

May 1993



Royal Mail

British Philatelic Bulletin

Volume 30, No: 9 The Royal Mail Magazine for Stamp Collectors Price 70p

KEW GARDENS STATION



The Britannia Paperweight



Stamp Pyramids, launched last October, have proved a popular addition to Royal Mail's range of philatelic products. For the £10 Britannia stamp we offer a unique lens-shaped paperweight.

Designed to magnify the stamp, it allows the design and security features to be studied in detail. See "Royal Mail Philatelic Products" article on page 223 for further information.



Royal Mail

Stamp Pyramids and Britannia Paperweights are only available by mail order from the British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, EDINBURGH EH3 5TT.

British Philatelic Bulletin

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Main Feature

Early Days at the Bureau 205

Frank Langfield recalls the hectic early life at the Philatelic Bureau, opened 30 years ago this month.



The Bureau in 1963 – making up orders of 1963 commemorative stamps. (PO Photographic Library)

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EDINBURGH EH3 5TT.

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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.

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This Month

On 1 May 1963 the Philatelic Bureau opened its doors and started business. No doubt a good number of *Bulletin* readers will recall the early, exciting days of the Bureau, either by personal visit or by ordering stamps and first day covers by post. The Bureau certainly got a baptism of fire with three stamp issues in its first month – Paris Postal Conference on 7 May, followed by National Nature Week and Lifeboat Conference on the 16th and 31st. Hitherto it was not unknown for years to go by without any new commemorative sets of stamps. Three issues (six stamps) in a month was unprecedented. The Bureau coped, was quickly successful and has earned itself a good reputation worldwide.

I am very pleased, as one of the earliest customers, to publish an account of the early days of the Bureau by Frank Langfield. Frank was also a key person in the setting up of this *Bulletin* which also celebrates its 30th anniversary this year. Frank wrote about the genesis of the magazine in the *Bulletin* of May 1984; his two accounts are useful articles on philatelic history.

From a handful of staff and customers, the Bureau has come a long way since 1963 and there have been many changes. Next month's *Bulletin* will include an account of the Bureau of today, with previews of future developments.

May will always be a significant month to collectors of British stamps and students of postal history. We commemorate the 153rd anniversary of the issue of the Penny Black by illustrating the Wyon medal commemorating Queen Victoria's visit to the City of London in 1837.



The Queen's head was subsequently used on the stamps. Bronze and silver versions of the medal can be seen in the National Postal Museum – home to the unique proof sheet of Penny Blacks and the R M Phillips Collection which contains numerous Blacks, including one on first day cover.

J R HOLMAN
Editor

Royal Mail News

Enschedé Definitives

Three new varieties of definitive stamp will go on sale from Tuesday 8 June 1993. The 1p, 5p and 10p stamps, printed for the first time by Joh Enschedé en Zonen of Haarlem, Holland, will incorporate similar security features to the 6p stamp issued on 27 April.

Elliptical perforations will be included and the base paper is free of optical brightening agents. Each stamp has two phosphor bars with added fluorescence to improve recognition.

The stamps will be available from the British Philatelic Bureau, Collections, philatelic counters and Post Shops Plus from 8 June 1993. The stamps are not regarded as a new issue and no first day of issue facilities will be provided.

Other definitive values will be printed by Enschedé and will be introduced as demand dictates during the year.

New Scottish Pictorial Aerogramme

A new Scottish pictorial aerogramme will go on sale on 22 June 1993, price 44p, which includes 34p postage. Designed by David Driver and printed by McCorquodale Envelopes Ltd, the aerogramme marks the 900th anniversary of the death of St Margaret, Queen of Scotland.

Royal Mail at Polska '93

Royal Mail will have a stand at the Polska '93 international stamp exhibition in Poznań, 7-16 May 1993. One sale will be a range of stamps and philatelic products. A cachet will be available at the stand, for application to covers or cards. Please note this cachet cannot be applied to postage stamps.

The exhibition, under the patronage of the Federation Internationale de Philatelie (FIP) will include material from the collections of HM The Queen, and Prince Rainier of Monaco.

Bulletin Binders

We regret that supplies of binders have been exhausted for some months, and this has disappointed many customers. We are pleased to announce that a new supply is now available; binders can be ordered from the British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, EDINBURGH EH3 5TT, price £6.75.

Please note that the 1st class litho, *Questa*, phosphor coated paper stamp at the top of page 149 (March) was listed in error – this stamp was not issued. The five books issued on 6 April yield four *not* five new stamps.

discovery of the tomb of Tutankhamun in November 1922 is now available from the Cambridge Stamp Centre. They have been illustrated from an original on Papyrus paper and reproduced using a gold colour pigment. Each cover bears a pictorial Heathrow cancellation after having been flown to Egypt and returned to the UK from Cairo by Concorde. They have been carried to the Tomb of Tutankhamun and some contain sachets of sand from the Valley of the Kings. All covers have been personally autographed by celebrities and those pertinent to the theme. Enquiries: Cambridge Stamp Centre, 9 Sussex Street, CAMBRIDGE CB1 1PA. Tel. 0223 63980

European Grand Prix. A cover has been produced for this event, held at Donington on 11 April. The cover has been overprinted with the names of the first three drivers to cross the finishing line and includes an insert card giving details of the history of the Donington Circuit where the British Grand Prix was last run in



1938. A special Grand Prix handstamp was applied. Price £2.50 plus large stamped addressed envelope. Orders/enquiries: Pilgrim Philatelics, PO Box 20, CANTERBURY, Kent, CT1 2XX.

75th Anniversary of RAE To mark the 75th anniversary, Benham is producing an official cover for the RAF which will carry the Art in the 20th Century stamps. The painting featured on this cover is "April Morning" by Frank Wootton, founder member of the Guild of Aviation Artists. Frank was an official artist during the Second World War, enduring many hardships both in France and in the Far East. Each cover contains a card printed with details of his career. His paintings, reproduced on "silk" and hand-mounted into a gold border, is surmounted by the RAF insignia. The 11 May postmark is designated Lympe, Kent, site of one of the original airfields which was used during both World Wars. Price £4.99.

Some covers will be flown in the official RAF

Anniversary Flypast on 1 April before being postmarked on 11 May to coincide with the Art stamp issue. Each cover will bear a cachet with flight details and a RAF backstamp. Prince £6.99 or £8.99 signed by Frank Wootton (limited number). Postage 50p. Orders/enquiries: Benham (A Buckingham) Ltd, The Bayle, FOLKESTONE, Kent, CT20 1SD. Tel. 0303 850041 (24 hour hotline).



Swiss National Tourist Office. The British started the era of wintersports, in St. Moritz in 1864. Tourism from Great Britain to Switzerland developed rapidly and the first Swiss tourist office was opened in London in 1893. To mark the centenary a commemorative cover has been produced. This depicts a Swiss train and bears the four Art in the 20th century stamps cancelled by a special Swiss National Tourist Office London Centenary handstamp of 11 May. Price £6. Orders/enquiries: Swiss National Tourist Office, Swiss Centre, Swiss Court, LONDON W1V 8EE. Tel. 071-734 1921.

Roman Britian. To coincide with this issue A G Bradbury has produced two special covers and sponsored two special handstamps:

The Ermine Street Guard are a group of enthusiasts who re-enact the life and times of the Roman troops. The cover, (Ref LFDC 115) shows a full colour picture of the Guard with the Roman eagle in gold-leaf. Ermine Street links London to York, via Lincoln, hence the postmark location *Eboracum* (York). Limited to 1000 covers; price £5.95.

The second cover features a Victorian engraving of Claudius from a coin now at the British Museum – probably the same coin used for the design of the 24p stamp. Claudius received the surrender of the British Kings at Colchester in AD43 – hence the postmark location *Camulodunum*. Single stamp covers cost £3.75; full set £6.75 or £9.75 signed by Derek Jacobi (of *I, Claudius* fame). Orders/enquiries: A G Bradbury, 3 Link Road, LEICESTER LE2 3RA.

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 the Bulletin office.

Maritime Covers and Cards. Chris Barton has available a wide range of covers and postcards of interest to collectors in the maritime field; these include Royal Navy, Merchant Navy, Hovercraft, Islands, and Antarctic. The covers/cards are produced in small numbers, always carried by the vessel in question and usually carrying the ship's cachet and often signed by the master. He has available a small stock of items connected with the Gulf War and is building a stock of material from the forces operating in and around Bosnia. For lists of material available send a large stamped self-addressed envelope to: Maritime Covers and Cards, 20 Upper Hyde Lane, SHANKLIN, Isle of Wight, PO37 7PR.

BATTLE OF BRITAIN



Spitfire 1 of No. 19(F) Squadron, Duxford, Cambs. in combat with a Bf 109E-3, Battle of Britain (1940).

Special Flown Cover

Imperial War Museum
Overland Airfield
Cambridge CB2 4QR

Spitfire Victory. A collection of commemorative envelopes is now available from the Cambridge Stamp Centre entitled "Spitfire Victory!" The collection is of about 20 covers of the same design – based on a painting by the eminent aviation artist Peter Castle and illustrates a Spitfire 1 of No 19(F) Squadron from Duxford in combat with a Bf 109E-3 during the Battle of Britain, 1940. They have all been personally autographed by Battle of Britain Spitfire pilots. Enquiries: Cambridge Stamp Centre, 9 Sussex Street, CAMBRIDGE CB1 1PA, Tel. 0223 63980

Art in the 20th Century. To coincide with this issue a special first day cover will be available

bearing the four new stamps together with some of the most attractive art stamps issued since 1967. These comprise the following: "Master Lambton" by Gainsborough; "Mares & Foals in a Landscape" by Stubbs; "Children Coming out of School" by Lowry; "The Hay Wain" by Constable; together with a Turner seascape, and a stamp from the 1973 Reynolds/Raeburn issue. These covers are available at £9.75 each. Orders/enquiries: A. G. Bradbury, 3 Link Road, LEICESTER LE2 3RA. Price includes UK P&P; Overseas please add £1 and remit in Sterling.



The Royal College of Art cover, from A G Bradbury (details published last month).

El Alamein. The turning point in British fortunes in the Second World War was fought between 23 October and 2 November 1942. The Cambridge Stamp Centre now has covers available based on a magnificent painting by Peter Castle showing Hurricanes of No 6 Squadron during the Battle of El Alamein, 1942. Each of the covers carries the crest of the 8th Army Veterans Association. All covers are signed – a proportion by members of the Desert Airforce and others by members of the 8th Army Veterans Association. A few covers will be supplied with a sachet of sand from the Western Desert. Each set consists of about 40 covers and have been flown from London to Cairo on Concorde during the anniversary month. Enquiries: Cambridge Stamp Centre, address below.

Tutankhamun. An unusual set of envelopes commemorating the 70th anniversary of the

Stamp Scene

1993 Northeast Philatelic Weekend

The 17th Northeast Philatelic Weekend is to be held at the Swallow Hotel, Gateshead, from Friday-Sunday, 21-23 May. The programme is designed to include many aspects of philately and to cater for both new and advanced collectors. These weekends are enjoyed in a most congenial and friendly atmosphere, and all newcomers will be assured of a very warm welcome indeed.

There will be two souvenir booklets to commemorate this event; these contain the 1992 GB "Europa" stamps. The booklets, issued in a limited number, cost £3 the pair of booklets. Please enclose a stamped self-addressed envelope (5 x 4in) with order. These booklets are in no way connected with Royal Mail.

For any collector interested in private booklets, a few souvenir booklets are still available from most of the previous weekends since 1982. For further details regarding the Weekend and/or booklets, send a stamped self-addressed foolscap envelope to: Dorothy M Martin, 46 Briardene Crescent, Kenton Park, NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE, NE3 4RY.

GB Collector's Database

QB Software announces two major extensions to their IBM compatible GB Collector's Database. A full listing of Window Booklets has been added to the database of Specialised Machins (see September 1991 *Bulletin* page 12), and a less specialised listing added to the GB database of definitives and commemoratives. Aerogrammes have also been added to the GB database including regional and British Forces issues from 1941. Each database costs £12.50 including postage, or both for £17.50. Databases for the Channel Islands, Isle of Man, and Ireland are also available. Enquiries: QB Software, 50 North Way, SEAFORD, E. Sussex, BN25 3HP. Tel. 0323 895077.

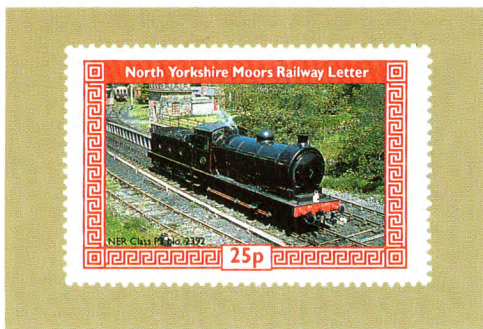
Rare Philypia FDC

The star item in the Brian Reeve Stamp Auction on 28 January was a first day cover of the 1970 Philypia issue with the International Stamp Exhibition, Philypia slogan postmark, of which only one or two examples are known. This realised £1555!

Railway Letter Stamps

The North Yorkshire Moors Railway will issue a new 25p railway letter stamp on 1 May to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Royal re-opening of the Railway by HRH The Duchess

of Kent. The stamp, printed in sheets of six by Walsall Security Printers, features NER "P3" class locomotive No2392 at Goathland. A second 25p stamp, depicting Southern Railway "S15" class loco No841 approaching Goathland Station on a summer day, will be issued on 2 June 1993. Again this is printed in sheets of six by Walsall.



Mint stamps are available at face value plus postage. Orders, or enquiries about first day covers and other NYMR stamps, should be sent to: Mrs M Atkins, 5 Tiber View, Brinsworth, ROTHERHAM, S Yorkshire, S60 5EA.

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

Lundy Postal Stationery

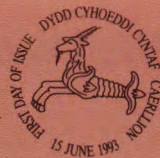
Lundy, a small island in the Bristol Channel has issued local stamps (local carriage labels) since 1929. The current definitives were described in the *Bulletin* of August 1991, page 285. The cost of sending a 2nd class inland letter/card from Lundy was increased from 23p to 24p from 28 April 1993. This includes the 18p British postage which is denoted by the application of a meter mark. A book of five 24p Lundy stamps was issued on 28 April, price £1.20. Also issued that day were postcards with imprinted 1st or 2nd class Lundy stamps of the same design as the definitives. These feature aerial view of island (2nd class); mail ship *Oldenburg* (2nd); puffin (1st); and selection of Lundy stamps (1st). Price £1.86 set of four or 44p 2nd class cards, 49p 1st class cards. Orders/enquiries: Wendy Puddy, Lundy, BIDEFORD, Devon, EX39 2LY. Postage 80p UK and EC, £1.25 non-EC Europe, £1.75 Rest of World.

Student Stamp Designs

In November 1992 (p. 64) we gave details of the RSA Student Design Competition exhibition. This can be seen at Cardiff Institute of Higher Education, Howard Gardens, CARDIFF CF2 1SP (5-26 May).

Roman Britain

15 June 1993



Four stamps commemorating the 1950th anniversary of the Roman occupation of Britain go on sale at post offices, the British Philatelic Bureau, Collections, philatelic counters and selected post shops on 15 June. The stamps feature spectacular items of Roman Britain discovered at sites in Kent, London, Wales and Dorset.

The values cover the inland 1st class and EC basic rates (24p); Europe, non-EC basic rate (28p); Worldwide postcard rate (33p); and basic airmail letter rate (39p).



The 24p stamp shows the head of the Emperor Claudius (ruled AD41-54) on a gold coin found at Bredgar, Kent. Claudius, well-known today through of the works of Robert Graves and a television series, created new provinces of the Roman Empire. He inaugurated the conquest of Britain, taking part in the opening campaign (43 AD).

The 28p stamp features the head of the Emperor Hadrian (AD 117-138). Hadrian's wall, constructed during his rule, was one of the strongest and most complete of all the imperial frontiers of Rome. Hadrian was a noted patron of the arts, and founder of the Athenaeum in Rome. The head shown on the stamp is a bronze of the 2nd century found in the River Thames in London in 1834. It is now in the British Museum.

The 33p stamp shows the goddess Roma shown on a second century gemstone discovered at the legionary fortress of Caerleon (*Isca*) in Wales.

The 39p value depicts a 4th Century mosaic of Christ from a Roman villa at Hinton St Mary in Dorset. It is probably the earliest known representation of Christ.

The Designer

The stamps were designed by John Gibbs, FCSD who trained at the London College of Printing.



Before becoming a freelance designer Mr Gibbs worked in London first for a printer, then for a design group (Unit Five Design, 1966-77) where he was the partner responsible for all graphics, and finally for a publishing company. As a freelance graphic designer his main areas of work are typography, symbol design, books and book covers and illustration.

He has worked with the Royal Mail for 15 years, during which time he has designed several sets of stamps, including the 1981 International Year of the Disabled set and the 1986 Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Conference stamp. He now lives and works in Bath, Avon.

Of his Roman Britain stamp designs, Mr Gibbs writes:

"These designs are the outcome of extensive

ROMAN BRITAIN

ROYAL MAIL MINT STAMPS



in Bononia, Queen of the Iceni tribe (of Norfolk), in AD 60-1, nearly succeeded. The newly created Roman towns at Colchester, London and *Verulamium* (by present-day St Albans) were sacked, and only discipline and superior equipment finally enabled the Roman forces to crush the Iceni. Drastic reprisals followed, but soon attention was switched to the north. Its conquest is particularly associated with

Gnaeus Julius Agricola, Governor between AD 78 and 84. In these years, Roman control was extended to the north. Agricola also fostered the development of towns, where Britons began enthusiastically to adopt the dress and language of the conquerors. Cirencester, Leicester and Dorchester (Dorset) were among the places that appear to have benefited from his encouragement.

Lowland Scotland was not held for long, and the Roman army pulled back to a line between the River Solway and the River Tyne. When the emperor Hadrian visited the province in AD 122, he ordered that a wall 80 Roman miles (77½ statute kilometres) of the Romans' finest and substantial masonry be built.

Within the nation's process among the Britons south and east.



which London soon became pre-eminent. Even so, the architecture and art would often have appeared somewhat hybrid to Roman eyes, and the term 'Romano-British' aptly describes this blend of indigenous Celtic and imported Roman traditions. It is nowhere better exemplified than in the world of religion. The Romans tolerated native deities, and Celtic and Roman gods and goddesses often became synthesised.

'Romanisation' is also symbolised by the gradual spread of classical-style country estates, known as *villas*. However, these, like the towns, were mainly confined to the south and east. In the north and west, the bulk of the population lived largely as they had done before the Roman conquest, kept in check by a standing army based in forts, like those of Chester and Lancaster.

The third century was a troubled time for the Roman empire, but Britain seems to have remained something of a backwater. The first half of the fourth century was, however, Roman Britain's golden age, both economically and culturally. In AD 313, the emperor Constantine embraced Christianity as the official state religion and its beliefs gained ground in Britain. But Britain also had its troubles. There were raids by Sea-

pirates like the Curator (thunder) appointed by the duty, and all British leaders, even regions, formed towns, and the army and the justice was, but, temples, and many of civilised

which London soon became pre-eminent. Even so, the architecture and art would often have appeared somewhat hybrid to Roman eyes, and the term 'Romano-British' aptly describes this blend of indigenous Celtic and imported Roman traditions. It is nowhere better exemplified than in the world of religion. The Romans tolerated native deities, and Celtic and Roman gods and goddesses often became synthesised.

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ROMAN BRITAIN

ROYAL MAIL FIRST DAY COVER

Mrs J Robinson
200 Manorbier Road
ILKESTON
Derbyshire
DE7 4AB



research which took me to museums and sites in England, Scotland and Wales. The brief was to depict a range of typical Roman items (such as mosaics, pottery, sculpture, jewellery, coins, etc) that reflect life in Roman Britain.

"Consultation with various experts led to the conclusion that the set should definitely include depictions of the Emperors Claudius and Hadrian and this stipulation led to the final selection of the Claudian coin and the bronze head of Hadrian. This choice in turn suggested that the rest of the set should also feature heads, so further research concentrated on mosaics and artefacts that incorporated heads within their designs. The objects chosen were the tiny gemstone of the Goddess Roma and the mosaic of Christ. The fifth (and eventually not required) item was a terracotta 'head pot' from the Yorkshire Museum.

"The next problem was to make the four heads work together as a set. I decided to focus in on

the heads themselves rather than the whole objects. This was a practical solution ensuring that details (particularly the fine lines in the mosaic), would not have to be reduced in size unnecessarily.

"Another question I had to address was whether to use photography or illustration as the medium. I decided on the former and the photographs were taken by the individual museum photographers. Details were enhanced and backgrounds unified on a Quantel Paintbox."

Technical Details

<i>Printers:</i>	Harrison & Sons Ltd
<i>Process:</i>	Photogravure
<i>Size:</i>	35 x 37 mm, "almost square"
<i>Sheets:</i>	100
<i>Perforation:</i>	14½ x 14
<i>Phosphor:</i>	Phosphor Coated Paper, overprinted with 2 phosphor bars
<i>Gum:</i>	PVA Dextrin
<i>Presentation Pack:</i>	No. 238, price £1.55
<i>Stamp Cards:</i>	Nos 153 A-D, price 21p each

First Day Facilities

Unstamped Royal Mail first day cover envelopes will be available from main post offices, the Bureau, Collections, and philatelic counters around a week before 15 June, price 21p.

The Bureau will provide a first day cover service – collectors may order the Royal Mail cover bearing the stamps cancelled with pictorial "First Day of Issue" postmark of the Bureau or Caerleon. Orders for first day covers must be received at the Bureau by 15 June.

Collectors may send their own stamped covers, on the day of issue, for the Bureau or Caerleon cancels to: British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, EDINBURGH EH3 5TT or Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, Penarth Road, CARDIFF CF1 1AA. The outer envelope should be endorsed "Pictorial First Day of Issue postmark".

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

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



Early Days at the Bureau

FRANK LANGFIELD

"...I intend to introduce facilities to give a better service to the large number of philatelists..."

With those few simple words, uttered during a discussion on Post Office finances in the House of Commons on 25 March 1963, Reginald Bevins, the then Postmaster-General, brought the Post Office firmly into philately.

Thirty years ago the Post Office was not the entrepreneurial organization it is today and Bevins's decision was not greeted with unalloyed enthusiasm by his senior officials, whose view of philatelists was set out by Kenneth Chapman, a well-known philatelist and then Editor of the magazine *Stamp Collecting*. In a broadcast on 30 April 1963, welcoming the PMG's decision, Chapman reminded his listeners of the GPO's view of stamp collectors hitherto as "pernickety nuisances" and, whatever Bevins might have decreed, that view was not changed overnight.

Pandering to stamp collectors was *infra dig* and not something for the British Post Office to follow and when I took over, on promotion, the Stamp Duty in the Home Mails Branch of Postal Services Department in October 1955, that was very much the situation. Special issues were

infrequent, unimaginative in their use of colour, participation in exhibitions was half-hearted, collectors writing for stamps were dealt with by a routine correspondence duty in the London Postal Region. Reproduction of stamps, so necessary for magazines, was governed by an 1898 Act of Parliament designed to prevent fraud and was grudgingly permitted by a sheet of closely printed conditions written by lawyers. Nothing more than was absolutely necessary was done.

Staff of one

I found myself with a staff of one and responsible for the complete range of postage payment and allied matters – postage stamps, permanent, special and experimental; franking machines; prepayment in money; postmarks; books of stamps; reproduction of postage stamps; subjects for special issues; commissioning and briefing of artists; the PMG's stamps advisory committee; exhibitions; and custody of the official stamp collections.

It was clear that there was a lot of interest in our stamps and I could see the money-making

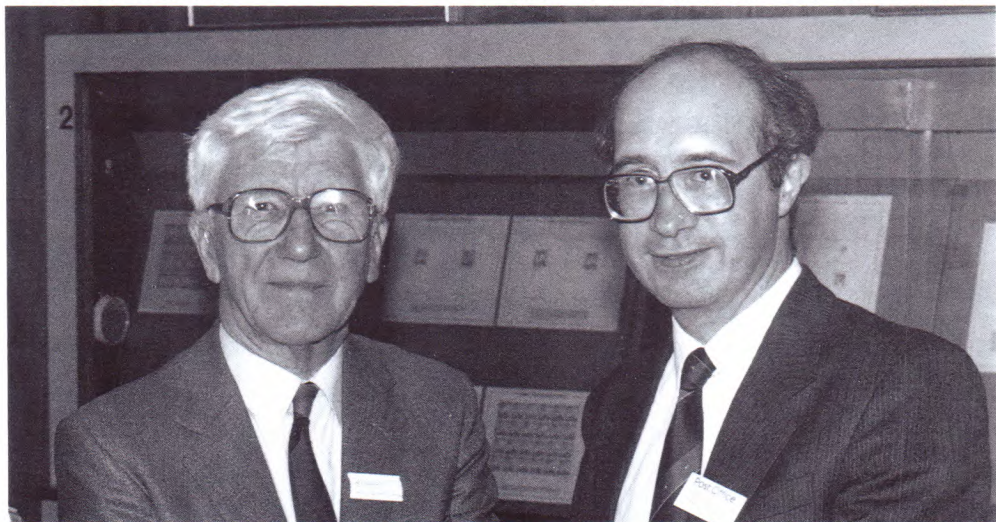
Early days at the Bureau counter – a customer inspects his order. (PO Photographic Library)



opportunities that were there even though the amounts would be minor when set against Post Office finances as a whole. Nevertheless it was also apparent that I was alone in this view. However, as long as I did not rock the boat I was left to my own devices and, although not a collector myself, I could appreciate their needs and I improved what services we did give them. Even so, Kenneth Chapman still felt able to use the term “pernickety nuisances”. Because of the climate, what improvements were made could not be dramatic but lay rather in easements and removals of irritation.

I had had no fore-warning of the PMG's intentions and so had no opportunity to do any pre-planning. I therefore intended to start off quietly with an opening date in June or July and let the business build up gradually but Mr Chapman's broadcast drew the attention of the national press and from then on I was under attack. Within a few days mail was arriving at an average of over 220 items a day – previously it had been about four a day – and I had no choice but to make the opening date 1 May.

Although the CTO building was derelict, for some reason the entrance at the Cheapside/



Frank Langfield (left) and Bulletin Editor John Holman at the Bulletin's 25th anniversary reception, 1988.

Starting up the Bureau

Despite the PMG's decision the old views still persisted and I was given no help, no staff and no accommodation to get the Bureau started. It was merely regarded as an extension of the duty I was already managing. A request for a staff of 12 was finally met by provision of two. I was offered a room in Headquarters building only big enough to take three desks, and when I rejected it as far too small was met with total incomprehension.

Development on the telecomms side had left the Central Telegraph Office (now the site of British Telecom HQ) abandoned and derelict. It was connected to POHQ by a second floor bridge over Angel Street and I found, on the second floor, a large useable ex-cashier's room with a strong-room in one corner and in this I set up business. Being on the second floor it enabled me to go easily between the Bureau and my other duties in HQ.

Newgate St corner was open and had a doorkeeper in attendance. In my initial planning I saw the Bureau as a mail-order undertaking, but within days people were finding their way to the office, even though the corridors were in darkness and rubbish-strewn. Fortunately the cashier's room also had a counter and rather than insist on mail-order only transactions and turn people away I had direction signs put up and the lighting restored. I had the counter grille removed and the counter widened so that people could be treated as valued customers and shown sheets of stamps to examine while maintaining a reasonable degree of security. In the first month we dealt with about 200 callers.

In naming the organization I settled on Philatelic as indicating a wider range than just Stamps, and Bureau rather than Office in its meaning of a department for transacting specific business. To brighten up the unavoidable black and white letterpress of those early days I

introduced a coloured letter heading, choosing Winsor's Purple to get away from the Post Office red of the Minister's correspondence, while still maintaining the royal association. The logo, an outline of perforations, was possibly hackneyed but very clear in showing its association with stamps.

Handling charge

One of my spare-time interests is model engineering and in consequence I was very conscious of the problem of working out postage on mail order items. I was also aware of the excessive charges some suppliers made for postage and packing. I therefore, introduced a modest flat charge – the handling charge – to cover an average return postage and which, since stamps were regarded as cash, had to include the registration fee where appropriate. To offset the charge to some degree, stamps to the value of the handling charge were fixed to a receipt,



RECEIPT FOR HANDLING CHARGE

cancelled with the Bureau handstamp and enclosed with the order. Stamps of interest to collectors were used and cancellation done carefully to create a collectable item.

Handling Foreign Orders

Foreign trade very quickly built up and almost all foreign orders were accompanied by cheques drawn on country of origin banks. The cheques had to be sent to the Bank of England via our accountants department for encashment. This took several weeks and, although the cheques were listed separately by currency, payment was made by lump sums related only to the total value of the all the cheques forwarded. The accountants could not offer any speedier service or relate the returns to the individual cheques. I then found that every overseas bank had a branch or agency in London and was able to get sterling cheques by return post on payment of a clearance fee of one shilling (5p) per cheque plus an assurance that I would meet the cost of any dishonoured cheque. This immediately speeded up treatment of orders and in the first year's

working only one cheque was returned "RD". A customer could now be sent an invoice detailing the overseas currency received, the realized sterling, the 1s. deduction, the value of the order and the handling charge, which greatly helped in speedy turnaround of orders, my aim being to despatch within 3 days of receipt of the order.

Other Facilities

From the start, collectors were offered First Day Cover and Deposit Account services. Two FDC options were offered – stamps affixed to their own envelopes or to envelopes provided by the Bureau. For the Shakespeare issue the service was advertised in the national press, much against my advice. In consequence we were overwhelmed and many readers will, no doubt, remember the inordinate delays that arose in despatching the covers.

The Deposit Account facility enabled collectors to lodge cash with the Bureau, against which they could place individual or standing orders thus greatly simplifying matters for them.

Stock lists were dated and produced in small numbers by duplicator. Each reprint was updated so that for all practical purposes the stock list was always up to date when issued. New items were prefaced with NEW in the margin so that they came immediately to attention. Warning of withdrawal of an item was given by underlining it for a month before its withdrawal became effective. The modern method of indicating it by shading was not, of course, possible with typewritten production. A stock list was enclosed with each completed order and with each issue of the *Bulletin*.

Finale

The system in those early months was very fluid and I was able to respond quickly to any need for change. Behind the scenes I was continually modifying the organization to cope with the growth and with a constantly changing temporary staff but, so far as collectors were concerned, all the essentials had been foreseen and what changes were made were in detail only. It is satisfying to note that there seems not to have been a need for any major new service for collectors in the 28 years since I left the Bureau. The biggest organizational change will have been computerization and that lay years ahead.

The illustrations of the early Bureau are from the Post Office Photographic Library. We would be interested to hear from readers who have other photographs of the Bureau in its infant days. Ed.

1992 Special Stamps Poll

Continued from April

Gilbert & Sullivan

I was somewhat surprised that this set did not feature higher in the poll as the subject is quintessentially British. The detractors found the designs fussy and too similar throughout the set. Those who liked them did so mainly for the fond memories the stamps evoked of performances of Gilbert & Sullivan and/or of a bygone era. K Grounds of Essex expressed his view that the set "is truly British and a good ambassador..."; for D Hillier of Kent they "tickled the mind into recalling happy memories of operettas enjoyed". E Baker, of the Greater Eastside Stamp Society in Washington, USA took a poll amongst 38 members of the Society, finding Gilbert & Sullivan "a prominent winner".

W Lacey of New Zealand voted Gilbert & Sullivan his "unenthusiastic third", finding them "too consciously stagey" although he pointed out that his family liked them best of all. Mrs W Borthwick of Edinburgh observed that the 28p stamp "was splendid in the pyramid – a most successful Christmas gift". Karen Langley of Berkshire wrote: "They are bright, full of life and movement. How much vitality can you get in one small square?" Dr T Sloan, age 80 of Perthshire, remarked that he had enjoyed the Savoy operas since the 1920s and exclaimed "what a pity the stamps cannot actually be heard."

G Doyle of Wolverhampton not only liked the stamps but the postmarks that accompanied them: "Gilbert & Sullivan are a British institution and a suitable, dignified theme for a British stamp issue. The design is vibrant, theatrical yet simple, but offering postmark potential for collectors of FDCs." A *Yearbook* will be on its way to Mr Doyle.

The Green Issue

When it comes to childrens' paintings, *Bulletin* readers seem to love them or hate them used as stamp designs. In general whilst you don't decry the efforts of the children you would prefer not to see their work on stamps. That said there were a number of very complimentary remarks about the Green issue designs and much praise for the idea of stamps bringing to our attention the plight

of the Earth. "Who better than children", wrote C Bond of Cheshire, "to show us adults the folly of our ways." For A Keir of Somerset the stamps "highlight the most important issue of the day – the very existence of our planet. This 'Red Alert' from children has the great advantage of being simple and unsophisticated." Aaron Rickman, age 10¾ of Middlesex, thought the issue "goes straight to the point, especially the Acid Rain stamp." Several commented not only on the importance of childrens' interest in the environment but in stamp collecting, thus Mrs D McMillan of Hampshire: "Colourful and unusual designs by children who will be encouraged to look and collect stamps themselves." Mrs A Allison of Kent thinks "asking children to submit designs encourages a life long interest in philately". There was approval for "a more 'open' competition for the stamp design" from P Brenchley of Hants; the Green issue resulted from some 30,000 designs submitted as part of a BBC Blue Peter competition (see July 1992 *Bulletin*, pp. 243-4).

Whilst J Worrall of Jersey considered the issue "the most inappropriate and uninspiring", J Carpenter of Bedford found "it stands alone as a popular current statement. Other issues for 1992 could be entitled History or Nostalgia. Congratulations to... the young designers." A Brewer of Norfolk wins a *Yearbook* for his comment: "Simply brilliant. The mournful face on the wilting flowers with 25 black rain drops says it all. I hope we shall see more designs from 9 year old Christopher Hall."

Last words on this issue to S Bonney of Harrow: "Green issue – ugh! This appears to be Royal Mail's attempt to jump on a 2 year old bandwagon. Am I alone in thinking that special stamps should not be issued to celebrate Royal Mail's commitment to the environment? Together with the Olympics stamps (only issued because Royal Mail were the sponsors), this creates an alarming trend in Royal Mail self-publicity."

Single European Market

When this stamp was announced in the August *Bulletin* I expected a considerable postbag on its controversial design. Less than 10 of you wrote in with any comment – good or bad – but you more than made up for it with your comments on the Stamps Poll form. The vast majority disliked this stamp, mostly for its design, some for both design and what it represents. As expected there were numerous suggestions as to what Mr Hockney's star really was – a yellow

ghost, banana skin, starfish, or Mr Therm. Mrs M Lauder of Surrey "couldn't see what a discarded banana skin had to do with Europe – but then I read about the ERM!" C Halifax of Surrey thought this stamp and the Green issue "truly awful and make me doubt the sanity of those who choose designs for stamps."

But it wasn't all doom and gloom. D Bennett of Lancashire wrote: "Lovely to own a genuine Hockney print! I bet this is the year's most controversial stamp, but I for one applaud the involvement of important contemporary artists in popular design." R Moffat of Bucks "loves the absurd and what is more absurd than a dancing starfish on a stamp." S Grandi of the USA wrote "A striking and memorable stamp",



J Owen of Cheshire thought Hockney's stamp "captures the exciting prospect of the Single European Market as a bright spark in an otherwise financially gloomy future." For R Royston of London, "it is simple and striking and above all looks like a stamp. It uses no more than two basic colours, as do most of the classic commemoratives up to the mid-1960s." Both Mrs R Spencer of Bedfordshire and Mrs Halnan of Middlesex recorded their approval of the stamp when used on mail. Sometimes we forget stamps are primarily for use on mail rather than just for display on album pages.

Finally some advice to Mr Hockney from J Allistone of Dorset: "If this is the best Mr Hockney can do with a computer I would suggest that he returns to his palette... and carries on painting telephone directory covers."

Christmas

From David Hockney's star, generated by a computer, we turn to Victorian stained glass featured on the Christmas set, described by C Gnech of Italy as "five little masterpieces", and by J Miller of Devon as "quite simply the finest set of Christmas stamps I've seen." Many of you wrote about the true meaning of Christmas as shown on the stamps. For L Grout of Windsor, "it was an admirable depiction of the timeless

mystery of the Incarnation – an opportunity for reflection in a busy world." T Hunt of London thought it "brave of Royal Mail to feature the work of fine but little-known artists from an unfashionable period." Mrs S Strettle of Tyne & Wear writes "as some one who stuck some 5000 commemorative stamps on first day covers in 1992, the Christmas issue was one I couldn't tire of."

Several noted the general popularity of the stamps in terms of their use on mail. K Gough of Staffs wrote: "they epitomised everything that a Christmas stamp should be – joyful, artistic, clear – obviously the public thought so – every Christmas card (of over 100 that I received) had a Christmas stamp attached." G Izmidlian of Lincs commented "I am sure that this year we have received more 18p Christmas stamps than ever before", adding "as previous ones have been almost too awful to use." M Reynolds of London wins a *Yearbook* for his observation: "As a set and individually they are striking and models of clear, appropriate design. They will give added pleasure to the senders and recipients of Christmas Greetings."

Greetings (Memories)

The main criticism of this issue was that whilst the complete block of 10 stamps looked attractive, single stamps torn off and used on mail tended to look a bit odd. However there was praise for the concept of memories and nostalgia and for Mrs H Bolam of Berkshire they were "the best yet set of Greetings stamps." R Vogt of Germany thinks "collectors can be proud of the Memories issue... it's the best I ever saw." A Wotton of London thought the Memories "crowned a truly wonderful selection.... 1992 has in my view been the best year ever for stamp issues." Janet Davis of Bucks appreciated the Memories, "such a tremendous contrast to the Horrible Smiles stamps." This set "prompted" N Whitehead of Cumbria, "to write to old friends" and P Domone of the USA suggested "they seem to emphasise the ancient art of letter-writing which is what after all what stamps used to be associated with." From A Tinsey of Middlesex came the welcome comment that "being all low values", they should "encourage children to collect stamps." Your views on the nostalgia evoked by these stamps was succinctly put by M Williams of Hants: "A much welcomed blast from the past!" Mrs E Luscombe of Windsor voted Greetings her most popular set because "of two negative reactions. Firstly, my relief at having a attractive set of Greetings

stamps after its predecessors! Secondly, my opinion that most 1992 sets were either ugly or odd!"

Conclusion

As always a considerable number of you added to the poll form general comments about the year's issues. There were requests for greater clarity of a stamp's value, P Dawson of Morayshire found them particularly difficult to see on the 24p and 28p Wintertime stamps. Ann Gardner of Somerset pleaded: "If only designers would consider the partially sighted, of whom there are millions." R Featherstone of Hants asked for an end to square-shaped stamps – a format which, in his opinion, "spoils any stamp." Miss P Walton of Wolverhampton believes "there is too much colour" in special stamp designs and "you keep moving The Queen's head from side to side." R Shaw of Essex wondered why Tennyson warranted four stamps whereas Hardy had just one; he asked for "more children designed stamps, they know what needs saying!" D Chakrabarty of Co Durham makes an interesting suggestion: "instead of having a poll after the stamps have been issued, why not have a poll before the final adopted design has been selected, giving us philatelists the chance to express our preference. I know the problems involved in this would be quite considerable, but for one issue it would be worth it just to have the definitive collectors' stamp!" I think for one set per year this would be an excellent idea but I far from sure my colleagues in Royal Mail would agree.

I am not so sure I agree with the suggestion of Mrs J Ward of the USA: "... a stamp for Mrs Thatcher as the first woman Premier, even if it was with other women honoured or Premiers (except Ted Heath)." A set on British Prime Ministers would appeal to me but no one could be so honoured until after their death. I doubt that at present Lady Thatcher and Sir Edward Heath would want to appear on stamps in the same set!

For Mrs M Pullan of Sussex "many of the year's designs are unclear as to what they are trying to say – children coming out of The Queen's left ear (Happy & Glorious final stamp), three-legged octopus on an ice cream cone (Green Issue 28p), a stone on a yellow background (Green 33p), a dancing ghost (Single European Market), etc...."

"From a generally poor year", writes B Hodgkinson of Cyprus, "only Wintertime best satisfies all the basic stamp design maxims: Pertinacy, Intelligibility, Aesthetic appeal, avoiding design or colour crudity; and

appreciation of final product size." This comment wins him a *Yearbook*. E Dow of Surrey believes that "for the nation that produces the outstanding best definitives (low values), the special stamps are very disappointing." R Bubb of Birmingham opines: "After 1991's Dinosaurs and Maps I felt that at last Royal Mail had progressed to a new height. These sets were excellent. We have now come back to average issues." For F West of Essex, "there's a scrap of hope in the 'rag-bag' that the Royal Mail has dumped on us this year. Most stamps show little design skill and few have original ideas. I suggest, for example, you look at Canada's recent 'Blueberry' stamps to see a fresh, clean-looking modern design."

P Hampshire of London, asking for "No more stylised designs", comments: "I would also like to ask exactly what weight is given to these polls? I seem to recall that an article said that stylised designs are not liked – and yet the disgraceful Single European Market stamp escaped." Mrs E Eastwood of Lancashire writes: "I wish to register a protest about the ugliness of most of the stamp sets in 1992. These stamps must be some of the most unattractive ever produced in this country."

But for every voice of dissent there was one of praise. Mrs E Meuret of France thought "1992 was a particularly good year for stamps and it was difficult to decide which set was best." She made an interesting comment on the Christmas set: "Some Christmas sets in the past have been disasters, when works of art have been reduced to stamp size (e.g. 1967, 1971, 1976). The secret is obviously to concentrate on one detail only." D Blake of Spain comments: "I honestly feel wasn't a bad set among them this year... You're making it harder to choose!" Similarly J Rapley of Somerset: "Not an easy decision with a well above average range of issues." Finally F Schlador of California, USA: "Thanks for a year of outstanding stamps!"

My thanks to all who entered the poll and who wrote comments, favourable or otherwise, about the 1992 stamps. I enjoyed reading your remarks and hope they will be of equal interest to my colleagues in the Stamp Design, Production and Marketing sections of Royal Mail. One thing is abundantly clear, collectors do look carefully at British stamps and have strongly-held beliefs as to what they want to see and what they feel British stamp design should represent. For the most part the stamps of 1992 seem to have been better received than those of 1991. I look forward to your comments on the 1993 issues.

Artists of Distinction

Henry Spencer Moore (1898–1986) was born at Castleford, Yorkshire, the son of a miner. He was trained in Leeds (where he met the sculptor Barbara Hepworth) and at the Royal College of Art in London. He taught sculpture at the college from 1924–31 and at the Chelsea School of Art, 1931–39. He travelled in France, Italy, Spain, the USA and Greece and was an official war artist in 1940–42.

Amongst his many well-known works are “North Wind” for the London Transport Building in London in 1928 (also included are works by Sir Jacob Epstein and Eric Gill), the “Madonna and Child” in St Matthew’s Church, Northampton (1943–4), his decorative frieze for the Time-Life Building, Bond Street, London (1952–3) and his reclining figures for the UNESCO Building in Paris (1958) and the Lincoln Center, New York (1965).

A good number of his sculptures can be seen in London parks – “Three Standing Figures” (1948) in Battersea Park (also a bronze, “Single

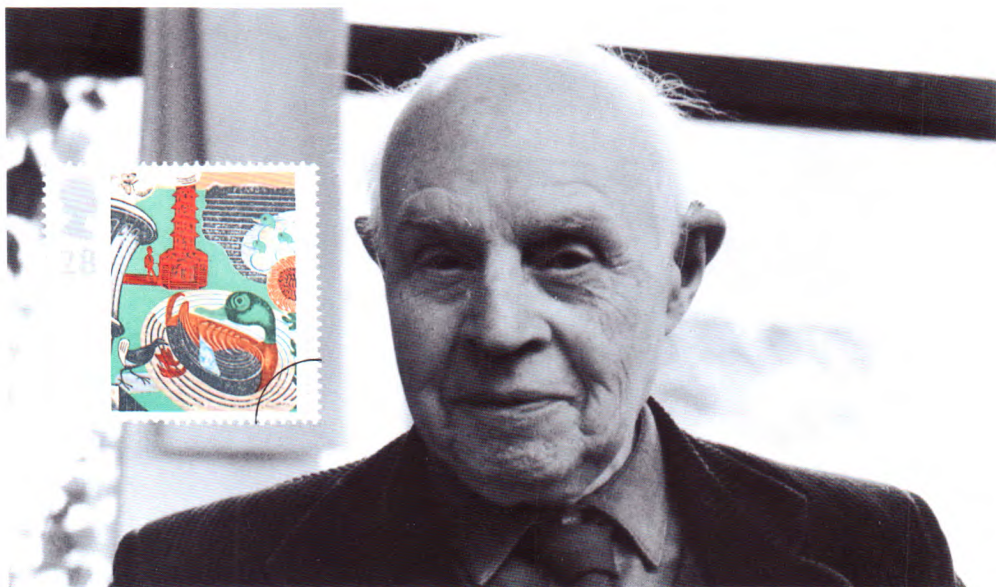
Form”, 1961–2, by Hepworth), “Standing Figure and Knife Edge” (1979) in Greenwich Park; “The Arch” (1929) in Hyde Park; and “Locking Pieces” (1968) on Millbank.

Moore advocated direct carving, using material to express natural forms in stone, bronze and wood. He is widely recognised as one of the most original and powerful of modern sculptors, noted especially for figures and groups in a semi-abstract style. His work is often said to show influence of primitive influences of African and Mexican art. One of his detractors commented that his work is “at times repetitive, solemn, almost tedious with gravitas”

Moore, who was highly regarded by his contemporary artists, was made a Companion of Honour in 1955 and received the Order of Merit in 1963 – one of a relatively small select band to have received these two prestigious honours.

Edward Bawden (1903–89) was born in Braintree, an ironmonger’s son, he lived in Essex





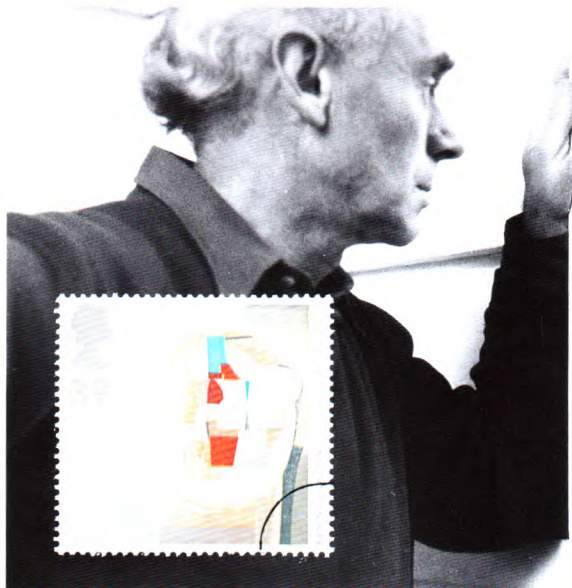
for most of his life. As a water colourist, he had, as one of his contemporaries observed, "the remarkable ability of reducing complex forms to a direct shorthand pattern of brush strokes: from the large shapes down to small details this sprightly calligraphy is sustained."

Equally at home with book illustration, murals, poster advertising, even fabric design, he allowed his talents generous room for manoeuvre. His greatest achievements were

probably his linocuts, which helped elevate a craft skill to an art form. Bawden's work is firmly rooted in the scenes and traditions of his native country and, in particular, of the eastern counties.

Sir Stanley Spencer (1891-1959) was born at Cookham, Berkshire where he spent most of his life. He studied at the Slade School of Art (1908-12), developing a linear drawing style which





characterises much of his work. During the First World War he served in Macedonia which inspired some of his inter-war paintings. He was an official war artist during the 1939-45 War, producing famous depictions of ship building on the Clyde.

Amongst his best known works are the murals (1926-32) in the Oratory of All Souls – a memorial chapel at Burghclere, Hants, built by Mr & Mrs Behrend in memory of H W Sandham who was killed in the war. The walls are painted with superb scenes from the Salonika front, including a great tumble of white crosses. This is considered by some as Spencer's masterpiece. The murals reflect the life of the ordinary British soldier set against the Macedonian landscape, or within the walls of a field hospital. A painting behind the altar shows resurrection on the Salonika front. These works have been described as "the most important series of decorative paintings produced in England this century". The chapel is now in the care of the National Trust.

Spencer was an eccentric character, specialising in unfashionable religious subjects, especially the resurrection theme. His work has been compared to that of William Blake. He transported his paints and easel on an old pram, becoming a familiar sight in the Cookham area where a Spencer Gallery is now located. A pencil self-portrait can be seen in the National Portrait Gallery in London. Spencer was knighted shortly before his death.

Ben Nicholson (1894-1982) was born at Dedham, Buckinghamshire, son of Sir William Nicholson (1872-1949), an artist inspired by Monet and Whistler and noted for poster works, his contribution to Queen Mary's Dolls House at Windsor Castle and his painting "The Gold Jug" (1937) in the Royal Collection.

Ben was trained at the Slade School where he spent much time playing billiards with Paul Nash. He exhibited in Paris in 1933-4 and at the Venice Biennale in 1954. He designed murals for the Festival of Britain (1951) and the Time-Life Building (1952). His second wife was the eminent sculptor (Dame) Barbara Hepworth.

Nicholson was a leading abstract artist, using conventional still-life objects as starting points for firmly drawn and subtle coloured variations. He is said to have been inspired by austere forms of Cubism and the work of Piet Mondrian. Nicholson worked from a studio in Hampstead and from 1958 to 1971 lived in Switzerland. His works can be seen in the Tate Gallery, at the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art in Edinburgh and at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. His international reputation was such that he received the first Guggenheim Award in 1957 and the Order of Merit in 1968.

Stamps featuring the works of these noted artists go on sale at post offices, the British Philatelic Bureau, Collections, philatelic counters and selected post shops on 11 May. The stamps were previewed here last month.

Decimal Stamp Books – 7

Specialist Report

D G A MYALL

New window books

Five new red books with Non Value Indicator stamps (NVIs) were issued on 6 April. They comprise: books of 4 x 1st and 10 x 1st printed in photogravure by Harrison & Sons Ltd. on phosphorised paper; books of 4 x 2nd and 10 x 1st printed in lithography by Walsall Security Printers Ltd on non-phosphorised paper, and books of 10 x 2nd printed by the House of Questa, also on non-phosphorised paper. The Harrison books of four are the first from this firm since December 1989 and required a new cylinder, B8.

With the exception of the Walsall books, referred to later, the covers are unchanged from those used for the post-Olympic books and have the same blue barcodes. The contents, however, incorporate several significant changes as part of Royal Mail's drive to deter fraudulent misuse of stamps and to improve electronic sorting of mail.

machinery to produce. The ellipse is the length of three normal holes and is placed at the bottom of the left and right sides.

The *gauge* of the Walsall perforation has changed from perf. 14 to perf. 15 x 14, the same as Harrison's and Questa's. Another change is that the production of window book panes with straight edges has ceased. Strictly speaking, these have never been part of Royal Mail's specification and, indeed, Questa's panes have always been perforated all round. These changes mean that the product of all three printers is now uniformly perforated.

OBA-free papers

Papers with different coating compositions are required for photogravure and lithographic stamp printing, but those used for the new books have one thing in common: they contain no Optical Brightening Agent (OBA). These OBA-free papers look very creamy in ordinary daylight and, having no fluorescence, look quite black under an ultra violet lamp. Basically, there are two kinds of OBA-free paper. One is non-phosphorised and is used for stamps which are to have phosphor bars overprinted on them; the other has the phosphor incorporated into the coating. This phosphor coating is the same as that used for the former so-called Advanced Coated Paper (ACP). In other words, it has the same violet afterglow as ACP, but because it has no fluorescence collectors will need to distinguish it. It is suggested that the papers be referred to as OBA-free non-phosphorised paper (OFNP) and OBA-free phosphorised paper (OFPP).

Fluorescent phosphor ink

Although fluorescent substances are no longer to be used in the manufacture of stamp papers, they are not being abandoned altogether. A fluor which shows up bright yellow under ultra violet light is added to the phosphor inks used to overprint the bars in some of the new books. This ink was first used on the 18p Enschedé sheet stamp and is now being brought into general use. Collectors who have had difficulty in seeing the former "A" phosphor bars will have no trouble with the new ink and will, I am sure, be grateful for it. I hope that Douglas Muir's



Harrison 4 x 1st class, cylinder B8 (6 April 1993).

Elliptical perforations

The most noticeable change is the introduction of elliptical perforations to small format stamps. Hitherto, these have been seen only on high values and Greetings stamps. This innovation will eventually be introduced to all definitives although they are unlikely to be seen in the 50p and £1 machine vend books until the next tariff change. Elliptical perforations are not designed to improve separation of stamps from each other but will inhibit forgery as they require expensive

felicitous suggestion (*Bulletin*, January 1992) that it be referred to as 'C' phosphor is adopted.

Both panes of 2nd-class stamps have a 4mm phosphor band. The *Questa* version is offset slightly to the right of centre and is printed from interrupted bands so that each stamp has a bar which is short at top and bottom. Walsall stamps have uninterrupted bands placed centrally over the stamps. A surprising development is that the Walsall 1st-class stamps (but not Harrison's) have two phosphor bars.

The Automatic Letter Facing (ALF) machines are being replaced by faster Toshiba sorters. These can cope with narrower phosphor bars than those printed by the standard 9.5mm wide bands. This is possibly the reason why the bands on the panes in Walsall's book of 1st-class NVIs are only 7mm wide, giving a narrow bar at left and right.

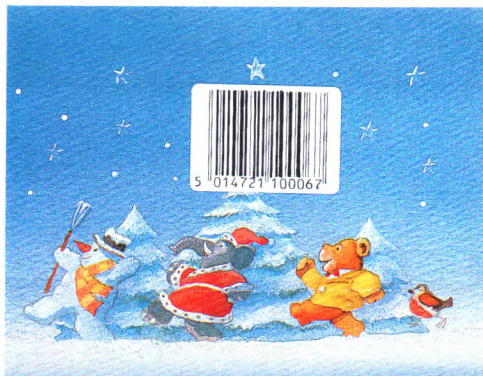
Walsall book assembly

The new panes have meant a change in Walsall's methods of assembly. Those I have seen have all been torn from the printed sheet and are affixed to the covers in the manner described here in January 1993 regarding the books issued last September. However, the covers for the new books are still sealed with a single non-latex gum spot. The September books were a trial in preparation for the ones just issued, so whether the new-style Walsall panes will appear in covers sealed with the latex adhesive remains to be seen. The new covers are a full 50mm wide, compared with the former 48mm, and provide plenty of room for the panes to be affixed without any danger of the edges being scuffed, as sometimes happens with the *Questa* books.

One Walsall feature familiar to specialist collectors seems to have disappeared from the panes of 10 (it ceased to exist on panes of four about March 1991). I refer to the horizontal coloured bar in the binding margin. This occurred on one book from each printer's sheet and was used to align the sheets with the perforator. Bar books, as they are known, have not been seen since the Rupert advert. book and it looks as if the mark is no longer required, unless, of course, it has been placed too wide to appear in any of the finished books.

Barcodes

Thanks to reader Graham Smith I am able to reveal the secret of the missing barcode No.6 mentioned here in November 1992. This was allocated to packs containing 36 2nd-class Christmas special stamps issued in November 1987 and sold through retailers. The code was



1987 Christmas pack, bar code label on cellophane wrapper.

on a self-adhesive label and would have been thrown away when the pack was undone. Packs sold at Post Offices did not carry a barcode.

Inadvertently, the Greetings presentation pack launched on 2 February 1993 carried the same barcode as the Greetings book itself. Since these retailed at £2.70 and £2.40 respectively, instructions were issued to de-activate the barcode on both products. It is not intended to reprint them with the correct codes.

Incidentally, the new books of 10 from Harrison and Walsall can be distinguished although they carry the same barcode. The one on Walsall's book has slightly smaller figures than that on Harrison's.

© D G A Myall

Royal Marriage Postmark

Shown here is the special postmark to be used on 6 June to commemorate the marriage of Crown Prince Naruhito Hironomiya of Japan. Covers should be sent, by 6 June, to: South East SHC, Royal Mail, WINDSOR SL4 1AA. The Prince was a student at Oxford.

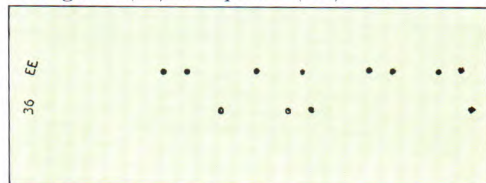


Phosphor Coding, OCR Dots and Idents

PATRICK G AWCOCK
of Postal Mechanisation Study Circle

The blue phosphor coding dots which now appear on a large proportion of machineable mail in this country do indeed constitute a category of postal markings, relevant to its era, just as much as the stamp or cancellation. The history goes back to early trials at Luton in the 1960s, then more trials at Norwich gradually turning into operational running, then at Croydon (1969), London EC (1970) gradually spreading through the country in the 1970s (Luton was dropped, only being used as a trial office). All these were clear phosphor dots, all visible to the naked eye but only with care, and such items were missed by many collectors. Indeed some of the early material is much sought after by "mechanisation collectors" and carry substantial price tags. Later the dots turned blue to bring mechanisation more readily to our attention, and shades of blue and turquoise have since been used. These coding dots are currently being applied at 81 Mechanised Letter Offices in the UK.

A complete address code consists of two rows of dots: the lower row represents the first half of the postcode eg B91, whilst the upper row represents the second half of the postcode eg 3AF, for the postcode B91 3AF. In each case the square dot at the right is the "start dot" showing the machine reading the code where to start. However, readers may well have noticed that sometimes only the lower row of dots is present, and in this case the pattern of dots is quite different. The most common reason for this is the absence of the postcode in the address. These are called "extract codes" since in this case the coding desk operator has had to key in a sequence of letters extracted from the name of the post town, to enable the letter to be partially machine sorted to the town concerned, after which it must



September Bulletin Anglophile
National Postal Museum
King Edward Street
LONDON EC1A 1LP

Postcoded mail – standard phosphor dots and ink-jet PE ident

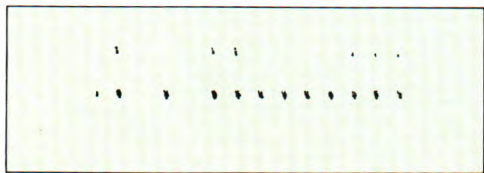
be manually handled – a much more time-consuming process.

It is normal for letters/numbers to be printed to the left of these code dots. These are usually printed sideways: a two-digit number appears against the lower row of dots eg 36, and this indicates which *coding desk* actually applied the code dots, whilst a pair of letters appears against the upper row of dots eg EE, and this indicates the actual *operator* who keyed in the postcode or extract of the address. Both of these are used operationally to help detect more quickly any fault which may arise. Since they *identify* the machine or operator, collectors have coined the term "ident" to cover these markings.

The coding desk idents described above are those normally in current use, and readers may look for slight variations. In particular they can look for items coded at Gloucester eg L1, or Worcester eg 2A, where the *letter* indicates the coding desk and the number acts as a "quality of service" check, since 1 denotes Monday, 2 Tuesday etc, so an element of the date has been incorporated into these idents. York desk idents include the letter Y, eg Y2, to distinguish their idents from those of other offices, thus even for mail which carries no postmark the source office can (in this case) be identified. Romford and Dartford will shortly receive new equipment, but currently (January 1993) are still using older coding desks where (at Romford) the operator ident consists of two upright letters (example shown below), and (at Dartford) the desk idents consist of a single letter/number eg L.

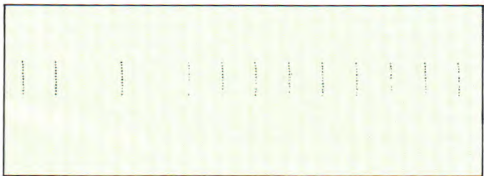
Optical Character Recognition

Royal Mail have installed 48 Optical Character Recognition (OCR) systems (17 in 1987-8, 28 in 1990-1 and 3 in 1991-2) which are capable of reading typewritten addresses at speeds of up to 30,000 per hour. Mail sorted by these machines receives similar phosphor markings, although they look like vertical bars rather than circular dots. In fact each bar consists of three fine dots in a vertical line (if the background is white) or four pairs of dots (when the background is darker) printed by an ink-jet printer.



OCR vertical bar phosphor markings

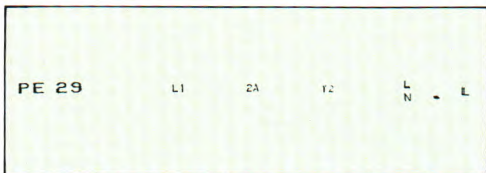
The printers on these OCR machines were changed in 1992 (mainly Sep.-Dec.) to new Domino printers which print a series of very fine dots, producing a fine vertical line which is not always easily seen by the naked eye. (The individual dots are rarely seen as clearly as in the example illustrated).



OCR Domino printer marks

The second batch of OCRs can also show an ink-jet printed ident in black towards the top left of the envelope, e.g. PE 29 where PE= Peterborough and 29 is the day of the month the

item passed through the OCR. If this ident appears on an envelope with manual coding, it indicates that the item passed through the OCR but for some reason (maybe the address was handwritten) the OCR was unable to read it. Very few of these ident printers remain in use in 1993.



OCR, ink-jet printed ident (PE=Peterborough)

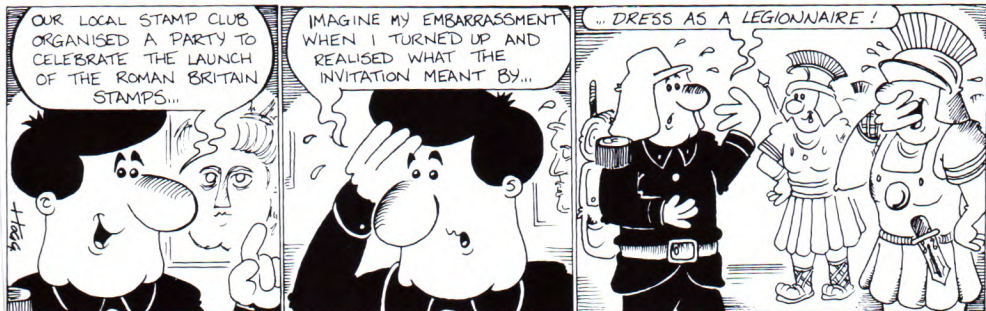
Readers should look out for new developments which will gradually start to appear in 1993. These will include a completely new type of code marking referred to as a 'four-state code' marking and will appear both printed in black by large mailing houses and in phosphor instead of the current code markings.

There are many other varieties that occur from time to time, sometimes only for a short period. Readers interested in "catching the bug", and who wish to enquire about Postal Mechanisation Study Circle membership, should write to Tom Mullins, 27 Elizabeth Road, Hunters Ride, HENLEY-ON-THAMES, Oxon, RG9 1RA.

© Patrick G Awcock

A sharp-eyed reader noted some incorrect postcodes on the map on page 165 of the March issue – HO should be HD (Huddersfield), BA, in south Wales should be SA (Swansea) and BN, next to BS should be SN (Swindon). On the London area map LG should be IG (Ilford). The area to the right of DH (Durham) should have been coded SR (Sunderland).

CUSTOMER KNOWS BEST.



The Royal Mail Stamp Advisory Committee: First Review

The Review assessed

STUART ROSE CBE *Director of Design, The Post Office 1968-1976*

In all the years that I was involved with the Stamp Advisory Committee I could never understand why the Post Office cast such a cloak of secrecy around its proceedings, for it wasn't as if we were dealing with classified material nor that we could put the nation's security at risk. Admittedly things did begin to get a little warm when Tony Benn, as Postmaster General, sought to remove The Queen's effigy from the stamps. But normally, as can be seen from this review, discussions at Committee meetings was pretty dull stuff and certainly held no official secrets! So the attempt to lift but one corner of the veil in this publication is to be welcomed and I can only hope that progressively the PO will allow a similar review to be made of all issues which have been subject to SAC scrutiny for nearly half a century.

But in saying that maybe I should try to put the record straight on the history of the SAC. It is always claimed by the PO that the Committee was established in 1968; indeed Sir Bryan Nicholson, past Chairman, repeats the claim in his introduction to this *Review*. It is of course quite true that the PO took over control of the existing Committee in that year for the first time, by disbanding it in favour of a new complement nominated by the PMG, and appointing a PO Chairman, in the shape of the Director of Operations and Overseas whose department was responsible for stamp production.

It is not generally known that the idea of setting up an Advisory Panel on the design of stamps was first mooted in 1944 when the President of the Board of Trade, Dr Hugh Dalton, established the Council of Industrial Design whose function was to raise the standard of design in British Industry.

For many years the PMG had been advised in matters of art by his own Advisory Panel composed of Garter King of Arms, the Director of the National Gallery and the Royal Fine Art Commission for Scotland. Inevitably its advice tended to be fine-art based, so with the establishment of the Council of Industrial Design it was hoped that the new advisory committee

would be able to steer its advice along professional design rather than fine-art lines.

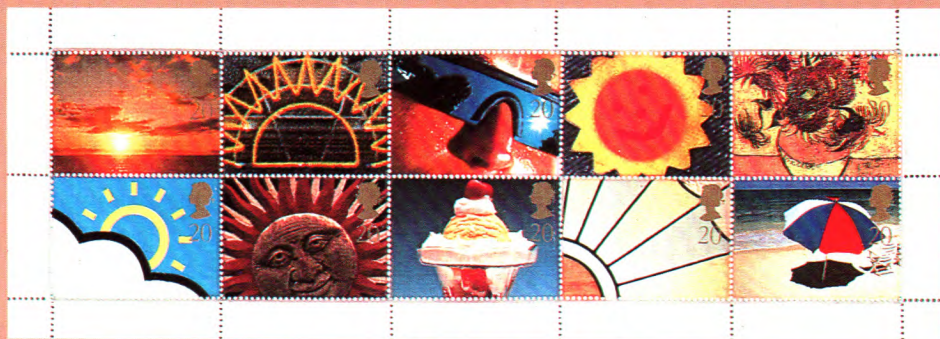
For a start the COID's function was seen to be only that of advising the PO on the choice of designers, having no authority or influence over what designs were submitted to the King. Added to which the concept of industrial design as opposed to fine art was not widely understood. It was some years therefore before the PO was prepared to forego its assumption that the PMG, with his Advisory Panel had the right to alter, add to or otherwise amend the COID's recommended selection and to accept the position of the COID as being the overall professional consultative body.

It speaks well for the PO therefore that on the first occasion of a new commemorative issue after the war, in 1946, the – Victory issue – it should have asked the COID to suggest names of designers who should be asked to submit designs. Later the PO was persuaded to allow the COID to advise on the final selection of submissions to the King.

This is not the place to go into the many years of an uneasy relationship between the PO and the COID which followed, but suffice it to say that ultimately between the two of them they managed to produce some extremely distinguished stamps and laid the foundation of an highly professional standard of stamp design which has persisted, with but a few notable exceptions, up until today. I was fortunate enough to serve on both the COID and the later PO committee and I am therefore a little sad that proper regard has not been paid to the remarkable work of that first COID Committee.

In 1947 the COID formerly constituted its own Stamps Advisory Committee under the Chairmanship of Sir Francis Meynell, Typographical Adviser to the PMG. When Sir Francis retired in 1950, his place was taken by Sir Kenneth ("Civilization") Clark, later to become Lord Clark.

The next 20 years saw the COID gradually refining the make-up of the Committee by nominating more designers to serve on it and the PO itself becoming increasingly more



Greetings (Trickett and Webb) – Value and Queen's head difficult to see.

professional in its understanding of design direction. But it was not until the creation of the post of Design Director in 1968 that the PO took the really decisive step to define and pursue a policy of professional design production. The fact that that policy is still being followed is amply demonstrated in this *Review*.

In the main this is an handsome-looking publication, but I do question whether the typographical treatment properly meets the editorial demands of the text. Basically this is a work of reference in so far as the text can only be read intelligently by constant reference to the relevant illustrations. The very formal design grid is too inflexible for that relationship to happen and there are some glaring examples of where it breaks down completely. Look at pages 20 and 21 where the Tennyson illustrations face the Europa text, pages 24 and 25 with Europa facing the Civil War and on pages 28 and 29 where the Civil War stamps are faced by Gilbert and Sullivan text. It almost looks as though the

Review typographer had not read the text before he designed the layout. Had he done so it would surely have suggested to him a two-column setting with the illustrations arranged in a more logical and flexible manner without being controlled by an wholly inappropriate grid.

I wonder too whether closer co-operation between author and designer would not have overcome the rather irritating situation in which the author goes to some length to explain detailed modifications to the design without the support of a relevant illustration, as in *Happy and Glorious*, so destroying the point of the textual comment. Nor is it always clear what the finally printed stamps look like, for the reader to be able to make that comparison is surely the whole point and interest of the *Review*.

If there are to be further *Reviews*, and I sincerely hope there will be (and that ultimately all issues of stamps before and after 1968 will be subject to a similar analysis), then I seriously recommend that a wholly new design style be

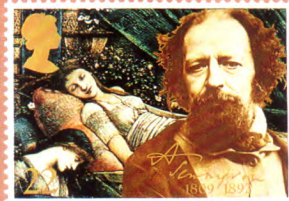


Happy & Glorious: Alan Fletcher/Pentagram Design



Gilbert & Sullivan: Paul Cox.

Europa: Keith Bassford.



Tennyson: Irene von Trescow.

adopted the better to accommodate the particular nature of the text. It could be that intelligibility could be improved if individual illustrations were captioned to explain the particular stage of design development they illustrate.

On the question of make-up I am of a generation which still looks for a degree of conventionality in book-making and I find the omission of a traditional title-page disturbing; particularly when some of the essential information, such as the name of the author and the date of publication, are relegated to the back page where they are barely discernable, thanks to the ludicrously small size of type and the paleness of the printing ink.

I was disturbed too to find on a number of presentation visuals, and even first time essays, the monarch's effigy, the value numerals and even

some captions were so recessive as to be well-nigh illegible. Surely it doesn't need a comment from the SAC to put right such a basic mistake. I hope this need not point to a gap in the initial brief, because these are fundamental questions.

By and large the *Review* is an interesting publication and for £9.87 not a bad buy. I do hope however that some effort will be made to correct some of the errors before the next *Review* is published.

The Royal Mail Stamp Advisory Committee First Review, covering the special and greetings stamps of 1992, is available from the British Philatelic Bureau, Collections, philatelic counters, and selected post shops. Price £9.87. Early ordering is advised.



£10 Definitive

I received a few letters about the new stamp. Most of your comments were covered in a letter from Sqn Ldr J H Witherow of Hertfordshire, who writes:

"The stamp appears to be an innovative progression into new fields – this is always of interest to collectors – and is a worthy addition to complement our other high values.

"The novel security features tend, for a start, to move this stamp into the classification of a small security document in the voucher-cum-banknote category. I have often wondered why British stamps had not already been subject to security features as, for example, have the Hong Kong definitives, namely by phosphor overprint of a badge design etc.

"One facet in the preparation of this stamp seems strange; this is the Braille feature. One suspects that it in fact is being used as an additional security feature, rather than any sincere attempt to aid the visually handicapped. Really, how many blind people are going to require to use the Braille identification of a £10 stamp? They could very well do this already by means of the double-oval perforations! I suspect that the purists will suggest, in fairly poor taste, that this is some sort of trial for future use of Braille. On the other hand, one wonders why *all* our stamps are not Braille embossed; that would be a much more useful exercise, of real value to those with impeded vision.

"While in general admiring our striking new stamp, both for its design and subtler features, I have to ask why it was so harshly blemished with the heavy poster face value numerals. This is really a lamentable lapse into artistic vandalism.

"Why not an elegant copperplate, Trajan or even some Jeffery Matthews design (notwithstanding that I cannot concur with some of his views on serifs in the January *Bulletin*, page 117). Why those slab, lump blocks brashly defacing our beautiful new stamp?"

"My criticism does not prejudice any necessary, loud, clear colouring to make the face value symbol stand out and remain eye-catching – which I presume is the current intention".

I discussed Mr Witherow's comments with the

Royal Mail Design Division. I was informed that there were requests from blind and partially-sighted individuals for braille to be added to stamps but relatively little enthusiasm from organisations for the blind. There are production and cost limitations on extending the use of braille to all our stamps.

Some blind people are concerned about affixing the stamps the wrong way up which they think might cause offence to The Queen. The introduction of elliptical perforations on the lower left and right sides of the low-value definitives (starting with the NVI stamps on 6 April) should aid blind people in positioning stamps the correct way up.

As regards Mr Witherow's belief that the value on the £10 stamp is "artistic vandalism", he is of course entitled to his view. However it should be pointed out that Royal Mail and the designers were not trying to recreate a stamp from the past, to emulate earlier issues. Stamps such as the Seahorses (1913) and PUC £1 (1929) are representative of their time as we hope the £10 stamp will be of the 1990s. The value was considered to be a very important feature of the £10 stamp; the stark contrast between the strength of the lettering and the subtlety of the detail in Britannia was intentional and carefully considered. In general the design seems to have been well received by collectors who think, like Mr Witherow that it is "a worthy addition" to the high value range of stamps.

1943 Air Letter

In the February *Bulletin* (p.141) Mr A S Goldstone asked if any reader had the George VI 6d air letter used earlier than 12 July 1943. The air letter was scheduled for issue on 18 June, but Mr Goldstone wondered if it had gone on sale as planned. Mr P A Barham of Bromley has reported this air letter bearing a Bromley and Beckenham Kent postmark of 30 June 1943. Reports of earlier usage would be welcome.

Machin Colours

D W Staddon of Sussex, well-known contributor to the *Bulletin*, writes:

"With regard to the second part of the article on the Jeffery Matthews Colour Scheme for Machin Definitives (*Bulletin* February 1993) may I point out that the colour sand was used for the 28p value issued along with the 14p, 19p, 20p, 23p, 27p 32p and 35p on 23 August 1988. This stamp was not mentioned in the article. Sand was of course used again for the 50p definitive issued 13 March 1990."

1971 Definitives FDCs

Mr G V Mahoney of Devon has submitted a photocopy of a cover bearing the ½p-9p decimal definitives with clear STATION RD, RAINHAM GILLINGHAM KENT c.d.s of 15 February 1971. He writes: "As your list of offices which handled mail during the strike has grown longer, I (like Mr Munden, December 1992 Postbag) have often surmised that many of these covers were cancelled to order. Mine certainly was, and it is probably unique. I well remember the postmistress being very puzzled at my request for her to handstamp it, and I hope that after 20 years she will be forgiven for contravening regulations!"

Mr J Hunt of Berkshire sends me a photocopy of the first day cover of the low values postmarked on 15 February 1971 by a Field Post Office 340 handstamp. A number of FPO cancels are known on first day covers – Don Staddon illustrated one (Forces Post Office 79) in his article in the *Bulletin* of July 1988 (p.245).

George V Seahorses

Mr F Gee of Suffolk points out that the illustration of the George V 5s. Seahorses stamp in the February *Bulletin* (p.123) is in fact the re-engraved stamp of 1934, not the original 1913 issue. Whilst the design is the same the background to the King's head had been re-engraved.

Approved colour standard
G.V.



We feature here a proof of the 2s. 6d. stamp in the "approved colour standard" of the 5s. value – an item from the "Britannia Depicta" exhibition on show at the National Postal Museum until 28 May.

A feature on the "Britannia Depicta" exhibition was published in the March *Bulletin* (pp. 156-8). The National Postal Museum, in London's Chief Post Office, King Edward Street, LONDON EC1A 1LP, is open Monday-Friday, 9.30am to 4.30pm. Admission free. The museum is a few minutes walk from St Paul's Cathedral and underground station.

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: May Competition, British Philatelic Bulletin, Royal Mail National, 76-86 Turmill Street, LONDON EC1M 5NS to arrive by 25 June.

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

1. What office did Reginald Bevins hold in March 1963?
2. Who designed the Roman Britain stamps?
3. Where was Henry Moore born?
4. Which philatelic society is hosting the Association of Sussex Philatelic Societies Spring Convention on 22 May?
5. What value definitive stamp, printed by Enschedé was issued on 27 April?

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 February competition were: W Candlish of Longeville-sur-mer, France (£75 worth of philatelic products); H Manley of E Sussex; J Olley of Middlesex; A Gee of Bucks; Mrs B McLean of Canada; and Mrs I Hesp of North Humberside (Orchids presentation packs).

The answers were: 1. Frances Steward (Duchess of Richmond); 2. Glasgow; 3. 500; 4. Frank Staff; 5. 2 March 1993.

Our thanks to all who entered.

Royal Mail Philatelic Products

BARRY BURKE *Products Manager, Royal Mail*

This month sees the launch of two new products which I am sure will be of interest to *Bulletin* readers, particularly to those who, like me, admire the fine design of the £10 definitive stamp issued in March this year.

Royal Mint PNC

To mark the 40th anniversary of the coronation of HM Queen Elizabeth II, the Royal Mint has issued a new £5 coin – the Coronation Crown. The Mint has decided to commemorate the actual anniversary date – 2 June – by producing a “philatelic numismatic cover” (or PNC for short) and we are delighted to be able to offer this unique product to stamp collectors through the British Philatelic Bureau.



This will comprise a brilliant uncirculated cupro-nickel crown mounted in a specially designed cover. The cover also bears the £10 definitive stamp featuring the patriotic image of Britannia and will be postmarked with a pictorial handstamp dated 2 June 1993 and designated London SW1, location of both Buckingham Palace and Westminster Abbey.

Production will be strictly limited to a maximum of 20,000 covers and will be sold by mail order from either the British Philatelic Bureau or Royal Mint only. Orders from British Philatelic Bureau customers and Royal Mint Coin Club members will be given priority over those generated through advertising and many *Bulletin* readers should by now have received their priority order form. The PNC is priced £18.50 and we expect it to be much in demand, particularly by collectors who also have an interest in numismatics and thematic collectors specialising in British Royalty.

The Britannia Paperweight

As mentioned in the March *Bulletin*, we have designed a very special product to complement the £10 definitive, one which I am sure readers will agree will make a superb gift for any collector (and at this point, some readers may wish to note that Fathers Day falls on 21 June this year!).

Because of its size, the £10 stamp cannot be accommodated within a Stamp Pyramid, so instead, we have commissioned production of a unique lens-shaped paperweight. Made from the same high-clarity optical glass as Stamp Pyramids, the Britannia paperweight has been designed to magnify the stamp, allowing the stamp design and security print features to be studied in detail.

The Britannia paperweight will only be available by mail order and will be advertised in the press at £47.95. However, Philatelic Bureau customers will have the chance to obtain this very special product at a reduced price of £39.95. Production of the Britannia paperweight will be strictly limited to 10,000 pieces, and each paperweight will be presented with an individually numbered certificate of authentication.

A further benefit for Bureau customers will be that they will have a chance to place orders for this product before it is advertised nationally. A limited number of authentication certificates will be personally signed by Mike Denny, Design Director of Roundel Design Group and leader of the team that designed the stamp itself. However, early ordering is advised as the latest date for acceptance of orders for paperweight accompanied by individually signed certificates will be 21 June 1993. All British Philatelic Bureau customers should receive order forms by the end of May.



May Digest

Issued in May/early June

6 May: National Postal Museum "Gems of the Museum" postcards, price 25p each.

Available from National Postal Museum shop and by mail order from British Philatelic Bureau, Edinburgh.

11 May: Art in the 20th century stamps – 24p, 28p, 33p, 39p.

Designer: Ashted Dastor.

Printing: Harrison & Sons Ltd, photogravure, 35 x 37mm, sheets of 100, PVA Dextrin gum, phosphor coated paper.

Pictorial First Day of Issue Postmarks: British Philatelic Bureau, and London SW.

Presentation Pack: No. 237. Price £1.55.

8 June: Roman Britain stamp cards, Nos. 153A-D, price 21p each.

8 June: 1p, 5p, 10p Definitives

Printing: Joh. Enschedé en Zonen, Netherlands, photogravure, sheets of 200, PVA gum, perf. 15 x 14 with elliptical perforations on vertical sides. Two phosphor bands.

Note: Available from Bureau, Collections and philatelic counters; stocks will go on sale at post offices as required. No first day of issue facilities.

Withdrawn in May

5 May: National Postal Museum "People in the Post" postcards, issued 6 May 1992.

Note: These cards will be withdrawn from sale at the British Philatelic Bureau on 5 May 1993; they will remain on sale at the National Postal Museum shop.

Events

until 28 May 93. "Britannia Depicta" exhibition at NPM.

until Oct 93. "Forces Sweethearts" exhibition at Imperial War Museum, Lambeth Road, London SE1. Sponsored by Royal Mail International. Enquiries: Exhibitions Officer, Imperial War Museum, 071-416 5323.

15 May 93. Poole & District PS "Twinning Exhibition" (with philatelic society from Oporto, Portugal) at Poole Arts Centre, 10.00-16.00. Dealers will be present. Enquiries: Barry Proctor, 38 Lulworth Avenue, POOLE, Dorset, BH15 4DJ.

15 May 93. North West Federation of Phil Soc Convention, Exhibition and Stamp Fair. Hosted

by Lostock & District Phil Soc, at Lostock Parish Centre, Tempest Road, Lostock, Bolton. 10.00-17.00. Enquiries: R Hargreaves, 26 Heaton Road, Lostock, BOLTON, Lancs, BL6 4EE. Tel. 0204 492800.

21-23 May 93. Northeast Philatelic Weekend at Swallow Hotel, Gateshead. Enquiries: Mrs D M Martin, 46 Briardene Crescent, Kenton Park, NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE NE3 4RY.

22 May 93. Association of Sussex Philatelic Societies Spring Convention, hosted by Brighton & Hove PS, at Town Hall, Hove. Opens 11.00. Exhibition, displays, dealers. Enquiries: J E O Hobbs, 12 Ophir Road, WORTHING, W Sussex, BN11 2SR.

5 Jun 93. Kent Federation of Philatelic Societies "Federation Day", hosted by Maidstone & Mid Kent PS, at Invicta Girls Grammar School, Huntsmen Lane, Maidstone. Opens 10.30. Dealers, Philatelic Counter, Exhibition. Enquiries: B R Stonestreet, 32 Bedgebury Close, Vintners Park, MAIDSTONE, Kent, ME14 5QZ.

12 Jun 93. Yorkshire Philatelic Association Annual Convention, Exhibition and Stamp Fair at Pudsey Civic Hall, Leeds 9.30-17.00. Enquiries: J Calvert, 11 Wesley Close, Winterton, SCUNTHORPE, S Humberside, DN15 9QB.

12 June 93. Annual Bournemouth Stamp & Postcard Fair at Summerbee Secondary School, Mallard Road, Bournemouth, 10.00-17.00. Dealers, displays, refreshments. Admission free. Enquiries: R W J Sharp, "Harcourt", Cardigan Road, Winton, BOURNEMOUTH BH9 1BG.

17-20 Jun 93. Welsh Philatelic Society Annual Weekend Meeting at Plas Tan y Bwlch, Maentwrog, Gwynedd. Enquiries: D Gwynne Morris, 27 Tan-y-Bryn, Llanbedr DC, RUTHIN, Clwyd, LL15 1AQ.

