

BRITISH PHILATELIC

The ROYAL MAIL magazine *for stamp collectors*

Volume 36 Number 4

DECEMBER 1998 • 85P

Bulletin

Vote for your stamp of 1998
• A Christmas collection

GREENWICH

Royal Mail's Millennium stamp series opens with the measuring of time itself; a tale of invention which led to the establishment of the Meridian.



TALES OF INVENTORS TRAVELLERS PATIENTS SETTLERS WORKERS FANS CITIZENS SCIENTISTS FARMERS SOLDIERS CHRISTIANS AND ARTISTS

Forthcoming issues and withdrawals



Cover photograph The H4 chronometer crafted by John Harrison in 1759 enabled mariners to determine their exact position at sea and won him the prize offered by the Longitude Board, which later established the Greenwich Meridian.

Royal Mail's new Inventors' Tale stamps are previewed on page 112. Photograph by Geoff Dann; Chronometer, National Maritime Museum

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

1 December

Issue £1 and £2 machine books, 10 x 1st and 10 x 2nd NVI books containing stamps printed by Questa by gravure.

31 December

Withdrawal Definitive packs Nos 27 (Castles), 33 (£3 stamp), 34 and 35 (low values), Country Pack No 36 (20p, 26p, 37p, 63p litho stamps)

31 December

Withdrawal 1997 Aircards (pack of five); 1985 Registered and Special Delivery envelopes; 1994 International Recorded Delivery envelope

4 January

Withdrawal Greetings books: Flowers Express (1997) and Chocolate Express (1998) promotion books

7 January

Issue Millennium: Inventors' Tale stamp cards

12 January

Issue Millennium: Inventors' Tale stamps and presentation pack

19 January

Issue £1.20 stamp book containing 4 x 'E' (European mail) NVI stamps

19 January

Withdrawal Endangered Species stamps, presentation pack and stamp cards

This photograph is one of many kindly supplied by Lord Glenamara of events during his time as PMG, 1966-68. We will feature more of these interesting historic photographs in future issues.

Christmas past Our photo is of the launch of the first Christmas stamps in 1966. It shows the young designers of the stamps and first day cover with the Postmaster General, Mr Edward Short, now Lord Glenamara.



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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** 65p 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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1998 *Bulletin* writers

Colin Baker January, March, May, June,

Martin Balls November

Richard Beith February, August

Fred Gee March, April

Matthew Hinton January, March, November

Pradip Jain November

James Mackay January, April–September, November

Dorothy Martin December

Jean Matheson May

Robert Maude January

Margaret Morris May

D G A Myall February, April–August, October, December

James Negus January, February, September

Ron Negus April, September

Colin Peachey October

Franceska Rapkin August

Martin Robinson March, June

Brian Warren August

David Watkins November

Derek Williams February

ONCE AGAIN we invite you to vote for your favourite stamps and *Bulletin* writer of the year. The special stamps issued during 1998 are shown on pages 110–111. Tell us your top three sets and favourite individual stamp on the enclosed voting form. All forms will be entered in a prize draw – the sender of the first ‘out of the hat’ will win £250, with £50 each to the next three drawn. Remember to return your voting form by 22 January 1999. The favourite set of 1997 was Great Tudor with the large-size Henry VIII stamp from that set as the favourite individual design. I await with interest your decision on the 1998 issues.

We are also asking you to vote (on the same form) for your favourite *Bulletin* writer – listed above, with the months their articles were published. All voting forms go into a second draw, the sender of the first drawn wins £100. The favourite author will also receive £100. The winner for the last two years was Douglas Myall for his Decimal Stamp Book articles. Will he complete his hat-trick this year? Please note that articles by Royal Mail staff are excluded.

Details are given this month of our new ‘E’ (European rate) stamp and the Inventors’ Tale set – the first of our 12 Millennium issues for 1999.

Next month we will introduce a new-style competition and I must thank all the companies who have sponsored our existing competition over the past few years. Especially I thank Omniphil Philately who have sponsored the most and provided some excellent prizes. Their special offer to readers on last month’s competition page remains open until 10 January and I am sure many readers will want to take advantage of it.

It just remains for me, on behalf of Royal Mail, to wish all *Bulletin* readers a happy and peaceful Christmas and New Year. JOHN HOLMAN ●

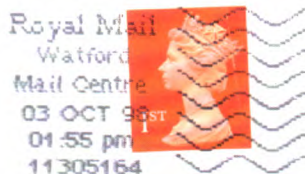
Royal Mail news New stamp for Europe • Stamps for Scotland • Scottish Postbus

Birmingham, Bolton, Bristol, Cambridge, Cardiff, Carlisle, Chelmsford, Crewe, Gatwick, Leeds, Leicester, London South, Manchester, Nottingham, Oxford, Preston, Shrewsbury, Southampton, Swansea, Swindon, Truro, Tyneside, Watford, Wolverhampton, and Worcester



NEED A POSTCODE?

RING 0345 111 222



New European stamp On 19 January Royal Mail will issue a book containing four stamps with 'E' (Europe) coding to cover the basic letter rate to Europe, currently 30p. The book will initially be available from the Bureau and philatelic outlets but will go on sale at selected post offices and retail outlets as existing stocks of the 4 x 30p stamp books are used up. The new 'E' stamp will be printed in gravure in dark blue (as earlier 14p and 17p stamps) by Walsall Security Printers. Although intended primarily for use of minimum weight letters (and postcards) to European countries, the stamp can be used as pre-payment of 30p postage on any mail. The E stamp can thus be used in similar fashion to the 1st and 2nd class XVI stamps, currently pre-paying postage at 26p and 20p respectively.

A Royal Mail first day cover envelope for this new stamp will be available from the Bureau and main post offices about one week before 19 January, price 25p. The Bureau will offer a FDC service – covers will be available with Bureau or Folkestone pictorial postmark, price 77p UK, 66p overseas. Orders must be received at the Bureau by 19 January. Collectors may post or hand in covers for the Folkestone postmark at main post offices. A non-pictorial Folkestone postmark will also be available. Covers bearing the new stamp can be sent on the day of issue for postmarking to: British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, Edinburgh EH3 5TT or Special Hand-stamp Centre, Royal Mail, Wexham Road, Slough SL1 1AA (for Folkestone postmarks). Please quote postmark numbers FD DEF 9901 (Bureau), FD DEF 9902 (Folkestone pictorial) or FD DEF 9902NP (Folkestone non-pictorial) •



1997 special stamp quantities

Great Tudor

26p Henry VIII	23,242,400
26p Wives (x 6)	38,570,200
Stamp cards sets	45,345

Missions of Faith

26p	21,881,400
37p	4,513,300
43p	4,963,600
63p	4,642,700
Stamp cards sets	52,600

Tales of Terror

26p	22,385,600
31p	4,810,300
37p	4,659,200
43p	4,935,200
Stamp cards sets	59,685

Architects of the Air

20p	20,682,400
26p	22,114,000
37p	4,909,100
43p	5,134,000
63p	5,031,900
Stamp cards sets	50,436

Queen's Horses

20p	19,897,400
26p	21,851,200
43p	5,063,000
63p	4,839,800
Stamp cards sets	52,510

Post Offices

20p	19,475,100
26p	21,486,300
43p	4,845,200
63p	4,713,600
Stamp cards sets	55,005

Enid Blyton

20p	19,338,800
26p	21,311,700
37p	4,549,500
43p	4,720,700
63p	4,685,500
Stamp cards sets	46,428

Christmas

2nd	279,032,200
1st	134,595,400
31p	11,433,300
43p	16,274,600
63p	14,434,700
Stamp book (1st)	4,115,050
Stamp book (2nd)	5,272,825
Stamp cards sets	58,761

Golden Wedding

20p	23,641,000
26p	24,931,700
43p	6,245,700
63p	6,204,800
Stamp cards sets	58,900

List of 1998 definitives Our annual list of new definitive and country stamps and stamp books will be published next month



Scottish postbus A new service was launched in September. It provides two runs, one between Kirkcudbright and Twynholm on Wednesdays and Fridays and from Kirkcudbright to Borgeue on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The new service, which departs from Kirkcudbright Delivery office at 12.15, supplements that to Borgeue which runs mornings and afternoons Monday to Friday and Saturday mornings. There are now 129 postbus routes in Scotland; the buses covering an amazing 3 million miles a year. An article marking 30 years of Scottish postbus services was published in the June *Bulletin*.

Our photograph shows driver John McLeish and regular passenger Carol Burgess on the new service •

Stamps for Scotland As announced in the August *Bulletin* a BBC programme was arranged to discuss the new Scottish country stamps to be issued probably next August (date to be confirmed). The programme was broadcast on BBC Scotland on 7 October. Amongst those taking part were Alex Gibb, Director and General Manager of Royal Mail Scotland, Barry Robinson, Royal Mail's Design Director, Dr Jean Alexander of the Stamp Advisory Committee, and leading philatelist and *Bulletin* contributor Dr James Mackay. Following the programme the public wrote or phoned in with suggestions for design themes, amongst the more popular being the Scottish flag, tartan, thistle, landscapes, wildlife, famous Scots and map of Scotland. The most popular famous Scot was Sir William Wallace. Once a theme has been selected, Scottish artists will be commissioned, and designs considered by the Stamp Advisory Committee before going for Royal approval •



Frank Langfield The Philatelic Bureau's first Manager, right, with the current Manager, John Wright.

Founder visits Bureau The Philatelic Bureau was set up 35 years ago, in May 1963 in the old Central Telegraph Office alongside the GPO headquarters in London. The first Manager was Frank Langfield who later in the year also became the first Editor of the *Philatelic Bulletin*. Frank worked in the Post Office from age 14 until he retired in 1975. In October he visited the Bureau in Edinburgh to see how things had changed over the years. He was pleased to see that the services he set up were still available to collectors, although with new technology could be delivered more quickly. He told the current Manager, John Wright, that he envied him the facilities he now has in Edinburgh •

Stamp scene News of events and societies

Autumn Stampex For all collectors of GB stamps and postal history there was a feast of fine material on show in the competitive displays. There were 11 entries of British and Irish material in the Postal History section covering the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. Sadly there was nothing after 1920. Mr H Lush received a large silver gilt medal and the Phillips Trophy for his entry *The Development of the British Postal Service* which covered the period 1635 to 1840. Small silver gilt medals were awarded to M Buxton for *Articles of Value* (registered mail from the 18th century to 1907), D Hepworth for *Exhibitions from 1851* (Crystal Palace etc), M Pitt-Payne for *Unpaid and Underpaid Mail (1835-1920)*, and Dr R Champion for *Free Franks 1652-1840* and A Pearce for *British Letter Mail to Sweden, 1840-75*. All were fine displays. In the Aerophilatelic section, Capt J D Marriner displayed covers and labels from the 1934 Airpost Exhibition. In the Traditional Section there were two excellent entries of British material – Dr I Stevenson's *Queen Victoria Penny Pink Postal Stationery* (small silver gilt) and J Bohn's *The Mulready and its caricatures* (large silver gilt and Royal Mail Trophy). The International Section included six GB entries: Capt Marriner – *Helicopter Mail* (bronze silver); A Piggott – *Postal History of British & Allied Hospitals in France During WW1* (large silver); H Wilson – *The Early Travelling Post Offices* (large vermeil & R A G Lee International Award); M Jackson – *KGV 1911-12 Downey Head ½d – Study of the Plates*; J Davies – *A Jubilee Reminiscence* (1890 covers, postmarks etc, vermeil); and Lady Mairi Bury – *Stamps of Edward VII 1902-13* (large vermeil & GBPS Hassan Shaida Trophy).

In the Jury's report it was stated that 'it is progressively becoming apparent that the categorisation of exhibits into the current range of classes inhibits recognition of philatelic subjects which cross over the various boundaries between classes. As an experiment a number of the exhibits ... were also assessed as "Special Studies" in addition to the class in which they were entered.' In all cases such an assessment resulted in an improvement in the award; it is intended to continue with such assessments in future although at present there is no formal route for progression to international level.

The *Prix d'Honneur* – the Harmers Jubilee Trophy was awarded to 'Sinbad' for a most impressive entry of Western Australia stamps, and the Silver Mailcoach Trophy (and Argyll Postal History Salver) went to D Tarry for his Mauritius – the Sterling period, 1811-77.

In the Literature section two GB periodicals received awards – *Midland Mail* (journal of the Midland (GB) Postal History Society) and the *Postal Mechanisation Study Group Newsletter*, the latter was also awarded the Francis Webb Memorial Trophy. Two GB handbooks also received well-deserved recognition – *The Royal Mail in Leicestershire and Rutland 1542-1997* by J Soer and *Collect British Postmarks* (7th edition) edited by C Peachey and V Crookes. The three entries in the Thematic section – Irish sportsmen, Christian illuminated manuscripts, and Heraldry were all worth seeing ●

Spring and Autumn Stampex 1999, at the Business Design Centre, London N1, will be held 3-7 March and 22-26 September.

For details of the NYSG and Stamp Active contact John Davies, 3 Longfellow Road, Banbury, OX16 9LB

Youth collecting initiatives The National Youth Stamp Group held a press and sponsor briefing at Autumn Stampex to report on progress in encouraging interest in stamp collecting amongst young people and to announce some new initiatives. The Group, chaired by John Davies, helps co-ordinate the work of youth officers in the various regional philatelic federations. It is supported by patrons including Royal Mail, British Philatelic Trust, Philatelic Traders Society, Cavendish Philatelic Auctions, stamp printers, various societies, and individual collectors. Further patrons are always welcome.

Since 1990 John Davies has run Stamp Active, now part of the NYSG work, which assists in the setting up and running of youth stamp clubs in schools and other organisations. For a modest fee, club organisers are sent a pack with useful information and some 120 'activity ideas' for running a club. This is regularly updated. So far over 600 clubs have benefitted and it is hoped that many more clubs will join. These clubs cover the length and breadth of the UK but youth activity is particularly strong in the south west and north east. Stamp Active provides displays and activities at exhibitions, such as Autumn Stampex where there were many colourful and interesting display panels, sponsored by Gavin Fryer and others.

Membership of Kidstamps is free. For application forms write to: George Gibson, Old Builders Wharf, Honey Street, Pewsey SN9 5PS, enclosing a stamped addressed envelope

Donations to Kidstamps Material for the starter packs from adult collectors and dealers is welcome and should be sent to Kidstamps, Cavendish House, 153-7 London Road, Derby DE1 2SY

The NYSG is particularly keen to encourage more young collectors to improve their knowledge and exhibit their stamps, and with this in mind has launched Kidstamps sponsored by Cavendish Philatelic Auctions. Anyone under age 18 who is a member of a school or junior stamp club, can register their collecting interests, and will receive a starter pack of stamps and accessories, a birthday card and gift pack, regular newsletters, and details of stamp competitions.

The main UK youth stamp competition – the Melville Competition – is being relaunched as the British Youth Stamp Championships at Autumn Stampex 1999. The aim is to increase the prestige of the competition to encourage more entries. The Group are however mindful of the need to retain the name of Fred Melville (1882-1940), one of the UK's greatest philatelists and philatelic writers, in some way. The 1998 Melville Competition at this year's Autumn Stampex attracted 26 entries, many of a good standard. Anyone looking at the displays would have been impressed by the enthusiasm and professionalism that went into the selection of material and the writing-up. Many adult collectors would have been proud to have some of the pages in their collections. A silver gilt medal was awarded to Scott Ferguson for his entry 'They Travelled Great Waters' (development of the ship), and a large silver to Martin Ferguson for 'Christmas'. The School Trophy was awarded to the Broadway East First School.

In addition a new Stamp Active Competition – for first-time entrants wishing to display four or eight sheets from their collections – attracted 35 entries covering a wide range of subjects, from Water Babies to Space, Farmyard Animals to Martial Arts, and Scouts to A Trip to the Zoo. Again the enthusiasm of the young collectors for stamps in general and their chosen subjects in particular was not in doubt. We look forward to seeing the entries in the two junior competitions next year ●

Treasury essay makes £21,850 A unique item from the 1839 Treasury Competition for the design of the first adhesive postage stamps was auctioned at Phillips in London in September. It comprises three cut-out designs in blue, affixed to a pink lettersheet. Two are similar design with a wreath of national heraldic emblems and the third shows the Royal Arms and Crown surrounded by a garter with the motto in Latin. According to Douglas Muir's book *Postal Reform and the Penny Black*, the designs were by George Van Sommer, submitted in September 1839. ●



Designs submitted to the Treasury Competition of 1839 (item 19962) by George Van Sommer. Estimated at £6000-£8000, the essays sold at auction for £21,850.

Praga '98 This important international exhibition was held in Prague from 10 to 13 September. There were over 350 competitive entries from all over Europe and North America. The international jury was presided over by the well-known British philatelist, Dr Alan Huggins. Some 15 British exhibitors were among the medal winners. In the various Main Classes they obtained four large vermeil, one vermeil and one large silver medal and in the literature class one large silver, one silver, two silver bronze and one bronze medal were awarded. In the Promotional Classes, British awards were one each at gold, large vermeil, vermeil, large silver and silver bronze level. The main exhibition was held in the former Trade Fair Palace, literature entries at the Postal Museum. It was a great pleasure to see many visitors avidly studying the exhibits in both locations. R BEITH ●

Scottish junior competition The national competition for young collectors in Scotland is open to all collectors under age 18 resident in Scotland. Each entry must be the work of a single entrant, and not the collective effort of a group. Entries can be submitted through a school, philatelic society or direct to the competition organiser in four age groups: up to 8 years, 9-12, 13-15, and 16-17. The winner of each group will receive a medal, certificates will be awarded to all participants, and the Alba Salver to best overall entry. ●

For application forms, to be returned by 16 January, contact F N Soutar, 1 Campbell Drive, Larbert FK5 4PP.

The Philatelist and PJGB Spink & Son Ltd have published the September issue of this prestigious journal, formerly edited by Robson Lowe. It includes articles on the George V Colonial Profile Heads of De La Rue, an interesting and unusual Irish cover of 1841, and GB official stamps, as well as book reviews, details of auctions, and tributes to Lowe.

The 502-lot Robson Lowe Collections sale at Spink on 23 September realised £231,179. The historical and autograph letters created a great deal of interest, with top price for an 1801 letter from Horatio Nelson to Lady Hamilton – £5980. A good collection of letters from British Naval officers went for over six times the estimate, at £3680. A letter from General Gordon and a 1682 document signed by Charles II went for £1725 and £1150 respectively. Lowe's medals and awards went for £977, and one of his favourite felt hats and a silver topped cane for £276. ●

The Philatelist and PJGB

Single copies are £8, annual subscription is £20 UK, £24 Europe, £26 outside Europe (\$40 America)

Spink enquiries Spink & Son Ltd, 5 King Street, London SW1Y 6QS

Gift Bearers at Christmas

Once again we are delighted to



feature Dorothy M Martin's well-known Christmas collection

EVER SINCE PAGAN TIMES it was traditional to give presents at midwinter. During the Saturnalia festival, the Romans gave presents; Odin, the blue-coated, white-bearded old man of the North took presents to his people in the depths of winter, and over the years became 'Old Father Christmas', later appearing in Court Masques and plays by the Mummers.

The Christian Church originally celebrated the Birth of Christ on 6 January, but in the 4th century this was changed to 25 December, the Winter Solstice. The tradition of giving presents at Christmas time originated from the gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh by the Three Wise Men, Caspar, Melchior and Balthazar.

Christmas is essentially a 'family time', a festive time and a time when children are all important. There are many mythical characters who distribute presents to children worldwide, each closely connected to their respective territories.

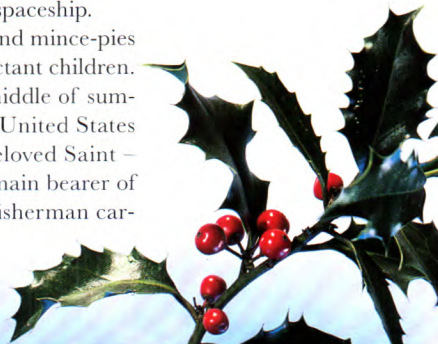
In the English-speaking world, Santa Claus distributes presents to the young people. The name Santa Claus is a corruption of St Nicholas who was Bishop of Myra in Asia Minor during the 4th century; he helped the poor and needy, and there are many legends about him. One was when he awakened three boys from the dead who had been slaughtered and salted in a tub by an Innkeeper. According to another legend, he threw three purses of gold through the door when he heard that a poor nobleman could not find the dowries for his three beautiful daughters who wanted to marry. The three purses are represented in the three gold balls of the pawnbrokers' trade signs, St Nicholas being the Patron Saint of pawnbrokers as well as the Patron Saint of children. On another occasion, St Nicholas threw gold coins down the chimney to help a poor family. They fell into a stocking which had been left on the hearth to dry, and this is thought to be the origin of children hanging up their stockings for gifts from Santa Claus.

The stately Saint changed his appearance over the years from the Bishop figure to a bearded, lovable old gentleman in a green robe with a crown of holly on his head. About 1863, the Americans altered his looks again to the jovial rosy-faced gnomish old man in a red hooded coat that we know today.

Traditionally, Santa is said to travel in a sleigh drawn by eight reindeer and fly over the roof-tops, climbing down the chimneys to leave presents in the children's stockings hanging on the mantel-piece, but in modern times Santa is thought to arrive by surf-board, helicopter or even spaceship.

Santa is welcomed by kiddies in many countries. In England mince-pies and Christmas cake are left out for him by excited and expectant children. In Australia and New Zealand Santa Claus arrives in the middle of summer, but nevertheless is still a very welcome visitor. In the United States the Dutch settlers who emigrated to America took their beloved Saint – Sinter Klass with them; he became Santa Claus and is the main bearer of gifts. In Canada, Santa Claus is sometimes portrayed as a fisherman carrying his toys in a creel.

Opposite Christmas stamps featuring Santa Claus from around the world, and a 1905 postcard



On the continent, 6 December, St Nicholas' Day is of greater significance than Christmas Day, and in some areas the Gift Bearer appears in episcopal robes and mitre accompanied by his servant, Black Peter. In the Netherlands, children put out carrots and hay for the horse bringing Sinter Klass, and in Amsterdam the Saint arrives by boat before mounting his white horse. The good children wake up to find the food in their shoes gone but filled with sweets instead; the naughty children find a rod beside their shoes and the hay and carrots still there.

Thousands of children all over the world write to Santa Claus asking for their special gifts, and Post Offices in several countries reply to these letters. To name a few, my earliest one is from Greenland dated 1950; other Scandinavian countries soon followed suit. USA's Santa's Workshop opened at the North Pole in 1953.

America has really gone to town with these replies, especially from a place called Santa Claus which was founded by German settlers in 1852 and named on Christmas Eve. A giant statue was erected there in 1935, and the town runs a week course for prospective Santas, and those who pass receive a Bachelor of Santa Claus Diploma. This is all taken very seriously and these Santas are in great demand.

Great Britain started their reply service in 1963; Jersey also sends out replies; Austria, France, Australia and New Zealand are among the countries who reply to letters, and now Japan has its own Santaland. Santa has many homes where he makes his toys throughout the year and answers his massive mail. The most well known are in Greenland, Lapland, Iceland and the North Pole. There is now a Santaland at Aviemore, Scotland which could well become the centre for the mythical Reindeerland.

In the Scandinavian countries, a gnome-like figure dressed in red distributes the presents. In Sweden Jultomte drives a sledge, and the children put out a bowl of porridge as a reward for their gifts; in Norway the Julenisse – another elf-like figure with a beard is the gift bearer; in Iceland the Jolasveinar or Christmas Spirits come down from the mountains with their presents and it is the Joulupukki who make the annual visits to Finnish children.

In Germany, Fur Nicholas sometimes appears as the servant of St Nicholas with toys and a rod to perform the praise or punishment routine. German children also receive presents from the Christkind or Christchild represented as a young girl dressed in a white robe and wearing a golden crown on her head and large golden wings.

In France the visits are made by Père Noël, who leaves his gifts in shoes put out by the excited French youngsters; in the more southerly areas, a Shepherd wearing a cloak with a ram drawing a cart filled with toys and decorated with candles is the mythical figure who delivers the presents. In Spain, shoes full of straw are put out for the camels who carry the Three Wise Men on their rounds.

In Czechoslovakia, the Patron Saint St Wenceslas is the Gift Bearer, and in Poland Star Man visits the homes after supper on Christmas Eve bringing small presents and candies for the children.



North Pole.

16th December 1953. Opening day of the special Post office set up at the North Pole, New York, where Santa Claus has his Workshop. Special First Day Cachet.

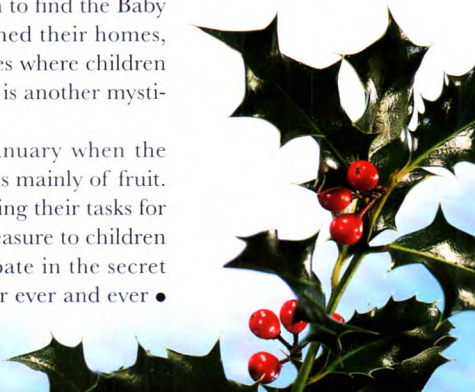


Covers with North Pole and Santa Claus postmarks from US post offices

In Italy and Sicily, The Old Witch Befana leaves toys for the good children and a piece of coal for the naughty ones. In Russia, Baboushka delivers the gifts. According to legend, Befana and Baboushka both refused to give hospitality to the Three Wise Men and go with them to find the Baby Jesus. They decided to follow them after they had cleaned their homes, but lost their way, and for ever after left presents at houses where children lived in case the Baby Jesus was there. Grandfather Frost is another mystical character in Russia.

In their homeland, Puerto Ricans celebrate on 6 January when the Three Wise Men go from house to house bearing presents mainly of fruit.

These and other mythical characters have been executing their tasks for many, many years giving so much excitement, joy and pleasure to children all over the world, and also to the parents who participate in the secret planning of the visits and the results! May it continue for ever and ever •



1998 Favourite stamps poll

Stamps in each set are numbered from left to right

FOR THE 13TH YEAR running we are inviting you to vote for your favourite stamps. Shown below are the special stamps of 1998. Tell us your top three sets and favourite individual stamp (numbered 1-49) on the enclosed voting form. Remember to return your form by 22 January for entry in our £500 prize draw •

Endangered Species

1 2 3 4 5 6



Diana, Princess of Wales

7 8 9 10 11



The Queen's Beasts

12 13 14 15 16



Lighthouses

17 18 19 20 21



Comedians

22 23 24 25 26



Health

27 28 29 30



ROYAL
MAIL
YEARPACK
1998



Magical Worlds
31 32 33 34 35



Carnival
36 37 38 39



Speed
40 41 42 43 44



Christmas
45 46 47 48 49

The Inventors' Tale stamps go on sale at post offices and philatelic outlets on 12 January. Later sets will be issued on the first Tuesday of each month, building a unique series of 48 stamps, many designed by leading contemporary artists.

The Inventors' Tale The first of the 12 sets of Millennium stamps to be issued in 1999 is on the theme of Inventors. Millennium sets to follow will all feature events, people, inventions, scientific discoveries, works of literature and art, entertainment and religious activity that have shaped British history and culture, the economy and society over the past 1000 years. Each set will comprise four stamps, each one by a different image maker or artist, including some who are familiar names.





The 20p stamp shows *Timekeeping*, by David Gentleman, reminding us of the important work of John Harrison, Britain's greatest horologist. His invention of the chronometer was to prove vital for safe navigation at sea.

The 26p value, featuring *Steam Power* by Peter Howson, recalls the inventions of James Watt, Thomas Newcomen and others, and the Industrial Revolution which made Britain the 'workshop of the world' in the 19th century.

Zafer and Barbara Baran's design for the 43p stamp, recalling the pioneering photography of British inventor Henry Fox-Talbot, is based on his early 'photogenic drawings' of leaves.

The 63p stamp symbolises the impact of the computer on both individuals and society in the late 20th century. The image of the thinking machine is by Sir Eduardo Paolozzi, whose design is indicative of sight, hearing, speech and thought.

Below, (and p99) detail from *James Watt and the Steam Engine*, by James Eckford Lauder, courtesy National Gallery of Scotland.



David Gentleman is the most prolific British stamp designer. Born in 1930, he is well known for his book illustrations and murals on London's Charing Cross station. In the 1960s he worked with the Postmaster General Anthony Wedgwood Benn on new approaches to the design of British stamps.

Peter Howson, born in 1958 in London, is one of Scotland's leading contemporary artists and has been the subject of exhibitions in the UK and overseas. His painting *Patriots* is in the Glasgow Museum of Modern Art.

Zafer and Barbara Baran, born respectively in Turkey and London in 1955 and 1956, both studied at Goldsmiths' College, London. Their work includes film titles and photography for corporations, publishers, and the arts.

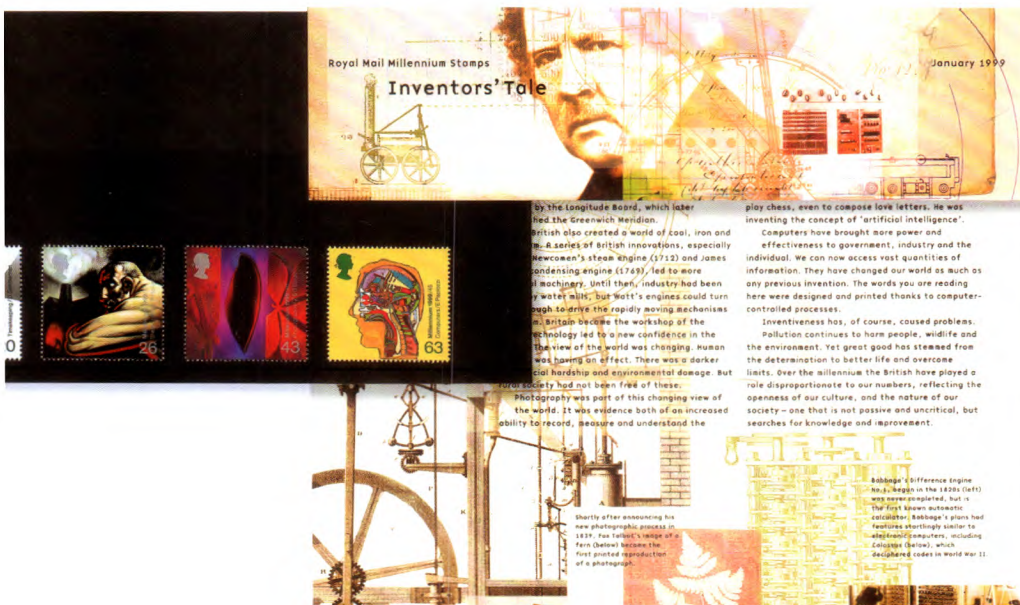
Sir Eduardo Paolozzi, born in Edinburgh of Italian parents in 1924, worked in Paris before becoming an instructor at the Central School of Arts and Crafts in London. His bronze *Newton* is in the forecourt of the new British Library. He was appointed HM Sculptor in Ordinary for Scotland in 1986.

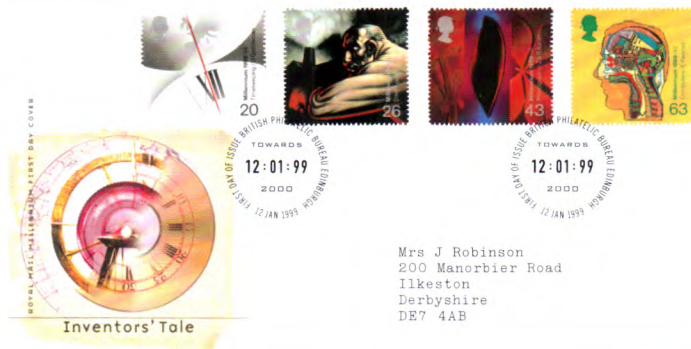
The **20p** stamp (basic inland 2nd class letter rate) by David Gentleman reminds us of the important work of John Harrison (1693-1776), who was honoured by stamps in 1993. His invention of the accurate portable time-keeper (chronometer) was vital for safe navigation at sea, thus helping to secure Britain's vast empire, and was the forerunner of all precision watches.

The **26p** value (basic 1st class inland letter rate) by Peter Howson recalls the 'dark satanic mills' of the Industrial Revolution in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Prior to the mid-18th century, industry and manufacturing played a relatively minor role in the British economy. Steam power, replacing water power, revolutionised the textile, mining, metal-working and many other industries and later transport with the development of the railways.

Zafer and Barbara Baran's design for the **43p** stamp (basic airmail letter rate) is based on Henry Fox-Talbot's pioneering photography of leaves. From the Fox Talbot Museum's vast number of prints bearing faint, mottled images in delicate shades of red, brown, blue or violet, they selected images which were duped on to colour film, and then computer scanned to enhance the faded originals. Fox Talbot, and early photographic equipment, was shown on £1.40 and £1.90 stamp book covers in 1989.

The **63p** stamp (second step airmail letter rate) is by Sir Eduardo Paolozzi who was particularly interested in the work of Alan Turing (1912-54) at Bletchley Park during the Second World War. Turing's main contribution was the design of the 'Bombe' – the electro-mechanical machine used to decode Enigma. Not strictly a computer, the Bombe represented the logic and approach required in computers. Post Office engineers at Bletchley Park used his logic to construct the first electronic computer, Colossus. Sir Eduardo's design is in some degree reminiscent of a 22p stamp issued in 1991 in honour of Charles Babbage (1791-1871) whose calculating machine is regarded as the forerunner of the modern computer.





Mrs J Robinson
200 Manorbie Road
Ilkeston
Derbyshire
DE7 4AB

Technical details

Printers Joh Enschedé
Stamps (26p), De La Rue
Security Print (others)

Process Gravure

Size 37 × 35mm

Sheets 100

Perforation 14 × 14.5

Phosphor One band 20p •
two bands others

Gum PVA

FIRST DAY FACILITIES Unstamped Royal Mail FDC envelopes will be available from main post offices and philatelic outlets about a week before 12 January, price 25p. Orders for FDCs with the stamps cancelled by a pictorial 'first day of issue' postmark of the Bureau or Greenwich, London SE, must reach the Bureau by 12 January. Price £2.20 UK (including VAT) or £1.88 overseas (no VAT).

Alternatively, collectors may send stamped covers on the day of issue, to: British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, Edinburgh EH3 5TT, or Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, Mount Pleasant, London EC1A 1BB (Greenwich postmark), marking the outer envelope 'FD9901' (Bureau), or 'FD9902' (Greenwich).

Collectors can post or hand in covers at main post offices – all covers will be given the Greenwich postmark. A non-pictorial Greenwich postmark will also be available for collectors who do not want a pictorial design. Covers for this postmark should be sent to the Special Handstamp Centre at Mount Pleasant (address above) requesting 'FD 9901'.

Handstamps sponsored by cover producers and others will be announced in the *British Postmark Bulletin* – available on subscription from the Bureau (£10 UK/Europe; £21.75 elsewhere). Covers may be posted bearing just the 20p Inventors' Tale stamp for any philatelic postmark in use on 12 January.

PRESENTATION PACK AND STAMP CARDS A well-illustrated pack (price £1.85) and stamp cards (25p each) will be available from main post offices and philatelic outlets. The pack, written by Prof Jeremy Black of Exeter University, was designed by Howard Brown.

MILLENNIUM STAMPS ALBUM A Royal Mail Millennium Stamps Album is now available from the British Philatelic Bureau. This contains 13 pages – one of introduction and 12 double page spreads with subject information facing a page on which to mount each set of stamps – and three FDC and three presentation pack pages. The album will be supplied with slipcase, price £19.99. The introductory and stamp pages will be available separately, price £9.99 •



Note, handstamp designs may be slightly amended.

Future issues The dates for the Millennium stamp issues during 1999 are included in Adam Novak's article in this *Bulletin*. The Travellers' Tale set will be previewed here next month.

Christmas reading We asked four of our contributors to

Glenn Morgan When it was suggested that I write about a philatelic work available through a public library it set me thinking that, unfortunately, the stamp collecting section is generally lacking in content.

However, *The Stamp Atlas*, by Stuart Rossiter and John Flower (MacDonald, 1986) should be available through the Inter-Library Loan Scheme – ask locally. It is also available for consultation at the library of the National Philatelic Society Library, 107 Charterhouse Street, London EC1, where the writer is librarian.

Incidentally, do consider regularly borrowing books on our hobby from your local library, for the more frequently that stamp collecting publications are taken out on loan, the more likely it is that the librarian will add other newly published works to holdings for the benefit of all.

An atlas is an essential ‘tool’ for any philatelist, so when written by postal historians who were a *Blue Guides* editor and a cartographer respectively, you know that it comes with a fine pedigree.

The book contains 144 maps, over 750 illustrations and a comprehensive index. The pictorial elements are held together by a text that records boundary changes, postal routes, postmarks, currencies, date of issue of first stamp and much more besides. This information is all broken down by continent and country in a logical sequence.

In the introduction, W Raife Wellsted claims that it is ‘almost impossible to assemble a collection of stamps without some knowledge of the political history of a country’, and for the postal historian ‘... a knowledge of geographical changes and history is an essential part of his study’. I agree totally and believe that there is a much deeper fascination and pleasure to be derived from our hobby when it includes research.

This book brings together otherwise scattered information and increases our knowledge of countries and the postal service therein. The images chosen add much to the pleasure of the reader and certainly inspired me to delve deeper into the workings of communication by letter, especially the boxes that they are posted in.



Glenn Morgan



Margaret Morris

The borders between nations and country names are forever evolving and a supplement to this book recording these changes would be of great value.

All postal history covers and stamps have a story to tell and *The Stamp Atlas* enables us to put our philatelic treasures into an historical context and to gain a greater understanding of what we possess. I have referred to the book many times when writing-up my own collections and exhibits and commend it to all readers •

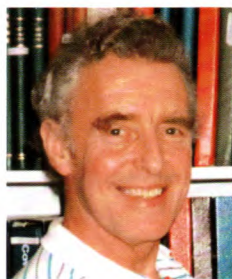
Margaret Morris Sometimes a book is special not just for its content but also because of the circumstances of its acquisition, and the book I have chosen falls into this category.

Last year I discovered that a fellow member of the Captain Cook Study Unit would be visiting Scotland with his family just around Christmas. I felt sad that they would be spending Christmas away from their home, so I invited them to come to mine for Christmas Day.

Norman Wansbrough, his wife Toni and their student son and daughter, were from New Zealand and it was so interesting to hear about their life and travels. Keith had actually been in Scotland for some months studying Computing Science at Glasgow University and Heather was on her way to Germany to study there. Of course there was a lot of chat about philatelic matters in general and our hero Captain Cook in particular.

Afterwards, Norman sent me a copy of a delightful book, *Another Way of Looking* – New Zea-

recommend a good philatelic read for the holiday season



James Mackay



James Negus

land's Birds on Stamps, by Margaret Forde (David Bateman, 1989) and I feel sure that this would appeal to any collector who is thinking of starting a collection on the popular Bird theme. As any member of the Bird Stamp Society will tell you, this is a very wide theme and so there could be a case for limiting it in some way and this book could provide an example of such limitation.

The author is described on the dust jacket as 'a bit of a biologist with particular emphasis on birds, and a hobby of collecting stamps'. The result is an attractive book which is simply written and easy to find your way around. There is a glossary of terms used in ornithology and philately, a list of references and an index of species and stamp-issuing countries. It is well illustrated, although only the endpapers are in colour.

The book does not claim to be a complete catalogue nor a definitive bird guide, for that you would need a more advanced reference book. However, it is a really nice book for anyone starting a bird collection and one that anybody would enjoy dipping into. It could also provide useful background information for a traditional collector of the stamps of New Zealand. After all, it makes any collection more interesting when you know a bit about the stamp designs.

Although not a collector of the bird theme, I have very much enjoyed my little excursions through this book and hope that other collectors would also find pleasure in it. I commend the title to thematic collectors – for what else is our branch of philately but 'another way of looking'? ●

James Mackay Although *Scotland in Stamps*, by C W Hill (Impulse Books, Aberdeen 1972) was published more than a quarter of a century ago, it is timely with devolution imminent and distinctive Scottish stamps scheduled for 1999. A college lecturer in the Midlands, Hill retired to Banffshire where he continued to write books and articles on stamps, coins and other collectables, notably a regular philatelic column in *The Observer*.

His book arose out of a request at a public library in northeast Scotland for a book about Scottish stamps and postal history. After a prolonged search, however, the librarian confessed that there was no such book. 'The omission was all the more remarkable,' said Hill, 'because there is so much to be said on the subject'.

In the space of about 150 pages he set out to rectify this omission. Successive chapters deal with the establishment of the General Post in the 1690s and subsequent developments, and there is an entertainingly racy account of the exploits of Peter Williamson whose Edinburgh Penny Post lasted 20 years before it was taken over by the Post Office. The part played by Scots in the postal reforms of 1839-40 is well told, with due emphasis on the work of Robert Wallace, MP for Greenock, and a much more sober assessment of the contribution made by James Chalmers than most Scots could have written.

But the core of the book deals with Scotland's own stamps, beginning with the regional stamps, first mooted in 1956 and actually inaugurated two years later, and continuing with those British stamps that celebrated or commemorated aspects of Scotland. The weakest chapter is 'The Postmark on a Letter', over half taken up with an abridged list of the post office numbers (1844 system); space that might profitably have dealt with many other aspects of postmarks.

Later chapters summarised the postal services by rail, sea and air, with a lightning romp through Cinderella material up to the strike posts of 1971. An awful lot has happened since then – the prolific series of Scottish aerogrammes since 1974, the complexities of the Machin regionals, the

positive spate of 'local carriage labels' and the wealth of stamps of the world with a Scottish theme. A supplementary volume might be twice as big! As an introduction to Scottish philately this book is still required reading •

James Negus With a welcome Christmas break in prospect, I suggest three titles. The first to delight the eyes; the second to exercise the mind; the third to warm the heart.

The joy of the first book is its stunning illustrations of beautiful stamps, though it comes from author David Scott with the forbidding title of *European Stamp Design: A Semiotic Approach to Designing Messages* (1995). This simply cloaks its theme of how ingenious designers are in projecting a national image within the confines of a postage stamp. Britain is treated and compared with our European partners France, the Netherlands, Switzerland and Ireland. Looking afresh at these images started me on a completely new collection of European definitives (with our own Machins at elementary level included). So, in spite of an off-putting title here was a book which had inspired one reader and it could well do the same for you.

To feed the mind, the most important recent book for GB collectors is James Mackay's masterwork *Under the Gum* (1997), with clarifying subtitle 'Background to British Stamps 1840-1940'. It contains wholly new research from official and long-neglected archives, showing just why successive issues appeared as they did. How valid are James Chalmers's claims? Why were white lines added to the Twopenny Blue? Why was the 2d Tyrian Plum prepared and never issued? These and a century of other conundrums are fully explained from a new, documented viewpoint in this remarkable book.

But if you are hoping merely to relax during your Christmas break, I point to a favourite 'golden oldie'. Order *Nassau Street* by Herman Herst (1960) from the library and enjoy a fund of entertaining tales about shrewd operators and daft eccentrics from his years in stamp dealing. Humorous and kindly, this autobiography from a veteran writer will be added cheer for the festive season •

Decimal stamp books 43

HRH The Prince of Wales label pane book The sixth in the series of 4 × 1st commemorative label books was issued on 14 November. It celebrates the 50th birthday of HRH The Prince of Wales and was printed by Walsall from the same plates that were used for last year's offering, the meeting of the Commonwealth Heads of Government, viz: w56 w59 w69. It is unusual for lithographic plates to be kept so long, unlike gravure cylinders which last for many years. Royal Mail now has a definite preference for gravure but lithography is still used for short print runs. The use of the same plates for two such books may be an indication that fewer of them than normal were printed, unless, of course, other combinations have yet to appear. Sadly, Royal Mail no longer publishes the number of good books issued for retail books so we cannot be sure.

Cylinder numbers Stamp printers number their cylinders for a variety of purposes. (I use the term to include gravure cylinders and lithographic plates.) Originally, they were to identify the source of a printing in case of error of some kind, especially if more than one was prepared for a given value. Today, this is achieved for sheet printings by printing the warrant (purchase order) number and date of printing in the margins, although cylinder numbers are also present. Most decimal stamp books carry cylinder numbers.

However, some printers seem to allocate the same number to different cylinders. Questa have used the same numbers on phosphor cylinders for retail books of 1st-class two-band stamps and

HRH The Prince of Wales label pane book using plates W56 W59 W69. The Queen's 70th birthday was marked by a label book in April 1996, using two plate combinations: W37 W45 W48 and W38 W45 W49.

The first label book marked the tercentenary of the Bank of England in 1994.

Postcode enquiries tel: 0145 111 222
Customer Service: Telephone tel: 0145 740 740
Monday to Friday (calls charged at local rates)

W 69

W 59
W 56



Specialist report by D G A Myall

Wilding book cylinder numbers Dates are of printing, not the dates the cylinders were made

Pane 1 9 × 26p 17.12.97

colour etc	W	Cyl
Brown	W1	104
Bronze	W1	105
Rust	W1	133
Phosphor	W1	102

Pane 2 6 × 20p 15.12.97

colour etc	W	Cyl
Brown	W1	113
Bronze	W1	114
Lt Green	W1	112
Phosphor	W1	115

Pane 3 9 se-tenant 12.12.97

colour etc	W	Cyl
Brown	W1	106
Bronze	W1	108
Lt Green	W1	107
Rust	W1	109
Rhododendron	W1	110
Phosphor	W1	111

Pane 4 6 × 26p 22.12.97

colour etc	W	Cyl
Black	W1	134
Black	W1	120
Rhododendron	W1	118
Rust	W1	117
Phosphor	W1	116

2nd-class centre band stamps which have obviously different layouts. Similarly, the cylinder numbers for the panes in their £1 and £2 machine-vend books panes are duplicated; see the numbers listed here in August. As I remarked in the same article, Walsall have used w2 for two different layouts of panes of 4 × 2nd class.

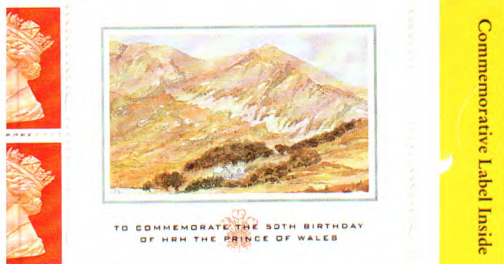
So are booklet cylinder numbers still capable of serving their original purpose, or does their presence owe more to philatelic than operational considerations? It seems that the latter is true. Examination of registration sheets at the National Postal Museum reveals that many cylinders have the numbers engraved more than once. This is clearly to increase the number of cylinder books available to collectors with whom they are more popular than plain books.

The Museum uncut sheets for the panes in the recent Wilding book disclose some interesting features. First, the warrant number and printing dates are included in the margins similar to those now universally applied in the case of sheet printings. There are no cylinder numbers there, although the panes were printed from several colour cylinders and a phosphor cylinder.

However, the reverse of each of the four sheets carries an imprint with more information. Each cylinder seems to have both a philatelic number, in the 'w' series, and a three-figure operational number, prefixed 'Cyl'. The full set is given above. Note that there were two black cylinders for the fourth pane with the same 'w' number but different 'true' cylinder numbers. Similarly, the phosphor cylinders have different 'true' numbers. The numbering of phosphor cylinders in the 'w' series is a first for Walsall. None of the numbers appears in the books as issued.

New Questa book of 10 × 1st Questa's first book of 10 × 1st for more than three years was issued on 7 September. The plate numbers used are: Q5 Q5/Q2. The colour numbers are new but the value is still the thin type hitherto seen only on combination Q4 Q4. The phosphor number is unchanged and the bands are the obsolescent 8mm wide. (The standard for 2-bar stamps has been changed to 9mm, plus or minus half a millimetre.) The ink used for this phosphor printing is the modified one mentioned here in August, so the stamps are new singles for the specialist; all previous Questa window book panes having the original 'A' phosphor. I have decided to name this A2 phosphor in my Deegam publications. Collectors are advised to make sure of their needs as future books from Questa are likely to be printed in gravure.

The new plate combination is also in a new cover. This has a revised validity notice following the introduction of the pan-European minimum letter rate last April.





Speed prestige book All stamps have a different perforation gauge to sheet stamps. This is sufficient to ensure their being included in even non-specialist catalogues.



Flags flown by British cars attempting the Land Speed Record in the USA



Speed prestige book singles Specialists might like to know what features to look for in distinguishing single definitives in this book from previous issues of the values concerned. Foremost is a perforation gauge of 14 instead of 15 x 14, which makes them all new. The easiest way to tell which is which is to count the half-holes along the short side of the stamps, ignoring the corners. There will be 13 for perf 14 and 14 for perf 15. Another change which applies to all of them is the use of the new, A2, phosphor. Third is the use of the new standard 9mm phosphor bands instead of 8mm. Fourth is the use of a blue fluor in the phosphor (previous issues of these values had either a yellow fluor or none). Fifth is the presence of ellipses in the perforations. In particular, the 2nd NV1s with right and left bands in the earlier prestige books (London Life 1990; Wales 1992 and Tolkien 1992 for the right band stamp; Beatrix Potter, two panes, for the left band stamp) did not have ellipses.

The above means, for example, that the 20p and 26p Country stamps in the book differ from those in sheet form issued in July last year only by the perforation gauge.

Christmas books The theme for the stamps in this year's Christmas books is Angels. There are the usual books of 20 x 2nd class stamps and 10 x 1st class but, unlike the last two years, they are not pictorial NV1s. They have the values 20 and 26, without the letter 'p'. The cylinder numbers for the second class stamps are: B1A B1B B1C B1D B1E /B16 and for the 1st class stamps are: B1A B1B B1C B1D B1E /B17. The latter exist with and without dots since the panes are only half the width of the cylinder and need to be distinguished.

Readers probably know that the Christmas stamp theme varies between the religious and the secular. Next year is likely to see an interruption in this pattern. It seems that one of the four stamps to be issued as the Christians' Tale in the Millennium series is titled Christmas and will show modern Christian emblems. It is sequence number 5 in the 48 stamps to be issued in 1999. (For some unknown reason, these numbers count down from 48 to 1.) It will be interesting to see which stamps are used in the Christmas stamp books ●

Chairman's comments Adam Novak, the Director and General Manager of Royal Mail National and Chairman of the Stamp Advisory Committee, examines the role of the SAC and dips further into the 1999 stamp programme

ONE OF THE MAJOR FACTORS in the success of Royal Mail stamps over the last three decades has been the contribution of the Stamp Advisory Committee. Since it was established in 1968, the SAC has played a significant role in establishing the international prestige which British stamps enjoy today. Key elements in this have been the SAC's forward-looking approach, its commitment to the highest standards and the wider awareness of both public opinion and specialist interest it has brought to the stamp design process.

The SAC comprises twelve external members as well as Royal Mail personnel. External members are appointed on a three-year rolling basis to ensure an optimum balance of continuity and fresh thinking. Current external members – all attend on an unpaid basis – come from a wide range of backgrounds, including philately, art, design, public life and entertainment. This diversity, which ensures a unique chemistry of people and specialist skills, provides a refreshing 'eye of the public' perspective on stamps and stamp designs which we might easily overlook because of our close, day-to-day involvement.

SAC meetings are usually held eight or nine times a year and each normally lasts a whole morning. Meetings work on a consensus basis – there is no formal voting system. This does not mean that the SAC's function is to 'rubber stamp' decisions or that discussions are tame. Far from it. Members are there to express their opinions, and they do so passionately. Not surprisingly, it is rare for opinions to be unanimous. As chairman, my task is to allow ideas and comments to flow, to identify where common ground exists and to nurture this towards a conclusion that will point the way forward to the next stage of a stamp issue's development.

Each member brings a unique perspective to the discussions. Those from a philatelic background, for example, might judge a particular stamp issue by what they consider acceptable to the philatelic community. Those from a design and art background might judge it by its creative strengths and visual coherence. Those from a public affairs background might judge it by the implications it could have on sensitive political or social issues. And those from more general backgrounds may judge it on the impression it could create in the public eye.

In reality, of course, members invariably offer much broader perspectives than those I have outlined here. The important point about these, however, is the added dimensions they bring to the quality of our work. They highlight less-obvious pitfalls and provide vital litmus tests as each issue is developed. Over the years, we have learned to respect the advice the SAC provides.

The SAC's role is far from reactive. Because members are involved from the earliest stages of planning, they are often able to make suggestions about stamp subjects, design approaches and even stamp designers. This proactive contribution is something we welcome.

In November, Royal Mail premièred a new film – *The Christmas Stamp* – which highlights the work of the SAC in the development of this year's Christmas stamps. It is hoped that this film will soon be screened on national television. And next month BBC Radio will broadcast a programme to coincide with the launch of our Millennium stamps. Narrated by Tony Benn, this again will look at the contribution of the SAC.

The choice of Tony Benn, a former Postmaster General, as narrator is highly appropriate since he encouraged The Post Office to widen the scope of its special stamp policy in 1964 and

established the criteria for the issue of such stamps – these remain the basis of our special stamp policy today.

The fruits of this initiative will be clearly seen in the 1999 stamp programme which has now been finalised. As the first stage of our two-year Millennium programme, these stamps represent a landmark in British artistic commissioning.

As I discussed in my last article, the whole year's programme is marked by delightful surprises amid layers of intriguing connections. In the Fans issue, for example, one of the stamps will show footballer Bobby Moore holding the World Cup aloft on that unforgettable day in 1966. This portrait, however, is not the familiar one that has graced countless newspapers, magazines and books ever since. Instead we have a new, refreshing image executed by Mike White. Who is Mike White? Well, he is none other than the comic-strip artist who illustrated the football hero of all football heroes, Roy of the Rovers! As a result, the stamp will not just be a tribute to one of Britain's greatest sporting achievements but also a testament to this country's development of the genre of the comic.

The same issue will feature pop-star Freddie Mercury on a stamp designed by Peter Blake. The connections here are multi-fold. The illustration will show Freddie Mercury in the setting of the 1985 Live Aid concert, a watershed event not just in the world of pop music but also in raising international awareness of the plight of Africa's famine-stricken poor. Another connection is provided by the fact that Freddie Mercury was a keen stamp collector – his collection is preserved in the National Postal Museum. Yet another connection is that Peter Blake, one of Britain's foremost artists, was commissioned by Bob Geldof to design the cover for the Live Aid record which raised millions of pounds for famine relief.

The Millennium is where we will all connect our present with our past and future. The Royal Mail countdown to these connections begins with the first issue on 12 January. In the meantime, may I wish you all a happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year ●

The 1999 stamp programme

12 January Inventors' Tale

Establishing time (Harrison's chronometer and the meridian), reducing time (steam power), freezing time (photography), accelerating time (computers)

2 February Travellers' Tale

Exploration (Cook), mass transportation (railways and steam ships), personal transport (bicycle), global travel (jet aircraft)

2 March Patients' Tale

Preventative medicine (inoculations), patient care (Florence Nightingale), antibiotics (penicillin), high technology (in-vitro fertilisation)

6 April Settlers' Tale

UK translocation (Normans to Scotland), colonial settlers (*Mayflower*), mass emigration (Australia), post-war immigration (from Asia and Caribbean)

4 May Workers' Tale

Medieval guilds (wool trade), mill towns (cotton trade), heavy industry (shipbuilding), service industry (financial trading)

1 June Fans' Tale

Charlie Chaplin (movies), sport (World Cup), broadcast media (cult TV), pop culture (Live Aid)

6 July Citizens' Tale

First rights (Magna Carta), right to education (Robert Owen), right to living conditions (public utilities), equal rights (votes for women)

3 August Scientists' Tale

Age of Reason (Newton), enlightenment (Faraday), evolution (Darwin), modern science (DNA and genetics)

7 September Farmers' Tale

Medieval methods (strip farming), mechanisation (Jethro Tull), new foods (potato), new technology (using satellite data)

5 October Soldiers' Tale

Medieval war (Bannockburn), pike and musket (Civil War), World Wars (war graves), changing role (peace keeping)

2 November Christians' Tale

Medieval religious life (pilgrimage), reformation (printed Bible), 18th century revival (Wesley), modern imagery

7 December Artists' Tale

World of stage, world of music, world of words, new worlds

Competition A 1929 Postal Union Congress £1 to be won, from Dauwalders of Salisbury

1998 MARKS the 40th anniversary of stamp dealers Dauwalders of Salisbury. Dauwalders operate from two premises in Salisbury, one being a large air-conditioned shop with a huge range of worldwide stamps and stamp albums and stockbooks for collectors. Enquiries are welcomed for any type of album.

The firm has specialised in Great Britain stamps for many years and would be happy to quote for supply of any single stamp or set that may be missing from *Bulletin* readers' collections – Dauwalders shop has been featured twice in national newspaper feature articles and also on TV. The mail order business exports to over 60 countries worldwide to include such outposts as St Helena and South Georgia. Being situated in the attractive city of Salisbury, many keen collectors make special excursions from far and wide to enjoy a stamp day combined with visits to nearby New Forest and Stonehenge. Information on hotel accommodation and local attractions (other than stamp) can be obtained from Dauwalders.

Since 1979 the *Stoneham Great Britain Stamp Catalogue* has been published by part of Dauwalders' business. This year also marks the 20th anniversary of the Stoneham Catalogue. The new (12th) edition, offering the most comprehensive single volume listing of GB stamps in one volume, is available direct from the publishers at £16.50 post paid UK.

To celebrate 40 years in stamps, Dauwalders of Salisbury are offering 3 prizes for this month's competition. The 1st prize is a 1929 Postal Union Congress £1 Black mint hinged, 2nd prize 1840 1d Black plate 1A used and 3rd prize 1992 £10 Britannia on First Day cover. Each winner will also receive a copy of the brand new Stoneham Catalogue. **Dauwalders of Salisbury, 92-96 Fisherton Street, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP2 7QY. Telephone (01722) 412100. Fax (01722) 410074.**

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

- 1 What is the date of issue of the first set of Millennium stamps?
- 2 What code letter appears on a new definitive stamp in January?
- 3 Who won the Silver Mailcoach Trophy at Autumn Stampex?
- 4 John Davies is the chairman of which youth organisation?

The competition is not open to employees, their families and agents, of Royal Mail or Dauwalders •



The winners of September's competition were L W Barratt of Essex, Mrs R Sheirtcliffe of New Zealand, and R L C Her-ring of Cornwall

The answers 1) Prof Barrie Jay; 2) Walsall Security Printers Ltd; 3) Stanley Gibbons; 4) Alan Sabey. Our thanks to all who entered.

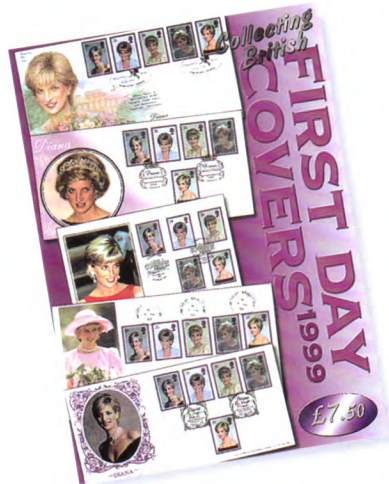
The winners of £35 each in our 35th anniversary draw (September) were: A Roberts, R Bostock, Mrs S R Fisher, A B Bateson, R Antunes, H H Simmons, Miss L Evans, A E Leyland, Mrs P M Hall, and M Sanford. A further 25 entrants were sent runner-up prizes of first day covers and presentation packs.

Books Stoneham and Stanley Gibbons • First day covers

Stoneham Great Britain Stamp Catalogue The 12th edition was launched at Autumn Stampex. It is hard to believe that it is now 20 years since the first edition of this popular catalogue and new editor David Spragg is to be congratulated on a job well done. Since the last edition (August 1995) there have been many developments relating to the Machin definitives so the four-page introductory notes to the Elliptical Machin Definitives section is worth reading carefully. Much is made of the length and position of the phosphor bands with listings of stamps with short bands at top, bottom, inset left and right, etc. The Enschedé printing of the £1 definitive is listed without fluorescence in the bluish violet ink and with the Iridodin ink stopping short of the base of the design. As an ultra-violet lamp is necessary to see these, less-technically minded collectors may well ignore such variations. However a number of interesting shades are listed which may appeal to the more traditional collector. The Booklet Panes section includes very useful illustrations of the panes, and the Postage Due section illustrations of the watermark variations to aid collectors in checking the stamps in their collections.

The prices quoted in Stoneham are generally more realistic than in the SG catalogues, for example the George VI 1939-48 High Values are £165/£24 as against £250/£55 and the 1989 Greetings stamps are £18/£15 as opposed to £28/£20. A couple of minor errors and anomalies were noted: the 'Boots' label issued early in 1997 is printed by Enschedé not Questa, the 20p Muffin the Mule stamp with perf 15 x 14 (from prestige book) is not listed. Finally, does the 1960 GLO 3d actually exist on chalky paper? – this reviewer has never come across one. As well as postage stamps, Stoneham lists postal fiscals, PO telegraph stamps, circular delivery company issues, college stamps and specimen overprints. A well laid-out and easy to use catalogue.

Stoneham Great Britain Stamp Catalogue 312 pages, card covers. £15.50, postage £1 UK, £3.50 overseas from Sarum Publications, 92 Fisherton Street, Salisbury SP2 7QY. ●



Collecting British First Day Covers Available from good stamp shops or direct from the publisher, A G Bradbury, 3 Link Road, Leicester LE2 3RA. Price £7.50, postage £1.45. Collectors ordering from the publisher will be sent five free covers.

Collecting First Day Covers The 1999 edition of this popular catalogue lists all FDCs and postmark types for special and definitive issues. Prices for special handstamps are given for examples on ordinary (or commercial) covers and for use on the official cover produced by the handstamp sponsor. There is often considerable price difference between the two. Listings and prices are also provided for covers with relevant counter datestamps and slogan postmarks. The listings for definitive FDCs include changes to perforation, papers and phosphors where dates of issue are known. FDCs of the Penny Black and Twopence Blue are priced at £20,000 and £25,000 respectively, but even many modern covers – such as two for the Diana, Princess of Wales stamps – are now priced at over £100. Covers with relevant cds are particularly popular, for example 1979 Dogs FDCs with the counter datestamps of Dog & Kennel, Liverpool; Dog Kennel Lane, Oldbury; and Isle of Dogs, E14 – valued at £100 each. Some FDCs of the early decimal definitives from coils or booklets command valuations up to £600! As always the catalogue is nicely pro-

duced, profusely illustrated, and with well-written introductory notes. The editor and publisher, Adrian Bradbury, writes: 'It has become clear that there is an upward trend in the number of special handstamp postmarks being produced for each issue with over 30 becoming the norm and in the case of the Diana, Princess of Wales issue, nearly 50 handstamps were sponsored... This has resulted in collectors becoming more selective and, in our view, this trend may well continue.' It would be a pity if the over-sponsorship of these special handstamps led to a general decline in interest – a potential case of killing the goose •

Stanley Gibbons Part 1 (British Commonwealth) Catalogue

The 1999 edition comprises two volumes, 1 covering GB and countries A-I, and 2 countries J-Z. In commenting on the state of stamp collecting at the end of the 20th century, Editor David Aggersberg writes: 'If the great collectors from the last century could return, it is an interesting speculation as to how they would react to the hobby... Some would, I am sure, have heartily approved of postal history with its emphasis on research into the use of postage stamps, but I am not too sure as to their reaction to other aspects of the modern hobby.' Here, one assumes, he is referring to the vast outpouring of stamps from nearly all current postal administrations and he more than anyone knows the problem of keeping up as he (and his staff) have to examine and list well over 10,000 new stamps a year. A quick glance in Part 1 at such countries as Guyana, St Vincent and Sierra Leone illustrates the point. SG are right to list all stamps properly issued but it is up to each collector to decide whether the stamps of the more prolific issuers are worthy of a place in his or her collection.

The catalogue continues to improve and the listing of Commonwealth watermark varieties, started last year, has been expanded to cover issues between 1901 and 1936. This has involved considerable research as Edward VII and George V stamps are often found with watermark reversed, or watermark inverted and reversed in addition to watermark inverted. Prices are provided where it has been possible to establish the

true scarcity of the new listings. Printed on the gummed side errors are now listed, there are improved listings of booklets from Fiji, Ghana, Guyana, Jamaica, and Sri Lanka, and of George V low value Key Plate stamps following the publication of Peter Fernbank's book on the subject. This has involved some number changes and additions, but mostly correcting the dates given for listed shades. The revision of the Australian States section has continued, improvements made to the listings of Malaysia, and a long standing anomaly has been corrected so that the catalogue entries for all Indian stamps in the anna currency now show the face values in the same form as they appear on the stamps. Many of the revisions result from the research of individual collectors or societies, such as the Kiribati & Tuvalu Philatelic Society which assisted in a project to identify which New Zealand stamps were used at the postal agencies on Fanning and Washington islands between 1902 and 1939.

On prices, Mr Aggersberg comments: 'There have been continued signs of consolidation in the stamp market during the last twelve months. Today's collectors are, however, becoming more selective in their interests with the result that some areas and periods have shown more movement than others. Much of this activity has been concentrated in the period between the early 1880s and 1945.' The market for GB stamps remains buoyant for issues of Victoria, Edward VII and George V, Official overprints, and the pre-decimal stamps of Elizabeth II; the 'Definitive Portrait' prestige book may have prompted nostalgia for the Wildings. Jersey issues of the late 1980s and early 1990s are up in price.

The 1999 edition of *Collect British Stamps* is now available, providing a straight-forward listing of all basic British stamps from 1840 to the 1998 Christmas issue.

Stanley Gibbons Part 1 (British Commonwealth) Catalogue
Volume 1 (928 pages) and volume 2 (864 pages), both hard-bound. £28.95 each

Collect British Stamps Colour illustrations. £6.95

SG catalogues are available from their Strand shop and by mail order from Stanley Gibbons Publications, Parkside, Ringwood, BH24 3SH. Credit card telephone order line: 0800 611622. CBS is also available from the British Philatelic Bureau •

Postbag

Patience rewarded In 1968 the *Bulletin* invited ideas from readers for subjects to be illustrated on future stamps. My response (November 1968) suggested that the then British municipal bus liveries would form a lasting record of a distinctively British form of transport which was capable of being identified with all regions of the country. At the time of writing there were over 90 municipal undertakings, many of which were about to disappear into the newly-created passenger transport executives. This variety of liveries would have provided sufficient material for a complete set of definitives in addition to any special issues which, together with high values, could have been dealt with in a more elaborate style. The suggestion would have recorded a colourful example of the everyday scene in all parts of the UK and a distinctive feature of the British way of life. Nothing came of the suggestion, and a subsequent correspondent thought I was joking. My reply (March 1969) assured readers that I was indeed serious and enlarged on my idea.

Thirty years later the idea has at last come to fruition in exactly the form I envisaged with Jersey's set of six stamps entitled 'Jersey Transport – Buses'. The designs illustrate six clearly defined vehicles in their operators' brilliant liveries, each against a picturesque background. This seems to me an excellent stamp issue, the only fault I can find being that some of the dates shown are incorrect.

Although municipal operators no longer exist in the same form as in 1968, there are still many companies with attractive liveries which would look well on stamps – and there is always the historical perspective. I still hope to see some British stamps based on similar designs to those of the Jersey buses issue. ERIC OGDEN, OLDHAM ●

Definitive Portrait prestige book It is many years since I last read a copy of the *Bulletin*, but having received a free copy at Stampex I was very impressed by its content which I feel is of interest to many collectors, who, like me don't collect GB. I was particularly interested in Peter Newall's

letter (July) about Machin shades, having recently bought a 'Definitive Portrait' prestige book for use rather than to collect. I was intrigued to find that the 26p stamps in the first pane are chestnut brown, whilst those in the third pane are clearly chocolate brown. I accept that it is difficult to maintain consistency through a print run, but I am sure that were these shades of earlier line-engraved issues they would warrant catalogue status. Maybe readers have a view on this? RUFUS BARNES, SAFFRON WALDEN ●

Printed Postage Impressions I notice that recent issues of the *Bulletin* contain references to that neglected aspect of postal history, namely the study of Printed Postage Impressions. Readers may like to know that the British Postmark Society has a study circle devoted to the subject and produces a newsletter. Participation in the study circle is not confined to members of the Society and a complimentary copy of the newsletter will be sent to anyone sending me a large stamped addressed envelope. DR ERIC INMAN, 28 Downs Hill, Beckenham BR3 5HB ●

Supply of commemoratives Further to R G Martin's letter (October), I can add another possible reason for an inability to obtain commemorative stamps at post offices. On a number of occasions I have seen at my own local office counter clerks attaching large blocks of commemoratives to parcels, virtually covering the entire area around the address. When I have commented on this, the answer has been 'We don't very much like these fancy stamps because we have to count the blessed things every day when we close – so we try to get rid of them as quickly as possible'. Collectors, or people wishing to use these commems on their mail, have to be very much 'on the ball'! H M BRUCE, CARLISLE ●

Bulletin back issues H Ter Braak of Wessel Gansfortstraat 22, 1064 NP Amsterdam, Netherlands offers a run from September 1994 to August 1997 as a gift in return for the refund of postage ●

Self-adhesive stamps Mr Jeffery's problem (October *Bulletin*) is best solved by examination of the perforations under moderate magnification. All self-adhesives issues so far have kiss die-cut perforations and their appearance is quite different from that of conventionally perforated stamps. The latter have edges which are either cut or torn, depending on the method of separation. Because individual booklet panes are often guillotined from the printer's sheet, many of them have a mixture of torn and cut edges. Non-marginal sheet stamps have all four edges torn. (The frayed appearance of torn perforations can be seen in

the illustration at the top of page 53 of the October *Bulletin*). No conventionally perforated stamp has all four edges cut. The opposite is true of self-adhesives; all four are cut.

Mr Jeffery can even tell Enschedé's recent coil self-adhesives from those printed in sheets by Walsall. Enschedé's perforation tips are rounded; Walsall's are square.

There is no problem with the experimental self-adhesives issued in horizontal format as no normally gummed stamps exist thus. No self-adhesive has a paper margin. D G A MYALL, BRIDPORT ●

Posting boxes 182

THIS MONTH'S PHOTOGRAPH, from Matthew Garrey of Glasgow, shows an Edward VII wall box in Killarney, Republic of Ireland. The box is now painted in the livery of An Post, the Irish Post Office. Another former British Edward VII box still in use in Killarney was featured here in November 1995 and an Edward VII lamp box on Dundalk station in March 1994.

Reader G Gallagher has recently acquired a substantial number of postcards of British post boxes and post offices. He is offering these to *Bulletin* readers in units of 10, 20, 40 or 70 different cards at prices ranging from £2.50 to £13. For details send SAE or IRC to: G Gallagher, PO Box 1497, Millport, Isle of Cumbrae, KA28 0BF ●



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

The Group produces many interesting publications and postcards.

Events

Until 24 December It's Only a Game (Sports), Going Places with the British Post Office, Post Haste! (vehicles and artefacts), and Victorian Posts exhibitions at National Postal Museum, King Edward Street, London EC1A 1LP. Open Mon-Fri 09.30-16.30. **Enquiries** 0171 776 3636

Until 6 April Scarfe at the NPG – exhibition of works of Gerald Scarfe, including original artwork for 1998 Comedians stamps. At National portrait Gallery, St Martin's Place, London WC2H 0HE. **Enquiries** 0171 306 0055

10 December Great Britain evening hosted by Stanley Gibbons in conjunction with Great Britain Philatelic Society at 399 Strand, London WC2R 0LX, 18.30. **Enquiries** Ian Boulton, 0171 836 8444

13 December Birmingham Stamp and Postal History Fair at National Motorcycle Museum. **Enquiries** 01279 758854

16 December Great Britain auction, Spink & Son, 5 King Street, London SW1Y 6QS. **Enquiries** 0171 389 2672

18 December Talk 'Philatelic Fakes and Forgeries' by David Beech at British Library Conference Centre, 96 Euston Road, London NW1 2DB, 13.30. No tickets required. **Enquiries** 0171 412 7635/6 ●

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