an ingot of the 2nd class stamp and bear a pair of the 2nd class stamps cancelled by a special Edinburgh postmark. Price £29.95, available only from Royal Mail Tallents House •

Quantities Special stamps of 2001

Millennium – The Future		Submarines		Nobel Prizes	
2nd	13,912,100	2nd	13,035,900	2nd	12,554,750
1st	15,056,500	1st	14,367,000	1st	8,050,150
45p	5,510,500	45p	5,124,800	E	4,831,700
65p	5,380,000	65p	4,980,100	40p	4,941,000
stamp cards	30,909	stamp cards	35,574	45p	4,968,250
Occasions		Buses		65p	5,358,100
1st Thanks	5,951,400	5 × 1st	26,716,000	stamp cards	33,676
1st Cheers	5,913,600	miniature sheet	861,670	Flags & Ensigns	
1st Welcome	6,196,000	stamp cards	38,251	miniature sheet	1,888,170
1st abc (baby)	5,850,800	Fabulous Hats		stamp cards	29,644
1st Love	5,912,400	1st	13,799,100	Christmas	
stamp cards	26,721	E	4,986,200	2nd	162,851,500
Cats & Dogs		45p	4,948,400	1st	135,099,750
Sheetlet of 10	2,507,355	65p	4,798,900	E	14,282,350
Book of 12	550,000	stamp cards	37,438	45p	14,778,600
(with definitives)		Pondlife		65p	14,885,700
stamp cards	34,395	1st	14,260,700	stamp cards	35,902
Weather		E	4,950,000	airletter (national)	249,460
19p	13,719,400	45p	4,994,000	airletter (Welsh)	17,530
27p	15,278,500	65p	4,859,400	Quantities for stamp cards	
45p	5,835,600	stamp cards	28,058	are sets	
65p	5,675,500	Punch & Judy		Quantities © Royal Mail	
miniature sheet	595,850	6 × 1st	28,469,100	Group PLC 2003	
stamp cards	31,201	stamp cards	33,987		

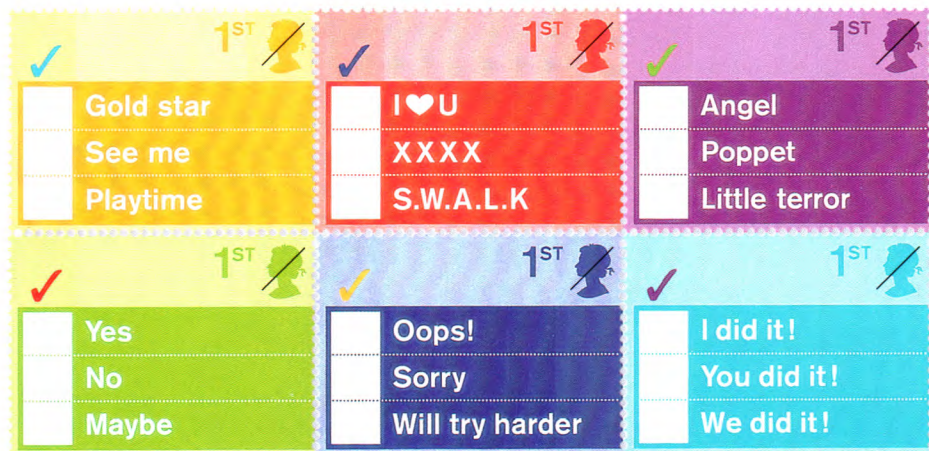
Favourite stamp poll If you haven't voted yet for your favourite stamps and *Bulletin* author of 2002 there is still time to return the voting form sent out with the December *Bulletin*. All forms are entered in a prize draw. Return your form by 17 January to: 2002 Bulletin Poll, British Philatelic Bulletin, Royal Mail, 148 Old Street, London EC1V 9HQ.

Regrettably, Airliners was omitted from the voting form; if you have still to vote and wish to vote for Airliners, please indicate this on the form. The poll closes on 17 January ●

Prize draws Winners of signed London Bridges first day covers (September *Bulletin*) were: D J Lamming, B Morriss, A Lewis, D Carney, Mrs E Rothschild, A Keppel, T Relf, S Mendelson, D Rees, Dr G Jungmayer, P Pincket, B Carroll, M Sandle, J Bruce, J Schopman, A Laxon, Mrs J Mills, Miss N Warnock, Ms P Franks, M McLoughlin, E Bullock, S Soderstrom, T Williams, C Kemshell, and A Leyland. Winners of Stamp Show packs (also September) were G Rossi, E Woods, F Oliver, J Payne, J Herring, D Lister, L Becl, E Haines, V Ellis, and Mrs S Gibson. K Ward, H Wright, N Moore, P van der Wal, K Yale, J Blake, D A Bagley, H Reeve, D Bowcock, and C Bird were sent FDCs of The Queen's Stamps miniature sheet. The winner of the Definitives collection folder (October *Bulletin*) was C Chugg of Belgium; runner-up prizes were sent to: C Calabro, J O'Riordan, P Russell, S Kempster, R Parish, J Hook, P Watson, A Godfrey, C Thompson, and D Carson ●

Occasions

The latest issue in the Occasions series will offer stamp users a multiple choice



A THIRD series of Occasions stamps will go on sale at Post Office branches and philatelic outlets and Royal Mail Tallents House from 4 February. The six 1st class stamps feature multiple choice messages: Gold star/See me/Playtime (yellow background stamp); I (heart shape) U/XXXX/S.W.A.L.K. (red); Angel/Poppet/Little terror (purple); Yes/No/Maybe (green); Oops!/Sorry/Will try harder (violet); and I did it!/You did it!/We did it! (blue). Senders can place a tick in the box alongside the appropriate message. The Queen's head and 1st indicator are printed in the top right corner. The stamps were designed by UNA, with wording by Sara Wiegand and Mike Exon. The six stamps are printed in se-tenant blocks of six, 10 blocks per sheet of 60.

FIRST DAY FACILITIES Unstamped Royal Mail FDC envelopes will be available from main Post Office branches and philatelic outlets about a week before 4 February, price 25p. Serviced covers can be ordered with pictorial Tallents House or Merry Hill, Wolverhampton postmarks, price £2.32 UK (including VAT) or £1.98 overseas (no VAT).

Collectors may send stamped covers on the day of issue to: Royal Mail Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB, or Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, St Stephens Street, Birmingham B6 4AA marking the outer envelope 'FD0303' (Tallents House), or 'FD0304' (Merry Hill). Covers can be posted or handed in at main Post Office branches for the Merry Hill postmark. Details of sponsored handstamps will be announced in the *British Postmark Bulletin* – available on subscription from Tallents House (£10 UK/Europe; £21.75 elsewhere). For a sample copy write to: The Editor, British Postmark Bulletin, Royal Mail, 148 Old Street, London EC1V 9HQ.

Technical details

Printer The House of Questa

Process Lithography

Size 41 x 30mm

Sheets 60

Perforation 14.5 x 14

Phosphor Two bands

Gum PVA

Gutter pairs Horizontal

Plate numbers and colours

Q1 new blue ● Q1 deep ultra-marine ● Q1 purple ● Q1 bright yellow-green ● Q1 red ● Q1 lemon ● Q1 phosphor



ROYAL MAIL FIRST DAY COVER
Occasions
MULTIPLE-CHOICE



A presentation pack (below, £2) and stamp cards (25p each) will be available from main Post Office branches and Tallents House. The pack, designed by Howard Brown, was written and illustrated by Stephen Appleby, noted for his cartoons in *The Guardian* and *The Daily Telegraph*.



SMILERS SHEETS Also available from 4 February will be a generic sheet containing 20 of the new Occasions stamps with adjoining labels bearing messages. The Smilers sheets are printed in litho by Questa. Price £5.95 from Tallents House and Post Office philatelic outlets. Sheets of 20 with personalised image rather than pre-printed labels will be available to order from Tallents House. For order form and details phone 0845 074 2000 (UK) or +44 131 316 7483 (overseas) •

A Victorian Christmas Part 2: from Saturnal rites to twelfth night, by Dorothy M Martin

THOUSANDS OF YEARS BC, the Winter Solstice, the annual rebirth of the sun, was a time of world wide celebration, of feasts with ancient fertility rites. Peoples all over the world worshipped their gods; it was a time of torchlight processions and joyous festivity, of peace and goodwill. Many of the Saturnal rites were linked with superstition. A few examples being the use of holly as a decoration which was the symbol of everlasting life and the red berries were supposed to protect against witchcraft; mistletoe was used by the Druids in their ancient fertility rites; candles were used as a symbol of fire.

A new significance was given to the Winter Solstice when the church decided to celebrate the birth of Christ on the same date. The linking of pagan rites with the greatest religious festival bequeathed to the world a festive season incorporating both pagan and Christian customs.

Many more traditions were added during the following centuries, such as Mummung, which was a ritual often linked with pagan rites to celebrate the triumph of light over darkness together with sacrifices to the harvest spirit. During the medieval period, Boy Bishops were elected, often one of the church choristers. He performed all the duties of a Bishop from 6-28 December, except Mass. Although the Protestant reformers suppressed the ceremony, it was revived by the catholic Queen Mary. Another tradition since 1668 was the Christmas Feast at Oxford University when the decorated Boar's Head was carried into Hall on a silver platter whilst the Boar's Head carol was sung. There are many theories about Wren Hunting. The Isle of Man legend believes a siren of the sea lured sailors to their death, escaping her avengers by turning into a wren. The Wren Hunt would end when the wren was killed, its feathers kept as a charm against ship-wreck. These are but a few examples.

In 1752 the calendar changed and Christmas Day was observed on 25 December, 11 days earlier than previously. This most likely originated the 'Twelve Days of Christmas' (right).

Although some traditions had been almost forgotten, the Victorians inherited and revived many of them and added new customs. During this era, matins on Christmas Day was all-important and a focal point. Church bells would ring, inviting families to go and offer their thanks-givings, and join together to sing praises for the birth of the Christchild. Upon arrival home, they would open their gifts, and the children would play with their presents left by Santa. During the festive season, children were given much more freedom and consideration than normally when they tended to be 'seen and not heard'.

Last month Mrs Martin described preparations for the Christmas festivities in Victorian times. In this second part of her article, she looks at the ancient pagan origins of the festival revived by the Victorians, and at how they might celebrate on the day.



The twelve days of Christmas on the 1977 Christmas issue, by David Gentleman.

9.5. The Festive Dinner

When Queen Victoria came to the throne in 1837, roast beef or goose was the traditional fare with all the appropriate trimmings, followed by a blazing Christmas pudding garnished with holly accompanied with rum sauce. There would also be mince pies, cheese and biscuits, followed by petite fours, not forgetting the punch, ale or wine for the adults. A lavish meal indeed and enjoyed with much merriment, one to be savoured for many a long day by all the family.



Christmas Crackers invented by Tom Smith in 1840, helped to increase the jolly atmosphere. Sometimes called *bonbons*, the French name for sugared almonds which were sold there, in a twist of coloured paper, the origin of the idea of crackers. The 'bang' was added later.

Everybody would be very happy and jovial and look forward to the sumptuous dinner to follow, with great anticipation. This would consist of turkey or goose, and plum pudding, with all the trimmings; accompanied by mince pies and cheese, not forgetting the punch, ale and wine. The local baker would often cook the goose for the poor families.

Christmas crackers, which were invented by Tom Smith in 1840, would help to make an atmosphere of great merriment and fun. Charades as well as party and forfeit games would follow, whilst some ladies would prefer a more sedate pastime and be quite happy doing their embroidery.

Boxing Day derived from the opening of the church Alms Boxes and the distribution of its contents to the poor and needy of the parish on St Stephen's Day. Gifts of money to people who provided services throughout the year such as postmen, milkmen, and dustmen also received their cash rewards on 26 December.

12. TWELFTH NIGHT



Between Christmas and Twelfth Night, many parties and balls would be held, and much merriment and revelry would be enjoyed by the Victorian people.



The Victorians were very generous and charitable folk, they helped poor and destitute families, particularly during the festive season, by distributing food and clothing. They often collected unwanted toys to give to poor children and orphans.

Top section of G.H. Christmas Air Letter issued 18th Nov. 1981, designed by Carol Walklin



When Twelfth Night arrived, it signalled the end of the Christmas celebrations. The cards were taken down, and the decorations put away for another year, but the Victorians were always conscious of the real reason for the Christmas festivities - that of - GOD'S GIFT OF HIS SON.

The 'hunt' was a Boxing Day tradition, but had limited appeal; whereas a visit to a pantomime was a more normal outing for most Victorian families and considered good entertainment for members of all ages, Cinderella, Puss in Boots and Snow-white being among the favourites. Many parties and balls were held on Boxing Night amid much fun and frivolity.

Due to wide social differences, many parents could not afford to buy gifts and toys for their family. The Victorians, being very charitable, helped the poor and needy and the lonely folk of their parishes by collecting clothing and toys to make up parcels for distribution on Christmas Eve. In 1894, the middle class ladies of the East End of London founded the Santa Claus Distribution Fund. They gave and collected clothing, toys and food, and on Christmas Eve dressed up as Father Christmas and distributed over 310 parcels to the poor in the area. This became an annual event and each year the number of parcels increased, reaching thousands after a few years ●

The Victorian Christmas came to an end on the twelfth night after Christmas: cards were taken down, and decorations put away for another year, but the Victorians were always conscious of the real reason for the Christmas festivities - that of God's gift of His Son.

Eminent early collectors James B Seymour by Ron Negus

When the auctioneers Robson Lowe began selling the J B Seymour collection of Great Britain stamps in 1951, they described the material on offer as ‘undoubtedly the finest and most complete in the world of the line-engraved types’

James Benjamin Seymour was widely regarded as the leading authority on the early issues of Great Britain. This reputation was gained from the displays he gave of his marvellous collection, plus his written work. In addition to many articles, Seymour was the author of the two-volume work *The Stamps of Great Britain*, that is still widely regarded as a definitive treatise on British issues from 1840 to 1865.



was amateur conjuring, and he was also prominent as one of Britain's pioneer motorists.

Seymour was also responsible for the GB section of the famous Kohl Handbuch, which appeared in the 1930s and the editor of the Handbuch, Dr Paul Munk, assisted him in this. At the Philatelic Congress of GB held at Leicester in 1931, both Seymour and Dr Munk signed the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists.

The first volume was issued in 1934 and the second in 1937, both under the imprint of the Royal Philatelic Society, London. Editorial work was performed on them by two eminent members of the Society, J Hall Barron and I Simons. Barron, a subsequent President and Honorary Life Fellow of the Society, was noted for an abrupt manner and did not consider Seymour's writing style to be too clear. He was reported to have said to Seymour at one point whilst editing the drafts ‘...why didn't you put it in prose form so that I could understand it’.

The publication price was set at five shillings per volume, at the author's specific request, so that as many collectors as possible should be able to afford the books. A result of setting this popular price was that sales were brisk and copies were soon only available in the second-hand market.

A notable feature of these books is the excellence of the drawings and photographs employed to identify the varieties being discussed in the text. Both aspects had been completed by Seymour himself, and showed his skill as an artist and a photographer – two other hobbies that he enjoyed. Amongst other non-philatelic interests

James Seymour was born in London in 1867, although the exact date is not recorded in any of his obituaries. He was educated at the Old Wesleyan Grammar School in Devon, and studied Geology and Zoology subsequently at Birkbeck College, London, where he obtained a qualification as a geologist. His scientific training, although not the specific subjects, led to him being employed in manufacturing, and he worked in the lace trade for many years.

Serious and systematic discoveries He took up stamp collecting in his mid twenties with a whole world collection, but by 1908 had decided to specialise in Great Britain. He acquired a plating study of Penny Reds that had been put together by Dr C E Whitehead and developed his interest in the early GB issues from this small beginning. Towards the end of the First World War he began to make his serious and systematic studies, and articles by him began to appear in the philatelic magazines.

He continued to add prime items to his albums over the years and was always prepared to show parts of it to local societies. He always expressed

his disappointment at the apathy of the British towards the stamps of their own country. During a show he gave to the Liverpool Philatelic Society in 1931 he indicated that the 400 sheets he was displaying represented about 3% of his collection. Three years before this, he had shown 'GB Line-Engraved Issues' at the Royal Philatelic Society and was awarded their prestigious Tilbeard Medal for the best display of the season.

His active interest in the Royal Philatelic Society was shown by his election to the Council in 1931. He served in this capacity until 1948, when his failing health prevented him from attending meetings. Another office he held with distinction was as President of the International Philatelic Union.

At a local level, Seymour joined the Leytonstone, Wanstead & District Philatelic Society in 1938. In the following year he was elected President and filled this role until he died. He was ever willing to pass his knowledge on to others and was able to help other members in many ways. He was a strong advocate of close co-operation between collectors and philatelic societies and it was on his suggestion that the first County Association was formed in Essex in 1944.

Seymour was never interested in entering his material in competition, despite its quality, which often led to its inclusion in the Court of Honour at exhibitions. He only broke his non-competitive rule on two occasions. In both of these years his entry took Grand Prix awards at the Berlin International Exhibition in 1929, and at the WIPA International in Vienna in 1933. Some material from his albums was included in the Stamp Centenary Exhibition in 1940, the limited show that replaced the London International Exhibition which had been cancelled by the outbreak of the Second World War. His wide experience often meant he was often invited to be a jury member for exhibitions around the world and sometimes acted as Chairman of the Jury.

12 volumes of blacks and blues His whole collection was housed in 43 volumes. The first of these contained postal history, Treasury Competition Essays, and the Perkins Bacon 1840-41 essays,

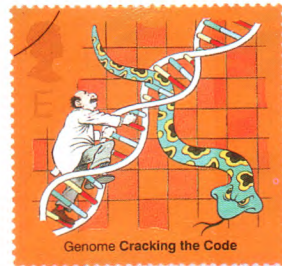
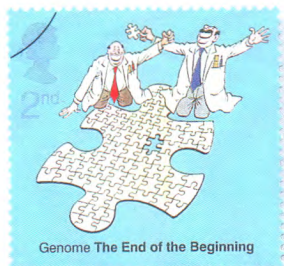
proofs and colour trials. Volume 2 comprised Mulready and other printed envelopes. The next 12 volumes had examples of Penny Black and Twopenny Blue plated specimens. The Penny Red plates occupied another 10 volumes and the 1854 to 1880 One Penny Line-engraved issues took a further seven. The remainder of the collection contained the Victorian surface-printed stamps, all the Edward VII and George V issues, Die and Plate Proofs, Cancellations, Used Abroad, and one volume with the Oxford and Cambridge University stamps. A final album was devoted entirely to Large Sheets and Blocks.

J B Seymour was able to attend an Essex Convention at Colchester in May 1949, but was in very great pain during his visit. His health continued to decline and he was confined to his home. Finally, at the age of 83, he died on 11 June 1950.

The *Centenary History of the Royal Philatelic Society* records that 'when Seymour died, his family suggested that the Society might like to have a display from his collection before it was dispersed. This was duly organised and the popularity of both the stamps and their late owner was shown by the attendance of no fewer than seventy-six members and seventy-seven guests.' A second edition of Part 1, covering the 1840 to 1853 line-engraved stamps, was also issued posthumously by the Society in 1950.

The collection of the stamps of Great Britain formed by J B Seymour was auctioned starting in 1951. It required eight separate sales with the last being held in October 1952. The auctioneers, Robson Lowe, considered their own rooms too small for these sales and they were held, with permission, at the larger premises of Christie, Manson & Woods Ltd in St. James's Place, SW1. They described the material on offer as 'undoubtedly the finest and most complete in the world of the line-engraved types, while the subsequent issues abound in fine and exceptional pieces.' As part of the sales, certificates could be purchased, with a photograph of the lot, stating its provenance, in order that future claims that 'this was the Seymour copy' could be substantiated ●

The Secret of Life A new stamp issue and a



Technical details

Printer Joh Enschedé
Security Print

Process Lithography

Size 37 × 35mm

Sheets 50. Starting with this issue, the standard sheet size for special issues will be 50 rather than 100 stamps.

Perforation 14.5

Phosphor One band 2nd class, two bands others

Gum PVA

Gutter pairs Vertical

Plate numbers and colours

All E1 black, new blue, magenta, greenish yellow, plus azure (2nd), bright apple-green (1st), yellow-orange (E), bistre-yellow (47p), lavender (68p)

THE SECOND of this year's special stamp issues – on the subject of DNA and the Human Genome – goes on sale at Post Office branches and philatelic outlets and Royal Mail Tallents House from 25 February. Three of the five stamps are also included in a new prestige book issued the same day. The designs of the five stamps feature a humorous representation of scientists involved in: 2nd class *The End of the Beginning of the Genome Project*; 1st class *Comparative Genetics*; E (European rate) *Cracking the Code*; 47p *Genetic Engineering*; and 68p *Medical Futures*. The Queen's head and value/service indicator are positioned at top left, The Queen's silhouette facing right.

FIRST DAY FACILITIES Unstamped Royal Mail FDC envelopes will be available from main Post Office branches and philatelic outlets about a week before 25 February, price 25p. The cover can be used for the stamps and panes from the prestige book. Orders for serviced FDCs must reach Tallents House by the date of issue. Price £2.74 UK/£2.34 overseas with set of stamps; £3.43/£2.92 with label pane from prestige book. State whether Tallents House or Cambridge postmarks required. Collectors may send stamped covers on the day of issue to: Royal Mail Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB, or Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, Wexham Road, Slough SL1 1AA (Cambridge postmark), marking the outer envelope 'FD0305' or 'FD0306'. Covers can be posted or handed in at main Post Office branches for the Cambridge postmark. Sponsored handstamps will be announced in the *British Postmark Bulletin*, available on subscription from Tallents House. For a sample copy write to: The Editor, British Postmark Bulletin, Royal Mail, 148 Old Street, London EC1V 9HQ.

PHILATELIC PRODUCTS A well-illustrated pack (price £2.35) and stamp cards (25p each) will be available from main Post Office branches and philatelic outlets and Tallents House.

A coin cover will be available from Tallents House, price £13.95. This commemorates the 50th anniversary of the discovery of the DNA Double Helix and bears the five new stamps cancelled by a special Cambridge 'fingerprint' postmark. The cover encapsulates the new Royal Mint £2 coin showing the Double Helix on the obverse.



Postmark for the coin cover.

ject. With Maurice Wilkins, they were awarded the Nobel Prize for Physiology or Medicine in 1962. The molecular structures in DNA decoding featured on the 19p Scientists' Tale stamp in the Millennium series (below right). Crick has featured on stamps from Guyana and the Marshall Islands, issued respectively in 1995 and 1999.

Cells contain all the instructions for building a human being, in the form of DNA concealed in the nucleus. Within the nucleus, DNA is arranged in 23 pairs of rod-like packages called chromosomes. Each chromosome has a tightly-packed strand of DNA. DNA is composed of four chemicals (nucleotides) paired with one another repeatedly to form a twisted ladder shape, called a double helix. A gene is a string of nucleotides spelling out how to make a protein at a particular location on a chromosome.

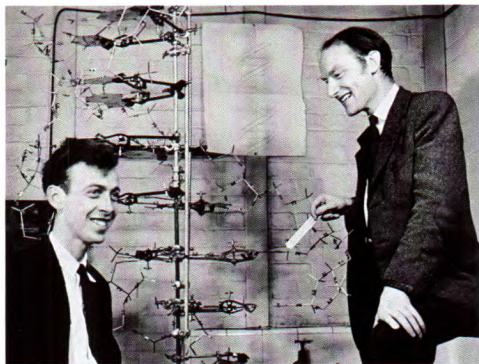
The Human Genome Project is an effort by the UK, USA, Japan, France, Germany and China to decipher the entire genome of a 'representative' human. This DNA sequence is 3 billion letters long, and contains the code for more than 30,000 genes. The first draft was completed in 2000; the aim is to have finished a 'gold standard' text by the 50th anniversary of Crick and Watson's discovery in 2003.

DNA is in the chromosomes of every living cell. Each human cell contains 6 feet of DNA. There are 100 million million cells in an adult body, so the DNA of just one person, if spun into a single thread, would stretch to the Sun and back 600 times.

Each individual's genome differs very slightly, although geneticists have pinpointed over 1 million of the tiny variations in genes that make each person different from all the other humans that ever existed. These minute distinctions explain why some people develop certain diseases or how they respond to drugs. This opens a future of 'personalised' medicine, and new research into Parkinson's disease, cancer or inherited genetic disabilities.

The human genome is so long that it can only be published on the internet and read by computer. If typed on A4 paper, it would fill 750,000 pages! The Project called for massive advances in computing and automation, stimulating a new branch of biology called bioinformatics. Researchers already know the DNA for tuberculosis, syphilis, bubonic plague, cholera, malaria, and meningitis. The cancer genome project has discovered more than 100 genes specifically linked in some way with tumours.

DNA is a personal signature as well as a badge of kinship. A British scientist, Professor Sir Alec Jeffreys, first used DNA 'fingerprinting' to help solve a murder in 1987. DNA science routinely clears up paternity disputes, identifies human remains and establishes historic family ties. Genetically-modified crops – with genes for added resistance to pests or to herbicides – are already grown widely in North America and Asia. The debate over this attracts strong opinions on both sides •



The discoverers of the structure of DNA, James Watson (left) and Francis Crick, with their model of part of a DNA molecule in 1953. Combining their own work with that of Maurice Wilkins and Rosalind Franklin led them to deduce that DNA exists as a double helix.



Molecular structures in DNA decoding featured on the 19p Scientists' Tale stamp in the 1999 Millennium series.

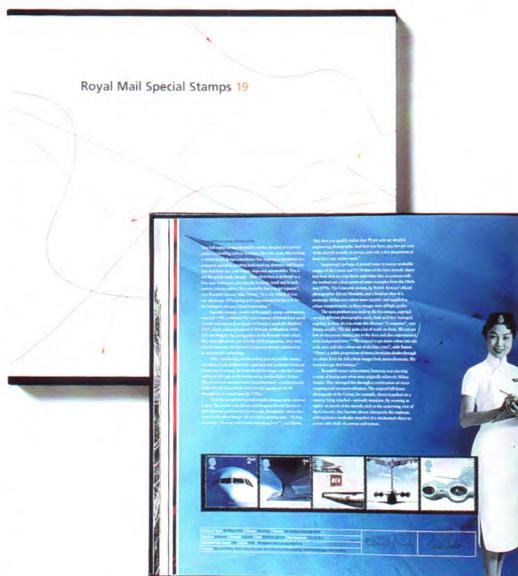
Royal Mail Special Stamps 19 The Editor reviews the 2002

THE 19th EDITION of *Royal Mail Special Stamps* – usually referred to as the Yearbook – contains chapters on each of this year's sets, based on interviews with the designers to reveal their thinking behind their designs and some of their tricks of the trade. It all makes for an interesting and enjoyable read. There is a supplementary folder for The Queen Mother memorial issue. The sets of stamps (miniature sheets for World Cup and Astronomy) are housed in protective carriers and can be mounted in the relevant chapter.

Like Kipling, Izhar Cohen, illustrator of the Just-So stamps, has lived and worked in three culturally-diverse countries. Born in Israel in 1963, he worked in France and the UK before returning to Israel. He works regularly in the UK and he describes BBC Radio 4 as 'one of the greatest influences over my state as an illustrator'. The Just So stories derive from many different cultures, and Kipling's distinctive language at times parodies E W Lane's *Arabian Nights*. Kipling – perhaps the J K Rowling of his time – produced his own illustrations; Cohen developed his own interpretation to distil the essence of the fables into 10 individual stamps forming a coherent set.

For the Golden Jubilee issue Kate Stephens selected striking images of The Queen taken in each decade of her reign by five high-profile photographers: Dorothy Wilding, Cecil Beaton, Lord Snowdon, Yousuf Karsh, and Tim Graham. She deliberately cropped closely in to The Queen's face to get to 'the real person without the trappings of monarchy'. This may detract from some of the originals, but achieves a consistency across a diverse range of styles. Beaton's portrait of The Queen in a long black cape is in marked contrast to the informal shot by Lord Snowdon in which (out of picture) she holds her first grandson, Peter Phillips. Stephens considered painted portraits but felt the immediacy of photography was more appropriate to the stamp format.

Commissioned to produce 10 stamps showing the beauty and diversity of the British coastline, photographer Richard Cooke presented Royal Mail with 200 images. He found himself drawn



to the more remote stretches of coast, such as the Outer Hebrides where 'the drama of the landscape attracted me...and the people were so nice.' Images including jetties, piers, buildings, and boats created 'a point of engagement with the public' – contrast the beach at Newquay with umbrellas, towels and sunbathers to the stark natural beauty of the Scottish coast. The project took around seven months, the daily flights subject to vagaries of the weather and tides.

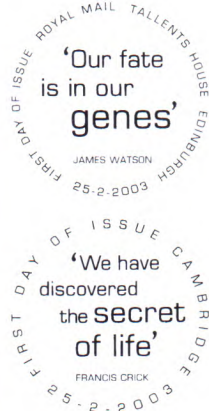
The Circus stamps feature the work of Ron Fuller who after making simple wooden and tin toys turned to automata; his first toy circus ring with 11 different acts powered by an electric motor. Clockwork-operated automated scenes were popular end-of-pier attractions in Victorian times; for a penny a story would be told by small figures moving around. Circus in Britain is enjoying a renaissance; aerial performers at the opening ceremony of the Millennium Dome trained at London's Circus Space which offers a BA degree in circus skills. Ron Fuller's stamps celebrate an institution that is alive and well.

Before 1952, flights in propeller planes were slow and passengers could suffer the effects of

prestige book explore DNA and the Genome

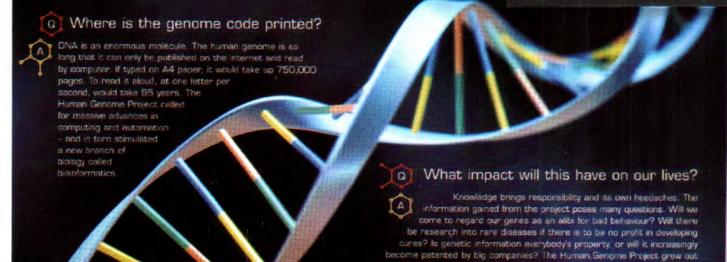
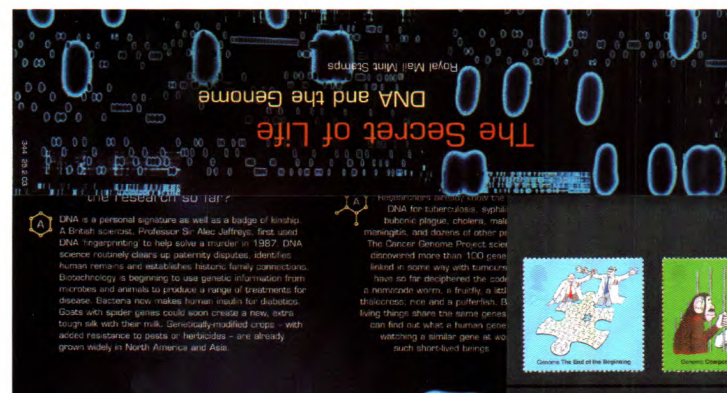


The Secret of Life stamps are the work of design group Williams Murray Hamm using illustrations by Peter Brookes, cartoonist for *The Times*. He also designed the Troilus and Criseyde stamp in the 1995 Greetings set and the Jenner vaccination stamp in the Patients' Tale set in the Millennium series.

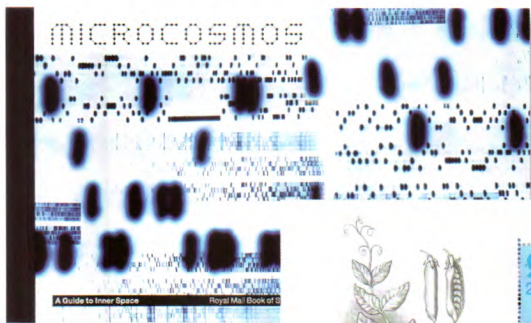


Mrs J Robinson
200 Manorbier Road
Ilkeston
Derbyshire
DE7 4AB

Royal Mail Tallents House 67 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH10 5PR



The pack (left) was written by Tim Radford, Science Editor of *The Guardian*, and designed by Dew Gibbons design group of London.



Panes here and on p157 are shown at proof stage.



Nothing exists except atoms and empty space;
everything else is opinion.

Democritus c. 400 BC

Microcosmos The new PSB contains four panes, as follows.

Pane 1 Top and bottom rows: Two 1st class Machin definitives in gold separated by Machin E definitive. Middle row: Two E definitives separated by label showing DNA sequencing. The pane margin shows a fly by Robert Hooke.

Pane 2 Top row: 2nd and 1st class Secret of Life stamps; Bottom row: 1st and 2nd Secret of Life stamps. Pane margin shows peas – plant hybridization.

Pane 3 Four Secret of Life E stamps. Pane margin shows DNA.

Pane 4 Top and bottom rows: Two Northern Ireland 2nd class stamps separated by Northern Ireland 1st class stamp. Middle row: Two NI 1st class stamps separated by NI 2nd class stamp. Pane margin shows an atom.

PRESTIGE BOOK A new prestige book, entitled *Microcosmos*, will be available from 25 February, price £6.99. This will contain four panes, as left. Pane 1 is printed in gravure, the other panes and text pages in litho, all by Joh. Enschedé Security Print. This is the first time Enschedé have printed the 1st class gold gummed definitive and the two Northern Ireland stamps. The text for the prestige book is by science writer Susan Aldridge; it was designed by CDT Design Limited of London who also designed the *Across the Universe* (Astronomy) prestige book •

DNA and the Human Genome Project In 1953 Francis Crick announced ‘We have discovered the secret of life’. The uncovering of the structure of DNA triggered a scientific revolution. Crick and the American James Watson, working together in Cambridge, found that DNA was a double helix linked over and over again by the same four bits of chemistry; they had identified both the code of all life and how it copies itself. The sequence of A, T, G and C spells out the genes that turn a single cell into a bean, a barnacle or a baby, and then make each bean, barnacle or baby different from any other. Crick and Watson laid the foundations for the Human Genome Pro-

Yearbook, and describes some 'journeys behind the stamps'



violent turbulence. The Comet, the world's first jet passenger airliner, meant that many exotic places that people had only heard of (or seen on stamps!) were little more than a day away. The first Comet journey from London to Johannesburg took over 23 hours, with four refuelling stops, compared to 11 hours today. The stamps are the work of Mike Denny and Harold Batten of Roundel Design which has a reputation as a transport specialist, creating identities and liveries for trains, ships and automobiles. Computers were used to make a coherent set, based on different photographic styles. By zooming in on the details of the aircraft the emphasis shifted from a workaday snapshot of a mechanised object to a more arty study of contour and texture.

In the chapter on the World Cup stamps we are told that in medieval times football 'was a rowdy, riotous and brutal pastime' – so no change there then. Howard Brown, the stamps' designer and Newcastle United supporter, had previously prepared stamps for a possible England win in the 1998 World Cup and Euro 2000. Finding images for the stamps was difficult – no living players could be featured, and much football

equipment is now covered in sponsors' names or logos, which can not be shown on stamps. Brown combined two symbolic elements – the England flag of St George and a classic football made up of black and white hexagons. (He also worked on a version using the St Andrew cross for use if Scotland qualified for the finals.) His colourful Flag stamps contrast well with the more sombre Crowned Lion stamp in the miniature sheet. He also prepared an England Winners stamp which, despite the team's best efforts, was not needed.

The sporting theme continued in July with stamps for the Commonwealth (Friendly) Games in Manchester. We are reminded that the 54 states of the Commonwealth comprise some 1.7 billion people – 30 per cent of the world's population. Details are given of the history of the Games and of the Queen's baton – the Commonwealth Games equivalent of the Olympic torch. The designer of the stamps, Madeleine Bennett, decided on an elongated format 'to enhance the idea of distance and speed'. The unusual proportions, combined with subtle photographic blur effects and horizontal lines, create a remarkable sense of dynamism and movement in a small space. An avid armchair sports fan, Bennett watches everything she can on television.

The Peter Pan issue was designed by Tuttsells Enterprise 16 using illustrations by Colin Shearing who sketched at home and took his pencil outlines to Tuttsells' studio, where they were scanned into a computer. A lot of time was spent at the printers 'working through the detailed shades of colour'; the resulting images are described as 'suitably vigorous, with a strong sense of movement and drama'. The finishing flourish – fully appreciated when you view the stamps together – is a swathe of fairy dust, printed in gold ink, emanating from Tinkerbell's trail on the 2nd class stamp and swirling across the other four.

The London Bridges stamps were designed by Robert Maude and Sarah Davies after research on Victorian London; other possible stamp subjects included London markets, civic buildings and notable architects. Once Bridges had been

**Royal Mail Special Stamps**

Available from Royal Mail Tallents House and main Post Office branches, price £32.50. A deluxe version, price £75, is available from Tallents House only.

decided, they 'deliberately chose bridges in central London, because this allowed us to include nearby London landmarks in the stamp image.' The Blackfriars Bridge stamp, for example, has St Paul's in the background, and the Millennium Bridge stamp shows Tate Modern. Robert is the designer of the 1998 Endangered Species stamps and this *Bulletin*.

The Astronomy miniature sheet was designed by Rebecca Oliver and Simon Elliott of Rose Design who conducted much of their research on the website of NASA's Space Telescope Science Institute. Three of the images were captured by the orbiting Hubble telescope, the fourth from the Subaru telescope of the National Astronomical Observatory of Japan. Rose used digital manipulation software in their studio to produce the final composition.

The stamps for the sesquicentenary of the first pillar boxes in the British Isles were designed by Silk Pearce and engraved by the renowned Czesław Slania. Production proved challenging – the engraved sections were proofed first to determine the area of the lithography underprinting. The Queen's head, value and date were also proofed in litho. Transparent litho ink printed under some tonal areas of the engraving brings out the finer points of Slania's work. 'It's complicated', admits Peter Silk, 'but it's worth the effort... it's very precise and you get a clarity of line you simply wouldn't get with litho or gravure.'

The Christmas issue is another from Rose Design, this time using photographs of plants by

Carol Sharp. Most of the images were carefully set up in Sharp's studio and taken by a large-format five-by-four camera using Fuji Velvia film which produces highly-saturated colours, and is particularly suitable for greens. The holly and the spruce 'star' were arranged by high-profile florist Paula Pryke.

The Occasions stamps feature the work of four very different image-makers whose brief was that the stamps should be bright and uplifting and relevant to the particular celebration. The five were selected from almost 100 from a broad range of UK-based illustrators, designers and artists. Ian Bilbey's 'new baby' stamp was a complex undertaking which involved roughly painting the two rabbits in black paint, putting the paper into the oven to dry, then scanning it into his computer, where he changed the colours and added the typewriter-style lettering to the bunnies' bodies.

The Queen Mother memorial stamps were adapted from those designed by the late John Gorham for her 90th birthday. Like the Queen Mother, Gorham embodied the best of another era; in an age of computer-dominated design, he retained the human touch in his work. Before his death he oversaw preparations for the memorial stamps, first day cover and presentation pack.

The Yearbook – written by Jim Davies and designed by Elmwood – contains many fine full-colour illustrations such as the portraits used for the golden jubilee stamps, posters advertising jet travel, Richard Cooke's coastline photographs, and the 1950 Broadway production of *Peter Pan* ●

Checklist of 2002 definitives



Left: mixed value pane from *Across the Universe* prestige book. Above: new stamps to cover postal rate increases.

We hope this list will prove helpful to collectors in completing their collections. Please read the following notes carefully.

We quote Tallents House order numbers (prefixed TB, DS, etc) as given on Tallents House stock lists. Some stamps were issued only in books and can be bought from Royal Mail only in complete books.

Printers DLR, De La Rue Security Print Ltd; E, Joh Enschedé Stamps; Q, The House of Questa Ltd; W, Walsall Security Printers Ltd.

Unless otherwise stated, the definitive and country stamps are gravure printed, have PVA gum, perforation gauge 15 x 14 (with ellipses at lower left and right sides). The dates quoted are those the stamps were first available from Tallents House. 2nd class, 1st class and E (European rate) stamps have Non Value Indicators (NVI) rather than a face value.

Machin definitives

6 February 2nd class and E (European rate) stamps, E. From *Gracious Accession* prestige book (YB018). First printing of E stamp and gummed 2nd class stamp by E.

5 June 1st class in gold self-adhesive from books of six Q and W (UB217, UB218) and 12 W (UB216). Note: for differences between the Q and W printings see Douglas Myall's article and Ken Marks's letter in the August and September *Bulletin*.

4 July 37p dark grey, 42p sage, 47p sea green, 68p stone, DLR (DS374, DS420, DS470, DS680).

4 July E (European rate), 42p sage, 68p stone self-adhesive from books of six, W (UB219, UB220, UB221).

Wilding definitives

6 February 2nd class and 1st class in designs of 2½d and 1½d Wildings of 1952, E. From *Gracious Accession* prestige book (YB018). Note: 2nd class stamp exists with both watermark upright and watermark diagonal.

5 December 1p, 2p, 5p, 33p, 37p, 47p, 50p, 2nd class, and 1st class in miniature sheet, DLR (MZ009).

Country stamps

5 June Scotland 2nd and 1st class DLR (previously W) (SS195, SS270) For differences between the DLR and W printings see Ken Marks's letter in Postbag, September.

4 July England 68p, N Ireland 68p, Scotland 68p, Wales 68p, DLR (N Ireland stamp litho) (ES680, IS680, SS680, WS680).

24 September England 2nd and 1st, Q. From *Across the Universe* prestige book (YB019). First printing of England stamps by Q (sheet stamps by DLR).



Above: Wilding miniature sheet. Right: books of mixed definitives and special stamps. Opposite page: some of the new self-adhesive stamp books.



15 October N Ireland E (European rate) DLR Litho (IS373). Note: 15 October was philatelic release date, supplies had gone into general distribution in N Ireland some weeks earlier.

Mixed value & pictorial label stamp panes and miniature sheets

6 February Pane of 4 × 2nd class and 4 × E (European rate) definitives with central label showing head of King George VI, E. From *Gracious Accession* prestige book (YB018) • Pane of 4 × 2nd class and 4 × 1st class Wilding definitives with central blank label plus fifth 2nd class stamp printed to left of the block of stamps alongside an image of a postmarked 1952 1½d Wilding (not valid for postage). This fifth 2nd class stamp has diagonal watermark. From *Gracious Accession* prestige book (YB018).

2 May Pane of 4 × 1st class flame (orange) and 2 × Airliners stamps, all self-adhesive, Q (UB214).

21 May Pane of 4 × 1st class flame (orange) and 2 × World Cup stamps, all self-adhesive, W (UB215).

24 September Pane of 4 × 1st class gold and 4 × E (European rate) with central label showing Jodrell Bank telescope, Q. From *Across the Universe* prestige book (YB019) • Pane of 4 × 2nd class, 4 × 1st class England and 1 × 1st class Scotland, Q. From *Across the Universe* prestige book (YB019). First printing of England stamps by Q.

5 December Miniature sheet containing 1st, 2nd, 33p, 37p, 47p, 1p, 2p, 5p and 50p stamps in Wilding designs, DLR (MZ009).

Stamp Books

6 February *Gracious Accession* prestige book containing Wilding definitives and Golden Jubilee special stamps, E (YB018).

2 May 4 × 1st class flame (orange) and 2 × 1st class Airliners special stamps, all self-adhesive, Q (UB214).

21 May 4 × 1st class flame (orange) and 2 × 1st class World Cup special stamps, all self-adhesive, W (UB215).

5 June New cover designs. 6 × 1st class gold, Q (UB217) and W (UB218) and 12 × 1st gold W (UB216), all self-adhesive. Matrix removed from around stamps.

4 July Old cover design 6 × 1st flame (orange) self-adhesive, Q (UB223). Note: 4 July was philatelic release date for UB223; supplies had gone into general distribution some weeks earlier.

4 July New cover design. 12 × 2nd class Q (UB222), 6 × E (European rate) W (UB219), 6 × 42p W (UB221), and 6 × 68p W (UB222), all self-adhesive with matrix removed.



10 September 4 × 1st class gold and 2 × 1st class London Bridges, all self-adhesive with matrix removed, Q (UB224).

24 September *Across the Universe* book containing mixed panes of definitive, country and Astronomy special stamps, Q (YB019).

Business sheets (self-adhesive)

9 May Sheets of 100 2nd class and 1st class flame (orange) E (DP028, DP027). Note: 9 May was phi-

latic release date, the sheets had gone into general circulation some weeks earlier.

4 July Sheets of 100 2nd class and 1st class gold, E, (revised format sheets) (DP031, DP030).

Presentation Packs

12 March Definitives containing 1p, 2p, 4p, 5p, 8p, 10p, 20p, 33p, 40p, 41p, 45p, 50p, 65p, £1, 2nd, 1st, and E (European rate). DLR except 2nd and 1st W (DR004); Definitives containing £1.50, £2, £3 and £5, DLR (FR002); Scotland containing 2nd, 1st, E and 65p (SP017); Wales containing 2nd, 1st, E, and 65p (WP017); Folder containing two definitive and four country packs (DY001).

4 July Definitives containing 37p, 42p, 47p, and 68p (DP029); Country stamps containing England, N Ireland, Scotland, and Wales 68p (CP018).

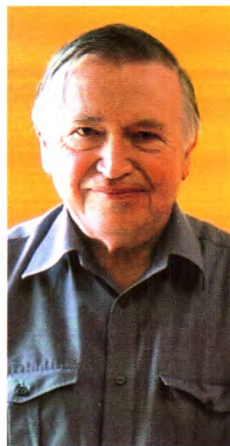
5 December Wilding definitives miniature sheet (DP032) ●

Royal Mail thanks D G A Myall for his help with this listing. The Editor regrets that neither Mr Myall nor himself is able to engage in correspondence regarding its contents.

John Hammonds Richard West meets the ABPS Chairman

THE ASSOCIATION of British Philatelic Societies (ABPS) came into being nearly 10 years ago, as the organisation to bring together collectors in the United Kingdom, principally through membership of stamp clubs. Much of the day-to-day running of the Association is in the hands of the Executive Committee, which has a new Chairman, John Hammonds.

John is far from new to the ABPS, having been persuaded from its outset to be its Secretary, a position he retained until 1999, steering the Association through its formative years. However, John's most significant contribution to the ABPS has probably been his editing the *Directory and Handbook* and the *List of Philatelic Lecturers and Displays*. Both have proved essential in providing



The new Chairman of the ABPS, John Hammonds.

information about the hobby in the United Kingdom, not least invaluable to society secretaries trying to arrange annual programmes.

The *Directory* lists all the UK's local and specialist societies, plus provides other useful information such as those museums which hold stamp collections, and details of stamp publications and catalogues. The list of lecturers details those who are prepared to visit societies giving talks. To say that John edits these publications is to do scant justice to the enormous task involved: John seeks and compiles all the information, and arranges it into a usable form.

Like most schoolboys, John collected when he was young, concentrating on Great Britain. But that collection was sold – so he could buy a camera. When he moved to London, the stamp shops proved too strong a magnet, and collecting resumed. After a while he found that he had a majority of French stamps, so that became his specialist subject. Later it was refined to the Air-mails of France, although he also enjoys collections of Belgium and Bohemia and Moravia.

John has always been an active 'society man', and joined Walton and Weybridge Philatelic Society, becoming the joint Exchange Packet Secretary, and today being an Honorary Vice President. However, the bank for which he worked moved him from London to Crawley, and there he joined his new 'local', Horsham and District Philatelic Society. During his time with Horsham he has been the Chairman, Auctioneer, and is still the Secretary.

He is also actively involved with societies linked with his own collecting interests. A member of the France and Colonies Philatelic Society since the early 1970s, he has, among other duties, been both the President and Auction Secretary, and has been a Life Member since 1992. He is a member, and Auction Secretary, of the British Aerophilatelic Federation, and is a member of the Society of Postal Historians.

A few years ago, with the late Michael Elliott, the first Chairman of the Executive Committee of the ABPS, he started an auction for the Association of Sussex Philatelic Societies, which is still going strong.

Involved with the ABPS from its inception, John was part of the organising team of the ABPS exhibition staged at Hove in 1998, and of Midpex, held at Tile Hill, near Coventry, every two years, an event that caters specifically for specialist societies and their members.

Following the death of Michael Elliott in 1998 (sadly he died just before the exhibition in Hove that year, having been instrumental in setting up the event), Alan Wood became Chairman of the Executive Committee. Alan recently decided to resign, and the members of the Executive overwhelmingly supported John as new Chairman.

Over the years John feels the ABPS has done much to break down the barriers that many felt existed between collectors; for example, between those who exhibit internationally and those who are happy just occasionally to show a few sheets to the members of their local society. However, he still feels there is much to be done to bring an awareness of the ABPS to more collectors, and to encourage more to join both local and specialist societies.

He is keen to continue the programme of exhibitions, such as Midpex, and events such as that held at Hove, and at Newcastle (1996), Glasgow (2000), and Chester (2002), and already planned for Basildon (2004) and in Yorkshire (2006).

While many philatelic societies are 'twinned' with societies overseas, particularly in Europe, he would like to see a strengthening of the bonds between collectors in the UK and those in other parts of Europe. He is also keen to investigate the idea of holding week-end seminars to explore subjects of importance to collectors.

Married for over 40 years, John is fortunate in that his wife fully supports him in his activities, although they have different interests (John's wife is keen on amateur dramatics). Sadly he has not been able to persuade his two children to take up stamp collecting.

However, in John one finds someone who has demonstrated not only honesty and integrity, but also a willingness to work extremely hard on behalf of the hobby. With John as its Chairman, the Association of British Philatelic Societies will be in safe and capable hands ●

Philately on-line Ron Negus looks at letterboxes websites



The Letter Box Study Group
lbsg.org

Aims
 Background of the LBSG
 Who are we?
 What do we do?
 Meetings
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When did letter boxes appear in the Which series then?



...the LBSG is the recognised definitive authority on the British letter box...

Disclaimer

www.lbsg.org Information about the Letter Box Study Group may be obtained by post from Mrs Val Scott, at 38 Leopold Avenue, Handsworth Wood, Birmingham B20 1ES, or by sending an e-mail to enquiry@lbsg.org for general enquiries, or to membership@lbsg.org for membership enquiries.

REGULAR BULLETIN READERS will know that it has had a column giving details of letterboxes from home and abroad for many years. Interest in these boxes has been highlighted with Royal Mail's issue of the special stamps devoted to them in October 2002, and Glenn Morgan contributed an article about their use in world-wide stamp designs in the *Bulletin* in the same month.

The Letter Box Study Group is the leading society concerned with recording details of the many types of box that exist. The society has its own website at www.lbsg.org, and this contains information about its history, structure and current activities.

The Group was formed in 1976 with a founding group of just 15 members. Since that time, its membership has increased steadily until nearly 800 enthusiasts belong to it today. Both male and female members represent all age groups. On the site there is a two-page publicity folder that provides a summary of what the Group seeks to accomplish. Page 1 of this folder simply shows drawings of the various types of post box that have been used over the years. All the relevant information about the society occurs on page 2, and this is all that needs to be printed out.

The Group has always been interested in the locations of the rarer types of boxes. Members have identified many of these, and some boxes are now subject to Preservation Orders as listed buildings. The society also maintains a Letterbox Listing that identifies almost 400 different models, and is regarded as the definitive record

of letterbox types. Colour photographs of a few types are shown on the site. Amongst a number of leaflets available to Group members is one that lists letterboxes found in museums or private collections, and another that gives details of letterboxes that have appeared in postmark designs.

The publication of a quarterly newsletter keeps members up to date with latest finds. Most issues of the newsletter include a postcard picturing an unusual box, or postal scene, from the past. Whilst the majority of the information in the newsletter relates to the British Isles, or to those other countries where British boxes have been in use, articles about foreign letterboxes are also included. Details of all the activities of the Study Group are given on the website, and an application form for membership can be downloaded.

www.wicks.org/pulp/index.html is another internet site worth examining. This is the work of a private collector, Paul Wicks, and is entitled Paul's Unofficial Letterbox Pages. It contains separate sections giving a brief history of letterboxes, terminology, unusual designs, foreign boxes, and details of collectibles in the form of letterboxes. All the sections are well illustrated with photographs and the site is attractive, easy to navigate and has a friendly tone. It was started in August 1996, when, Paul believes, it was the first web page produced on the subject of British roadside letterboxes. The site also has a page that provides a short bibliography, plus a listing of links to others that will interest the letterbox enthusiast •

Postbag Letters to the Editor

Better designs Referring to the letter in September regarding special stamps, I too was amazed that no new special design had been lined up for the death of the Queen Mother. I had imagined that stamps for that occasion had been 'on hand' for years. Is there any explanation for this – or did the event come as a complete surprise to Royal Mail? I was also interested in Mr Wyles's comments regarding design and I agree that so many recent stamps seem to be 'garish' and undignified. However, since the completion of the awful Millennium series we have had some beautiful stamps – Submarines, English definitives, Pond Life, Nobel Prizes, Friendly Games, and, in particular, the lovely Bridges of London. The Pillar to Post stamps are well designed and also have that now rare addition – a border. The new Christmas stamps have also been added to my favourites. There are many letters in Postbag concerning the minute differences in different printings and so on, but for the average collector it is the artistic design that we look for and hopefully 'feedback' comments are useful to Royal Mail.

MRS A J OWEN, BOVINGDON, HERTS ●

Commemorative colours I agree with Mrs Ridley (September) that a larger portrait of The Queen on special (commemorative) stamps would give them greater dignity, and that better captioning is needed on most of our special stamps. When I started collecting special stamps they were printed in the same colour as the equivalent definitive value. Even when two or more colours were used they retained the definitive colour as the main colour used. This continued up to the National Productivity Year set of 1962 NPV, but started to change the following year although certain values in some sets retained the definitive colour, for example 1964 Shakespeare 3d and 1s6d, Botanical Congress 3d, 1965 Post Office Tower 1s3d, 1969 Ships 5d, Concorde 1s6d, Anniversaries 1s and 1s6d and Post Office Technology 5d and 1s6d. There are even some examples into the decimal period, such as 1971 3p Literary Anniversaries, 5p and 7½p Universities, 3p Christmas, 1972 3p

Churches and 2½p and 3p Christmas and 3p Silver Wedding, and 1976 Christmas 6½p and 8½p. I was pleased to see that the 2001 Christmas stamps had The Queen's head and values in the definitive colours and the 2002 2nd and 1st Commonwealth Games stamps were essentially blue and a kind of deep orange (although the 1st class was then being changed from orange to gold).

The regional and later country stamps were also originally in definitive colours but this would not have been possible with the new pictorial stamps for Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. That said, the Welsh £ is basically blue like the definitive £ stamp. However the English stamps are single colours plus silver and it might have been possible to print these in the definitive colours.

Retention of a basic colour is important for special stamps, relating them to the definitives and the prime purpose of any stamp, prepayment of postage. Printing The Queen's head in this colour worked well on the 2001 Christmas issue and I hope will be used as often as possible in the future. Finally no more black and white stamps please but if we are to have them, let's have a boldly coloured Queen's head, not in almost invisible silver as on the 1999 Royal Wedding and 44p War Graves stamps and 2001 Cats & Dogs. The latter would have been enlivened by the Queen's silhouette and value printed in orange (flame) or pillar box red. TIM EDWARDS, SHEFFIELD ●

Stamp variations I always read with interest the letters from Ken Marks in which he lists differences between varieties of newly-issued stamps. While I broadly agree with his points in September, I feel impelled to make one slightly negative comment. First though, I should like to take him up point by point.

On examples of the new gold 1st class stamps I have, the phosphor bands are 12mm apart on the Walsall issue, 11.5–11.75 on the Questa. I wonder if this is a 'standard' difference, and also how measurable it would be on used stamps? Compare the different width of phosphor band on the

2nd class stamp – Questa 5mm, Walsall 4.5mm – mentioned by Douglas Myall in March 2001. The differences in perforation shape are as described and illustrated by Mr Myall in the same article, where he is discussing the flame-coloured NV1 1st class self-adhesives. I agree with Mr Marks that the Questa ‘1st’ is perhaps set slightly higher than the Walsall. More obviously to my eyes, though, it is set closer to the left margin, and (as with the ‘2nd’, and again as pointed out by Mr Myall), is considerably thicker than the Walsall version. In fact I have found that ‘thicker figures’ are the quickest and easiest way of sorting out used Questa from Walsall printings. On the question of colour, however, I am in complete agreement with Mr Marks (‘much deeper with a less greenish appearance’ than the 1997 gold issues, ‘more resemble the colour of the 50p definitive’), and therefore disagree with Mr Myall (‘a good colour match to the previous gold printing’) in his article in August.

Turning now to the Scottish 2nd and 1st class printings by De La Rue. Mr Marks describes and illustrates how on the DLR 2nd class ‘the silver Queen’s head and “2nd” seem positioned slightly higher up.’ Now I agree that this is the case with his illustrated example; but with my own stamps this is not the case at all. The DLR head is either identically positioned, or perhaps a micro-

fraction higher, but the difference is nothing like that as between the stamps shown. Furthermore, ‘the design shows through the back’ on my Walsall, Questa and DLR versions alike. (Incidentally, Mr Myall has pointed out in the same August article that DLR’s paper is gummed and coated by themselves ‘and is white compared to the creamy paper supplied by Tullis Russell’).

Now to my general criticism. Mr Marks’ comments are valuable, and extremely accurate. But one is sometimes left with the feeling that ‘God has spoken’, that the differences Mr Marks points out are set in stone. Often, perhaps, they are. But I believe he should accompany his much-needed and much-appreciated commentaries with louder, larger and more explicit caveats: ‘These remarks apply to stamps I have in front of me; they do not necessarily apply to all possible exemplars of the stamp in question.’ PETER MANSFIELD, EASTLEIGH, HANTS ●

Stamp book anniversary 2004 marks the centenary of the first proper British stamp book – containing Edward VII ½d and 1d stamps. I trust Royal Mail will commemorate the centenary with a suitable prestige book. Perhaps all stamp books issued that year could carry a centenary logo or message. J D THORNTON, HULL ●

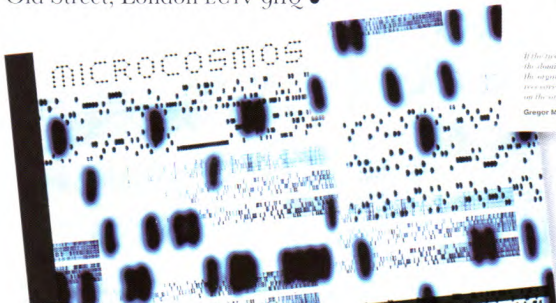
Special draw Win forthcoming Microcosmos prestige book

WE HAVE SIX of this new book, to be issued on 25 February, to give away – to the senders of the first six cards drawn on 14 February. To enter the draw simply write your name and address on the back of a postcard and send to: Prestige Book Draw, British Philatelic Bulletin, Royal Mail, 148 Old Street, London EC1V 9HQ ●



If the two sides (green & silver) differ, then surely the dominant allele, is better expressed in the organism's appearance in the culture. The two sides differ. And no matter what, first on the organism's appearance.

Gregor Mendel's (1822-1884) 1865



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



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

- 1 In which year was the Letter Box Study Group founded?
- 2 In which year did 'A Pointer' feature on a stamp?
- 3 What is the colour of the current 42p Machin definitive?



October identify The detail is from the 2002 Christmas 47p stamp. The winner was K Muttlow of the USA.

October knowledge The answers: 1) Sally Stiff; 2) Edinburgh; 3) 1988. The winner was J Mellor of Yorkshire.

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

Send your answer (addressed to either January *Identify* competition or January *Knowledge* competition), name and address on a postcard or back of a sealed envelope to: British Philatelic Bulletin, Royal Mail, 148 Old Street, London EC1V 9HQ. The senders of the first cards drawn in each competition on 14 February will each receive £100. Ten runner-up prizes of presentation packs or FDCs will be awarded in each competition.

The competitions are not open to Royal Mail employees •

Events

Until further notice Postal Memorabilia displays at Museum of Lincolnshire Life, Burton Road, Lincoln and Manchester Postal Museum, Wythenshaw Park, Manchester (open 10.00-16.00). **Enquiries** D Harrop, 15 Hawthorn Road, Stockport SK4 3DQ.

18 January Display 'Boring Machins' by Barrie Mutton to GB Philatelic Society at British Philatelic Centre, 107 Charterhouse Street, London EC1, 11.00. **Enquiries** A Claridge, 01376 584412.

31 January - 1 February 6th Annual London Westminster Stamp & Postal History Fair at Central Hall, London SW1. Open 11.00-18.00 Friday; 10.30-16.00 Sunday. Admission free. **Enquiries** John Auld, 01279 758 854.

15 February Streetly PS Stamp Fair at Collingwood Centre, Collingwood Drive, Pheasey, Birmingham.

10.00-16.30. Dealers in stamps, postal history, covers and postcards. Displays, meeting of Midland Postal History Society. Admission 20p, children 10p. **Enquiries** C T Poynton, 0121 360 0704.

22 February Welsh Philatelic Society meeting at Southgate Hotel, Aberystwyth. **Enquiries** P Gaywood, 2 Fairways, Fulwood, Preston PR2 8FX.

26 February - 2 March Spring Stampex at Business Design Centre, London N1. Displays by British Aerophilatelic Federation and Czechoslovak PS. **Enquiries** Stampex, 020 7490 1005.

27 February - 1 March Philatex at Royal Horticultural Hall, Greycoat Street, London SW1. 27 Feb 11.00-19.00, 28 Feb 10.00-18.00; 1 Mar 10.00-17.00. Admission free. **Enquiries** 020 8946 4489 or 01793 513431 •

Exhibition report

Chester 2002 was the fourth national exhibition staged by the ABPS, following Newcastle, Hove, and Glasgow in 1996, 1998, and 2000. Chester provided the familiar blend of dealers and displays, it being pleasing to note that all areas were busy on both days (29-30 November). The exhibition was opened by the Sheriff of Chester, who was guest of honour at the awards banquet and also hosted a magnificent welcoming reception at Chester Town Hall. A feature of these ABPS exhibitions is the inter-federation competitions. On this occasion federations were invited to submit entries in three classes, plus Youth entries. The winners were: Surrey (Thematics), Hampshire (Postal Stationery), Midlands (Aerophilatelic), and Wessex (Youth), with Hampshire winning the overall Inter-Federation Competition.

There were individual competitions in Traditional, Social Philately, Literature, and Youth classes. John Dahl won the Grand Prix for the best display for his 'The Nyasa Company 1901-11 King Carlos I issue', while individual trophies went to Tony Bowers, Michael Oliver, Jeffrey Stone, John Dahl, Donald Scregg, David Tett and the France & Colonies Philatelic Society.

GB exhibits included a study of 1st and 2nd class definitives (Cliff Garside); George VI postal stationery (Tony Bowers); the Penny Die II, Alphabet III (Stanley Aveyard); Greetings Telegram Service (Brian Sole); John Palmer and the use of mail coaches (David Robinson); PO Savings Bank (William Hogg); the Golden Jubilee of Uniform Penny Postage in 1890 (John Davies and Thomas Kenwright); and Jean Alexander's 'Supermarket Philately', on PO involvement with promotions.

For many, the highlight was the display from the Royal Collection, which included the famous Kirkcudbright wrapper with 10 Penny Backs, the original sketches for the 1946 Hong Kong Victory issue, material relating to the Jubilee Jamboree of 1957, and GB Commonwealth Games issues.

It was a busy, enjoyable exhibition, with congratulations to the organisers. A pity they could not have had a little better control over the weather. *Richard West* ●

Late news

People We are sad to report the sudden death in November of Angus Mathieson who designed this *Bulletin* for over a decade until 1996. Angus, who was only 54, originally worked with Philip Sharland, designer of several sets of stamps as well as the *Bulletin*. A gentle, considerate and extraordinarily polite person, he was proud of his work on the *Bulletin* and enjoyed finding suitable illustration material, particularly for the front covers. The December 1989 *Bulletin* cover, for the forthcoming Dogs stamps, featured one of his daughters with his family's pet labrador. He was proud of his Scottish descent and understandably knowledgeable about the Mathieson clan history. He was also interested in railways, particularly the Leighton Buzzard Railway near his home. The Editor will miss meeting him for the occasional lunch, Angus was always good company, cheerful and easy to talk to. Our sympathy to his wife and daughters on their sudden loss.

Geoff Manton who died in November, aged 81, founded Cavendish Philatelic Auctions in 1952. The company is now amongst the leading philatelic auctioneers – particularly of postal history material – in the world. Happily Mr Manton was able to take part in the 50th anniversary auction last January. His recollections of his long years in the trade were recently published. Mr Manton was of the 'old school', knowing his customers well and enjoying the social aspects of the philatelic world. Our condolences to his family.

Congratulations to *Bulletin* contributors Margaret Morris and Brian Warren on gold and vermeil awards at Stampa (Irish national exhibition) in October, and to Glenn Morgan, recently elected a Fellow of the Royal Philatelic Society ●

Auctions Bonham's auctions on 12-13 February will include a specialised collection of Wildings. Enquiries: Bonham, 101 New Bond Street, London W1S 1SR; telephone 020 7468 8373.

Spink will auction the Chan collection of Victorian and Edwardian stamps and covers on 12 February. Enquiries: Spink, 69 Southampton Row, London WC1B 4ET; telephone 020 7563 4000 ●

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