

BRITISH PHILATELIC

The ROYAL MAIL magazine for stamp collectors

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Bulletin

The Queen's stamps at the
National Postal Museum

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Forthcoming issues & withdrawals

1 October	Issue Cars stamps & presentation pack • National Postal Museum postcards: Postal Vehicles • 1996 Christmas aerogramme
2 October	Withdrawal Rugby League stamps, presentation pack & stamp cards; 1995 Christmas aerogramme • 10 x 1st W H Smith promotion book (issued October 1995)
4 October	Withdrawal 4 x 35p book (issued October 1995)
7 October	Issue Asda promotion book, 10 x 1st NVI. Note: available from Asda stores from this date; philatelic availability to be announced
10 October	Withdrawal 25p definitive printed by Harrison with blue fluor (issued August 1995)
21 October	Issue 1996 Christmas stamp cards
28 October	Issue 1996 Christmas stamps, presentation pack, stamp books (20 x 2nd, 10 x 1st) • 1996 Yearbook (standard & leather bound versions) and 1996 Yearpack
29 October	Withdrawal 1995 Christmas stamps, presentation pack, stamp cards, & stamp books (20 x 19p, 10 x 25p, 4 x 60p)
30 October	Withdrawal 1995 Yearbook & Yearpack; NPM 1995 Christmas postcards. Note: NPM cards to be withdrawn at Bureau but remain on sale at NPM • £2 Edinburgh Castle stamp with Dextrin gum (version with PVA gum remains on sale)
11 November	Issue 1996 Cartoons greetings book reprint: stamps with 2 phosphor bands, amended text on covers
3 December	Issue 2nd class NVI stamp in sheets of 200, with extended phosphor bands
11 December	Withdrawal Walsall 4 x 2nd & Harrison 10 x 2nd books (issued December 1995)

Issues Note some items are available only from the British Philatelic Bureau and Post Office Counters philatelic outlets at main post offices in Bath, Belfast, Birmingham Brighton, Bristol, Cambridge Canterbury, Cardiff, Chester Colchester, Coventry, Croydon Durham, Edinburgh, Exeter 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-on-Avon, Truro Windsor and York.

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

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Christmas Royal Mail First Day Cover

Mrs J Robinson
200 Manorier Road
Ilkeston
Derbyshire
DE7 4AB

The designer The stamps were designed by 24 year old Laura Stoddart, her first work for Royal Mail. Laura was born in Liverpool and received her training at Brighton University and the Royal College of Art,

London. The College, celebrating its centenary this year, has contributed many stamp designers in the past, including David Gentleman, Hugh Casson, Michael Foreman, Quentin Blake, Brian Tatters-

field, Dan Fern, Bryan Kneale, David Hockney, Barnett Friedman, and Enid Marx. Charles Frederick Tunnicliffe, whose bird drawings were used on the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust stamps, was another RCA

graduate. Professor Christopher Frayling, Rector of the RCA, has written the introduction to the new Royal Mail Yearbook (see page 40).

A baby is a

new beginning and is cause for rejoicing. When the Magi, the wise men from the east, journeyed through the plain leads to Bethlehem at the Epiphany, they bring with them gifts given in symbolism. Gold is the stuff of crowns and robes because Jesus is a king. Frankincense is to sanctify him as a priest. Myrra is a gum resin made from a tree - it is used to embalm the dead. Pre-figures of Christ may be detected in this

Christmas
celebration.

Christmas Royal Mail Mini
Stamps



Presentation pack and stamp cards A presentation pack (price £2.20) written by award-winning writer Susan Elkin and stamp cards (25p each) will be available from the Bureau, Post Office Counters philatelic outlets, and main post offices.

The first to hear the good news and the working classmen, and, indeed, and so working in the same way as the first to hear the good news. These are the people - the people who are the first to hear the good news - not the people who are the first to hear the good news. This is the first to hear the good news, and the first to hear the good news.

This is the first to hear the good news, and the first to hear the good news. This is the first to hear the good news, and the first to hear the good news. This is the first to hear the good news, and the first to hear the good news. This is the first to hear the good news, and the first to hear the good news.

Royal Mail news Christmas stamps • 1996

Yearbook • 1996 Yearpack • Definitives/ stamp book update • New postshop • NPM news • Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust

Christmas Five stamps in the annual Christmas series go on sale at post offices and philatelic outlets on 28 October.

The 1996 set depicts the Biblical Nativity story from the Annunciation to the Epiphany, from watercolour paintings by Laura Stoddart. The designs feature: Star in the East (2nd class), Annunciation to Mary (1st class), Son of the Highest (31p), Journey to Bethlehem (43p), and Shepherds under the oak (63p). Trees are seen in the background of each painting, each tree having a symbolic meaning in art.

The 2nd class stamp shows the Three Kings journeying past palm trees. For the Romans the palm was a symbol of victory; the early Christians adopted the palm branch as a symbol of a martyr's triumph over death. The 1st class design shows the angel Gabriel presenting a lily to Mary, with an olive tree in the background. The lily is a symbol of innocence and the Annunciation. Artists from Leonardo to Rossetti have depicted the Annunciation with this flower. The olive has many associations, particularly with peace.

The 31p denomination depicts the journey to Bethlehem with Joseph and Mary passing cypress trees which are associated with death by many people, but also the durable evergreen is linked to immortality and life after death. The 43p stamp features an orange and an apple tree. Artists of past times have used both fruits as the 'fruit of salvation'. The apple in Christ's hand represents salvation. The orange is a symbol of purity and generosity.

The 63p value depicts the shepherds with an oak tree. Long before the Christian era, the oak was revered as a tree that could ward off evil. Oak is believed by some to have been the wood from which the cross was made, and it became a symbol of Christ with its qualities of strength and virtue.

The 2nd and 1st class non-value indicator stamps prepay postage at the basic 2nd and 1st class inland rates, ie 20p and 26p. The 26p rate also applies to basic rate letters to European Union countries. Both can be used as 20p/26p part postage to all countries. The 31p, 43p, and 63p rates are for letters to European, non-EU, countries; and airmail letters to 10 and 20g respectively.

CHRISTMAS STAMP ANNIVERSARY Christmas stamps were first issued 30 years ago; the first set featuring childrens' paintings was issued on 1 December 1966. The Nativity story has featured on several earlier issues: 1967 (religious paintings), 1969, 1970 (medieval art), 1971 and 1992 (stained glass windows), 1974 (church roof bosses), 1976 (medieval embroidery), 1979, 1981 22p and 25p (children's paintings), 1982 12½p and 26p (carols), 1984,



1988 (Christmas cards), 1991 (illuminated manuscripts), and 1994 (children's nativity plays).

Including the 1996 issue, Royal Mail has issued 139 Christmas stamps. To this can be added phosphor versions of the 1966 issue, and underprints on 13p values (1984, 1986, 1987) and 12p value (1985) from books or packs. Four of the 1989 issue carried a charity surcharge. A feature article on British Christmas stamps, by James Mackay, was published here in December 1994. *Bulletin* readers voted the 1995 Christmas stamps, featuring robins, the most popular set of the year.

Technical details

Printers Harrison & Sons Ltd

Process Photogravure

Size 41 × 30mm

Sheets 100

Perforation 15 × 14

Phosphor 2nd class one band

● 1st class, 31p, 43p & 63p
two bands ● Blue fluor in
phosphor

Paper OBA (Optical Brightening Agent) free

Gum PVA

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 28 October, 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 Bethlehem, Dyfed, price £2.57 (including VAT) to UK addresses, £2.19 to overseas addresses (no VAT). Orders for covers must be received at the Bureau by 28 October 1996.

Collectors may send their own stamped covers on the day of issue, for these cancels, to: British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, Edinburgh EH3 5TT, or Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, Penarth Road, Cardiff CF1 1AA (for Bethlehem postmark). The outer envelope should be endorsed 'FD9627' (Bureau), or 'FD9628' (Bethlehem).

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

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

Collectors are reminded that it will be in order to affix just the 2nd class stamp to covers to receive all special cancels ('first day of issue', sponsored and philatelic counters), in use on 28 October. The minimum 1st class rule is suspended on this day as the set includes a 2nd class rate stamp. This concession applies only to the Christmas stamp; otherwise covers must bear at least 1st class postage.



CHRISTMAS STAMP BOOKS Books containing twenty 2nd class and ten 1st class Christmas stamps will be available from post offices, the Bureau, philatelic outlets, and many retailers from 28 October, price £4 and £2.60 respectively. The front covers reproduce the design of the relevant stamps. There will no books containing international rate stamps this year. Christmas stamp books were introduced in 1978, initially containing definitive stamps. Books with the Christmas special issues started in 1984.

CHRISTMAS AEROGRAMME The 1996 aerogramme, shown here last month, will be issued on 1 October. Price 45p, including 36p aerogramme postage. Designed by Peter Malone, it features angels and a procession of stable animals. Christmas aerogrammes have been issued since 1965.

CHRISTMAS STAMP PYRAMIDS The Christmas stamps will be available in optical glass pyramid-shaped paperweights – an ideal Christmas gift. Available from the Bureau, price £24.95 each. Please quote which value stamp(s) required – 2nd class, 1st class, 31p, 43p, or 63p.

COLLECTOR'S PLATE A fine bone china plate reproducing the design of the 1992 18p Christmas stamp, of a stained glass window in St James's Church, Pangbourne, will be available from the Bureau, price £19.95.

WITHDRAWAL OF CHRISTMAS STAMPS Any remaining stocks of the 1996 Christmas stamps, stamp books, and aerogramme will be withdrawn from sale at post offices on 24 December. All will remain on sale at the Bureau and philatelic outlets for one year from the date of issue, unless sold out.

The 1995 Christmas stamps (£1.75 set), stamp books (20 × 19p, 10 × 25p & 4 × 60p), presentation pack (£2.10), stamp cards (£1.25 set) will be withdrawn from sale at the Bureau and philatelic outlets on 29 October, also the 1995 Yearpack (£15.95) and Special Stamps Yearbook (£22.50 standard version, £75 leather bound) on 30 October. The 1995 Christmas aerogramme (45p) will be withdrawn on 2 October.

CHRISTMAS CARD Last year Royal Mail delivered a card bearing the signature of former Managing Director Peter Howarth to all households in the UK. The card reproduced the design of the 19p Christmas stamp. A similar card, featuring a specially commissioned design showing Christmas cards being delivered through a letterbox, will be sent to 25 million addresses this year. The card will contain useful information about Christmas mailing, including the last posting dates ●

Definitives/stamp book update No further supplies of the 36p definitive are being printed; it will remain on sale at post offices until supplies are exhausted.

New printings of the 2nd class NV1 stamp in sheets of 200 have extended phosphor bands. Supplies will be available from the Bureau and philatelic outlets from 3 December.

A book of 10 × 1st class NV1 stamps with an Asda coupon promotion will be available from Asda stores from 7 October. Availability from the Bureau and philatelic outlets will be announced later.

The 1996 Cartoons greetings book has been reprinted to meet continuing demand. The stamps now have two phosphor bands instead of a phosphor screen and text on the inside of the book cover has been amended, the calendar of 1996 greetings occasions being replaced with useful information about the range of greetings stamp books. Supplies of the reprint



Classic Sports Cars PMC

A new joint Royal Mail/Royal Mint Philatelic Medallic Cover bearing the five Classic Sports Cars and commemorative medallion will be available from the Bureau from 3 November, price £12.95. Early ordering is advised as such covers have previously sold out very quickly.

book will be available from the Bureau and philatelic outlets from 11 November and from post offices and retail outlets as stocks of the earlier book are used up. The stamps are not regarded by Royal Mail as new issues so no first day of issue facilities will be provided ●

The Yearbook will be available from the Bureau, philatelic outlets, and main post offices, price £23.50 (standard version), £75 (leather bound).



The Yearpack will be available from 28 October, price £17.50.

1996 Yearbook Volume 13 of the Royal Mail Special Stamps Yearbook will go on sale on 28 October; the handsomely produced book, now enlarged by 8 pages, contains background information about the development of all the 1996 special issues. The book is hardbound with a matching slipcase and includes sets of the following: Robert Burns; Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust; 100 Years of Going to the Pictures; Football Legends; Olympics; Women of Achievement; Childrens' Television Characters; Classic Sports Cars; and Christmas ●

1996 Yearpack The pack contains all special and greetings stamps mounted on a quality display board with an informative brochure in the form of a quiz about the stamp subjects. Available from the Bureau, philatelic outlets, and main post offices ●

Robert Burns exhibition The touring exhibition on the life of Robert Burns can be seen during October at: Dundee Central Library (until 14 October), Midlothian District Library at Dalkeith (from 14 October), and at Wesley College, Cambridge (from 22 October) ●

New Postshop Post Office Counters Ltd will open a new open-plan Postshop at the Freshney Shopping Centre, Grimsby on 7 October. This will prove useful for collectors living in the area whose nearest philatelic outlet is currently in York ●



Celebrity stamp launch Anita Roddick, founder and Chief Executive of The Body Shop, launched the Women of Achievement stamps by Elisabeth Frink's sculpture *Horse and Rider* in Dover Street, London W1 on 5 August. Ms Roddick is shown here, with enlargements of the stamps, in front of the sculpture.

Further donations are always welcome and should be sent to: WWT, Slimbridge, Gloucester GL2 7BT.

Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust donations The presentation pack for this issue included a leaflet giving details of the Trust's work with a form for making donations. To date about £1000 has been donated by collectors purchasing the pack. The pack is still available from the British Philatelic Bureau and Post Office Counters philatelic outlets, price £1.85 ●

NPM news Currently on show at the National Postal Museum are the following special exhibitions: *The Queen's Stamps – Mauritius* (until 13 December) and *Robert Burns: Man of Letters* (until 31 December); *Victorian Posts*, and *Sub Post Office photographs* (until 21 November). Permanent displays include the *Post Haste!* exhibition of postal vehicles and artefacts; the R M Phillips Collection of Victorian stamps; and a selection of all-world issues. An article on *The Queen's Stamps – Mauritius* exhibition is published in this *Bulletin*.

The Museum shop stocks a wide range of products of interest to stamp collectors and postal historians as well as the casual visitor. These include NPM mugs showing the Penny Black, NPM phonecards, model vehicles, books, and postcards. The Museum regrets it cannot supply goods by mail order, but NPM postcards are available by post from the British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, Edinburgh EH3 5TT. The Bureau can also supply the Museum's colourful and informative *Reviews* for 1994 and 1995, price £5 each •



One of the four postal vehicles postcards issued on 1 October.

NPM Manager retires After 11 years at the Museum, Stan Goron retires as Manager at the end of October. Stan took over at a difficult time in the Museum's history but quickly made his mark by realising that the NPM should be far more than just a stamp museum. In recent years he has been able to make great strides, as the Museum is now better-known and held in high regard within the business. He has been able to employ more staff and significant progress has been made in clearing a backlog of sorting and cataloguing work as well as preparing new exhibitions and displays. He has been able to expand the Museum's displays into the former London Chief Post Office area and a new temporary exhibition gallery has been opened. The number of visitors has increased considerably over the past year. Stan regards the NPM's paper conservation studio as a major achievement.

Whilst not a philatelist, Stan understands the needs of collectors, and researchers as he is a noted numismatist and fellow of the Royal Numismatic Society. His other great interests are music, cricket and horticulture, he is also a fellow of the Royal Horticultural Society. Stan enjoys the social aspects of the Museum, meeting visitors and hosting events, especially the openings of new exhibitions. He has taken a keen interest in the work of other museums, gaining useful knowledge for improving the NPM. He is Secretary of the International Association of Transport & Communications Museums and hosted a meeting of this august body at the NPM. He has represented the Museum at overseas exhibitions and given numerous radio and television interviews about the Museum and its treasures.

During the time this *Bulletin* was based at the NPM (1986-92), Stan took an interest in its content and promotion. In October 1993 he wrote enthusiastically on the Museum's All-World stamp collection of which he is very proud.

We wish him well in his retirement, able to give more time to his medals, his music and his garden •

The NPM is located in King Edward Street, London EC1A 1LP, a short walk from St Paul's Cathedral and underground station. Enquiries: 0171 600 8914.

The shop is open during normal NPM hours: 09.30-16.30 Monday to Friday.

The Queen's Stamps — Mauritius

Peter Ibbotson describes some of the treasures currently on show at the National Postal Museum. In 1847 Mauritius became the first British colony, and only the fifth country, to issue postage stamps. These are the locally-produced 1d and 2d 'Post Office', among the most famous stamps in the world.

Examples of each have been in the Royal Philatelic Collection for over 90 years, and are among the treasures included in the exhibition 'The Queen's Stamps — Mauritius' at the National Postal Museum from 24 September to 13 December.



Two Pence 'Post Office' and (top left) 'Post Paid'. Royal Collection, © HM The Queen

Peter Ibbotson



Joseph Osmond Barnard

The stamps were needed to meet the requirements of Ordinance No 13 of 1846 to take effect from 1 January 1847. Its 150th anniversary is being marked by a commemorative set announced by the Mauritius Postal Administration for this October. Under the ordinance the island's postal system was completely reorganised, including the adoption of postage stamps.

On 12 November 1846 an estimate for the production of postage stamps and handstruck postal markings had been furnished to the Colonial Postmaster, J Stuart Brownrigg, by the English-born immigrant engraver Joseph Osmond Barnard (1816-65). Totalling £59.10s, it provided for the manufacture of assorted handstamps, postmen's badges, and 'Letter labels for one penny and Twopence, per tho. 10.0. Engraving plate for Do. £10. 0 0'. (The inland letter rate was 1d per ounce within Port Louis, otherwise 2d per half-ounce; overseas letters cost 2d per half-ounce posted in Port Louis, double that elsewhere.) Eventually Barnard engraved the two values side by side on a small copper plate, from which the stamps were printed one at a time.

First use In an attempt to regain lost popularity among the influential Franco-Mauritian community, the Governor (Sir William Gomm) and Lady Gomm arranged a fancy dress ball at their official residence, Le Réduit, on 30 September.

On 20 September Brownrigg reported that the postage stamps were ready for issue. (700 had been struck off; a further 300 were printed.) As the stamps were available and the cards of admission to the ball were awaiting despatch, what could be more natural than sending a card in an envelope bearing the latest innovation, a Mauritius 'letter label'? Thus 21 September was the first day of usage of the 'Post Office' stamps.

Of the envelopes which had contained admission cards to the ball, three have survived. The one displayed in the exhibition is reported to have passed into the Royal Collection in 1904, from the collection of the Earl of Kintore. Another is in the British Library Philatelic Collection.

The 'ball envelope' in the Royal Collection bears a 1d red stamp. The collection includes also an unused 2d blue, regarded as the finest stamp in the collection. Found by James Bonar in a sixpenny pocketbook which years before he had used as a stamp album, it was sold at auction in January 1904, the buyer (through an agent) being the Prince of Wales, later King George V. He had instructed his agent 'If the stamp is mine you may telegraph Sandringham but on no account mention the price.' Subsequently, the story goes, a courtier asked the Prince if he had heard that 'some fool' had paid £1450 for a stamp. The Prince replied 'I was that fool.'

Centenary issue The centenary of the 'Post Office' stamps in 1947 was the subject of a four-value commemorative set, recess by Bradbury Wilkinson, with two values reproducing the 1d stamp and two the 2d. Issue was unfortunately delayed until March 1948. Over 3 million of the lowest denomination (5c, the inland letter rate) were printed – at a time when the total population was barely ½ million! Proofs for this centenary set are included at the end of the display.

Printing stamps one at a time was obviously too slow a process when they were required in larger quantities. Barnard therefore engraved two more plates – one for 1d stamps, one for 2d – each comprising four rows of three. Whereas the 1847 stamps had POST OFFICE reading upwards at the left, the new plates had POST PAID. Printing from these new plates began early in June 1848: a 2d 'Post Paid' is known used on 19 June 1848. The 1d is not known used before 27 September 1853.

The 12 impressions on each plate were engraved separately by hand with resulting slight differences which enable individual stamps to be allocated to their positions on the plate. As the plates were of soft copper and used from 1848 to 1857 (2d) or 1859 (1d), the engraved impressions became increasingly worn and the stamps deteriorated in appearance. Collectors distinguish five principal states of the plate: earliest, early, intermediate, worn, latest; the exhibition includes examples of each as well as a reconstructed plate. The 'Post Paid' stamps are well represented in the Royal Collection because King George V, an active and informed philatelist, had

Stamps from the Royal Collection are reproduced by gracious permission of HM The Queen

Right 1948 Stamp Centenary commemoratives

a special liking for Mauritius. His 'Post Paid's' comprise singles and multiples, a block of nine used 1d latest impression being outstanding. So is the 2d where PENCE appears as PENOE.

The total quantity printed of the 'Post Paid's' is not known, printing records being incomplete. We know only that 115,609 of the 1d and 79,028 of the 2d were printed in 1853-59 plus 8,400 (denomination unknown but probably all 2d) in 1849.

By 1857 the 2d plate was no longer serviceable for printing. When more 2d stamps were required, a new plate was engraved in 1859 by Jules Lapirot (three rows of four) and a total of 46,959 stamps (plus 5,004 returned as unsatisfactory) was printed from it. Barnard's 2d plate was re-engraved; Robert Sherwin began the re-engraving which Lapirot completed. Eventually, a small quantity was printed from the re-engraved plate and issued late in 1859. Barnard's 1d plate was also re-engraved in 1859, but not used for printing.

The last locally-produced classics were the lithographed 1d and 2d designed and printed by Louis Adolphe Dardenne and issued in December 1859: 30,000 at 1d and 40,000 at 2d.

Britannia A few months after the 'Post Office' stamps were issued, Mauritius became in 1848 the first colony to request stamps through the Colonial (now Crown) Agents. Shortly afterwards Trinidad also requested stamps, so Perkins Bacon prepared a common design for both colonies. From a watercolour of Britannia by Edward Henry Corbould a die was engraved, it is said by Gideon Fairman. His first die, in July, was rejected; a second die, in September, was accepted.

Three undenominated stamps were printed for Mauritius: 33,334 in red and 33,333 each in green and in 'plum'. Though the stamps arrived in Mauritius in March 1849 there was no hurry to issue them. The red stamp was never issued. The green stamp was kept in store until 1854 when 10,152 were overprinted FOUR PENCE in a semicircle though not issued until early 1858. The 'plum' stamp was issued in 1859 at 9d, replaced in 1860 by a 9d portraying Queen Victoria, and reissued in 1862 at 1d. The cancellation helps to determine usage at 9d or 1d – a B53 postmark denotes a 1d stamp, an oval of bars blank in the centre identifies 9d usage.

Additional Britannia stamps were supplied, all imperforate except the last, in 1858 (including an undenominated blue stamp which was never issued), 1860 and 1861.

In 1860 De La Rue began to print the stamps of Mauritius, and did so almost uninterruptedly until 1948. Definitives portraying Queen Victoria superseded the Britannias and locally-produced classics. At first unwater-





marked, they were subsequently water-marked Crown cc. Temporary changes in overseas letter rates briefly necessitated a ½d stamp, met by surcharging quantities of the Queen Victoria 10d and unwatermarked 9d; there were 1d surcharges on the 5s and watermarked 4d. In 1878 a currency change, from sterling to rupees and cents (R1 = 100c = 2s), brought a set surcharged in the new currency, followed by a definitive set.

The period 1882-1902 was marked by: (1) the issue of assorted cents values as new denominations were required and colour or watermark changes were undertaken;

(2) the release of many surcharged stamps, including no fewer than six at 2c; and (3) the piecemeal replacement, beginning in 1895, of the Queen Victoria portrait stamps by a set showing the arms of the colony.

The exhibition includes a 24-page array of assorted Queen Victoria head stamps. The first arms type is also well represented, including proof and colour trial material. Large format high denomination (R1, RS2.50, RS5) arms type stamps had been planned during the 1890s but were not issued until 1902 as part of the long arms type set. The last large format high value arms type, a RS50, appeared in 1924.

First commemoratives Meanwhile the first two commemoratives had been issued. Mauritius was one of the few colonies to commemorate Queen Victoria's diamond jubilee, which fell in 1897. A 36c stamp was issued, but not until mid-April 1898, nearly a year after the event. The bicentenary of the birth of Bertrand François Mahé de Labourdonnais (1699-1753), governor of Mauritius 1735-46 during the period of French possession, was marked by a blue recess 15c portrait commemorative in December 1899, ten months later than the actual bicentenary. Sales of both commemoratives were sluggish; quantities of the 36c were surcharged 15c (1899) or 12c (1902) to meet particular overseas letter rates, while surplus Labourdonnais 15c were overprinted in 1904 for use as Inland Express stamps.

In 1910 Mauritius fell into line with other colonies by adopting a king's head design. King Edward VII, George V and George VI definitives exist in this style, augmented on two occasions by modified arms type values.

Unlike Queen Victoria's diamond jubilee, King George V's silver jubilee was the subject of an Empire-wide commemoration. The common approved design for the Jubilee omnibus issue featured Windsor Castle and a profile of the King. This approved design (by Harold Fleury) is shown along with a range of unadopted designs. The proof material includes die proofs of the frame of all four Mauritius values. At the King's request first day covers were sent to him at Buckingham Palace by each colonial administration; that from Mauritius is shown ●

In my view... Franceska Rapkin, interviewed by John Holman

Two items in Franceska's 1936 Olympics collection which have given her great satisfaction. The first is a cover (below), found in a job lot box, sent by the Olympics press office to Fleet Street. Although the stamps on it are nothing special, 'it is a good thematic cover on all levels'.

Another cover (right) travelled on the first Olympic flight on the airship *Hindenburg* which went into service that year, posted from Danzig to Berlin. All countries having airmail treaty arrangements with Germany could send mail on the Zeppelin services.



Franceska Rapkin is best-known for her impressive collection relating to the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin. It was, therefore, appropriate that I interviewed her shortly before she set off to Atlanta for the 1996 Games and Olympihex exhibition. As I quickly found out her philatelic interests are widespread, covering traditional philately as well as thematics.

Franceska first became interested in stamps when as a child her aunt gave her an old Stanley Gibbons catalogue as her daughter had given up collecting. She believes she was also given some stamps, but it may have been a case of having a catalogue before the stamps. Amongst the first stamps to make an impression on her was the Belgian mourning issue for Queen Astrid (SG 713) – ‘many of the children of my generation found her terribly sad and romantic.’ Also recalled were George V stamps of Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika although the young Franceska was ‘unsure how to pronounce Tanganyika’. Like most of her friends she didn’t take stamp collecting too seriously, ‘collecting anything that came my way – stamps were mounted a country or two to a page.’ Franceska sold her collection for about ten shillings (50p) to pay for a school outing, a decision she now considers ‘very stupid’.

She regrets that fewer children nowadays start collecting, due largely to the pressures on them – ‘they do not have the freedom and choices we had. They are working very early, more prone to outside influences, have too much homework, indeed do not have an easy life at all.’ She thinks it is important that more philatelists give talks on collecting to schools. ‘Today’s young collectors’, she says, ‘are concerned with the same things as we were – the number of stamps in their collections and their catalogue value.’ Both her children collected stamps and took up competitive philately. They no longer collect, but have passed their collections to Franceska for safekeeping as they may one day return to the hobby.

A new start In her early twenties Franceska took up collecting again, urged by her mother to do something useful with her time. Her father had been a philatelist but his collection ‘did not come

out of Germany with us’. The new collection, which concentrated on Germany and Spain, subsequently became a ‘joint collection’ with her husband Leon. The Spanish collection was sold when they needed money for new carpeting, but the German collection remained and became Leon’s speciality. Franceska still adds to this, a mixture of stamps and postal history. Leon was a bridge player and in return for sharing Franceska’s interest in stamps, she took up bridge on the basis of if you can’t beat them, join them.

In the late 1960s Leon bought a job lot of Germany in which were some Olympic stamps which he passed to Franceska. This was the genesis of her award-winning collection, since then she has never looked back. Today, she says, ‘there is relatively little I can add to this collection, but I am always on the look-out for an unusual item that will add that bit more interest.’

Thematic collecting Franceska, and Margaret Morris, are the best-known female thematic collectors in the UK, no mean achievement as there are many enthusiastic ladies in this area of philately. ‘Thematic collectors’, says Franceska, ‘come in various shapes and sizes. Some have a background in the hobby, having collected in their youth, others are new to the hobby. It does not matter if you only want to collect for its own sake, but others want to build up knowledge in order to display, enter competitions, and write.’

Franceska recalls running battles with some thematic collectors who feel that thematic collecting is divorced from traditional philately – collectors should be free to collect and exhibit what they want, and that philatelic information is of little importance. She has fought against this, also the view of some traditional collectors that thematics was not a genuine philatelic discipline. Today thematics is widely regarded as an accepted part of philately and most thematicists heed philatelic information as well as specialist information on their chosen subject.

Franceska outlined three branches of thematics: ‘1. collecting, which can include whatever you like; 2. displaying, most important to remember never to bore your audience; 3. exhibiting – you,

along with the judges, must abide by the rules whether they are right or wrong. Rules are important and are meant to be helpful, not restrictive, encouraging logical thinking so the exhibit can be appreciated by a wide audience.' Francesca is of the view that most people compete in life and enjoy a challenge: 'we all like to try hard and get satisfaction in a job well done. Exhibiting stamps provides that challenge.' However, 'those who prefer a more democratic approach, can exhibit at Thematica which is an exhibition with no rules, where you can display what you want with judging carried out by popular vote of visitors.'

Specialised collecting Francesca recognises that what is rewarding for one collector, will not necessarily appeal to others. Specialised collecting 'suits those who want to do something in depth, not superficial.' She feels that 'most collectors get more satisfaction from a degree of specialisation, as your knowledge grows so you get more out of the hobby. You are, for example, more likely to pick up bargains (and who doesn't like finding bargains!) if you look round with a knowledgeable eye. No dealer knows everything and a specialised knowledge of a small area of thematics or a particular country will make you one-up on other collectors.'

I asked Francesca about her collecting policy and the way she manages her collection. She has a 'fairly clear idea' of what she wants in the collection – 'anything I happen to like but it must have philatelic significance'. She does not spend much on fringe material. Recently she was offered an Olympic torch, 'I would have liked it, but it cannot be exhibited as part of a philatelic collection, so I turned it down. The money was better spent on items I could display and exhibit.'

She distinguishes between items she mounts on pages intended for exhibiting and others intended for personal enjoyment or non-competitive display. Postcards or Olympic entrance tickets, autographed material and other ephemera, for example, are not normally included on exhibition pages, reserved for pages kept, 'in tandem', with exhibition pages in her collection.

She mainly uses Stanley Gibbons album pages but, unusually the reverse side, 'not the quadrille side'. The Olympic collection is mounted on pale grey pages, the German Empire stamps on white, and a third collection (in progress) on Beethoven on cream leaves. The stamps are mounted using clear Hawid mounts or hinges on white album leave paper, then onto coloured card on the album page. The colour of card differs for each collection. The album pages are stored in conservation quality exhibition protectors. Francesca is busy practising with a word processor for writing up, and will in time redo previously handwritten pages.

She claims to have 'no pattern to collecting – sometimes months go by without much attention to the collection although I am always busy on some philatelic matter – displaying, and helping to run societies'. Giving a display is a spur to getting more material mounted and written up – 'sometimes I have to work like the clappers to get it done, not a happy way of working'. It is an experience many collectors will recognise.

Francesca obtains stamps for her Olympic collection from a regular pool of dealers but admits to finding it increasingly difficult to find new directions, ways of approaching the subject from a new angle. She knows her 1936 collection thoroughly so doesn't record her stamps or wants. She keeps material 'that comes my way' from other Olympics, but doesn't seriously seek it out. Such items are stored in stockbooks.

The German Empire Collection covers the years 1872-1900 in depth, with later material to 1918. It is particularly strong in 19th century issues – unused and on cover. Leon didn't want to collect postal history but was interested in the correct use of stamps to prepay different rates, often multiples of a basic stamp to cover, say, postcard, printed matter, inland letter, and overseas letter rates. Francesca adds covers that enhance the collection, 'it is a return to my traditional philatelic roots and I get a lot of fun out of it.' She keeps a simple record of what is in this collection – listed by rate, giving date acquired, cost, on which page mounted, whether needs replacing, or what items could be added with it.

Franceska admits to being 'well-organised in my philatelic work for societies and others, perhaps less so for my own collection.'

Philatelic literature 'This', says Franceska 'is very important to me'. She has an extensive library of journals as well as books. Specialist journals and useful articles from general stamp magazines are kept and bound. She is a member of many societies covering German and Olympic stamps as well as the Revenue Society (for German revenues), Philatelic Music Circle (for Beethoven collection), the Royal, the National, British Thematic Association, and the American Topical Association. The publications of all these add up to quite some reading matter.

In the general magazines she looks for articles on particular subjects rather than by specific authors although always reads features by Norman Williams for his 'interesting slant on things'. She thinks 'the quality of articles in the general press varies considerably but choosing articles is a difficult task for editors as most general readers do not want anything too deep.' She has written extensively herself, in *Stamp Magazine*, *Stamp World*, *Stamp News*, and other magazines. Many of her articles were aimed at new collectors, offering basic good advice on starting and developing a collection. Leon was editor of *Stamp World*, the short-lived but much-admired magazine in 1987. 'Articles in the specialist press', says Franceska, 'get better and better, a good balance of in-depth features with a broader overview of what is happening'.

Organised philately Franceska is very involved with societies and events, mainly as she 'likes people, travelling and enjoys giving displays'. Feedback from the audience is important, 'it is nice when you relate to an audience and they to you'. At heart she reckons she is 'a frustrated actor' and says she has been 'lucky in the collectors I have met – especially since Leon died everyone has been so kind and I have had some wonderful trips'. If organised philately means less time for her own collection, she feels it is a price well worth paying.

We spoke of the work of the Federation Internationale de Philatelie (FIP) which Franceska says does 'valuable work in fighting against forgeries, and trying to persuade the more prolific stamp issuing countries to cut back.' In this, FIP works with the Universal Postal Union, and stamp dealer associations. She feels Royal Mail does not exploit collectors but recognised that 'the £10 stamp did give this impression although it is needed for postage and I have used it quite often myself'. She hopes that consideration can be given to 'reducing the cost to collectors, if not the number of stamps. Perhaps more make-up values could be issued, to supplement basic rates without so many higher value stamps.' Lower value stamps might in the long run sell more stamps to collectors and she cites the recent us issues commemorating Elvis Presley, Marilyn Monroe, and the Legends of Hollywood series.

Exhibitions & museums When time permits, Franceska enjoys visiting the National Postal Museum and the British Library. She considers the NPM 'a vital resource for those studying British stamps whereas the British Library is of broader significance.' She looks forward to the displays it will be able to put on when it moves into its new building.

She has visited Stampex since the 1960s; Philympia in 1970 was her first international. She feels Stampex has much improved in recent years. She didn't get to Stamp '95 or '96 at Wembley but 'heard many good comments about the way it brings younger collectors to the hobby.'

Leon Rapkin was the Chief Executive of the Stamp World London exhibition at Alexandra Palace in 1990 and Franceska was herself heavily involved. Not surprisingly it was the exhibition she enjoyed most – 'a happy event'. She also has good memories of the pleasant atmosphere at Capex '96 where she served on the jury, and is looking forward to London's Stamp Show 2000. She urges the organisers 'to match the commercial aspects of a major exhibition with the traditional philatelic interest. It is question of balance.' She hopes the advice of the Philatelic Advisory Committee (of which she is a member)

will be heeded. As at Capex, she thinks it important that there are many attractions for people to enjoy as well as the stamps. She hopes Royal Mail will link its stamp issues to the attractions at the 2000 exhibition. Miniature sheets are, she feels, 'an old idea but they are fair in that the collectors pays towards their hobby.' The cost of admission to the exhibition 'needs to be realistic and cannot be under £5 for most visitors.'

Franceska is in favour of more exhibitions away from London but feels that internationals should be in a capital in order to attract overseas visitors. She hopes that one day an international will be held in Scotland's 'beautiful capital city'.

Royal Mail and BPT Franceska recognises that collectors and Royal Mail do not always have the same goals – 'collectors have to appreciate that Royal Mail is a vast organisation and that philately is a relatively small part of its business.' Conversely she feels 'Royal Mail is not always sensitive to collectors needs.' She would like to see a philatelist appointed at a senior level in Royal Mail to act as a link between the two camps. She singled out the problem of poor cancels on mail, appreciating that vast quantities of mail are handled and that uniformly high quality cancels cannot be guaranteed on every item. She believes that some improvement should be possible and would improve the way collectors regard Royal Mail.

Franceska is not directly involved in the British Philatelic Trust but praises its work in supporting 'the collecting arm of Stampex, local exhibitions, literature and the youth programme.' Care needs to be exercised in the way funds are spent, she commented on the great deal of money the Stampway to the World exhibition had cost the former Stamp Collecting Promotion Council, with relatively little visible result.

Inspiration and enjoyment When asked about philatelists she admires, Franceska immediately answered Robson Lowe 'who has probably done more than any other to advance philatelic knowledge', and the late Arthur Salm 'a highly knowledgeable collector of Bremen and Thurn &

Taxis issues, and one of life's gentlemen.' She is delighted that more women are taking up stamp collecting, especially thematics, mentioning two leading figures – Chris Earle with her fine Archery exhibit, and Sheila Foster whose subject is Roses.

Franceska emphasises the social aspects of the hobby – important in counteracting the stresses of everyday life. She links her other main interest – music – to philately through her 'Beethoven accumulation – not yet a collection'. She also enjoys swimming, and walking the dog.

If cast away on a desert island, Franceska would like to take the 1970s part-work *The Encyclopedia of Stamps* 'which would maintain my interest, along with a good supply of paper and pens for note-making.' She would hope to finish writing books on the 1936 Olympics (on which she has been working for 15 years), and the first issues of the German Empire which she studied with Leon. I am sure that her many friends in the philatelic world look forward to completion of these two projects ●



Above, Franceska Rapkin. Another item from her 1936 Olympics collection, a Dominican Republic stamp of 1957 (SG 667), shows Fanny Blankers-Koen who won the 100m hurdles in 1948. Franceska discovered that Blankers-Koen came sixth in the 1936 Olympics, so the stamp earns a place in that collection. The design includes an unusual rendition of the Olympic rings.

Decimal stamp books 29 Specialist report by D G A Myall

New promotional books Since the previous article was written there have been two promotional issues of retail (window) books. The first became available from certain branches of W H Smith & Sons on 15 July. The inside back cover of a book of 10 1st-class XVI stamps printed by Walsall contained a voucher worth £2 off the price of any AA or Ordnance Survey leisure guide sold by the shop. I say certain branches because not every branch participated in the promotion. Indeed, in the first few days of the offer collectors were unable to obtain the book as many branches had no knowledge of the offer. At one seaside town near where I live the manageress said that she did not intend to order any of the special book as they had plenty of stamp books in stock already. Apart from being frustrating to a collector, this seems an unusual attitude to the promotion of leisure guides in a tourist area at the height of the season. If you were unable to obtain your requirements from W H Smith shops you will be able to get them from the British Philatelic Bureau; the books went on philatelic sale at the end of the promotion, in mid-September. However, the vouchers were not valid after 31 August. The plate combinations seen at the time of writing were: w49 w36 w41 and w49 w37 w41. The printing on the yellow strip reads: W H Smith Offer Inside. The outside back cover features logos introduced in February.

The second promotion, named 'Send-a-Cake', is one of Royal Mail's own and was launched on 9 September. For four unused 1st-class stamps and two proofs of purchase, you can send a friend (or yourself) one of four miniature fruit cakes iced with a brief greeting and can include your own message of up to 10 words. A proof of purchase is either the back cover of the book or a counter datestamp on the special leaflet available at post offices. If you choose to send two book covers, one of them can be any other book of 10 1st-class stamps. The outside back cover includes coloured pictures of three of the available cakes and four check boxes to indicate which greeting you want on it. While Royal Mail will

endeavour to send the cake of your choice this is not guaranteed as some greetings might prove to be more popular than others. To be sure of your choice early application is advisable. There is a warning that the cakes contain nuts so don't send one to anyone who is allergic to them. In place of the usual block of stamps on the left of the front cover is a picture of the fourth cake and the slogan: Put the icing on the Morning Post. The wording on the yellow strip reads: OPEN FOR DETAILS.

There are two versions of the cake book. In order to distinguish orders from books sold through retailers and those sold from post offices, the former have a small black square printed on the back cover, below right of the barcode. No doubt this is why a cake book cover must be sent with the order; unless a leaflet with two counter datestamps is used when it will be assumed that the source is not a retailer. This device was first employed with the 'Someone Special' promotion of August last year, featuring Benjy Bear and Harry Hedgehog. The books are printed by Walsall and the plate combinations seen so far are: w50 w38 w41 (non-retail) and w53 w39 w42 (retail). No doubt there will be others as the promotion runs until the end of the year so long as the supply of cakes does not run out.

Recent cover changes In the last few months there have been several subtle changes in the design of the covers of the window books and some variations are limited to a particular printer. Here is a note of the major ones so that you can be sure to obtain those which interest you. Some of them are already extremely scarce with particular plate combinations.

PRINTER'S INITIAL The W H Smith promotion book mentioned above has a tiny letter w printed in black below the right of the barcode on the outside back cover. This stands for Walsall, the printer of the book. The innovation will be adopted by all printers of retail books and is said by Royal Mail to enable the source of the take-



up of the offer to be monitored. The next use of the initial was on four books of 10 NVTs issued on 6 August. Walsall printed a book of 1st-class stamps, Questa printed a book of 2nd-class and Harrison printed books of 1st- and 2nd-class. Limited to a single initial, these bore, as you would expect, W, Q and H respectively. These four books also carried the Olympic logos on the back cover. This is rather strange as there was nothing significant about the 6 August in the Olympic context, unless it was to mark the end of the games. No doubt these covers will soon be reprinted with the initials but without the logos and the first versions may become scarce. The cylinder and plate numbers seen are: Harrison 2nd-class B3/B8, Harrison 1st-class B11/B99, Questa Q25 Q25/Q2 and Walsall W52 W39 W42.

This is not the first time that the letters H and Q have appeared in this position on book covers. The first window books were issued on 4 August 1987 and were, as now, sold through post offices and retailers. At that time books for each outlet were distinguished by having a different barcode as well as a check letter printed below it. Basically, there were five books, catering for users of the 1st- and 2nd-class service in books of four and 10 and a book of four stamps for overseas postcards. Each book was issued in the two versions and the check letters ran from A to J, with H being used for the £1.30 book of 10 × 13p stamps sold through post offices (barcode series 2). On 23 August 1988, the covers were made slightly smaller and contained new values to meet the tariff increase which came into effect on 5 September

that year. The 10 check letters allocated to these type 2 books were K to T, with Q being allocated to the £1.40 book of 10 2nd-class stamps sold through retailers (barcode series 1).

WHITE LINE When the single stamp illustration on the front covers of window books was replaced with a block design in January 1995, the practice of ‘cancelling’ each stamp with a white line across the bottom right corner of each ‘stamp’ continued. It has always been official policy to require coloured illustrations of currently valid stamps to be cancelled in this way, presumably to prevent their being used for postage. It seems that this requirement may have been relaxed recently so far as the illustrations on book covers are concerned. It was omitted from the covers of the new books of value stamps for overseas mail, 4 × 37p and 4 × 63p. It was also omitted from the W H Smith promotional cover mentioned above.

The four books issued on 6 August vary. The white line is omitted from the Walsall and Questa covers but not from the Harrison covers. Maybe Harrison made a mistake as I have heard a rumour that at least one of their ‘initial’ books omits the line. I cannot confirm this but it may be worth keeping a lookout; these, with their Olympic logos, are likely to be short-lived in any event.

TEXTUAL CHANGES Another design change on the front covers concerns the placing of the contents text. This is now ‘ranged left’, ie, each line begins at the same point. Previously, each line



Opposite, left Harrison and Quеста books of 6 August (H & Q identification)

Opposite, right Type 1 window book (10 × 13p), check letter H. Type 2 window book (10 × 14p), check letter Q

Left Walsall 10 × 1st with white line across stamp illustration and 'Pull Open' on yellow strip. 6 August book: no white line or instruction

Right Inside cover of new £1 book showing rate error

Inland Letters
United Kingdom, Channel Islands
and Isle of Man

	60g	100g	150g	200g
First Class	26p	39p	47p	60p
Second Class	25p	31p	37p	47p

Need a Postcode?
Tel: 0345 111 222 Monday to Friday.
Calls are charged at local rates.
For customer service enquiries or any
information about our products and
services tel: 0345 740 740

Printed at The House of Quеста, UK

was 'centred', eg, the word 'Class' appeared in the centre of its line. The figure of contents has also been moved closer to the centre. At the same time, the printers' imprint has been moved from the inside back cover to the inside front cover. The words 'Pull Open' no longer appear on the yellow strip of any book. Unless this space is used to denote any special offer or content it is left blank. Perhaps this is intended to focus attention on those books which offer something special.

Rates error in £1 and £2 books There is an error in the rates table printed on the inside front covers of the new £1 and £2 machine vend books. The 200g rate for 2nd-class letters is shown as 47p instead of 45p. The latter is correctly printed on page 6 of the latest edition of the 'Handy Guide to Postal Services' available at any post office. No doubt this will soon be corrected, making books with the incorrect rates desirable collector's items. Already there have been two plate combinations used for the £1 book, viz: Q1Q1Q1Q1Q1Q1/Q1 and Q2Q2Q2Q2Q2Q2/Q1. Make sure you have these before a corrected version appears. It is likely that the Q1 set at least will not appear with corrected rates.

Incorrect rates tables in machine book covers are not unusual. A fairly recent example occurred in the first of the £1 books featuring illustrators of *Punch* magazine, Doyle and Hoffnug, issued on 10 September 1991. That managed to get five of the eight inland rates wrong. The corrected version was issued on 19 November 1991. The same rates panels were used for

the 50p books with the first illustrated covers in the Archaeology series, featuring Knossos and issued on the same dates.

Edinburgh bounty It is well known that one should not judge a book by its cover. A seemingly normal £2 book for the new tariff contained a grossly miscut pane of stamps. The column of stamps headed by the 20p appeared in the centre of the pane flanked on each side by a column of 26p stamps cut in half up the middle. This was sent by the Bureau to a new issue customer. Even better, it was a plate book. If you obtained yours from the Bureau open them now!

One wonders how such a thing can happen. The stream of miscut panes must have been obvious on its way to the bookmaking machine before being attached to the covers. As soon as the operator spotted this, the process would have been halted and the offending column of panes removed together with any books already made up. This one escaped the normally vigilant checkers at Questa.

My friend, the late Len Newbery, used to say that one can learn more about the printer's methods from his mistakes than from perfect books. In this instance, the mishap proves that while I was not strictly wrong in my last column when I said that a miscut would produce books with the wrong value makeup, I erred in saying that a miscut would have either two 20p stamps or none. A 'normal' miscut book with complete stamps would simply have the 20p stamp on the wrong side, giving an unusual se-tenant pair •



The news in flight Aviation will always be in the news. Here's your chance to put the news in aviation by Donald Malcolm

Considered in retrospect, it must have been exhilarating to live through the brief pioneer aviation years in Britain, especially from 1909 until 1914. The Edwardian era was drawing to a close. Marconi had made his pioneering experiments with wireless and automobiles were still objects of wonder – and some apprehension – beyond the pockets of most of the population. Artistically, Art Nouveau held sway. Fliers were lionized and the crowds flocked to aviation meetings and individual displays, from Brighton to Aberdeen. On Wednesday 10 August 1910, about 50,000 spectators attended the Lanark meeting. In August 1913, some 100,000 mourners followed Cody's cortege.

The Wright Brothers had achieved powered, controlled and sustained flight on four short forays at Kitty Hawk on 17 December 1903. But it was not until Wilbur Wright came to France in 1908 and in a series of flights, continually astonished everyone, not least such European pioneers as Henri Farman, Louis Blériot and Santos-Dumont, with his mastery of the air; that it was realised just how significant the Wrights' work was.

The lesson was not lost on British fliers and designers, among them Claude Grahame-White and Charles Rolls. It was evident to them that they had much to learn and they set out to emulate and to surpass the Americans.

Flight into history Although Britons and an American, S F Cody (later naturalized at the Doncaster meeting, 1909), had been making powered flights – Cody's flight of 16 October 1908 was the first officially-recognised flight in Great Britain – I have taken as my benchmark 25 July 1909. On that Sunday morning, Blériot, the second man to attempt the Channel flight, was successful and flew into history. Latham's two attempts, on the 19th and the 27th, both ended up in the sea.

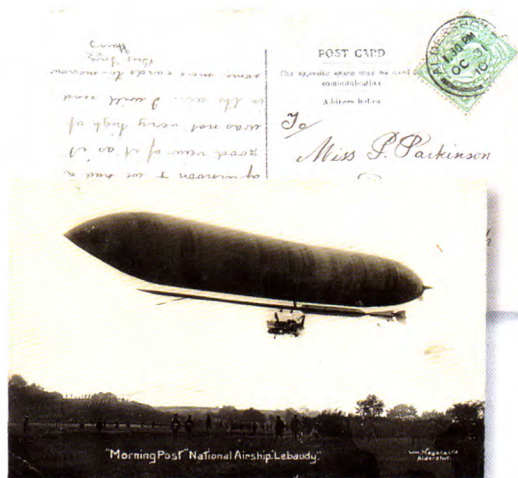
This was effectively the start of the postcard boom, which took off with the Doncaster and Blackpool meetings of 1909.

Influence of the sponsors Newspaper sponsorship did not originate with the *Daily Mail*. A card records the flight of the Spencer airship from the Crystal Palace, in 1902, with *Evening Times* emblazoned on its sides. And in 1907, the *Daily Graphic* sponsored a balloon flight and the mail – special postcards – ended up in Sweden and was posted back to Britain.

The earliest *Mail* prize that I can trace was that awarded to A V Roe, who won a model aeroplane competition in 1907, to gain a modest £75. But what a beginning to a glittering career! The year 1910, cited by writer Norman McGillan as the *annus mirabilis* of pioneer aviation, was a fruitful one for newspaper sponsorship, four publications being involved.

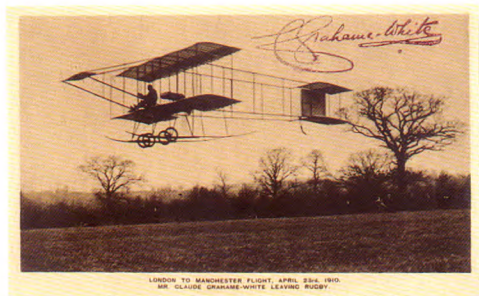
'The race of the centuries' Two pilots, Grahame-White and Frenchman Louis Paulhan, competed for the £10,000 *Daily Mail* Prize, offered for the first successful London-Manchester flight. Henri Farman supplied both biplanes and at first assisted the Briton, but when Paulhan notified his attempt, he switched allegiance. Grahame-White was the first away, on 23 April 1910, and looked to have the event won when he landed at Hadmore Crossing, near Lichfield, having flown 117 miles in 3 hours 6 minutes. However, his machine was not adequately pegged down and it was overturned in a storm and had to be sent back to London for repair.

Opposite Blériot won the *Daily Mail* £1000 Prize offered by Lord Northcliffe, one of the great patrons of aviation. What is probably the second most famous aviation photograph was taken by a *Daily Mirror* man and shows Blériot's Type XI monoplane crash-landed at Dover. That *Mirror* was the forerunner of the publication that was to become famous. It might have been associated with the *Daily Mail*, which is why I have never seen a *Mail* card of the Channel flight. Below, an early Blériot logo-type.



The readers of the *Morning Post* subscribed to the purchase of a French Lebaudy airship for the British Army. She had a very short career, ending up wrecked on the roof of a house. Here is one card with relevant postmark and message. In my estimation, such cards are worth at least three to four times an unused card; see undernoted comments.

Meantime, Paulhan had become a contender. A real race developed, during which Grahame-White made the first night flight, a train being laid on to guide him. But his dangerous attempt failed to win him the prize, won by Paulhan on the 27th. The progress of the race was reported world-wide. The *Evening News* called it 'The race, not of the century, but the centuries!'



London-Manchester 1910
One of the 'commoner' cards with a printed signature.

There are many cards of the event, those of Paulhan being much the scarcer. Among the Grahame-White selection are photographic cards with a *printed* signature. I have yet to see one used. One was estimated in a recent auction at £30-40, with the comment 'scarce'. The status of the signature was not clarified. Such cards are *not* scarce and that one was grossly over-estimated by a factor of four: £8-10 is a reasonable price, bearing in mind that while relevantly-used cards will, as a rule, increase in value, unused examples will draw much lower gains – except in the wishful thinking of auctioneers...

'A world-class pioneer' The other 1910 cards are associated with the major aviation meetings. The *Daily News* produced monster cards (12½ × 10") and the late Francis J Field told me that he had seen them for various meetings. I have Lanark (one is known with a Grand Stand postmark) and Blackpool. Wolverhampton, mentioned by Field, remains elusive; but any cards from that meeting are scarce.



Daily Mail Circuit-of-Britain 1911 James Valentine at the Paisley Control, St James's Park.

1911 saw the great *Daily Mail Circuit-of-Britain*, Brooklands to Brooklands, 1010 miles, which began on 22 July and was won by Frenchman Lt Conneau, under the *nom d'air*, Beaumont. Again, look out for used cards.

The *Daily Mail* was to the fore again in 1912, when it sponsored the Aeroplane and Waterplane Tours and there is plenty of scope for the collector. Organised by Grahame-White, special cards and cachets were on sale.

Mail was handed to a pilot at point A and he posted it at point B – or, as happened, forgot to do so, eventually posting it after another flight. These flown cards, although unofficial, are among the gems of pioneer aviation. Easier to find are unflown cards and many have fascinating messages. Unused cards, unless exceptional because of the illustration, are worth about £5-7. Recently I bought a relevant-used one for a few pounds, so keep searching.

There were no special cachets for the 1913 Tour, but good finds can still be made. The mention of a particular pilot adds historical interest (and value) to a card.

The seaplane circuit More important in 1913 was the *Daily Mail Seaplane Circuit-of-Britain*. It was marred by the death of a prospective entrant, Cody, and a passenger on 7 August and because of withdrawals, only Harry Hawker and his mechanic, Kuiper, in a Sopwith floatplane, participated. The ups and down of Hawker's attempts are too involved to relate here. His second flight was abandoned near Dublin. Cards are known from various controls. The most amusing one – of little monetary value – is a view of Oban Bay upon which the sender (who, perhaps, actually saw the arrival) traced Hawker's descent to the water, and it adds a bit of humour to a collection.

This was the last of the important newspaper-sponsored events before the First World War.

The *Yorkshire Evening News* organised a 100-mile cross-country race on 2 October 1913, Leeds to Leeds. Harold Blackburn, with Dr Christie in the latter's (Robert) Blackburn monoplane represented Yorkshire, while Fred Raynham and A V Roe, in an Avro biplane, provided the Lancashire opposition. Blackburn, being more familiar with the terrain, won.

Blackburn gave shows on behalf of the *Sheffield Daily Independent* in 1914 and cards are known from both events.

On many occasions, newspapers offered individual prizes, particularly at aviation meetings. For example, W L Brock won two *Daily Mail* Gold Cups (and bagfuls of sovereigns!) for his 1914 victories in the Third Aerial Derby on 6 June, and the London-Manchester race on the 20th.

A collection of newspaper-sponsored cards and flown mails can be extended into the pioneering years, 1919-39. Flown letters from the first non-stop Atlantic flight, 1919, are beyond the means of most collectors, but postcards of Alcock and Brown and Hawker and Mackenzie-Grieve can be found.

Aviation will always be in the news. Here's your opportunity to put the news in aviation •



Daily Mail aeroplane tour 1912 (front and back)

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The world's longest-running definitives James Mackay

With the release of the latest additions to the Machin series in June, the world's most prolific definitive set has broken its own record. But, in terms of the longest-running series it still has a long way to go, even if it is now in its 30th year which places it among the marathon issues.

The title of the world's longest-running definitive series undoubtedly belongs to Norway's Posthorn series which made its debut on Christmas Day 1871 with the release of the 3 skilling carmine-lake. The simple motif, of an upright oval enclosing a crowned posthorn with the numerals of value in the centre was the work of a designer named Von Hanno. The dies were engraved by P Batz at Copenhagen, Denmark and the stamps letterpress-printed by Peterson of Christiania (now Oslo).

The original series consisted of six denominations, from 1 to 7sk, but following Norway's accession to the Scandinavian Monetary Union the decimal krone of 100 ore came into effect in January 1877 and the stamps were re-issued with the lower part of the oval re-engraved to include the word *POSTFRIM* (postage stamp) and value. The contract passed to Christian Johnsen in 1882 and stamps from this firm have no shading on the ring of the posthorn. Serifed capitals in *NORGE* replaced the original block lettering in 1893, while the master die was re-engraved by H Rui for the Knudsen printings from 1909 till 1929, the figures of value being slightly shorter and thicker.

The typographed series continued till 1937, although the values from 10 ore upwards were gradually superseded in the period 1926-34 by the Lion design. In July 1937, however, the Posthorn design appeared in a photogravure version by Emil Moestue used for values from 1 to 60 ore. The numerals were redrawn between 1940 and 1949, issued with a watermark and overprinted V for Victory in 1941. Replaced by the Haakon VII series in 1950, the Posthorns hung on in the form of the denominations below 10 ore. Then, in 1962, an intaglio version appeared in values from 5 to 20 ore, with various additions up to 90 ore between 1974 and 1978.



Since 1991 a bicoloured version, printed in intaglio by the Norwegian Bank Printing Works has been used for the lower krone values.

Neighbouring Denmark has its own long-running series, showing the value between wavy lines. Designed by J Therschlens and letterpress-printed by the Government Printing Works, this series was launched in October 1905. Like the Norwegian Posthorns, these stamps were confined to the lowest denominations, originally 1 to 4 ore, but raised from 5 to 20 ore in 1912. Both watermark and perforation changed in 1913 and in this guise the set continued into the 1930s. A recess version on unwatermarked paper appeared in 1933 and continues to the present day, making this the longest running series without technical change, amounting to some 44 different stamps and ranging from 1 to 350 ore. Even the Arms design, still current, has now been going for 50 years having first appeared in July 1946. Both Norway (1972) and Denmark (1983) have issued stamps commemorating their doughty veterans, while the Faroe Islands (1979) issued a stamp reproducing the celebrated 4 ore bisect of 1919, a provisional which ranks as the



Opposite from top Norway's Posthorn design made its debut in 1871. Denmark's long-running Numeral and Arms definitives with (below) Danish 1983 commemorative showing engraving of Numeral design. British Postage Dues Design in use 1914-71 (5d letterpress, 8d photogravure). **Above** Sudanese and Tongan designs dating from the 1890s; Irish 5d definitive printed in letterpress (typography) and photogravure.

first distinctive Faroese stamp. Sweden, on the other hand, holds the world record for the stamp with the longest period of sale. The 1 ore black, introduced in 1910, changed its watermark in 1912 and in this guise remained on sale at main post offices till 1970, if not later.

Other contenders Other examples of longevity pale by comparison. Britain's postage due labels, introduced in 1914, remained in use until 1971 when they were replaced by a new design in decimal currency. This long-running series, based on the heraldic flowers of the UK, underwent changes in watermark with each reign, as well as changes in colour and denomination.

This record of 57 years pipped Tonga's pictorial definitives by a matter of months. Introduced in June 1897, this handsome intaglio series by De La Rue continued, with colour and watermark changes, until the Bradbury Wilkinson series appeared in July 1953.

Lagging well behind is Ireland's definitive series of 1922 which continued till 1969, a life of 47 years. The original SE watermark of 1922 was superseded in 1940 by the E watermark and in

this guise continued to yield new varieties of color and paper as late as 1968. In 1966-7 the 3d and 5d values were re-issued in photogravure, the format being slightly smaller than the original letterpress version. This series was phased out between 1968 and 1970 when the Gerl definitives were released.

Brunei's River definitives, introduced in February 1907, lasted till 1952, a 45 year period. Between 1924 and 1947 many denominations were replaced by a series featuring a water village, but the original design was retained for the \$5 and \$25 high values, as well as for several new values resulting from increases in postal rates.

The Sudan used the same design for its definitives from 1898 till 1941 and then from 1948 till September 1951, a period of 53 years but with a seven year gap. The design is of interest for several reasons. It was produced by E A Stanton, then a *bimbashi* (captain) in the Egyptian army but later a colonel in the British forces and one of Britain's foremost philatelists. The vignette showed an Arab postman mounted on a racing camel, the model being the Sheikh of the Howawir tribe whom Stanton persuaded to dress for the part and trot around with four straw-filled sacks representing mailbags, while a sketch was made. Optimistically, Stanton inscribed two of the mailbags KHARTOUM and BERBERA – towns which were still in the hands of the Mahdi at the time.

These inscriptions duly appeared on the stamps printed by De La Rue in 1898 – and continued to appear on the stamps for more than half a century – long after their significance had vanished. The Camel Postman, designed by an Englishman in the service of the Khedive of Egypt, ultimately became the national emblem of the Sudan, and appeared on commemoratives of 1948 and 1954 celebrating the opening of the legislative assembly and the attainment of self-government. Since then the Camel Postman has even become the motif on the reverse of the Sudanese coinage ●

This article follows on from Dr Mackay's feature on Decimal Machin Silver Jubilee in the February 1996 *Bulletin* (p176-9). Ed

Books New Stanley Gibbons publications • *The British County Catalogue of Postal History* • *Postal History, Postmarks & Cachets of Lundy Island* • James Bendon catalogue

New Stanley Gibbons publications The 1997 edition of the *Part 1 (British Commonwealth)* catalogue was published on 27 September and will be reviewed here shortly. It comprises two volumes, 1 covering GB and countries A-1, and 2 countries J-Z. Price £27.50 per volume.

The 1997 edition of the *Stamps of the World* catalogue is being published in three volumes. Volume 1 covering foreign countries A-J was published on 6 September, Vol 2 (K-Z) follows on 25 October and Vol 3 (Commonwealth countries) on 29 November. Price: Vols 1 & 2 £24.95 each, Vol 3 £22.95. All SG catalogues are available from their Strand shop and by mail order from: Stanley Gibbons Publications, Parkside, Ringwood, BH24 3SH. Postage £3 UK, £6 overseas. Credit card telephone order line: 0800 611622 •

The British County Catalogue of Postal History Volumes 1 & 2, 2nd edition. Edited by R M Willcocks & B Jay. The first editions of these two volumes have been out of print for some time so a new combined edition will be welcomed by many collectors and students. The County Catalogue series has been designed for use with the authors' *The Postal History of Great Britain and Ireland* (2nd edition 1981). Vol 3 of the County series covers London (published 1983), Vol 4 Bedfordshire, Berkshire, Cheshire, Dorset, Hampshire, Isle of Man, Kent, Lancashire, Staffordshire and Yorkshire (1988), and Vol 5 Cumberland, Durham, Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, Lincolnshire, Northumberland, Somerset, Wales, Westmorland, Wiltshire, and Worcestershire (reviewed here August 1990). Vols 4 & 5 are still in print.

The combined Vols 1 & 2 deals with the postal history of four large cities: Birmingham, Bristol, Liverpool, and Manchester, and 21 counties: Buckinghamshire, Cambridgeshire, Cornwall, Derbyshire, Devon, Essex, Hertfordshire, Huntingdonshire, Isle of Wight, Leicestershire, Mid-

dlesex, Norfolk, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Rutland, Shropshire, Suffolk, Surrey, Sussex, and Warwickshire, also the Channel Islands and the Isles of Scilly.

The book lists the handstamps used in every town and village up to 1840/43. Each type of handstamp is clearly illustrated, with the listings giving a catalogue number, type (illustration) number, size, colour, dates and rarity code. The popular Penny Post and Ship Letter markings are included in the listings. Each section is introduced by a specialist editor with a concise and useful short postal history of the city or county. Helpful maps are included in the county sections, and a contact name and address given for reporting additional information. In the field of postal history new discoveries and earlier or later dates of usage are being found all the time.

The introductions make interesting reading, for example the section on the Isles of Scilly shows the parsimony of the Post Office in regard to the mail service to the islands: 'The first mail service commenced in 1804, a sailing vessel making the journey once a week from Penzance to St Mary's and back. Not being a regular packet boat, a dispute arose as to what rate was to be charged; it was settled at 2d per letter for the sea trip. The service ran at a loss for several years and the Post Office cut the grant from £100 to £50 per annum, causing deadlock with the shipping company. No one else would take on the contract, so the Post Office employed two naval cutters to carry the mails; these cost the government over £1200 a year in order to save £50!'

A careful comparison of this new edition with the 1st editions of Vols 1 and 2, shows that nearly 1000 new handstamps have been recorded and added to the new volume, this of course being in addition to numerous extensions in respect of usage dates and colours used. The rarity codes, explained in the introduction, range from A

(under £8) to H+ (over £200). With the exception of those cases where the code has been amended through improved knowledge, the great majority of handstamps have retained their original rarity ratings, but the prices quoted for each rating have been raised since the earlier editions to take account of increased demand for postal history material and to provide a guide to 1996 prices. Typically, a handstamp given a rarity value of 'E' in the 1st edition has moved up in price from £40-42 to £50-52. The Z code in the book refers to items known only in archive offices, GPO to items recorded in Post Office Archives.

The book ends with a useful index of over 1300 town and village names, from Acle (Norfolk) to Yoxford (Suffolk) and illustrations of some 87 standard handstamp types. Other, unique types of postmarks are illustrated at the beginning of each county listing. 254 pages, hardbound, with dust-jacket. Available from: Vale Stamps, 21 Tranquil Vale, London SE3 0BU. Price £23, postage £2 •

Postal History, Postmarks & Cachets of Lundy Island: an illustrated priced guide and handbook

by Stanley Newman, 2nd edition. Mr Newman's popular catalogue of Lundy stamps was followed in 1991 by a priced listing of the island's postmarks and cachets. This 2nd edition not only updates the 1991 book, but contains new sections. Newman's concise postal history of Lundy is followed by section 1 dealing with the now scarce GPO cancels used between 1886 and 1927 – valued at between £80 and £300. Section 2 records cancels used on the local stamps (local carriage labels) since 1929, including new standard Lundy cancels, introduced in 1991 and 1995, and several first day of issue and event cancels used since the 1st edition was compiled. New Lundy meter impressions introduced in 1991 and 1995 are also recorded. The Air Mail cancels are chronicled in section 3, with a notable increase in value of the 1938 'AIR/LACAL/POST' cancel on cover. Sections 4 & 5 deal with the popular 'Delayed by Storm' and ship cachets, the latter increasing in number in recent years. Sections 6-10 record

cachets used by the Philatelic Bureau, for special events in 1972-74, Lundy Field Society, for temporary usage, and the Coastguard and Signal stations cachets. These range from common to extremely scarce. The section on private cachets lists those produced by collectors and dealers until 1988, after which they became too 'numerous and frequent' and were, says Newman, often 'a trifle crude, being composed of "John Bull" type moveable rubber letters.' Included here are cachets used on mail handed to the Lundy representative at Stampex and Stamp World London '90 for reposting from the island. The remaining sections, three new to this edition, cover markings of the *Illustrated Lundy News* publication, Lundy Shore Office, Radio Ham and Collect Lundy stamps cachets.

Prices have been revised where necessary to reflect current market values, and are given in pounds and dollars. 64 pages, card covers. Available from: Channel Islands & Lundy Auctions, Gemini Business Centre, 136 Old Shoreham Road, Hove, BN3 7BD. Price £8.50, postage 75p UK, £1.25 Europe, £2 overseas airmail •

James Bendon has issued his annual catalogue (September 1996) of philatelic literature, arranged under 10 headings: Aerophilately, Bibliography, Forgeries, General Works, Maritime, Military, Philatelic History, Postal Stationery, Revenue Stamps, and Thematics, followed by a country listings from Andorra to Uruguay. The GB section, of particular interest to readers of this magazine, details the following publications: *A History of the Ship Letters of the British Isles* (Robertson), *The Inland Posts (1392-1672): A Calendar of Historical Documents* (Stone), *Newspaper Postage Stamps: The De La Rue Dies 1860-1870* (Lowe), *British External Airmails until 1934* (Newall), *Guide Lines to the Penny Black* (Litchfield), *Unpaid and Underpaid Mail 1840 to 1921* (Johnson), and *British Line Engraved Stamps: Repaired Impressions 1855-1879 – One Penny Die II* (Wiggins). For a copy of this useful listing write to: James Bendon Ltd, PO Box 6484, 3307 Limassol, Cyprus •

Competition Win valuable classic stamps in this month's competition – sponsored by Omniphil Approvals



1st prize Canada 1897 \$2 violet Queen Victoria Jubilee issue, SG 137, very fresh unused partially gummed example, beautifully centred with fine colour. SG cat £700. Classic without Tears retail price £275.

2nd prize GB 1911 £1 Edward VII, scarcer deep green Somerset House printing, SG 320, a sound good colour example cancelled by several part registered oval datestamp strikes and with traces of registered crayon. SG cat £350, retail price £140.

3rd prize GB 1840 1d black letters I-B, lovely four margins, excellent even colour example cancelled by crisp clear well-centred red Maltese Cross. A joy to behold. SG 2, cat £150, retail price £75.

The winners of the July competition were B Hewlett, Norfolk; J Kirkcaldy, Ayrshire; J Rapley, Somerset; R Jacquet, France; I Brown, Israel; D Roworth, Buckinghamshire; and D Barrett, Hampshire

The answers 1. King Edward VII; 2. University of Bristol; 3. Stephanie Nash; 4. Ray Pottle; 5. 50th Edinburgh Festival. Our thanks to all who entered.

Introducing Omniphil Apart from the Post Office – just where can collectors go to find stamps these days? There was a time when most towns boasted a stamp shop. But sadly times have changed and for many collectors these traditional sources have all but dried up... which is why it is reassuring that in these days of bewildering computers and complexity, that there is still a stamp company (supplying over 1000 collectors) prepared to send you selections of suitable stamps by post, on approval without obligation, for you to examine in the peace and comfort of your favourite armchair.

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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: October Bulletin Competition, Royal Mail, 22 Finsbury Square, London EC2A 1NL to arrive by 22 November. Each entry must be posted separately; multiple entries in one envelope will be disregarded.

- 1 Who designed the 1996 Christmas stamps?
- 2 Who featured in the 'Someone Special' promotion?
- 3 Who used the first Mauritius stamps on invitations to a ball?
- 4 In what year were Norway's Posthorn definitives first issued?
- 5 Who is shortly retiring as Manager of the National Postal Museum?



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

Events

Now showing A new 'Mail by Rail' exhibition at the National Railway Museum, York opened at the end of September, sponsored by Royal Mail. For further details contact Candace Brownlee 0171 320 7078

Until 13 December Display of stamps from the Royal Collection, Buckingham Palace (including famous 'Post Office Mauritius' stamps) at National Postal Museum, King Edward Street, London EC1. Open Monday-Friday 09.30-16.30. Enquiries: 0171 600 8914

Until 31 December Robert Burns: Man of Letters exhibition at National Postal Museum

5 October Sussex Federation Day, hosted by Eastbourne & South Downs Phil Soc, at Eastbourne Town Hall, Grove Road, Eastbourne, 10.15-17.00. Car parking nearby, 5 mins from Eastbourne rail station. Dealers (stamps, postcards, postal history), competitive displays (thematics, cinderella, traditional philately & postal history), display of GB coil stamps by Dr Jean Alexander. Meetings of GB Phil Soc and British Society of Australian Philately. Enquiries: L Jones, National Postal Museum, 0171 600 8914

5 October Assn of Essex Phil Socs Autumn Rally & Stamp Fair at Caterham High school, Caterham Ave, Clayhall, Ilford, 10.00-16.30. Dealers, county competitions, quiz, refreshments. Hosted by Leytonstone, Wanstead & District Phil Soc. Enquiries: 0181 989 1783

10-13 October 78th Philatelic Congress of GB at Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza Bristol, Victoria Street, Bristol. Enquiries: Phil Kenton, 01932 222864

12 October Display 'Cinderellas and other GB Philately' by Lionel Jones at National Philatelic Society, 107 Charterhouse Street, London EC1. Enquiries: NPS, 0171-251 5040

12-18 October Taipei '96 international stamp exhibition, Taipei, Taiwan

18-20 October Stampa (Irish National Stamp Exhibition), at Riverside Exhibition Centre, Dublin 2. Enquiries: Stampa '96, PO Box 2723, Dublin 1

19 October Hampex '96 - Hampshire Philatelic Federation Convention & stamp Fair at the Petersfield School, Cranford Road, Petersfield, 10.00-17.00. Admission 50p. 30 dealers, eight specialist stamp society meetings, NPM and BPT Junior Workshop.

26 October Telford Phil Soc Stamp Fair at Civic Offices, Wellington, Telford, 10.00-16.00. Auction at 15.00. Enquiries: P Morris-Jones, 01952 223926

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

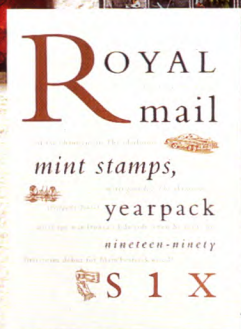
26-27 October Big Stamp show at Metropole Exhibition Centre, Brighton, 10.30-17.00. Enquiries: 01279 433910 or 01279 871110

27 October British Aerophilatelic Federation Midlands group meeting. Enquiries: Larry Chamberlain, 01476-72125

2-3 November Scotex at Hall 2, Scottish Exhibition & Conference Centre, Glasgow. Enquiries: Gordon Carroll 0141 333 9724

9 November Display 'Great Britain Private Posts' by Chris Harman FRPSL at National Philatelic Society, 107 Charterhouse Street, London EC1. Enquiries: NPS 0171-251 5040 •

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Yearbooks are lavishly-illustrated, authoritative works with background stories on each issue of special stamps. Interviews with the designers help bring the stamps to life. Stamps are supplied on stock cards ready for mounting in the book. Each book supplied in a matching slip-case.

The 1995 Yearbook contains the nine sets from Cats to Christmas Robins, available whilst stocks last, until 30 October, price £22.50 (£75 leather-bound). **The 1996 Yearbook** including the 39 special stamps from Robert Burns to Christmas

Nativity, goes on sale on 28 October, price £23.50 (£75 leatherbound).

Also available Royal Mail Collectors Packs containing special and greetings stamps on stock card. Colourful and informative brochure gives details of the stamp subjects. **1995 Yearpack** available until 30 October, price £15.95. **1996 Yearpack** on sale from 28 October, price £17.50.

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