

October 1992



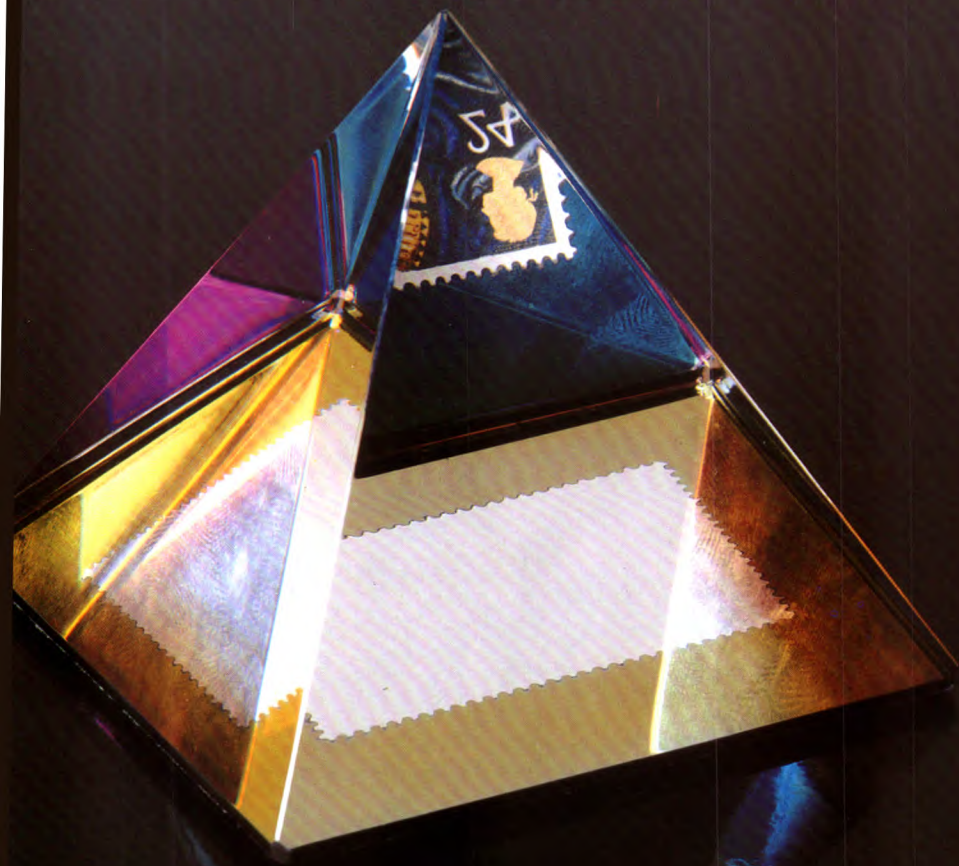
British Philatelic Bulletin

Volume 30. No: 2 The Royal Mail Magazine for Stamp Collectors Price 70p



Christmas

Mystified?



For the Ideal Christmas Gift
See page 41

British Philatelic Bulletin

The **British Philatelic Bulletin** is published monthly by Royal Mail, 76 Turnmill Street, LONDON EC1M 5NS.
Editor: J R Holman

Price: 70p single copies from Collections, philatelic counters, and National Postal Museum.

Annual Subscriptions:
UK and Europe £8
Rest of World: £11.50.

Subscriptions should be sent to:
British Philatelic Bureau
20 Brandon Street
EDINBURGH EH3 5TT.

Binders to hold 24 issues, price £6.75. Available by post from British Philatelic Bureau (address above) and to callers only at National Postal Museum, King Edward Street, LONDON EC1A 1LP.

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, 76 Turnmill Street, LONDON EC1M 5NS.

Designed by Angus Mathieson
Design 103A Farringdon Road,
LONDON EC1R 3BT.

Typeset by Pinnacle Phototype,
11/12 Great Sutton Street,
LONDON EC1V 0DD.

Printed in Great Britain by
Raithby, Lawrence & Co Ltd,
LEICESTER LE3 5AY.

Front Cover: 24p Christmas Stamp – a Parson's window in St Mary's Church, Bibury, Gloucestershire.

ISSN: 0953 8119

Contents

Autumn Stampex – Visit the National Exhibition	31
New Post Office Chief Executive – Bill Cockburn promoted	31
Tolkien: The Great Storyteller – Prestige Professor	32
Bureau News – 70,000 entered Prize Draw	36
High Values Update – 1988 Castles Numbers Issued	36
New First Day of Issue Handstamp – Pictorial Postmark	36
British Air Mail Links with South America During the 1930s	37
Royal Mail Philatelic Products – Stamp Pyramids	40
New Look Postmark Bulletin – Companion Publication	41
Postbag – A selection of your letters	42
Postshops with Philatelic Service – Romford, Stratford	43
NPM Christmas Cards – Mailcoach Scenes	43
Postbus Expansion Plans – New Services	44
Ron Reed Retires – A Handstamping Legend	44
Posting Boxes – Two Unusual Boxes	45
Gems from the Phillips Collection – Scottish Revenues	45
Book Reviews – Important Reference Works	46
Railway Letter Stamps – New Train Stamps	47
Competition – Win £75 worth of philatelic products	47
October Digest – This month's comings and goings	48
Events – Guide to exhibitions, fairs and displays	48

Main Feature

1992 Christmas

28



Preview of 1992 Christmas stamps, featuring stained glass windows by Karl Parsons and Paul Woodroffe.

The book, price £3.60, contains twenty 18p Christmas stamps showing part of the east window in St James's Church, Pangbourne, Berks.

The stamps and book (cover shown above) go on sale 10 November.

Christmas 1992

10 November 1992



Our churches and cathedrals house a rich legacy of stained glass and a distinctive contribution to that tradition was made earlier in the present century by the artists of the Arts and Crafts Movement. There could be no more fitting way of celebrating Christmas than by using characteristic details of their work in stained glass to illustrate the story of the Nativity.

Woodroffe, in Our Lady and St Peter Church, Leatherhead.

Karl Parsons (1884-1934) and Paul Woodroffe (1875-1954) were two interesting and important members of the Arts and Crafts Movement whose work has rarely received the broader recognition it deserves.

Charles Bergemann Parsons (known through-



The **18p** stamp (basic inland 2nd class rate) features the Angel Gabriel, part of the east window (1920) of St James's Church, Pangbourne, Berkshire, by Karl Parsons. The **24p** value (1st class inland and EC basic rate) shows another Parsons' window (1927) of St Mary's Church, Bibury, Gloucestershire.

The **28p** (non EC European countries) and **33p** (airmail postcards) stamps feature respectively King with crown (by Paul Woodroffe), and Three Shepherds (Parsons) from the churches of Our Lady and St Peter, Leatherhead, Surrey and All Saints, Porthcawl, Mid-Glamorgan.

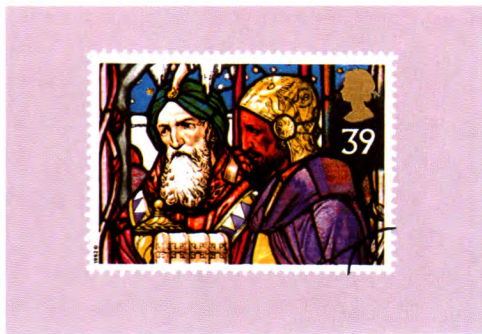
The final stamp, **39p** (basic airmail letter rate) shows two of the Kings bearing gifts, by

out his life as Karl) was born in Peckham, London. After leaving Haberdashers' Aske's School, he became a pupil of Christopher Whall (1849-1924), a hugely influential teacher and the undisputed doyen of artist-craftsmen in the field of stained glass.

Parson's first major work was a collaboration with Whall for the apse windows of Cape Town cathedral, commissioned in 1908. Their success gave him the confidence to set up his own studio in Fulham, and a significant early design was a memorial window to Charles Rolls, co-founder of Rolls Royce, who died in a flying accident in 1910. Originality of approach, allied to impeccable craftsmanship, brought Parsons a

growing reputation. For such a large-scale medium, his work showed a rare delicacy of touch, his sensitivity defined in the exquisitely intricate way he painted on glass to bring out fine detail. A fair proportion of his output was for Commonwealth countries where the strong, clear light of the southern hemisphere brought out the full richness of colour in his work.

Born in India, Paul Vincent Woodroffe was educated at Stonyhurst College in Lancashire and the Slade School of Art in London. Some years later he became a pupil of Christopher Whall. Unlike Parsons, however, Woodroffe did not devote his whole career to stained glass. He was a fine book designer and illustrator. In 1895 he published an illustrated book of nursery rhymes,



the first of many volumes to which he would contribute. His earliest known stained glass, (1901) is at St John's Catholic church, Alton, Staffordshire.

In 1904 Woodroffe moved to Chipping Campden in the Cotswolds, where he lived for over 30 years. He adapted a small, dilapidated cottage into a studio work-shop. Coming from a devoutly Catholic family, much of his work was destined for Catholic churches. Just as with Parson's contemporary work, his windows reflect Whall's tutelage.

After the First World War (during which he worked at the Ministry of Munitions), Woodroffe was kept busy with commissions for war memorials. His largest project was for 15 windows for the Lady Chapel of St Patrick's Cathedral in New York. Started in 1909, the work was not completed until 1934.

These stamps are issued in the year that marks the 900th anniversary of the founding in 1002 of the Benedictine abbey that later became Chester Cathedral. They also anticipate the 1,200th anniversary in 1993 of the establishment by King Offa of a Benedictine monastery on the site of what is now St Albans Cathedral.

The Designers

The stamps were designed by Carroll, Dempsey and Thirkell Limited who were responsible for the successful and popular 1991 Dogs issue. Mike Dempsey, of this partnership, designed the 1987 Victorian Britain and 1988 Europa-Transport and Communications issues. The photographs of the stained glass window were taken by the late Tony Evans, whose photographs were also used for the 1987 Studio Pottery and 1990 RSPCA stamps.

Printing Details

The stamps measuring 41 x 30mm were printed in photogravure by Harrison & Sons Limited in sheets of 100. PVA Dextrin gum, perforation 14½ x 14. The 18p has one phosphor band, the others are on phosphor coated paper.

Presentation Pack

The pack (No. 232) will cost £1.75. It was designed by Carroll, Dempsey & Thirkell Limited, with text by Tim Shackleton. Printing was by Raithby, Lawrence & Company Limited of Leicester. The pack features 17 fine examples of stained glass windows.

Royal Mail Stamp Card

Cards, featuring enlargements of the stamp designs, will be available approximately two weeks before the stamp issue, price 21p each. They are numbered 148A-E.

First Day Cover

The Royal Mail first day cover will be available from the British Philatelic Bureau, Collections, philatelic counters and main post offices approximately two weeks before 10 November, price 21p. Three pictorial postmarks will be used for the first day cover service – one for the Bureau, the others for Bethlehem and Pangbourne.

A first day cover service will be provided by the Bureau with the official Royal Mail cover addressed to the destination required with the stamps cancelled with the requested postmark. Application forms, available from the Bureau and main post offices, should be returned not later than 10 November.

Collectors may send their own cards/covers for the pictorial postmarks; these should be sent on the first day of issue in a stamped outer envelope endorsed "Pictorial First Day of Issue Postmark" to: British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, EDINBURGH EH3 5TT (Bureau postmark), or Wales & The West Special



Mrs J Robinson
200 Manorbie Road
ILKESTON
Derbyshire
DE7 4AB



Rolls, co-founder of Rolls Royce, who died in a living accident in 1910. Originality of approach, allied to impeccable craftsmanship, brought Parsons a growing reputation. For such a large-scale medium, his work showed a rare delicacy of touch, his sensitivity defined in the exquisitely intricate way he painted on glass to bring out fine detail. Much of his work was for British churches, but a fair proportion of his current work for Commonwealth

uneven in thickness and a rich variety in the overall density of colouring. Made by blowing glass into a box-shaped mould and cutting the resultant 'bottle' into slabs, it was one of the hallmarks of Arts and Crafts glass, despite being expensive and difficult to work with.

In the first years of peace after the Great War, during which he worked at the ministry of munitions, like so many of his contemporaries – was kept busy with war memorials. His most important work was the most important artist from a client base of windows for the Lady's Cathedral in New York became involved in work was not completed in 1914. His last recorded work for the Catholic church was, Surrey, in 1941. He died, on 7 May 1941, but his work survives him.



(1) Chancel window by Edward Burne-Jones, 1872, at St Michael's, Waterford, Hertfordshire.



Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, Cardiff, Penarth Road, CARDIFF CF1 1AA (Bethlehem postmark), or South East Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail Windsor, Peascod Street, WINDSOR SL4 1AA (Pangbourne postmark). Collectors wanting their cards/covers returned under cover should enclose a suitable addressed envelope. This need not bear additional postage stamps, the postage being already paid by the stamps affixed to the covers for postmarking.

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

Details of special handstamps, sponsored by 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).

Souvenir Cover

A souvenir cover, of similar design to the first day cover, will be available from Collections and philatelic counters for one year from 11 November, price 21p.

Christmas Stamp Book

A book containing 20 second class (18p) Christmas stamps will go on sale at post offices, the British Philatelic Bureau, Collections and philatelic counters on 10 November, price £3.60. The book will remain on general sale until 24 December unless sold out earlier; it will remain on philatelic sale for one year.

The book will be of similar format to the Greetings book; the stamps being in panes with margins at top and bottom.

The cover design is by Karen Murray, printing by Harrisons in lithography (stamps by Harrisons in photogravure).

Christmas 18p stamp

Collectors are advised that it will be in order to affix just the 18p Christmas stamp to covers to receive all special cancels ("First Day of Issue", sponsored, and philatelic counter) in use on 10 November. The minimum 1st class rate rule is suspended on this day as the Christmas set includes a 2nd class rate stamp. It should be noted that this concession applies only to the 18p Christmas stamp; covers bearing other than Christmas stamps must bear at least 24p postage.

Autumn Stampex

This year's **Autumn Stampex** will be held at the Royal Horticultural Society Halls, Greycoat Street and Vincent Square, London SW1 from 13 to 18 October. The exhibition will be open 12.00-19.00 on 13 October, 10.30-19.00 on 14-17 October, and 10.30-18.00 on 18 October.

Royal Mail involvement at the exhibition will include the usual sales stand and Stamp Bug area. The National Postal Museum is to put on a small exhibition, the theme of which will be "Moving the Mail". A cachet for NPM postcards will be available at the exhibition.

A special handstamp will be applied to mail posted at Stampex. Collectors unable to visit the exhibition may send covers to: London South Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail London South West, 53 Nine Elms Lane, LONDON SW8 5BB requesting the Stampex handstamp; please state date required.

The Association of Friends of the National Postal Museum is staging displays of stamps and postal history material from members' private collections, including postal history of north Wales; franks, impressions and mechanisation; postal stationery; Royal Events, British Empire Exhibition and Olympics. A feature on the displays will be found in the Stampex Catalogue.

New Post Office Chief Executive

Sir Bryan Nicholson retires as Chairman and Chief Executive of The Post Office on 21 October. He will then remain as part-time Chairman until the end of the year to allow time for his part-time successor to be chosen by the Government. Sir Bryan has shown a keen interest in philatelic matters, particularly the future of the National Postal Museum. He outlined the Post Office's commitment to philately when he opened the Stamp World London '90 exhibition (see *Bulletin*, July 1990).

Mr Bill Cockburn, CBE, TD, Managing Director of Royal Mail since 1986, becomes Chief Executive of The Post Office from 22 October 1992. Mr Cockburn joined the then GPO in 1961.

The new Managing Director of Royal Mail will be Mr Peter Howarth, currently Managing Director of Parcelforce. A number of other changes of responsibility are also taking place amongst PO top management. Commenting on the appointments, Mr Cockburn, said: "Our top priority is to delight our customers with high quality services throughout the Post Office".

Tolkien: The Great Storyteller

CHRISTINA SCULL

John Ronald Reuel Tolkien was born in Bloemfontein, South Africa on 3 January 1892, the elder son of Arthur and Mabel Tolkien, both of whom came from Birmingham; Arthur died in 1896 while Mabel was on a visit home. She had to bring up and educate their two sons, a task which became more difficult when family support was withdrawn following her conversion to Catholicism. One childhood home on the outskirts of Birmingham, near Sarehole Mill, made a great impression on Ronald; it was the source of the Mill at Hobbiton in his writings and drawings. Mabel inspired her elder son with a devotion to her chosen religion and with a love of story and language. When she died, from diabetes in 1904, Father Francis Morgan, of the Birmingham Oratory, became the boys' guardian.

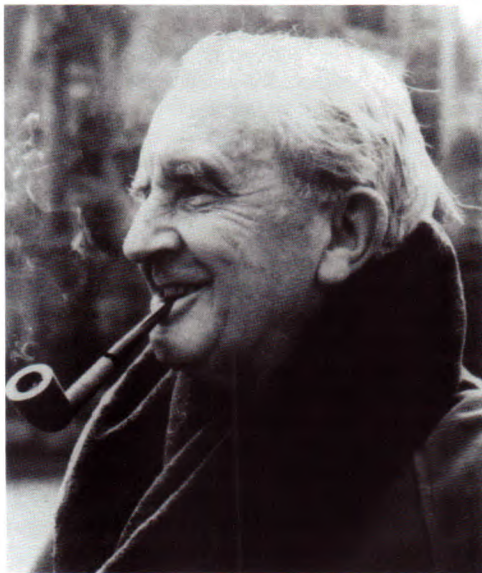
Ronald won a scholarship to King Edward's School where he showed an aptitude for classical and modern languages. He also began to study others in his own time – Anglo-Saxon, Middle English, Gothic and Old Norse. He even made up languages. He loved words, their shape and sound and became interested in the evolution of

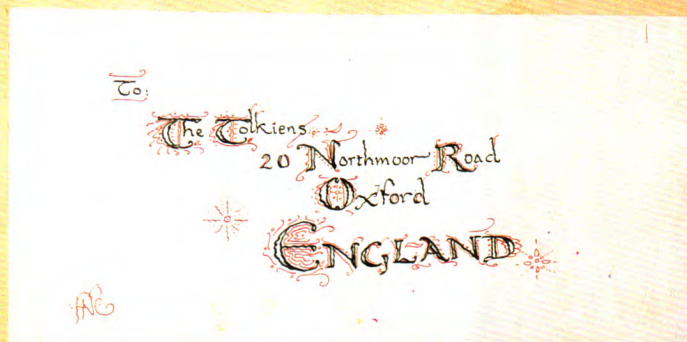
language. He was particularly attracted by Finnish and Welsh and these later had a strong influence on Quenya and Sindarin, the main languages in his imaginary world.

While still at school he met and fell in love with Edith Bratt. Father Morgan did not approve, especially when Ronald failed to win a scholarship to Oxford at his first attempt, and forbade them to meet or write until Ronald came of age. He was more successful at his second attempt, and went up to Oxford in 1911. He began by reading Classics, choosing Comparative Philology as a special subject. In 1913 he changed from Classics to the English School and achieved First Class Honours in 1915.

He married Edith in 1916; shortly afterwards he left for the battle front on the Somme. He survived the war but many of his closest friends were killed and his experiences in the trenches probably contributed to his descriptions of the Dead Marshes and other areas of devastation in *The Lord of the Rings*.

After the First World War he worked for a while on the *Oxford English Dictionary*, and then became Reader, and later Professor, of English Language at the University of Leeds. In 1926 he returned to Oxford as Rawlinson and Bosworth Professor of Anglo-Saxon. He became Merton Professor of English Language and Literature in 1945, and retired in 1959. His most important academic works include editing the Middle English *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (1925, jointly with E V Gordon); *Chaucer as Philologist: The Reeve's Tale* (1934), and his British Academy lecture of 1936, *Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics*. After that lecture *Beowulf* was no longer studied mainly as a possible source for history of the period or for the light it shed on the evolution of Anglo-Saxon but was regarded primarily as a work of literature and studied as a poem, a story and a creative work of great power. Tolkien seems to have the ability to "transport" himself back into the period and take others there. J I M Stewart, who was his pupil, said "He could turn a lecture room into a mead hall in which he was the bard and we were feasting, listening guests".





'The Father Christmas Letters' by J R R Tolkien, courtesy of Harper Collins Publishers.

Mythology for England

While still an undergraduate, Tolkien worked on his own created languages and then began to write the story of those who spoke them, thus providing his languages with a history and background. This eventually became his "mythology for England" on which he worked at intervals from 1914 until his death in 1973. He regretted that the English had so few legends and myths surviving from their past and set out to provide a substitute. However his passion for perfection meant that he constantly rewrote and revised both his academic and literary works and published comparatively little. He tried telling his mythology in various ways, (including in alliterative verse), and with each version details changed and the story developed and deepened. Almost all except the simplest were abandoned unfinished; after his death his youngest son, Christopher, pieced together a continuous narrative from the various texts and published it as *The Silmarillion* in 1977. Since 1983, Christopher has been editing and publishing all the different versions in *The History of Middle-earth* series. Those who are interested can study the evolution of Tolkien's mythology and see how his creative mind worked.

Every Christmas from 1920 to 1943 Tolkien wrote a letter from Father Christmas addressed to those of his four children of a suitable age to appreciate it. In these letters "Father Christmas" recounted the year's events; the earlier ones are

mainly concerned with the mishaps of his accident-prone helper, North Polar Bear. In later letters the content becomes more dramatic and includes an attempt by goblins to steal all the Christmas presents, and the mood is darker, reflecting events in the real world. They were written in a very beautiful "shaky" handwriting to suggest Father Christmas's age, and were accompanied by drawings and watercolours illustrating the events described. They arrived in envelopes with "North Pole" stamps and postmarks drawn by Tolkien.

The making up and telling of stories was as much a part of his life as breathing. Many of those he told to his children have survived. Often they were based on their toys such as *Roverandom* about the adventures of a toy dog, written to comfort his son Michael who had lost such a toy. Michael's Dutch doll was the origin of Tom Bombadil, the hero of an unfinished story and of a poem published in 1934, who eventually became a mysterious character in *The Lord of the Rings*. Tolkien bought a car in 1932; his problems driving it resulted in a humorous story *Mr Bliss*, not published until 1982. He made a series of delicate drawings in ink and coloured pencil to accompany the story. Tolkien was a very able artist and made illustrations for his writings in a variety of media – pencil, ink, crayon, watercolour and bodycolour. His watercolour illustrations for *The Hobbit* are especially notable and one must see the originals to appreciate their pure glowing colours fully.



'The Hobbit' by J R R Tolkien, courtesy of Harper Collins Publishers.

In a hole in the ground...

About 1930 Tolkien was at home marking School Certificate examination papers, when, as he recalled later, "One of the candidates had mercifully left one of the pages with no writing on it and I wrote on it: 'In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit'. Names always generate a story in my mind. Eventually I thought I'd better find out what hobbits were like". As readers discovered, in that children's story which became *The Hobbit*, and in its successor *The Lord of the Rings*, hobbits are related to us but are only about half our height and have hairy feet. They are, to quote Tolkien again, "just rustic English people, made small in size, because it reflects the generally small reach of their imagination – not the small reach of their courage or latent power ... I've always been impressed that we are here, surviving, because of the indomitable courage of quite small people against impossible odds". They dislike all but simple machinery, eat large meals, smoke pipeweed, are home-loving and above all dislike the idea of leaving that

comfortable home to have adventures. But Bilbo Baggins, the hero of *The Hobbit*, did find himself going on an adventure. He was engaged by 13 dwarves to go on a long journey with them and the wizard, Gandalf, to the Lonely Mountain, and steal back the treasure seized by Smaug the dragon, years before. Many adventures befall Bilbo on the way, including capture by trolls and then by goblins, getting lost in goblin passages and meeting the slimy creature Gollum, rescuing his companions from the spiders of Mirkwood and from the dungeons of the Wood Elves and braving Smaug in his lair. The most significant event is his finding a ring lying in the goblin passages; this makes him invisible, and so he is able to use it in many tight corners. Bilbo grows as a character, becoming more resourceful until eventually the dwarves naturally look to him for help when needed. The book was well received when it came out and has constantly been reprinted. The hardback edition still has the dustwrapper Tolkien designed for its original publication in 1937.

The Inklings

Tolkien was a member of the Inklings, an informal Oxford group, that met in pubs and in C S Lewis's rooms in Magdalen College for general discussion and to read and comment on each other's "work in progress". Tolkien read *The Lord of the Rings* aloud to the Inklings; this had been begun in 1937 in response to a request from his publisher for a sequel to *The Hobbit*. By this time Tolkien's children were grown up and its writing continued through the Second World War and the difficult postwar years. It is not surprising that it gradually changed from a book for children to a much more serious work for adults, though many children do enjoy it. It also grew so long that when it was eventually published it was divided into three volumes.

The Lord of the Rings is a quest story with a difference for the hero journeys not to win a treasure but to destroy one. The ring found by Bilbo in *The Hobbit*, is discovered to be the One Ring forged by the Dark Lord, Sauron, which gives its wearer great power but it also corrupts him utterly. Long ago, Sauron had been defeated by an alliance of Elves and Men and the Ring taken from him. Now his power is growing again and he is seeking the Ring to give him absolute dominion in Middle-earth. This can only be prevented if the Ring is destroyed by being thrown into the Cracks of Doom in the heart of Sauron's realm. This task is undertaken by Bilbo's heir, Frodo, aided by representatives of the free peoples of Middle-earth. The world through which they travel has a reality and depth unequalled in other works of fantasy; its history stretches back millennia to the mythology on which Tolkien had been working since 1914. Its peoples, languages and customs reflect his deep knowledge of the literature and history of our own medieval world; its terrain as Tolkien describes it shows his love of nature in all her aspects and his horror of the devastation resulting from war and industrialisation. The quest succeeds but the ending is bitter-sweet for there is a price to be paid and much that is high and beautiful must pass away. Above all Tolkien is a superb storyteller.

The Lord of the Rings sold quite well when it was published in 1954–5 but ten years later it became a cult book on American campuses and a best-seller. Graffiti and buttons (badges) declared, "Gandalf for President" and "Frodo Lives", fan magazines were produced, and Tolkien societies formed. Fan mail by the sackful arrived for Tolkien. The furore has died down

but there are still Tolkien societies all over the world. His writings have inspired artwork and adaptation for radio, screen, stage and computer games. As a result of his success fantasy has become an important and lucrative genre with a special section devoted to it in most bookshops.

Other published works include the short stories, *Farmer Giles of Ham*, *Smith of Wootton Major*, and *Leaf By Niggle*, a book of poems, *The Adventures of Tom Bombadil* and a very influential essay *On Fairy Stories*, in which he discusses their importance and relevance today.

Tolkien died at Bournemouth on 2 September 1973 but his creations live on and have become part of our cultural heritage.

© Christina Scull

Readers interested in joining the Tolkien Society should write (enclosing a stamped addressed envelope) to Mrs D Bream (BPB) 12 Mortimer Court, St John's Wood, LONDON NW8 9AB. Royal Mail's tribute to Professor Tolkien – a prestige stamp book entitled "Tolkien – The Anniversary" goes on sale on 27 October. It was previewed in last month's Bulletin. Ed.

Tolkien Prestige Book – First Day Arrangements

The Tolkien Prestige Book to be issued on 27 October contains a mixed value pane containing five new stamp variations: 18p Litho centre band, 18p Litho right band, 24p Litho PCP, 24p Litho 2 bands, 39p Litho 2 bands. Any of these new stamps and the other stamps in this book can be used, singly or in combination on first day covers to qualify for "First Day of Issue", sponsored and Philatelic Counter handstamps on 27 October. The minimum 24p rate for First Day, sponsored and Philatelic Counter handstamps is waived for this day.

Three Philatelic Counter handstamps are of particular relevance to this issue – Birmingham where Tolkien spent his childhood, Leeds where he obtained his first university teaching job and Oxford where he was an undergraduate and later professor. The reposting addresses and handstamp numbers are: Midland Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail Birmingham, BIRMINGHAM B1 1AA (Birmingham, 2104), Northern England SHC, Royal Mail House, NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE NE1 1AA (Leeds, 2120), and South East SHC, Royal Mail Windsor, Peascod Street, WINDSOR, SL4 1AA (Oxford, 2128). Please quote the special handstamp numbers when submitting covers.

Bureau News

Earlier this year the Bureau offered its customers the chance to win a valuable first day cover of the 1924 British Empire Exhibition stamps. Over 70,000 customers entered the prize draw; the winner was Mr P Clark of Kent. Our first photograph shows Bureau manager Mr John Wright (left) and world championship bowls finalist Richard Corsie, of Royal Mail Edinburgh, who made the draw.



A Bureau customer, Mr Jan Van Beek, of the Netherlands, is an accomplished embroiderer as well as stamp and postmark collector. He recently presented the Bureau with a delightful embroidery showing philatelic counter handstamps. Our second photo shows Dave McNeill, Customer Services Manager (left) and Robert Alexander, Customer Care Manager with Mr Van Beek's embroidery, now framed for display in the Bureau.

High Values Update

The quantities issued of the 1988 High Values, withdrawn from general and philatelic sale on 23 March 1992, were:

£1	101,259,400
£1.50	50,467,200
£2	80,303,200
£5	34,181,500

G M Johnson of Co. Down reports two further plate numbers to those reported here in August (page 266) – the new £1 stamp has been printed from plates 1H and 1K.

An important and exciting additional High Value definitive is to be issued early in 1993. Details will be given here shortly.

New First Day of Issue Handstamp

The Northern England Special Handstamp Centre introduced a pictorial "First Day of Issue" handstamp on 15 September 1992, day of issue of The Green Issue stamps. This handstamp will be used on all future first days of issue. Collectors wanting this handstamp should submit covers bearing the relevant stamps on the day of issue to: Northern England SHC, Royal Mail House, Forth Street, NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE NE1 1AA. Ask for handstamp No. 2622. The SHC also has a pictorial "First Day of Issue" handstamp for Durham (showing the Cathedral). This is also available under the reposting service, as above, ask for handstamp No. 2610.

A pictorial "First Day" handstamp showing the City of London coat of arms is used at the Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail City of London, KEB, LONDON EC1A 1AA. When sending in covers for this cancellation, ask for handstamp No. 2611.

Full details of all these postmarks are given in the *British Postmark Bulletin*, Royal Mail's magazine for postmark collectors. It is available on annual subscription from the British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, EDINBURGH EH3 5TT: £10 UK & Europe; £21.75 Rest of World.



Bulletin Supplement

Commemorative Covers

Information given here is based on details supplied by the cover producers; requests for further information should be directed to the relevant producer and not to the Bulletin office.

Ebbw Vale Garden Festival. A cover – designed by Newport school children, to commemorate the Ebbw Vale Garden Festival and also raise money for charity was issued on 1 August 1992. (Handstamp sponsored by Royal Mail Newport). This is a limited edition of 1000 covers; 950 priced at £2.50 and 50 priced at £3.50 (signed by the Rt Hon David Hunt MBE, MP, Secretary of State for Wales). Covers available from: Ian Brown, Staffing Office, Royal Mail Newport, 23-29 Mill Street, NEWPORT, Gwent, NP9 1AA. All proceeds go to charity.

Preston Guild Merchant. A cover has been produced to commemorate the 1992 Preston Guild – an event which originated in 1179 and has been celebrated every 20 years since 1542 (except First and Second World Wars). The cover, featuring a montage of Guild activities, bears one of the “Happy and Glorious” stamps cancelled by a special Preston handstamp on 31 August. Price £2.95 or £14 set of five covers, each with one of the “Happy and Glorious” stamps (these are appropriate as The Queen is Patron of the Guild). Covers signed by the Guild Major cost £4.95. Postage and packing 40p. Orders/enquiries: C Ryding, Guild Office, PO Box 10, Town Hall, PRESTON PR1 2RL.

Fern Gully. Royal Mail are involved in a joint promotion with Fox Videos on their latest film *Fern Gully* which has an environmental theme. As part of the promotion Fox are producing a souvenir cover bearing the Green Issue stamps cancelled by a special postmark. The cover will be shrink-wrapped to all *Fern Gully* videos sold through W H Smith between early November and early January.

Ground Gunners. A special handstamp was used at Bath on 16 September to mark the 50th anniversary of the RAF Regiment. The handstamp incorporates the initials GG and oak leaves, the official arm insignia of the Ground Gunners formed in Northern Ireland in 1941.

The Ground Gunners were the forerunners of the RAF Regiment formed in 1942. Three commemorative covers (100 each) were produced for use with this handstamp. Price £5 each plus postage. Orders/enquiries: D G Shiels, 21 Inverness Road, BATH BA2 3RX.

UK Habitat Conservation. A new £5 “Duck stamp” was issued by the Wildlife Habitat Trust of the British Association for Shooting & Conservation on 23 July. The “stamp” was launched by the Duke of Westminster at the National Game Fair, Tabley. The “stamp” which features Green-Winged Teal in flight, is available on a commemorative cover. The “Duck stamp” bears a GAME FAIR TABLEY FIRST DAY OF ISSUE cachet, the 24p definitive postage stamp a special Wrexham, Clwyd handstamp. Price £15.95. Mint “Duck stamps” cost £5 or £30 sheet of six. A “collector’s sheetlet” is also available, £5. Postage 40p on all orders. We should point out the “Duck stamps”, raising funds for wildlife conservation, are not issued by Royal Mail and have no postal validity. They are recorded here for the benefit of thematic collectors who may be interested in them. All orders/enquiries to: Wildlife Habitat Trust, Marford Mill, Rossett, WREXHAM, Clwyd, LL12 0HL.



1992 United Kingdom Duck Stamp



Tallyllyn Railway. A souvenir cover was issued on 28 July to mark the Railway’s “Victorian Week” and to commemorate Queen Victoria’s first railway journey (Slough to Paddington) in 1842. The cover bears the Tallyllyn railway letter stamp issued on 28 July cancelled by a special railway handstamp featuring the Penny Black. The 24p Welsh Country stamp bears the TYWYN GWYNEDD datestamp. Price £2, postage 60p. Orders/enquiries: Sara Eade, Tallyllyn Railway, Wharf Station, TYWYN, Gwynedd LL36 9ET.

The Dambusters. For all collectors interested in *The Dambusters*, The Cambridge Stamp Centre are pleased to release a further collection of covers featuring stills associated with this famous British film. Each collection consists of 20 covers featuring 20 different stills and a portrait of Air-Marshall Sir Harold Martin who

died in 1988. All covers, printed in monochrome, have been personally autographed by members of 617 Squadron, and bear a postmark commemorating the statue of Marshall of the RAF Sir Arthur Harris, GCB, OBE, AFC which was unveiled at the Church of St Clement Danes on 31 May 1992. Orders/enquiries: Cambridge Stamp Centre Ltd, 9 Sussex Street, CAMBRIDGE CB1 1PA, Tel: (0223) 63980.



MANCHESTER METROLINK
Official Opening by
HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN



*Official Opening
by Her Majesty
The Queen
17 JULY 92 MANCHESTER*



© G. Bradbury, Victor Bond, London, 1992. No. 109

Manchester Metrolink. A commemorative cover was produced on 17 July to mark the official opening of the Manchester Metrolink system by HM The Queen. The cover shows one of the trains, this also features on the special handstamp. A limited number of these covers are still available, price £2.50 plus 40p postage. A second Metrolink cover was produced on 15 September in connection with The Green Issue of stamps; again a special handstamp was used. Price £2.50 with single stamp, £4.75 with full set, postage 40p. Orders/enquiries: Dawn Cover Productions, 27 Ashfield Road, Davenport, STOCKPORT, SK3 8UD.

Football Covers. Dawn Cover Productions announce four new football covers produced during August – Peterborough's first ever match in Division 1, Blackburn Rovers promotion to the Premier League, Aston Villa's first home match in the Premier League, and Tottenham Hotspur's first home match in the Premier League. Price £2.50 per cover, postage 40p. Three further covers were produced in September; these feature Manchester United, Liverpool, and Leeds United in their European matches. The special handstamps were used on these covers in September and again on the first day of issue of the Single European Market stamp (13 October). Price £2.50 per cover, postage 40p. Orders/enquiries: Dawn Cover Productions, address above.

Single European Market. To coincide with this issue, A G Bradbury is producing three special first day covers and sponsoring special handstamps:

Confederation of British Industry

Printed in full colour, the covers depicts a

business travel case with various labels all printed in the form of the member nation's flags. Each cover will be franked with a special CBI postmark. The standard cover is limited to 1000 at £4.75 each. Covers signed by the new Director General of the CBI, Howard Davies, price £8.75. Also available is a special version which, in addition to the new stamp, also bears the 1967 EFTA and 1973 EEC stamps, price £9.75.

Houses of Parliament

A full colour cover depicting the Houses of Parliament will be available to coincide with the issue of the Single European Market stamp on 13 October. Cancelled with a special handstamp, the cover costs £3.75, or £9.75 personally signed by Sir Edward Heath (Prime Minister 1970-74).

Victorian Prints Series

The Victorian Prints cover (No. 71) issued to coincide with the Single European Market stamp shows an engraving of Notre Dame Cathedral. These will be franked with a special handstamp depicting the Eiffel Tower. Limited to 250 numbered copies, price £6.75. Orders/enquiries: A G Bradbury, 3 Link Road, LEICESTER LE2 3RA. Overseas please remit in Sterling and add £1 postage.

Single European Market. Benham are producing two covers for this issue. The main cover will feature a composite picture of the Houses of Parliament surrounded by the 11 other European capital cities framed in a gold-blocked border. The cover will be flown to all capitals on three flights to commemorate the SEM and the British Presidency of the EC. Full flight details will be stamped on the back of the cover, which will be signed by pilot and crew. The SEM stamp will be cancelled by a Westminster special handstamp. Price £4.99, including donation to service charities. The second cover celebrates the European Arts Festival and the special handstamp commemorates "Lux Europae" – a light show which will sparkle over the city of Edinburgh. Price £4.99. Postage 45p extra. Orders/enquiries: Benham (A Buckingham) Ltd, The Bayle, FOLKESTONE, Kent, CT20 1SD.

British Air Mail Links with South America During, the 1930s

RICHARD BEITH

Many residents of the United Kingdom had family or business reasons to want to send letters by air mail to South America in the 1930s. And yet, there was no British air line operating to South America and hence no British air mail service. In fact, senders of letters were faced with a simple choice, the mail could go by the French service or by the German service.

The French Service

French interest in developing an air route to South America can be traced right back to 1918 when the *Latécoère* company opened a route from Toulouse to Barcelona. By 1925 this line had been extended to Dakar in the French colony of Senegal and by 1 March 1928, the first regular mails were carried through from Paris to Buenos Aires in Argentina, by *Aéropostale* as the company was now known. However, at this stage, the trans-ocean crossing between the coast of West Africa and the coast of Brazil was bridged, not by a 'plane, but by a fast mail-boat.

July 1936 letter at the 4s rate from London to Buenos Aires utilising a printed VIA AIR FRANCE envelope and carried on Air France's 100th crossing of the South Atlantic

Mails were carried from the north east coast of Brazil to Rio de Janeiro, to Buenos Aires and even over the Andes to Chile by French sponsored internal air companies. In 1933, the various French airlines were amalgamated to form *Air France*, and it was under this name that regular fortnightly "all the way by air" flights were inaugurated in February 1935. A weekly service was in operation from January 1936 and this continued until the fall of France in July 1940 (Refs 1, 2).

The German Services

Between 1930 and 1937 there were a number of airship flights between Germany and Brazil, usually utilising the LZ127 *Graf Zeppelin* but occasionally using the larger LZ129 *Hindenburg*. Mail from Great Britain was carried from 1932 onwards. The *Graf Zeppelin* was on a routine flight from Brazil to Germany in May 1937 when the *Hindenburg* crashed in flames in the United States at the end of its regular North Atlantic





September 1935 letter at the 4s rate from London to Chile via the German seaplane service. Note manuscript instruction "Via Germany" and the red cachet: DEUTSCHE LUFTPOST EUROPA-SUDAMERIKA. (Note, this cachet could be applied to either airship mail or seaplane mail)

run. When the LZ127 reached Germany the age of long distance passenger carrying trips by airship was over.

It must be remembered that neither the French nor the German aeroplane services carried passengers at this time over the South Atlantic. The limited carrying capacity of the planes was required solely for mail, valuable freight and fuel. (Refs 3-5).

Just as the French started with an air-sea-air route from Europe to South America, the German airline *Deutsche Luft Hansa*, did likewise in 1930. A regular fortnightly 'all air' service was initiated in February 1934. Catapult ships stationed in the South Atlantic were used to assist the take-off of the loaded German seaplanes until planes with a greater range could be designed and built. This seaplane mail service ended in August 1939.

French – German Cooperation

From 1936 *Air France* and *Deutsche Luft Hansa* collaborated in the timing of their South American services. For example, in October 1938 this meant that in Great Britain letter writers had the choice of two services to South America a week, the mails leaving the London Airport at Croydon at 12.30pm on Saturdays via the French service and at 9.45pm on Wednesdays for the German service. Mail was scheduled to reach Brazil three days after leaving London, Argentina and Uruguay in four days, Bolivia and Chile in

five days and Peru in six days. An excellent service, but the cost to the sender was high. Postage rates to Brazil in 1938 were: Letters 3s 6d per ½ ounce; postcards 1s 9d and printed papers and small packets 10d per ½ ounce. For Argentina, Uruguay, Chile, etc, the charges were 4s, 2s, and 1s respectively.

Why not a British Airline to South America?

The answer must be that the British *were* slow to get organised on the South Atlantic run, but on 22 March 1937 it was announced in Parliament that it had been decided to encourage an experimental service to West Africa and that British Airways Limited had been selected to manage the experimental service with a view to the eventual development of a South American route (Ref 6). British Airways Limited were to conclude a three year agreement to cover the proposed experimental services, the continuance of their existing services to Scandinavia and an extension of the existing arrangements for a night mail service to Berlin. The Agreement between British Airways Limited and the Air Ministry was finally signed on 24 March 1938, the airline being made responsible for the control and management of the survey flights. Stroud (Ref 7) reported the following developments:

- 11 June 1938: British Airways began a ground survey of the Natal-Buenos Aires route
- 3 September 1938: First Lockheed 14, G-AFGN, delivered to British Airways at Heston
- 7 October 1938: British Airways made survey flights London (Heston) – Lisbon (Cintra) with two Lockheed 14s (Captains V E Flowerday and E G L Robinson), one direct, one via Bordeaux.
- 25 October 1938: A further nonstop flight was made to Lisbon.
- 27 October 1938: First survey flight from Lisbon to Seville.
- 28 December 1938: A British Airways Lockheed 14 left London on a survey flight to Bathurst. Captain Flowerday was in command. Stages flown were: London-Lisbon (28.12.38) Lisbon-Casablanca-Agadir (29.12.38) Agadir-Port Etienne-Dakar (30.12.38) Dakar-Bathurst (30.12.38)

Towards the end of 1938, with survey flights



Franked, but unflown cover prepared for British Airways proposed January 1939 London-Lisbon flight

to Lisbon completed, the Air Ministry decided that British Airways could open a regular London-Lisbon service. The flights would be carried out by Lockheed 14 landplanes which would fly non-stop between the two capitals, there being one flight in each direction on each week-day. The operating company were required to provide sufficient capacity for the carriage of all first class mail between the United Kingdom and Portugal (Ref 8).

In December 1938, British Airways announced that special first flight covers would be available for the first scheduled flight on Monday 2 January 1939. The envelopes could be obtained at 2s 6d each from the airline at Terminal House, Victoria, London. The envelopes were to be collected in Lisbon, returned to British Airways in London, who would return them to the sender at no extra charge. There was no air mail surcharge, the letters were to be franked at 2½d for the first ounce, with an extra 1½d for each additional ounce. Unfortunately, the Lisbon service was killed off before it could start, General Franco refusing permission for British planes to overfly Spain. With the subsequent outbreak of the Second World War, these uncanceled, unflown covers can be regarded as the only aerophilatelic souvenirs of Britain's late attempt to initiate a South Atlantic air mail route.

British Airways was, of course, subsequently amalgamated with Imperial Airways to form

BOAC. It was as a BOAC operation that UK-Lisbon flights were eventually initiated in 1940, though the main postal reason for their introduction must have been to provide a connecting link to the Pan American Clippers flying the North Atlantic. It was to be 1946 before British South American Airways started their first proving flight to Buenos Aires via Lisbon and Bathurst

References and Further Reading

1. Labrousse P, *Répertoire des Traversées Aériennes de l'Atlantique Sud. 1930-1940*, Libourne, France, 1974
2. Collot G and Cornu A, *Ligne Mermoz, Histoire aérophilatélique, Latécoère, Aéropostale, Air France 1918-1940*, Paris, France, 1990
3. Curley W, *The Graf Zeppelin's Flights to South America*, Weston, Mass., USA, 1970
4. Field C E, *The British Mails of the Graf Zeppelin*, Sutton Coldfield, 1987
5. Haberer, *Katalog Über die Katapultpost, Teil 2, Sudatlantik, Weil der Stadt, Germany*, 1987
6. Air Ministry, *Civil Air Transport Services*, Cmd. 5524, HMSO, London, 1937
7. Stroud J, *Annals of British and Commonwealth Air Transport 1919-1960*, Putnam, London, 1962
8. Air Ministry, *Civil Air Transport Service. London-Lisbon*, Cmd. 5898, HMSO, London, 1938

© Richard Beith

Royal Mail Philatelic Products

BARRY BURKE *Products Manager, Royal Mail*

Last month, I promised you details of one or two special promotions we are running and to give you news about two new products which will be of particular appeal to the great gift-buying public.

Tourist Information Centres

First, the promotions. We have linked up with the English Tourist Board and are running a promotion through selected Tourist Information Centres (TICs) over the coming months. The Centres participating in the promotion will be selling a selection of stamp products including Presentation Packs, Stamp Cards and Collectors Packs.

Customers spending £2.50 or more on any of these products will receive a free gift – a bookmark encapsulating the five Happy and Glorious stamps. This bookmark is not available anywhere else and the only way of getting one is to take up the promotional offer in participating TICs. Discussions with TIC managers are continuing as I write, so I cannot yet give you a definitive list of centres taking part. However, I will certainly be able to give a complete list in next month's column and as the promotion runs until March 1993, there will be plenty of time for readers to take advantage of the offer.

If successful, our long-term aim will be to make stamp products available through many more TICs and similar outlets throughout United Kingdom, bringing Presentation Packs, Stamp Cards and special issue stamps to the attention of a much wider audience, including many visitors from overseas.

Book Bargain

Another promotion to watch out for will take place in Post Shops and Collections outlets. It will run until 10 October so you may have to hurry to take advantage of this one. Customers who buy Green Issue Presentation Packs, Stamp Cards or sets of stamps to the value of £2.50 or more will receive a free *Our World* book. These books are still on sale at £7.50 each so this really is a bargain. Even if you already have a full complement of Green Issue products, it would

be worthwhile popping along to your nearest Post Shop or Collections to take advantage of this promotion as *Our World* books, containing stamps from around the world, make a super gift for any youngster who has an interest in stamps or environmental issues (and which of them doesn't, these days?) or both. (*Details of the three Our World books can be found in the Bulletin of October 1989, page 37; November 1990, page 67 and December 1991, page 90. Ed.*)

Customers who buy the Single European Market Presentation Pack will find yet another special offer enclosed. The coupon enclosed in this Pack can be used to get £1 off either the 1991 Collector's Pack or 1991 Year Book. Both these items come off sale on 9 November, so this offer is being made as a 'last chance to buy' incentive. Again, if you already have the 1991 Collector Pack or Year Book, you can always take advantage of this offer to get a second copy which can be given as a gift, perhaps together with the 1992 editions, this Christmas. But you will have to hurry, the offer is only available while stocks last and I expect 1991 Year Books in particular to be completely sold out before the promotion ends on 9 November.

As I said in last month's column, I believe that more people will be attracted into the hobby if we de-mystify stamp products, making them more attractive to non-collectors and more easily available, particularly to people looking for attractive and unusual gift items who may not have thought of stamp related products for this purpose before. All three of the above promotions are aimed precisely at these customers – although there is no reason why those who already collect should not also benefit.

Christmas Gifts

Now on to the new products which are also aimed very much at the gift market, although I know they will be of interest to collectors.

The first are Stamp Keyrings. These are a very simple idea which we hope will appeal to adults and children alike. They are transparent plastic key fobs, each with a pair of real mint Greetings Stamps encapsulated. The fobs will be custom-moulded so the stamps sit snugly inside without moving around. Initially, Stamp Keyrings will contain the 10 Smiles Greetings Stamps, two in each keyring, so there will be a range of five different keyrings available when they go on sale on 10 November. They will be available from Post Shops, Collections and Philatelic Counters priced £1.50 each or by mail order from the British Philatelic Bureau in packs of five (all

different) at the discount price of £6.

Some readers may be asking themselves "What on earth have keyrings to do with stamp collecting?" The answer is, of course, very little. However, if we are to attract young people into the hobby, we have to produce products which they find appealing. We have to bring the attractiveness of stamp designs to their attention. We have somehow to make stamps more popular with youngsters, so they become a topic of conversation in the playground, not just the class room. Stamp Keyrings are designed to meet some of these objectives. Needless to say, they will make nice, relatively inexpensive, stocking-fillers this Christmas.



One of the new Stamp Pyramids – these can be produced to order containing any special or high value stamp currently available from the Bureau.

Produced to Order

The second new product, also available from 10 November, is aimed at the opposite end of the gift market in that I am not going to try to persuade anyone that they are inexpensive! Stamp Pyramids, illustrated here, are, so far as we are aware, a unique product available nowhere else in the world! Developed over the last year, they feature a mint stamp mounted on the base of a "Crown Quality" optical glass pyramid which is then processed to produce some beautiful and intriguing optical effects. As the Pyramid is viewed from different angles, the background colour changes and the stamp disappears, due, I am told, to multiple internal reflection. "Crown Quality", by the way, is the very high clarity glass used in the optics industry to produce lenses for telescopes, binoculars and cameras.

Stamp Pyramids can be used as paperweights or ornaments and are bound to become a talking point wherever they are displayed – this has certainly been the case with the prototypes we had produced during development!

Another unique feature will be that customers ordering Pyramids from the British Philatelic Bureau will be able to customise their own Pyramid by specifying which stamp they would like encapsulated. Any High Value definitive stamp or any special stamp currently available from the Bureau can be used and Pyramids will be produced to order. This means that, if you wanted to give a Stamp Pyramid as a gift this Christmas you could tailor it to the interests of the recipient. So, for example, Jacques Delors could send a Stamp Pyramid featuring the Single European Market stamp to Lady Thatcher!

Stamp Pyramids will cost £34.95 each, complete with presentation box. British Philatelic Bureau customers will find further information and an order form enclosed with the "Gifts For Christmas" information being sent out during October and November. A selection of Stamp Pyramids will also be available from Collections, Post Shops Plus, and selected philatelic counters.

Next month I will give details of the other stamp products coming on sale in time for Christmas and will also give details of two more special offers.

New Look Postmark Bulletin

The *British Postmark Bulletin*, introduced in 1971, is published fortnightly to provide collectors with advance notice of forthcoming special handstamps and postmark slogans. It has been of A4 size, despatched as loose sheets. Now it has been redesigned as a companion publication to this *Bulletin*, in A5 format, stapled and despatched to subscribers as a complete magazine.

As well as details of new postmarks, collectors are provided with the relevant addresses to which to send their covers to receive the special handstamps and slogans. The addresses of the sponsors of the handstamps are given so that collectors can contact them for information about special commemorative covers.

The annual subscription to the *Postmark Bulletin* is £10 UK & Europe, £21.75 Rest of World. Subscriptions should be sent to: British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, EDINBURGH EH3 5TT.

Postbag

J R HOLMAN

More Variety needed

Martin Allen's letter in April brought forth a considerable response and some of the letters have been published here. Many strongly disagreed with Mr Allen and criticised his views. To be fair to him, I am giving him the "final word" to respond as follows:

"Well, I did kick up a fuss. It is a well known fact that it is easier to put pen to paper in disgust rather than agreement. So, a 10 to 1 reaction is expected and don't travel companies know so.

"However, my letter never referred to more issues (C S Dixon) just more variety within the issues. I know before I see each new issue in the Bulletin what shape, size and approximate number.

"With reference to B D Cameron's comment, the only reason we appear in the 'Top 20' stamp production is because, of the 112 stamps released, 76 were definitives including Regional issues for there were only a paltry 36 commemoratives. Hardly any comparison to Guyana's 419.

"The Machins are boring and Her Majesty was I guess glad of the change with her 40th Accession photos.

"Why is Mr Overall concerned about extra cost overriding decisions to change stamp sizes, shapes. Who cares? This is a dog-eat-dog world and the only reason I took up collecting South east Asian stamps was because of GB's continual lack of imagination.

"The Rev. Ross's attitude is deplorable – has he seen Isle of Man's current definitives and Guernsey's previous and new definitives? Perfection, and they're no 'Banana Republics'.

"I agree that the 24p stamp in each new issue should be made into a booklet. Now that would be a booklet set to keep and collect! What do we get? – 96% of mail with a boring orange Machin that will hardly influence a prospective new collector.

"I suppose the majority of those 10 to 1 letters were also the voters of last years No 1 stamp set, being happy with the four map stamps that to me seemed almost identical. The idea was innovative but the final print was hardly eye catching. In my view the Dogs won it by a nose!"

Post Offices open during 1971 Strike

Further to earlier reports of first day covers cancelled on 15 February 1971 at post offices which remained open for the delivery of local mail, A D Champion of Wadebridge has sent a photocopy of a cover bearing all 12 low value definitives (½p-9p) clearly dated stamped "TINTAGEL CORNWALL 11.15AM 15 FE 71."

UK Presidency of EC

F L Brandeis writes concerning the statement in the February 1991 *Bulletin* (page 122) that the UK presidency of the EC was to start in September 1992. We are pleased to set the record straight, the presidency began on 1 July 1992.

Europa 92 Stamps

James Lazenby of Leeds raises some interesting points on the Europa issue: "I mean no offence to Mr Bassford (designer), who has obviously worked hard, under considerable time constraints, to produce this collage of stamps. I feel, however, that Royal Mail have gone over the top in trying to cover too many events in one single issue. Personally I find them hard to accept as a set and I feel they look ungainly in my collection. Royal Mail have tried covering more than one event in a single issue before – Sports issues on July 1987 and July 1991, but on those occasions they 'got away with it' because the format of all the stamps was similar. On this occasion I feel they have failed. The bright colours of the se-tenant pair of 24p and the 'Expo 92 Seville' do not blend with the fine line drawings of the Ship stamps. I believe that at least two separate issues would have better served these stamps. I am, of course, aware of the problems that Royal Mail have in selecting themes for issues and the cries of 'too many in one year', but if Royal Mail feel that they must cover all events, then please not like this."

Mr Lazenby's letter was shown to Miss Rosena Robson, Acting Head of Special Stamps at Royal Mail, who has provided the following explanation:

"The five stamps in the Europa set are in fact linked by the theme of Spain. The CEPT theme for 1992 was the 500th anniversary of the landfall in the Americas by Columbus and we believed that this provided an opportunity to celebrate the British contributions to the major events occurring in Spain during 1992. This is particularly appropriate as the Royal Mail is sponsoring the British teams taking part in the Olympic and Paralympic Games in Barcelona.

We did consider splitting the set; however this was rejected because it would have increased the number of stamp issues and, therefore, the cost to our customers."

The Elusive Mrs Robinson

In June I asked if anyone knew the origin of the Mrs Robinson whose name and address appears on publicity for Royal Mail first day covers. Ray Dennis of Derby has sent the following interesting explanation:

"In 1965 I was a postal executive in charge of the arrangements for the introduction of post coding in the Derby Head Post Office area. For publicity purposes, originally to advertise postcodes, I was asked to produce a fictitious local address and provide a postcode that should not be allocated. Mrs Robinson was my idea and it is pleasing to note she has received nationwide fame.

"I chose Mrs J Robinson simply because it was my grandmother's name. Manorbier I always remembered as a site of a Royal Artillery camp (and/or castle) in South Wales, I had association with during my national service, and the name seemed to roll easily off the tongue. Ilkeston, of course, is a town in Derbyshire that does exist. The only part of the address that does.

"Sorry there is no more exciting explanation. Over the years however Mrs Robinson has gathered quite a 'fan club' and the local office regularly received, and probably still does, correspondence, usually unsigned, asking if she realised her name and address was splashed over various publicity items for the Post Office."

Mystery solved. Over the past four years a number of readers had asked about Mrs Robinson, and I even received an enquiry from *The Daily Telegraph* no less!

Caravan Post Offices

The note here in April about the post office at Barvas, Isle of Lewis prompted M Watson of Suffolk to report a caravan office at Rouaig on the Isle of Tiree last summer. It had, he tells us, been used as such "for a great many years."

All letters sent to the Editor are carefully read; matters of general interest will be dealt with in "Postbag" or other sections of the Bulletin. Readers' comments relating to stamp issuing policy are brought to the attention of the relevant Royal Mail Manager. The Editor regrets that he is unable to reply personally to all letters – to do so would seriously delay production of this, and the Postmark, Bulletin.

Postshops with Philatelic Service

In June (pages 226-9) we gave details of Collections, philatelic counters and postshops. Some postshops now provide a philatelic service – Bath, Durham and Portsmouth were providing such a service at the time the June *Bulletin* went to press. We can now add Romford and Stratford-upon-Avon. The addresses, phone numbers and special handstamp numbers are as follows:

64 South Street Post Office

ROMFORD

Essex RM1 1RL

Tel: 0708-732118

Open: 9.00-17.30 Mon-Fri; 9.00-12.30 Sat

Handstamp: 2584

2-3 Henley Street Post Office

STRATFORD-UPON-AVON

Warwickshire CV37 6PU

Tel: 0789-414939

Open: 9.00-17.30 Mon-Fri (Wed opens 9.30); 9.00-12.30 Sat

Handstamp: 2477

Covers to receive the Romford handstamp should be sent to: Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail City of London, KEB, LONDON EC1A 1AA; for the Stratford handstamp to: Midland SHC, Royal Mail Birmingham, BIRMINGHAM B1 1AA. Covers must bear at least the 1st class postage rate. Please put the relevant handstamp number (2584 or 2477) in the top left-hand corner of the outer cover when submitting covers for cancellation.

NPM Christmas Cards

The Museum will issue four postcards featuring mailcoach scenes on 10 November, day of issue of the Christmas stamps. The cards, reference numbers NPM92/13-16, will cost 25p each. Orders should be sent to: National Postal Museum (Mail Order), King Edward Street, LONDON EC1A 1LP. Minimum order £1; handling charge 24p on orders up to £24; £2.14 over £24 (sent by registered post).

A special handstamp will be available on 10 November in addition to the Museum's regular Maltese Cross handstamp. Cards/covers to receive these handstamps should be sent to: Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail City of London, King Edward Street, LONDON EC1A 1AA. For the Maltese Cross handstamp ask for handstamp No 1985, for the special Christmas handstamp request "NPM Special-10 November".

Postbus Expansion Plans

The first postbus was launched in Powys, Mid-Wales in 1967 and since then the fleet has expanded to include some 170 routes in the UK, 130 of them in Scotland. In the past year postbuses covered 1 million miles, carrying more than 100,000 passengers.

Postbuses travel across some of the most beautiful and remote parts of the UK, and provide an ideal way for visitors to tour some of Britain's most spectacular sights. The postbus services combine delivery and collection of mail with stops en route to pick up and put down passengers. As well as making house-to-house deliveries, they collect mail from roadside deliveryboxes along their route.



A postman collects mail from a remote postbox in Abergwesyn near Builth Wells, Wales.

Royal Mail has announced major expansion of its nationwide postbus network as it celebrates the 25th anniversary of this unique service which offers a lifetime to customers in rural Britain. During this year more than 20 new routes across some of the remotest parts of the UK will be added to the 170-strong network.

Mr Bill Cockburn, Managing Director of the Royal Mail, said: "We are delighted to announce this new programme of postbus expansion. The 200-strong postbus fleet is a key part of the Royal Mail's nationwide mail network, which handles

a record 60 million letters a day and delivers to all 24 million addresses throughout the country – no matter how remote. It's a service no-one else can match – all at a uniform postage price, which is the fastest and best value for money service in the EC. At the same time these buses provide a vital lifeline for local communities, especially where there is no other means of public transport."

The first of the new routes opened from Alnwick to Wooler near Berwick-on-Tweed in the border country; two more routes, both operating out of Lairg in the Scottish highlands, were launched in August.

Royal Mail has also marked the anniversary by publishing two colourful 25th anniversary postbus guides packed with useful information, timetables, routes and photographs. There are two editions of the guide – one for Scotland, the other for England and Wales combined. The guide will be available free at selected post offices, tourist information outlets and libraries in areas where postbuses operate.

A feature on the 25th anniversary of postbuses, showing the first bus at Llanidloes in 1967, was published in the February 1992 Bulletin, page 127.

Ron Reed Retires

Ron Reed who has worked for Royal Mail for 25 years retired at the end of September. Ron had for the past 14 years worked in the Special Handstamp Centre (formerly Special Postmark Duty) at London's King Edward Building. A keen collector of postmarks, Ron has set very high standards in handstamping covers for dealers and collectors alike and has made many friends in the philatelic world. He has trained others to continue the good work in the future. He now retires to watch the ships on the River Stow in Essex. We wish him well in his much-deserved retirement.

Stop Press: Postal Stationery

Royal Mail is currently reviewing its postal stationery. New padded envelopes in C4 and C5 sizes, both with 1st and 2nd class service indicators (incorporating the Machin head) will be available from the British Philatelic Bureau, Collections and philatelic counters from 27 October 1992. These envelopes will also be on trial sale at selected post offices in the Midlands. Further details next month.

Posting Boxes

134. Unusual Boxes

Featured this month are photographs of two very unusual boxes. The first shows the wooden box at the Moor Row Sub Post Office in Cumbria, between Egremont and Whitehaven. The photograph was submitted by Alan Hall of Workington who describes the box as "not so much a post-box – more a cupboard on the wall."



Dr S J Holt of London sent in the second photograph which shows the dual posting box situated on the left of the entrance to Burlington House, Piccadilly, London. The box is sited just outside the chambers of the Linnean Society (stamps commemorating the 200th anniversary of this Society were issued in January 1988). Dr Holt writes: "I suspect this box is used by the other scientific societies in the House, and by the Royal Academy of Arts."

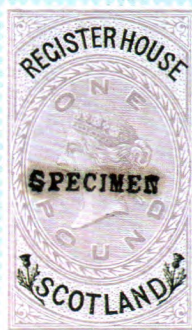


Gems from the R M Phillips Collection

202. Register House – Scotland

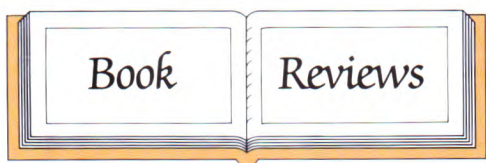
Register House in Edinburgh holds the "Register of Saisins" and other registers. All are connected with the complicated property laws of Scotland. "Saisins" is the act of transferring land ownership, and the register for this was commenced in 1617. Under the Public Offices Fees Acts of 1866 and 1879 adhesive stamps were produced to meet the various fees levied by the Registrar of Saisins and of the other registers maintained at Register House.

The first stamps issued (1871) were general duty dies underprinted with this appropriation. Key types with overprints appeared in 1873; those with thistle motifs (as shown here) were issued in 1882 (Phillips Collection Vol XLV, page 64).



These stamps are to be seen in the exhibition "Victorian Revenues and Other Fiscals" currently on show in the main gallery at the National Postal Museum. The material, all from the Phillips Collection, has been researched and written up to conform to latest published and unpublished work on this important aspect of "cinderella philately". The NPM in London's Chief Post Office, King Edward Street, EC1 is open Monday-Friday, 9.30am to 4.30pm.

Lionel Jones, Philatelic Officer



Patrick Awcock's book **Automatic Letter Sorting In The United Kingdom** is well-known to specialist collectors of postal mechanisation material. He has recently published volume 2, sub-titled *OCR, 3rd Generation Coding Desks and Ink-Jet Printers*. Despite the rather dry title, it is a most useful and interesting work as it deals with mechanisation markings that can be found on current mail. These markings are many and varied and it is good to have a comprehensive guide with which to sort covers.

The book is arranged in two sections – Introduction and Catalogue. The latter, providing details of all the different markings to be found, will repay careful study. Price £11 including UK postage, £12 overseas, 86 pages, card covers, slide-binders. Available from: P G Awcock, "Smallacre", Chelwood Gate, HAYWARDS HEATH, W Sussex RH17 7LY.

Part 1 of the **Stanley Gibbons Stamp Catalogue** is now being produced in two volumes. The proliferation of stamps from all Commonwealth countries had resulted in a book of considerable weight, becoming cumbersome to use. Volume 1 of the new two-part "Part 1" was published on 24 July and deals with countries A to I, including Great Britain (Vol 2, countries J-Z follows on 2 October.) The listing for GB, of particular interest to Bulletin readers, is complete from the Penny Black (S.G. 1) to the recent Civil War issue (S.G. 1620/3). The low value decimal Machin listing now comprises 183 stamps; arranged in seven sections for different printers, and phosphor characteristics. The highest priced basic Machin stamp is still the ½p side band (X842) at £60 mint, followed by the 75p Quеста of February 1988 (X1019) at £6.50 mint. Some of the prices of the booklet stamps have increased since the *Concise* catalogue was published in May, e.g. 18p Questa 2 bands (X1010) and 14p Walsall (X1020) both up by £1 to £4 and £3 respectively. The prices of the 20p Greetings stamps (1483/92) are increased 10p to 75p each, worth looking for with clear postmarks. The mixed value pane from the 1989 "Scots Connection" prestige book (S551) is up £1.50 to £9. The basic Penny Black and Twopence Blue (S.G. 1, 4) remain unchanged at £3500 unused/£200 used and £7000/£400 respectively. The GB section comprises 102 of the 692 numbered pages. Hardbound. Price £20, from Stanley Gibbons Publications, Parkside, RINGWOOD Hants, BH24 3SH, postage £2.50 UK, £5 overseas surface mail.

The Royal Historical Society has recently published **The Victorian Post Office: The Growth Of A Bureaucracy** by C R Perry, Associate Professor of History at the University of the South, Sewanee, Tennessee. This impressive tone is intended, not so much for postal historians, as students of the history of the PO and its administration. As Prof Perry points out in his Preface, the PO has been all but dismissed in many general histories – "when the department was mentioned at all (it) was usually limited to a few vague words about improvements in communications." He aims to analyse the expansion of the Post Office, bringing it "closer to the centre of our understanding of the role of the Victorian state and the origins of a mixed economy in Britain". Amongst 19th century government departments the PO was a bureaucratic giant. By the eve of the First World War it managed a complex set of responsibilities, including the conveyance of mail around the world: its staff accounted for one-third of the entire civil service. The book is arranged in 10 chapters within four parts; Part 1 "Administrative Contexts" deals with the world of St Martin's le Grand and the role of the Treasury. Part 2 "New Responsibilities" has chapters on the Encouragement of Thrift; Nationalisation of the Telegraphs; Trials of the PO Telegraphs, 1870-1914; Coming of the Telephone, 1876-92; and the Acquisition of the Telephone, 1892-1920. Part 3 "Complications of Growth" looks at Railway and Shipping Contracts; Part 4, "Epilogue" sums up "A Pattern of Government Growth?".

This book is not a light read, it is a work of considerable scholarship, on a par with Prof Daunt's *Royal Mail: The Post Office Since 1840* (reviewed here in November 1985). As such it will appeal to all who have a deep interest in the history and workings of the PO. A few illustrations would have been welcome and would not have detracted from the scholarship. 316 pages, hardback. ISBN 0 86193 220 X, available from good bookshops or from publisher: Boydell Press, PO Box 9, WOODBRIDGE, Suffolk IP12 3DF. Price £39.50.

Railway Letter Stamps

The North Yorkshire Moors Railway issued a new 25p stamp showing locomotive "Blue Peter" on 19 September printed in sheets of six by Walsall Security Printers. A special railway cancel was used on first day covers, price £1.95. Also issued on 19 September was another 25p stamp commemorating the naming of a British Rail locomotive "The North Yorkshire Moors Railway". This comprises a 1989 Diesel stamp overprinted, and surcharged 25p. Orders/enquiries: Mrs M Atkins, 5 Tiber View, Brinsworth, ROTHERHAM, S Yorkshire, S60 5EA.



NYMR "Blue Peter", Talyllyn locomotive No. 1, and Mid-Hants "76017" stamps

The Talyllyn Railway issued a new 25p stamp on 28 July, showing a front elevation of locomotive No. 1 "Talyllyn". See the "Commemorative Covers" supplement for details of first day covers. The stamp was printed in sheets of 10. A further 25p stamp featuring locomotive "Tom Rolt" will be issued on 10 October. Orders/enquiries: Sara Eade, Talyllyn Railway, Wharf Station, TYWYN, Gwynedd, LL36 9EY.

The 25p mid-Hants Railway stamp issued on 17 April features "Standard 4" class locomotive No. 76017, not West Country locomotive "Swanage" as announced here in March 1992 (p. 161). Enquiries re MHR stamps to: Postal Co-ordinator, Mid-Hants Railway, ALRESFORD, Hants, SO24 9BG.

Railway letter stamps are issued by a number of privately-run railways under the Railway Letter Agreement with Royal Mail.

Competition



Win £75 worth of British stamps

Enter this month's competition and stand a chance of winning £75 worth of current British philatelic products of your choice – stamps, stamp books, postcards, albums, etc. Answer the questions below, the answers will be found in this month's *Bulletin*, and send with your name and address on a postcard to: October Competition, British Philatelic Bulletin, Royal Mail, 76-86 Turnmill Street, LONDON EC1M 5NS to arrive by 27 November.

The sender of the first all-correct entry drawn on 27 November will be invited to order £75 of philatelic products; five runners-up will be sent presentation packs of the Christmas stamps. Answers and winners' names will be published in the January *Bulletin*.

1. What are the dates for Autumn Stampex 1992?
2. In what year was Karl Parsons born?
3. Which informal group met in C S Lewis's rooms in Magdalen College, Oxford?
4. Which sportsman conducted a prize draw at the Bureau?
5. In what street is the London Chief Post Office (and National Postal Museum) situated?

The competition is not open to staff (and their families) of Royal Mail National and its agents. No correspondence will be entered into; the Editor's decision will be final.

The winners of the July competition were:– Mrs L A Saunders of Essex (£75 worth of Royal Mail products); D J Weir of Western Australia; T N Allcott of West Midlands; Miss K B Douglas of Fife; Miss M L Speake of Wiltshire; and H Samuelsson of Sweden (Green Issue presentation packs).

The answers were: 1. "Blue Peter"; 2. Symphony of Stamps; 3. Czeslaw Slania; 4. Irene Lawford; 5. 10 March 1992.

Our thanks to all who entered.

October Digest

Issued in October

6 October: Christmas aerogramme, price 44p.

Designer: Karen Murray.

Printing: McCorquodale Envelopes Ltd.

13 October: Single European Market Stamp – 24p.

Designer: David Hockney.

Printing: Harrison & Sons Limited, photogravure, 41 x 30mm, perf. 15 x 14, sheets of 100, PVA Dextrin gum, phosphor coated paper.

Pictorial First Day of Issue postmarks: British Philatelic Bureau and Westminster.

Presentation Pack: No. 231, price 55p.

14 October: Single European Market souvenir cover. Price 21p. Available from Collections and philatelic counters.

27 October: £6 Tolkien – The Centenary prestige stamp book.

Contents: 4 panes as follows:

1. 6 x 24p on Phosphor Coated Paper (PCP).

2. 6 x 18p with centre phosphor band.

3. Mixed pane containing 2 x 18p with phosphor band right, 2 x 24p with 2 phosphor bands, 2 x 39p with 2 phosphor bands, 1 x 1st class NVI with 2 phosphor bands, and 1 x 2nd class NVI with phosphor band right. The pane is completed with a central label showing Tolkien's initials J R R (John Ronald Reuel).

4. 6 x 24p on Phosphor Coated Paper.

Printing: The House of Questa, Offset-lithography, perf. 15 x 14, PVA gum.

Pictorial First Day of Issue postmarks: British Philatelic Bureau and Oxford.

27 October: Christmas stamp cards, price 21p each.

Withdrawn in October

31 October: Reprints of 50p and £1 stamp books, Archaeology and "Punch" No 1, with corrected postal rate information.

Events

NPM = National Postal Museum

until 31 Dec 92. "Pictures in the Post" exhibition (story of picture postcards) at Bath Postal Museum, 8 Broad Street, BATH BA1 5LJ. Tel. 0225-60333.

until Feb 93. "Victorian Revenues & Other Fiscals" exhibition of material from the Phillips Collection at NPM, London EC1. Open Mon-Fri 9.30-16.30.

until May 93. "People in the Post" exhibition at NPM.

3 Oct 92. Festival of Stamps at Banbury Town Hall. Open 10.00-16.00. "Goodie Packs" available to young visitors. Enquiries: Banbury Festival of Stamps, 3 Longfellow Road, BANBURY, Oxon, OX16 9LB.

13-18 Oct 92. Autumn Stampex/BPE at Royal Horticultural Society Halls, London SW1. Enquiries: STAMPEX, 107 Charterhouse Street, LONDON EC1M 6PT. *Note change from originally announced dates of 20-25 Oct.*

15-18 Oct 92. Stampa (Irish national stamp exhibition) at Riverside Exhibition Centre, Sir John Rogersons Quay, Dublin.

17 Oct 92. Telford Phil Soc Stamp & Postcard Fair at Belmont Hall, Wellington, Telford, 10.00-16.00. Enquiries: P Morris-Jones, 190 Holyhead Road, Wellington, TELFORD, TF1 2DW. Tel. 0952-223926.

24 Oct 92. Association of Sussex Philatelic Societies Autumn Convention 1992 at White Rock Theatre, Hastings, 10.30-16.30. Dealers, displays, etc. Enquiries: J E O Hobbs, 12 Ophir Road, WORTHING, W. Sussex, BN11 2SR.

31 Oct 92. Dorchester and Weymouth Stamp Club Exhibition at United Church Hall, Charles Street, Dorchester. 10.00-16.30. Displays, dealers, refreshments. Admission 20p adults, 10p children. Enquiries: B Dennett, 2 Enkworth Road, Preston, WEYMOUTH, Dorset, DT3 6JT. Tel. 0305 832377.

31 Oct-1 Nov 92. Scotex – Scotland's national stamp and postcard fair and exhibition – at Clyde Hall, Glasgow. Enquiries: F Tonelli, Cornucopia Collectors Ltd, 15 King Street, DUNDEE DD1 2JD. Tel. 0382-24946.

