

BRITISH PHILATELIC

The ROYAL MAIL magazine *for stamp collectors*

Bulletin

Volume 33 Number 12

AUGUST 1996 • 75P

Children's television stamps •
Decimal stamp books



Forthcoming issues & withdrawals

Note Northern Ireland and Youth aerogrammes now cancelled. We regret any disappointment caused.

6 August

Issue Stamp Books – 10 × 1st and 10 × 2nd with printers initials on back covers • Women of Achievement stamps & presentation pack

7 August

Withdrawal Shakespeare's Globe stamps, presentation pack, stamp cards • National Postal Museum cards – Post Office Uniforms (ref 95/14-17). *To be withdrawn at British Philatelic Bureau; will remain on sale at NPM shop.*

27 August

Issue Children's TV Characters stamp cards

30 August

Withdrawal 5p, 6p, 20p, 30p, and 50p definitives, 25p N Ireland, and 41p Wales with yellow fluor (printings with blue fluor remain on sale) • £1 Car-rickfergus Castle stamp; £1.50 Caernarfon Castle stamp with Dextrin gum • Priority service envelopes issued 28 June 1993

3 September

Issue Children's TV Characters stamps, presentation pack, & souvenir pack

4 September

Withdrawal Communications stamps, presentation pack, stamp cards

9 September

Issue Cake Promotion book, 10 × 1st NVI

24 September

Issue Cars stamp cards

1 October

Issue Cars stamps & presentation pack • National Postal Museum postcards – Postal Vehicles • 1996 Christmas aerogramme

2 October

Withdrawal Rugby League stamps, presentation pack & stamp cards • 1995 Christmas aerogramme

21 October

Issue 1996 Christmas stamp cards

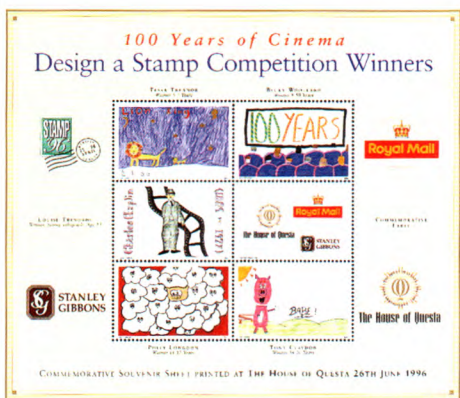
28 October

Issue 1996 Christmas stamps, presentation pack, stamp books (20 × 2nd, 10 × 1st) • 1996 Year Book (standard & leather bound versions) and 1996 Year Pack

Front cover Basil Brush courtesy Ivan Owen; Watch with Mother puppets © The Estate of Freda Lingstorm, puppets held in the Museum of London; Dangermouse © Cosgrove Hall Films, licensed by kind permission of Pearson Television International Ltd.

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

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This month: souvenir sheet free gift, supplied courtesy of The House of Questa

Included in this *Bulletin* is a souvenir sheet, produced by The House of Questa, reproducing the winning entries in the 'Design-a-Stamp' competition held at the Stamp '96 exhibition. See page 363 for details.

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Royal Mail news Children's TV stamps • Celebrity stamp launches • Robert Burns exhibition • New stamp books • NPM news • Bureau's 30 years in Edinburgh

Big stars of the small screen Stamps featuring much-loved characters from children's television programmes go on sale at post offices, and philatelic outlets on 3 September. The issue commemorates 50 years of children's television.

The **20p** stamp (basic inland 2nd class rate) features **MUFFIN THE MULE**, bought by puppeteer Ann Hogarth in 1934 and made his television debut in 1946 after working with circus puppets. His talents were quickly recognised by the BBC and he was given a prime time slot on *Children's Hour*. His co-star was Annette Mills, sister of actor Sir John Mills. Muffin continued on TV until 1957. A Muffin video was launched in 1989.



The stamps were designed by Tutsells, their first commission for Royal Mail, and printed by Joh Enschedé of the Netherlands, their second set of special stamps for Royal Mail.



SOOTY is the star of the **26p** value (basic inland 1st class and EU rate). The famous bear was discovered by the late Harry Corbett in a toyshop in Blackpool in 1948. Corbett bought the glove-puppet for about 7s 3d (36p) to entertain his three children. Initially the bear was called Teddy but his name was changed to Sooty after Corbett's

wife brushed soot on his ears. Corbett and Sooty made their TV debut in 1952, being joined by Sweep the dog five years later. Since Harry Corbett's death, his son Matthew has worked 'hand in glove' with his partner. In May this year the rights for Sooty were sold by Matthew to City bank Guinness Mahon Development Capital for some £1.4 million. The company aim to promote the bear through international television, and merchandising. According to recent press reports about 60 people depend on Sooty for their livelihood, he once squirted water at the Duke of Edinburgh, and footballer George Best is his greatest fan. A special postmark was used in February 1992 to mark Sooty's 40th birthday.

The **31p** stamp (Europe, non-EU countries, rate) depicts **Troy Tempest** from **STINGRAY** – a puppet science fiction programme which made its TV debut in 1960. Tempest was modelled on American actor James Garner, and it is said that another character, Lord Titan, was inspired by Lord Olivier who was depicted, with Vivien Leigh, on the 25p 100 Years of Going to the Pictures stamp in April.



Technical details

Printers Joh Enschedé
Security Printing

Process Photogravure

Size 41 × 30mm

Sheets 100

Perforation 15 × 14

Phosphor 20p: one phosphor band ● 26p-43p: two phosphor bands ● Blue fluor in phosphor

Paper OBA (Optical Brightening Agent) free

Gum PVA



Characters from the popular programme **THE CLANGERS** feature on the **37p** stamp (overseas postcard rate), the invention of Oliver Postgate and Peter Firmin. They were also responsible for *Noggin* (shown on 1995 Greetings stamp), *Bagpus*, *Pogles' Wood*, *Ivor the Engine*, and the irresistible Basil Brush.

The **43p** stamp (basic airmail letter rate) features **DANGERMOUSE**, a rodent 007 which has enjoyed more than 200 adventures. It is amazing to consider that a half-hour cartoon needs 30,000 different paintings – all drawn and coloured by hand.



The first show for children was broadcast 50 years ago – *For The Children*. The first programme included an item about stamp collecting. The programmes were initially broadcast on Sunday afternoons but later expanded. The programmes of the 1950s and 60s are now regarded as classics and still have a cult following: *Andy Pandy*, *The Flowerpot Men*, *The Woodentops*, *Play School*, *Thunderbirds*, *The Magic Roundabout*, and *Jackanory*. A new generation were brought up on *John Craven's Newsround* (first regular news programme for children), *The Muppets*, and *Grange Hill*.

Perhaps the best-known of all remains *Blue Peter* which started in 1958. It regularly features British stamps and three sets have been designed as a result of Blue Peter competitions: 1966 and 1981 Christmas and 1992 Green Issue.

The 50th anniversary of the BBC was marked by three stamps in a Broadcasting Anniversaries set in 1972. The 75th anniversary will be the subject of the 1997 prestige stamp book. Alexandra Palace from where early BBC broadcasts were made, featured on a 20p value in the 1990 Europa set. Sooty becomes the third famous bear to have starred on TV to appear on British stamps: Rupert and Paddington having featured on Greetings issues. John Logie Baird, inventor of television, featured on a Scottish aerogramme in 1988.

FIRST DAY FACILITIES Unstamped Royal Mail first day cover envelopes will be available from main post offices, the British Philatelic Bureau and Post Office Counters philatelic outlets around a week before 3 September, price 25p.

The Bureau will provide a first day cover service – collectors may order the Royal Mail cover bearing the stamps, cancelled with a pictorial 'first day of issue' postmark of the Bureau or Alexandra Palace, London, price £2.26 (including VAT) to UK addresses, £1.93 to overseas addresses (no VAT). Orders for first day covers must be received at the Bureau by 3 September 1996.

Collectors may send their own stamped covers on the day of issue, for these cancels, to: British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, Edinburgh

EH3 5TT, or Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, Mount Pleasant, London EC1A 1BB (for Alexandra Palace). The outer envelope should be endorsed 'FD9623' (Bureau), or 'FD9624' (Alexandra Palace).

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

Collectors are reminded that it will be in order to affix just the 20p stamp from this issue to covers to receive all special cancels ('first day of issue', sponsored and philatelic counters), in use on 3 September. The minimum 1st class rule is suspended on this day as the set includes a 2nd class rate stamp. This concession applies only to the 20p stamp from this issue; otherwise 1st class postage must be affixed.

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).

PRESENTATION PACK AND STAMP CARDS A presentation pack (price £1.90) and stamp cards (25p each) will be available from the Bureau, Post Office Counters philatelic outlets, and main post offices. The pack contains amusing comments on children's TV by Basil Brush – aided and abetted by Ivan Owen. Boom-Boom! ●



Celebrity Stamp Launches Pictured here are actress Joanna Lumley and Rosena Robson, Royal Mail Manager Special Stamps, at the London launch of the 100 Years of Going to the Pictures stamps in April. Actor Sir Ian McKellen launched the stamps in Scotland. Also shown are George Best, with Royal Mail's Steve Griffiths, at the launch of the Football Legends stamps at Chelsea Football Ground on 8 May.

Women of Achievement stamps – colours The cylinders and colours are as follows. 20p: P37 (phosphor) 2A (dull blue-green) 1B (brownish grey) 1C (black) ● 26p: P38 (phosphor) 2A (dull mauve) 1B (brownish grey) 1C (black) ● 31p: P38 (phosphor) 1A (bronze) 1B (brownish grey) 1C (black) ● 37p: P38 (phosphor) 1A (silver) 1B (brownish grey) 1C (black) ● 43p: P38 (phosphor) 1A (gold) 1B (brownish grey) 1C (black) ●

Please note that the illustrations of the covers of the Olympic triathlon books in the *May Bulletin* (pages 260-1) were of proof covers and show an arrow head after the bar code numbers. These arrows do not appear on the issued books. We regret any confusion caused.

New stamp books Books of 10 1st and 2nd class xvi stamps with printers initial on back cover will be available from the Bureau and Post Office Counters philatelic outlets from 6 August. The 1st class books are printed by Harrison and Walsall, the 2nd class books by Harrison and Questa. No new stamps are involved.

A new promotion, from 9 September to 31 December 1996, will run on books of 10 1st class xvi stamps sold at post offices and retail outlets. As with the 'Someone Special' books (4 September 1995), there will be two variants – one with a small mark near the barcode for sale by retailers. Customers will have to send in two proofs of purchase of two lots of £2.60 worth of stamps (one proof is either the cover of a promotional book or a dated stamped Post Office Counters leaflet) plus four unused 1st class stamps for a miniature cake plus a personalised message to be sent to a person of their choice. There are four cakes to choose from. The cakes are featured on the covers of the book with tick boxes on the reverse for customers to select which they want. The book, printed by Walsall, will be available from the Bureau and at Post Office Counters philatelic outlets from 9 September ●

The Museum in King Edward Street, London EC1A 1LP, is a short walk from St Paul's Cathedral and underground station. Open Monday-Friday 09.30-16.30, admission free. Enquiries: 0171 600 8914.

National Postal Museum news Christine Jones, the Museum's Collections Manager, reports that the Museum is now the proud owner of *A Halted Coach* painting by Henry Alken, snr (see *March Bulletin*, page 201). The painting, along with four others recently acquired by the NPM, will be on display until the beginning of September. The theme of the exhibition – *Letter Carriers Framed!* – is that of the role of the horse in carrying the mail during the 19th century. Samuel Henry Alken, junior; Charles Cooper Henderson; and J F Herring are the other artists represented in this small equine display.

Also on show at the National Postal Museum are the *Robert Burns: Man of Letters* and *Post Haste!* displays, as well as part of the Museum's All-World collection, the noted R M Phillips Collection of 19th century British stamps, and exhibits relating to Victorian posts ●



British Philatelic Bureau on 1990 stamp

Bureau's 30 years in Edinburgh The Philatelic Bureau started life in a building alongside GPO Headquarters in London in May 1963. Two years later the Postmaster General Mr Wedgwood-Benn decided that it should be moved from London. Morecambe in Lancashire and Edinburgh were considered. A temporary Bureau was set up in Edinburgh in January 1966 to handle first day covers of the Burns stamps and the permanent move took place in August/September. Initially the Bureau was located at the Head Post Office in Waterloo Place, moving to Lothian Road in 1974 and to its present home in Brandon Street in 1981. An article on the early days of the Bureau, by Frank Langfield, was published here in May 1993.

To commemorate its 30 years in Edinburgh, the Bureau has produced a special cover and sponsored a special handstamp for use on 12 August 1996. The cover is exclusive to British Philatelic Bureau customers; it is not being offered for sale ●

US collector wins unique cover Earlier in the year the British Philatelic Bureau mailed its customers with details of The Queen's Birthday philatelic numismatic cover and stamp book. Customers had the opportunity to enter a prize draw for a unique £5 commemorative crown philatelic numismatic cover. The draw was made by Mr Dave Allen of the Royal Mint, from an amazing 35,000 entries. The lucky winner was Mr L Price from New Jersey, USA. Our photo shows Mr Allen (left) with Keith Macdonald, the Bureau's Marketing Manager, with the thousands of entries •



Robert Burns exhibition The Royal Mail-sponsored exhibition on the life of Robert Burns, can be seen during August at: A K Bell Library, Perth (1-29 August) and Inverness Library (from 13 August) •

Bulletin price increase The current cover price and subscription rates for this *Bulletin* have remained the same since November 1993. A modest increase will come into effect from 1 September: single copies will then cost 85p, annual subscription UK/Europe £9.50, Rest of World £13.50. Two-year subscriptions will be: £18 UK/Europe; £26 Rest of World.

Subscription rates for the *Postmark Bulletin* will remain unchanged: £10 UK/Europe, £21.75 Rest of World. Readers who would like a sample copy of the *Postmark Bulletin* should write to the British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, Edinburgh EH3 5TT or The Editor *British Philatelic Bulletin*, Royal Mail, 22 Finsbury Square, London EC2A 1NL •

Bulletin back issues Back issues are available for one year from the British Philatelic Bureau, price 75p per copy (issues to August 1996), 85p per copy (issues from September 1996). For earlier issues a back number service is operated by Mr Maynard Davies of Surrey. He offers bound reprints of vols 1 & 2, photocopies of issues from vols 3-6 and original copies of most issues from vol 7 onwards, also a limited stock of used binders. Mr Davies wishes to purchase issues from vols 3-6, but has adequate stocks of later issues. He regrets he cannot search for or provide copies of specific articles •

Enquiries with stamped addressed envelope or international reply coupon, to: Maynard Davies, 3 Eastwood, Bridgewater Road, Weybridge, KT13 0EG.

Where are they now? Thirty years ago the Post Office announced a competition for children to design Britain's first Christmas stamps. Our photograph shows the two winners – Tasveer Shemza and James Berry, both age six, receiving their prizes from the Postmaster General, Mr Edward Short (now Lord Glenamara). Also in the picture is nine year old Ann Belshaw whose work was used on the first day cover. It would be nice, 30 years on, to hear what has become of Tasveer, James and Ann. If they read this, or any reader knows of their whereabouts, please write to: the Editor, *British Philatelic Bulletin*, Royal Mail, 22 Finsbury Square, London EC2A 1NL •



reproduction courtesy of James Negus FRPSL

Stamp scene Astro Space Stamp Society • Presentation pack differences • Hong Kong Machins • Stamp '96 • Railway letter news • New Summer Isles issue

For details of the Society and its activities send a stamped addressed envelope or two international reply coupons to: Astro Space Stamp Society, 21 Exford Close, Weston-super-Mare, BS23 4RE.

Astro Space Stamp Society The Society reports that three of its members won awards at the Space and Aviation Philatelic exhibition in Seville, Spain in May: Charles Bromser of Australia won a Gold, Dr Ben Ramkissoon of USA a Large Silver, and Jean-Louis Lafon of France a Silver. Information about the Society was distributed at the exhibition. New members of the society will receive an interesting first day cover or presentation pack, courtesy of the Crown Agents or cover producer Adrian Bradbury. •



From left Shakespeare Festival, Explorers and Broadcasting packs. Steven Scott acknowledges these discoveries by Mr A M Morse.

Enquiries Steven Scott, 77 The Strand, London WC2R 0DE. Telephone 0171 836 2341.

Presentation pack discoveries Stamp dealers Steven Scott report differences in the Royal coats of arms on the 1964 Shakespeare Festival, 1972 Explorers and Broadcasting Anniversaries packs. The Shakespeare pack exists with a 'skinny' or 'plump' lion and unicorn. On some Explorers packs the crown in the Royal coat of arms is 'filled' and there no 'flower' above the word DROIT in the motto scroll. On others the crown is unfilled and a 'flower' is present above the scroll. On the BBC packs, the crown can be found either unfilled or solid. Collectors specialising in presentation packs are advised to check examples in their collections. Steven Scott has limited stocks of all types. •



Machins to end No, not on British stamps, but on the definitives of Hong Kong. New stamps to be issued next year will show the Hong Kong skyline with the name in English and Chinese. Stamps bearing The Queen's profile will become invalid on 1 July 1997 when China takes over. Hong Kong issued its first stamps, featuring Queen Victoria, in 1862. The current definitives,

showing the Machin head of The Queen, were introduced in 1992 (SG 702/17). To promote the international stamp exhibition in Hong Kong (12-16 February 1997), the Hong Kong PO is issuing three miniature sheets incorporating a \$10 Machin definitive. The first were issued in February and May 1996; the third follows in October. •

Children enjoy Stamp '96 Some 1700 children collected a free gift on entry to the Stamp '96 exhibition at Wembley in April. Many took advantage of special features designed for their enjoyment. Over 800 joined in the Treasure Hunt Trail and a reported 600 budding artists competed in the 'Cinema 100' theme in the Design-a-Stamp competition organised jointly by Royal Mail and The House of Questa. Earlier in April, *Young Telegraph* (the Saturday supplement to *The Daily Telegraph*) ran its own competition category as part of the build-up to Stamp '96.

The entries were judged by stamp designer Clive Abbott; *Gibbons Stamp Monthly* Editor Hugh Jefferies; Paul Singleton, Mike Hickson and Rees Kenyon of The House of Questa; and John Ryan and Lauretta Morris of Royal Mail. The winners were presented with their awards at The House of Questa in June. The winners were Tessa Treanor, age six; Becky Woollard, 10; Polly Longdon, 11; and Tony Claydon, 15.

The Questa stand at Stamp '96 displayed the Royal Mail's Football Legends stamps and continued the football theme with a quiz for children up to 16 years old. Over 350 took part, the winners receiving Subbuteo games and football mugs. Visitors to the stand were offered chocolate sportsballs – over 6000 were consumed!

Royal Mail's dedicated children's workshop comprised a computed animated CD produced especially for the exhibition – this gave children an insight into different aspects of stamp collecting in a stimulating and light-hearted way.

The exhibition which attracted some 20,000 visitors was opened by football legend George Best who collected stamps in his youth. He was kept busy signing covers for collectors, as was another soccer hero, Sir Stanley Matthews, who was at the exhibition on the second day •

Railway letter news The North Yorkshire Moors Railway issued two new 25p letter stamps on 20 July in connection with a Vintage Vehicle Weekend. The stamps, printed in se-tenant pairs in sheets of eight by Walsall, feature steam locomotives with a Bedford Lorry, Bristol Bus, and MG car. A further 25p stamp featuring locomotive no 60007 *Sir Nigel Gresley* will be issued on 24 August, again printed in sheets of eight by Walsall. For details of first day covers see *Commemorative Covers Review*.



Stamp '96

Young designers at work

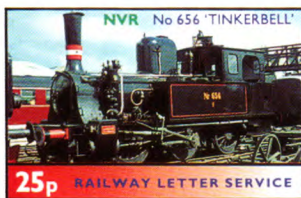
As last year the winning designs have been printed in a souvenir sheet which we are pleased to include as a free gift in this *Bulletin*. We are grateful to The House of Questa for making these available. Last year's sheet was included in the August 1995 *Bulletin*.



Stamps are available at face value plus postage 30p (overseas add 50p for airmail postage) from: NYMR Railway Letter Service, 5 Tiber View, Brinsworth, Rotherham S60 5EA. An interesting Newsletter is available from this address – enclose SAE or IRC.



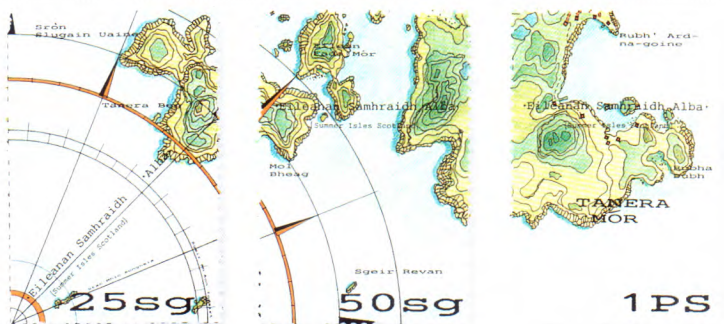
Loco no 3672 *Dame Vera Lynn* prepares to haul the *Railway Letter Service Pullman* train from Pickering station, 13 April.



The Nene Valley Railway issues a new 25p letter stamp on 6 August. This has been printed in sheets of nine by Walsall Security Printers. Mint stamps are available at face value plus postage. First day covers will be serviced, bearing Royal Mail's Women of Achievement stamps. Orders and enquiries: Railway Letter Service, Nene Valley Railway, Wansford Station, Stibbington, Peterborough PE8 6LR. Telephone 01780 782854.

The NYMR hosted a seminar attended by representatives of preserved railways and collectors of railway stamps and postmarks at Pickering in April. Amongst the speakers were Neill Oakley, compiler of a railway letter stamp catalogue; Brian White, who told of adventures working on a TPO; Jim Eldridge, Royal Mail's Postmark Manager; and Alistair Sharp, Philatelic Marketing Manager, Royal Mail. After the displays, talks and discussions, delegates enjoyed a fine meal on a special *Railway Letter Service Pullman* train •

The Summer Isles stamps were designed by John Coleman and printed by The House of Questa. Available at face value plus postage. Orders and enquiries about first day covers: Summer Isles Philatelic Bureau, West Croftnuisk, Edradynate, Aberfeldy, PH15 2JU.



New Summer Isles issue Local stamps (or local carriage labels) have been used on mail carried from the Summer Isles to the village of Achiltibuie in north west Scotland since 1970. The Isles have recently issued their third series of definitive stamps comprising six values, collectively reproducing a map of the islands and the adjoining Scottish mainland. The stamps are inscribed and denominated in Gaelic: 10, 15, 20, 25 and 50sg, and 1ps (sg = sgillinn, ps = Punnd Sasannach). The stamps are also available in miniature sheet format •

Decimal stamp books 28 Specialist report by D G A Myall

New overseas retail books Retail (window) books of value stamps for overseas mail have been part of the standard range since October 1989, when a book of four 29p stamps was issued to prepay the basic rate for worldwide postcards. Books of stamps for the basic worldwide letter rate were added to the range in September 1991, containing four 39p stamps. These were the same colour as the new 37p; Royal Mail calls this rhododendron. In July 1992, there was a special issue containing two of the 39p stamps in association with Kelloggs. A third series was issued in August 1994, when a book of four 60p stamps was placed on sale. These stamps prepaid the second weight step for worldwide letters and are unique to books.

The stamp content of the worldwide books has been uprated for each tariff increase. However only two books were issued on 8 July for the new rates effective from that date; one containing four 37p stamps for overseas postcards and one containing four 63p stamps for second weight step letters. There will not be one containing 43p stamps for the new basic airmail letter rate. The books of 60p stamps were issued as a trial but they have proved more popular than the books for the basic rate since you do not have to write a very long letter to exceed the 10g weight limit.

All the worldwide books have been printed by Walsall and the stamps in them have been of great interest to collectors. The 4 × 29p, for example, were issued on phosphorised paper and on paper with two phosphor bars. The 4 × 60p has been issued with yellow and blue fluor phosphor bars as well as in a special Christmas 1994 book with greetings labels. All these variations have been chronicled in this column. Now there is another matter that will interest those who take the trouble to examine these books more closely. It concerns the 37p stamps in the new postcards book.

The 39p booklet stamp of September 1991 was, as I have said, the same colour as the new 37p. At that time Walsall used four colour plates to print it (w1 w1 w1 w1 for the books of four and w2 w2 w2 w2 for the books of two). This

time, Walsall have been able to match the effect with only two colour plates, w1 w1. One of the reasons for using more than one plate to print a monochrome stamp is that not each plate prints the whole image. Each plate also prints a slightly different colour. You can see this from a book with the plate numbers in the margin, the lower number is in a distinctly lighter coloured ink. The combined effect is to give depth to the normally flat look of lithographic printing. This is vital when dealing with a design like the Machin head which is meant to give a sculpted effect.

There may be nothing new under the sun but there is something new under the lamp. If you view this 37p stamp under ultra-violet irradiation, you will see The Queen's head stand out in yellow. At first I thought that a yellow fluor had been added to the lighter-coloured ink by the printer, similar to that which was added to the phosphor ink before the change to the current blue fluor phosphor. In fact, there is no added yellow fluor, so why does the head fluoresce yellow? The fluorescing element is added to the ink by the manufacturer in order to match the 'clean colour' specified by the printer when it is viewed in ordinary daylight. The fact that this causes it to fluoresce yellow under ultra-violet irradiation of a wavelength emitted by philatelic lamps is a coincidence. It is of no concern to Royal Mail as it does not affect the operation of any of the equipment used for sorting or cancelling mail.

For the technically-minded, printing inks based on or including rhodamine red usually have this brightener added in order to improve their appearance in daylight. It was present in the earlier 39p stamps but was masked by the optical brightener added to the paper in use at that time. Now that optical brighteners are no longer added to papers used for GB definitives, the effect is much easier to see. The word rhodamine is derived from combining the prefix rhodo, meaning rose, and amine. No doubt this is why Royal Mail named the colour rhododendron. (Collectors of sheet stamps might like to know that the 37p Country stamps and the

Enschede 31p purple, 37p rhododendron and 39p shocking pink all have this yellow fluorescent feature so it seems that all of these colours are based on rhodamine. At the time of writing I had not seen the 37p coil stamp.)

The 63p stamps in the other Walsall book do not have this feature. However, both stamps incorporate a change in the blue fluor used to print the bands. Previous bars were much more difficult to see, even under the lamp, than those printed by the other three firms who produce Machin definitives for Royal Mail. The new fluor is brighter, and easier to see. I hope that this will be a permanent feature of the Walsall product. It may be, of course, that they have simply increased the amount of the fluor rather than used a new kind from a different supplier. The brightness of the fluor is not critical for operational use as the current sorting machines rely entirely on the phosphor content of the ink and its fluorescent properties are ignored.

New machine-vend books Two new machine-vend books went on sale on 8 July and the previous £1 and £2 books, both those with stamps printed in photogravure by Harrison, with pictorial covers, and those printed in lithography by Questa, in the new red livery, were withdrawn from general sale at the close of business on 6 July, although they will continue to be available from the Bureau for a time. Make sure that you have the Questa versions; they were never on sale everywhere.

The new books have the same red covers, with the statement of contents on the front altered to show the new make-up. The prices of the books have not altered (the machines do not give exact change) so the panes involve se-tenant arrangements. Another factor which determines the make-up is that panes for machine-vend booklets must have a multiple of four units. This is to ensure that the booklets lay flat when loaded into the machines. Otherwise they are liable to jamming. Both of the new panes have eight units.

The higher value book contains seven 1st-class stamps and one 2nd-class one. This makes a total face value of £2.02 and the books will be sold at

a discount of 2p. This is too small for Royal Mail to bother endorsing the stamps, as happened in the past. Surprisingly, the 2nd-class stamp has a central phosphor bar instead of a side bar as is normal when 1st and 2nd-class stamps are printed se-tenant. This has resulted in a rather complicated phosphor arrangement and no doubt quite small defects in plate registration will result in some varieties which are meat and drink to collectors. Because there is only one 20p stamp on the pane, any miscutting will produce books with contents of the wrong face value, having either two 20p stamps or none. Miscuts are not all uncommon (the most recent one occurred on the £1 McIndoe book), so look out for any. I know several people who habitually 'feed' book machines in the hope of such a jackpot.

The same remark about possible miscuts applies to the £1 book but the pane for this has its own interest. The face value is exactly £1. It contains three 1st-class stamps and one 2nd-class, totalling 98p. To make up the value, two 1p stamps have been included. To make up the size, two labels have been added. Labels have been included on decimal booklet panes ever since the very first issues in February 1971. At that time, the traditional panes of six were the norm for

be properly addressed use the postcode

Books of 10 Greetings stamps are on sale now

First Class stamps are available in books of 10

Overseas Letters

Zone	Air	10g	Fastnet 10g
N Africa	Zone A	10g	7p
Middle East	Zone B	10g	9p
Zone B	Zone C	10g	10p
Europe, Switzerland, Africa	Startzone	20g	50g
Asia	Startzone	10p	21g
Australia	Startzone	10p	21g
China	Startzone	10p	21g

The rates shown here are correct at the time of going to press August 1979. Please use the postcode

counter books, a size which did not fit the new decimal system very well. Five units were taken up by the stamps leaving a spare one which was made into a label. (On some panes there were two labels, resulting from the need to keep the total face value to a multiple of five pence, similar to the restriction imposed on today's machine books). These early labels were used for commercial advertisements, but by the end of 1973 advertising contracts were being reduced and the labels on the panes were left blank, except for the phosphor bars. Following a tariff increase in June 1977, new pane make-ups were required and those with a spare unit were used for various slogans promoting the use of postcodes. With the special exception of the labels in the prestige books, this has remained their sole use until today.

The two labels on the new £1 pane promote Royal Mail products, reminding the public that books of 10 stamps are available. This might be welcome news to those who are wondering whether they should continue to buy £1 books and what to do with their spare 1p stamps. Of course, if they also buy a £2 book, they can afford to throw the 1p stamps away and not lose out!



Far left London 1980 10p booklet; pane with 'be properly addressed use the postcode' label.

Left 5 x ½ p plus 'make your lucky find pay' label, and 5 x 4 ½ p plus blank label.

Bottom left New £1 book (July 1996).

The use made of labels would make a nice sideline booklet collection. This would include the pictorial label in the centre of the definitive set-tenant panes in the prestige books. And don't overlook the series of commemorative labels attached to books of four 1st-class xvts, the latest of which was in celebration of Her Majesty's 70th birthday and is still on sale ●

Capex '96 by Richard Beith

Held in Downtown Toronto's metro Convention Centre, this world class exhibition took place from 8-16 June. There was a wide variety of attractions for collectors of all levels from junior to established specialist. The many competitive classes contained exhibits from some of the world's finest collections and the cream of recent philatelic literature. British exhibitors collected a grand total of 54 medals including one Large Gold, nine Gold and 14 Large Vermeil.

The organisers are to be congratulated on the wide variety of specially presented exhibits starting with British North American material from the Royal collection. The exhibit *Jewels of the World*, brought together some of the greatest rarities including the Swedish *Treskilling Yellow*, a Penny Black used on entire on 1 May 1840 and a block of six of the unissued 2d red of Australia showing Edward VIII, printed in September 1936, but withdrawn before issue due to the King's abdication. Aerophilately was not excluded from this mouth watering selection, a cover dropped over Nova Scotia in 1919 on the outward flight of the British Airship R34 from Scotland to the USA was shown with other R34 material and exhibits loaned by the British Library, for their first showing outside the UK, included a unique 1919 air mail cover bearing both the Hawker and Martinsyde stamps of Newfoundland and a vertical strip of three unused Hawker stamps, the largest known multiple.

Many postal administrations had stands and exhibits. The British display included a rare novelty, an example of a St Kilda mail boat, a small sealed letter carrier launched on the waves and used to carry mail from this remote island to the Scottish mainland, or even to Norway, courtesy of the North Atlantic Drift. A fascinating display covering three centuries of letter writing between Canada and France was jointly created by French and Canadian postal museums and archives. Mention must be made of the historic cars, beer wagon, fire engine, etc which were on show, historic vehicles which had been featured on the Canadian pre-Capex stamp issues ●



Former and address of sender

Postcode

UK Foreign postage 100%

For official
Registration label.



REGISTERED
LETTER
RECOMMANDÉ

This letter must be handed
to a Post Office official
and a receipt obtained



See note on back for
details of compensation

W. DAVIES AND SON
SOLICITORS
WESTMINSTER CHAMBERS
CHURCH PATH
WOKING SURREY GU24 1EH

© 1979 by a Royal Mail Product



1. Wyon City Medal 1837. The world's first adhesive postage stamp issued in 1840 was based on Courtauld's line drawing from the Wyon Medal. This head was used for all stamps of the Queen's reign
2. Maltese cross cancellation 1840
3. The 'Penny Red' 1841
4. 'Maltese Cross' cancellation

FIRST FOLD HERE

Sender's name, address and post code

An air letter should not contain any
enclosures, if it does it may be surcharged
or sent by ordinary mail

Designed by Clive Abbott
Printed by McCorquodale Printers Limited
for the British Post Office

**Come to London for the 1980
Philatelic Exhibition**



SECOND FOLD HERE

BY AIR MAIL AIR LETTER
PAR AVION AEROGamme

**SIR ROWLAND HILL
CENTENARY 1979**



Creator of the Uniform Penny Post

TO OPEN SLIT HERE



BRITAIN'S FIRST
DECIMAL COINS

BRITAIN'S
FIRST
DECIMAL
COINS

Twentieth century postal stationery Part

6: Elizabeth II decimal issues by Colin Baker

The 1970s saw not just the conversion to decimal currency, but also a radical change in the range and availability of postal stationery. Although some items such as stamped envelopes and aerogrammes continue to be sold to this day, others have disappeared after more than a century of use, to be replaced by new products and ideas designed for today's postal needs.

Decimal currency fully came into use on 15 February 1971, along with yet another increase in postal rates. There was a 12 month transition period during which pre-decimal stationery remained valid, uprated as necessary with adhesive stamps. From 1 March 1972 these were demonetised and stationery impressed with pre-decimal stamps could no longer be used for postal purposes.

The use of phosphor bands in the handling of mail is as important today as it was nearly 30 years ago when they were first printed onto stationery. All items of stationery which can be handled automatically continue to carry one or two phosphor bands according to the class of service chosen.

The ever popular envelope From the beginning of this period the use of both 1st and 2nd class stationery envelopes remained popular with the public, the only headache facing the PO being the almost annual rise in postage rates requiring the uprating of existing stocks and the production of new issues in revised values. This eventually led the PO to introduce Non Value Indicator (NVI) stamps, which merely showed that postage had been prepaid rather than bearing a stamp of a specific value. This system avoided uprating or unnecessary wastage. Any loss of revenue following a rate increase, when items purchased at the old price were used at the new rate, was more than offset by other savings.

In 1971 the new decimal envelopes issued by the PO used the same octagonal stamp developed in the late 1960s. This incorporated The Queen's portrait based on the bust by Arnold Machin, framed on each side by the word POSTAGE, with the value in figures set at the bottom of the design. With the increase in postage rates in June 1974, the PO ceased printing embossed stamps, the hand-engraved dies taking too long to produce. From then on the aniline printing process was used.

Aerogrammes Following the introduction of decimal currency, the PO continued to use both the international word 'aerogramme' as well as their original term 'air letter' to describe this type of stationery. It was not until 1982, that the term 'air letter' was finally dropped in favour of 'aerogramme'. In keeping with this development, aerogramme will be used for this final section on 20th century stationery.

The advent of decimal currency required little change to be made to the layout of aerogrammes. Even the standard issue retained the same stamp design proudly displaying Britain's VC10 airliner, but revised to show

Opposite The registered envelope (far left) issued with the international title 'Recommandé' for overseas use. Illustrated aerogramme (right) for the centenary of Rowland Hill's death in 1879. Subsequent commemorative aerogrammes followed the A4 format. The much larger post-note (top) replaced the lettercard in 1982 and was the first item of stationery to carry a non value indicator stamp.



Above The embossed stamp used for envelopes between 1971 and 1974, and (below) the letterpress version used on postcards and lettercards.

the postage rate in decimal currency.

As the early years of decimal currency passed, so more commemorative issues began to appear. The annual Christmas aerogrammes settled into a familiar routine, with their stamps complementing the aerogramme's main theme, often reflecting the design of the adhesive issues but always different from them. Other issues appeared at other times of the year promoting events and anniversaries in Scotland and Wales. In addition there were special issues for Royal occasions and other, such as the centenary of the death of Sir Rowland Hill (1979).

But it is the Scottish issues that have provided a wealth of material over the years, with more than 40 different designs. In 1989 the rest of the country started to catch up when sets of different pictorial aerogrammes were put on sale in packs of six. All these issues, amounting to more than 100 in total, provide a worthwhile area for specialist study.

The aerogramme has always been a popular medium for high speed correspondence overseas and looks set to remain so for the foreseeable future.

Some losses, some gains The stationery postcard, which started life as a cheap and easy message carrier, ended its days as a drab item which was not heavily used, but which seemed reluctant to leave the scene. In the early decimal period the PO continued to issue postcards for both 1st and 2nd class mail, changing stamp values and phosphor bands almost every year. However 2nd class postcards were not popular and from 1974 only 1st class cards were sold. For the 1979 rate rise, no cards were issued, but suddenly in 1980 a 1st class postcard appeared again. However, this was the final issue and with the next postage rate increase in 1981 the stamped inland postcard finally passed into history.

Over the same period the PO also issued lettercards which had to be impressed with 14 different values of stamps, four of which were also printed with either one or two phosphor bands for both 1st and 2nd class mail. The need to issue such a large number of different values, coupled with the lack of demand for lettercards, led to their demise.

Following a further increase in rates in on 1 February 1982, they were discontinued, to be replaced by the Postnote.

The Postnote was made from a heavyweight paper, A4 in size, which was folded into three and sealed with gummed flaps. It was larger than the lettercard and gave much more space for correspondence. The PO avoided previous problems of rate increase by the use of a 1st class indicator stamp, the first items of stationery to carry this type of stamp. Therefore these, and all stationery which is similarly impressed with XVI stamps, are as equally valid for sending through the post today as when they were originally issued.

Changes to registered envelopes The first decimal currency registered envelopes gave rise to the only combination of stamps of both currencies printed on the same item. The issue of the 3s 5d plus 'EXTRA 6p PAID'

envelope was made to uprate old pre-decimal stock and to avoid unnecessary waste. In later years registered envelopes in decimal currency were also printed with the 'EXTRA PAID' device for similar reasons.

Eventually, keeping up with the ever increasing rises in registration fees and postage rates forced the PO to extend the XVI stamp system to this range of stationery in 1986. However, in 1993 these envelopes were replaced by Priority Service and Registered Plus envelopes which now provide a guaranteed 'next day' delivery with the added bonus that they can be tracked across the country by a simple bar code system.

From their introduction in 1878, registered envelopes had always been manufactured with a scrim lining for extra strength. By 1974 a new stronger paper had been developed allowing the PO to change to this new material while at the same time effecting a saving in manufacturing costs of about £50,000 a year.

In addition to ending some of stationery's old favourites, the PO have also introduced entirely new products. Air Cards were first put on sale in March 1993. Intended mainly for the tourist trade, they carry the International Indicator stamp and airmail etiquette and are suitable for posting to anywhere in the world. Later in the same year two further sets of pre-paid Air Cards were issued, five showing London scenes and five Stratford-on-Avon and Warwick Castle.

Specially prepared Air Packs for sending small packages overseas by airmail went on sale in 1990. They were initially released in two trial areas, but later, having proved popular, became available countrywide. Swift Packs were first released in 1987 to provide an express airmail service to overseas destinations. The latest addition to the range the International Priority Service envelope, manufactured in a 'plastic' material, as are the latest issues of Swift Packs, and the large size Air Packs.

The future Over the last 150 years postal stationery has developed and adapted to the needs of the day. Although not nearly so popular now as in the past, it continues to provide an essential service. The future is always difficult to predict, but no doubt postal stationery will continue to fill that important gap between commercial mail posted in bulk and other mail prepaid by adhesive and franked stamps. No doubt it will continue to develop and cater for special services as the need arises.

From a philatelic point of view, collecting postal stationery has steadily been gaining in popularity over the years, with all indications pointing to it becoming more popular in the future. Let us hope this is the case, for it was intended right from the beginning in 1840 that postal stationery be the public's chosen method of prepaying postage. It is only fitting that it should also be the philatelists' first choice today ●

This completes this present series of articles by Mr Baker. A new series on non-post office postal stationery begins later in the year. Ed

Out of the Arc

Curiosities from the Post Office Archives: 1914 Postman As part of its continuing celebration of its centenary this year, the Post Office Archives & Records Services is pleased to announce the launch of the latest in its series of exclusive miniature figurines. Simon Bates reports.

All nine Archives miniatures now available.



Miniature no 9 shows a Postman of 1914. As with all of the figurines in this series, every feature of the 1914 Postman has been painstakingly researched by members of the Archives team in order to guarantee historical accuracy. We would also like to acknowledge the work of Mr Russ Nichols (a member of the Friends of the National Postal Museum) in researching aspects of the buttons and badges featured on this miniature.

The issue of uniforms within the PO had expanded tremendously during the latter half of the 19th century. The number of grades which were issued uniforms and the types of garments which were issued, proliferated to such an extent that 98,000 PO staff were being issued uniforms by 1908, at a cost of £250,000.

In 1910 a Committee on Uniform Revision issued a report which observed that the PO had no general or governing policy in relation to uniform production and put forward a framework for the simplification of procedure and regulations.

One of the results of this Committee's work was the division of the uniform-wearing ranks into six classes: Class I Supervisory Officers;

Class II Doorkeepers; Class III Postmen, Postwomen; Class IV Porters, liftmen; Class V Mailcart drivers; and Class VI Boy Messenger.

One result of this was that the number of different garments being produced was dramatically reduced from 92 to 56.

The 1914 Postman then falls into Class III. He is shown wearing the civilian 'lounge' pattern jacket, with red piping, that was recommended by the Committee on Uniforms. This jacket had replaced the jacket which had buttoned up to the throat and which had a red stand up collar and red cuffs on the sleeves.

On his left breast we see his Good Conduct Stripes. Since 1872 these had been awarded in recognition of length of service, by the late 1890s they were being awarded to all Postmen on completion of five years service, up to a maximum of six of thirty years service; the Postman featured here has therefore served at least ten years with the PO. This, together with his appearance, moustache and military bearing, suggest that this Postman could have been one of the many Boer War veterans who entered the PO after their military service ended.



Left Postmen, Supervisor and Messenger Boys, 1890.

Above Single and double-peaked shakos.

Below Portrait of Troon Postman, circa 1900. He is wearing a single-peak Shako and a high-collared tunic with one good conduct stripe.

His hat is the well-known double-peak shako, first introduced in London in 1896 as an alternative to the single-peak shako which can be seen on miniature no 2, London Letter Carrier of the 1860s. This earlier hat had been modelled on the famous cap worn by the French military, the kepi, but was unpopular with Postmen because it provided no protection from rainwater running down the back of the head and neck.

This protection was provided by the double-peak shako, but even then this hat came in for some criticism because of its appearance. One leading newspaper described it as 'the ugliest peaked fore-and-aft headgear ever designed.'

Originally limited to London, the 1910 Committee of Uniforms recommended that the double-peak shako be issued to provincial offices where a majority of staff were in favour of the change. Both types of shako continued to be worn until the introduction of the 'Broderick'



style peaked cap was introduced in the early 1930s.

As with previous miniatures, no 9 will be made available to *Bulletin* readers at the special introductory price of £21.95 (normal price £25.00). This offer will be available only until 31 October 1995 and will be limited to one per customer, please remember to quote 'Philatelic Bulletin' with your order. Cheques should be made out to 'The Post Office' in £ sterling,

all orders to be addressed to: Post Office Archives & records services, Freeling House, Mount Pleasant Complex, Phoenix Place entrance, London EC1A 1BB. Please note, there is a handling charge of 60p per order.

The next miniature, no 10, will depict a first National Standard pillar box set in the late 19th century. We hope to release this model some time in the Autumn of 1996, a precise launch date will be announced at a later date and details will be published in the *Bulletin* •

The Olympic torch relay by Franceska Rapkin On 30 March the Olympic torch relay began its long journey to Atlanta in the United States, when the flame was lit by the rays of the sun in the ancient stadium at Olympia.

Aisport



The modern torch relay was the brainchild of Carl Diem, the German Sports educator and Secretary General of the Organising Committee for the XI Olympic Games in Berlin in 1936. He suggested a relay connecting the two stadiums, Olympia and Berlin, at the International Olympic Committee's Session, held in Vienna in 1934, and those present voted overwhelmingly in favour of the suggestion.

This is the fourteenth occasion that there has been a torch relay connecting the site of the games of antiquity with a modern stadium for the Summer Games.

Although a torch relay was not part of the ancient Olympic Games, various fire ceremonies were a part of many Greek pagan festivals. At Olympia, the winner of the 1 stade race (approximately 100 yards), the most prestigious race of all, was invited to light the flame that marked the end of the quadrennial Games. For the ancient Greeks fire was identical to Light, Truth, Purity and Knowledge. At Olympia a temple was dedicated to Hestia the goddess of hearth, where priestesses were responsible for keeping the sacred flame alight at all times. The flame symbolised the chain of life and death and the succession of generations who transferred the spiritual light.

In 1896, when Athens was chosen to host the first Modern Olympic Games, the first Hellenic Olympic Committee organised a torchlight procession through one of the central streets of the city. At both the 1928 Games in Amsterdam and the 1932 Games in Los Angeles, a flame burned in a brazier specially prepared for it at the stadium.

Ever since that first relay, when the flame was lit by the sun's rays with a giant magnifying glass specially produced by the Karl Zeiss Company in Jena in Germany, the torch relay has become a part of Olympic tradition. In 1936, each country through which the torch passed supplied her own athletes,

who each ran 1 kilometre, before handing over the flame to the next runner. The torches were made by the Krupp Works in Essen, and became the property of the runner in commemoration of his participation. In all, 3075 runners were needed in that first relay to cover the distance from Olympia to Berlin.

Temple of Hera At every Summer Games, and more recently at every Winter Games, the celebrations have started with the lighting of the flame at the Temple of Hera at the ancient sanctuary of Olympia, and the length of time taken to carry the torch from Olympia to the opening ceremony has got longer and longer. The distances too have increased, for the torch now travels the length and breadth of the host nation before finally coming to rest in the brazier specially prepared for it.

After a cold and fairly dull month, 30 March dawned with bright blue skies and sunshine from first light. It was truly the first day of spring and one sent by the gods. Some 20,000 people gathered at the ancient stadium, for the track. Only the privileged few had seats on the dust arena.

Simple ceremony In contrast to the razzamataz that was sure to accompany the torch on its journey throughout the USA, the ceremony at Olympia was simple and moving and lasted less than an hour. Hillary Clinton, as well as William Porter Payne, President & Chief Executive of the Atlanta Olympic Organising Committee, were amongst those who spoke before the lighting ceremony. The Olympic flag, followed by those of the USA and Greece were raised, and after each one the appropriate national anthem was played. After the speeches a small group of dignitaries went through the arch from the stadium into the sanctuary of Olympia itself and into the ruins of the Temple of Hera, where the flame was lit, much as it was in 1936.

The large crowd outside the sanctuary waited patiently and fell silent when they heard the drum roll that indicated that the flame had been lit. Then a single girl in flowing white robes emerged from the sanctuary slowly beating her drum. She was followed by more girls in classical white Greek dresses, each carrying an olive branch. In their midst was the girl carrying the flame in cupped hands. The container was so small that at times it seemed as though she carried the flame in her naked hands.



After a short graceful dance, the first of the many runners approached and dipped his torch into the flame. Before he left the stadium, a white dove was released symbolically spreading the news that the Olympic celebrations had started.

Bitterness There is no doubt that the Greeks are bitter that the Centenary Games were not awarded to Athens, even though the Greek capital was ill prepared to host such an event. Great ceremony was made of the actual centenary of the first Modern Olympic Games a hundred years ago. A stamp and document exhibition was held at the Zappeion Hall to coincide with the exact dates of those first Games. The celebrations included a trip to Marathon to honour the instigator of the race, French philosopher and educator Michel Breal, and the first winner, the Greek, Spiridon Louis.

Interestingly, the torch relay, which has a direct link to the Centenary Games in Atlanta, was hardly feted at all. I heard from several sources that the torch passed on its way through Greece with little comment and less publicity, except in those places where it stayed overnight. Even the lighting of the flame in Olympia received little coverage on the national

television, though its arrival in Athens, as a part of a re-enactment of the sporting events of a hundred years ago in the Pan Hellenic Stadium, did receive a wider coverage.

Without stamp collectors, it is possible that there might not even have been a cancellation. To get any information about the torch's journey after leaving Greece was almost impossible. It arrived in Athens on 6 April, and in Los Angeles on 27 April for a torch run through the USA. No-one could

tell me for sure where it went in the intervening 21 days. There were rumours that it toured the Greek Islands. Another fairly reliable source said that it visited all those previous Olympic cities that had asked for it.

Special postmarks A special cancellation was used at the only post office in Olympia to commemorate the lighting of the flame marking the start of the Games of the xxvi Olympiad. After leaving Olympia, the torch wound its way through the Peloponnese by way of Kalamata, where it again stayed overnight. The third day it travelled to Nema, another site of important games in ancient times, and on to Corinth where it made its third overnight stop. On 2 April, the torch passed through Kiata, Akrate and Aegio to Patras. After an overnight stop at Patras, it left the Peloponnese and crossed the water to the Greek mainland, coming to rest in Delphi for the fifth night.

The end of the sixth day found the torch in Vergina. This city became well known in the late 1970s when Professor of Archaeology Manolis Andronikos discovered so many rare and valuable artifacts that he came to the conclusion that Vergina was actually the first capital of the kingdom of Macedonia. A series of royal tombs were found, amongst them the tomb of Philip II (359-336 BC) the father of Alexander the Great, one of the most important figures in Greek history.

On the seventh day the torch left Vergina and continued its journey north to Salonika, where it again stayed overnight. On 6 April, it was taken either by car or bus to Marathon, some 42 kilometres to the south of Athens, from where it started the final journey through Greece. It arrived in Athens at the Pan Hellenic Stadium at the end of an evening of sporting events, as they would have been in 1896. There were no electronic time keepers and no starting blocks. The only concession to modern technology was a giant television screen so that we could see all the events in detail. We have come a long way in the intervening century! ●



Olympic issues We feature some recent Olympic/Paralympic stamps from around the world, commemorating both the 1996 Games in Atlanta and the centenary of the first of the modern Games held at Athens in 1896.



Centenary of the Modern Olympic Games
British Virgin Islands



BERMUDA



ÉIRE 28



PARALYMPIC GAMES



100 YEARS OF OLYMPIC GAMES STAMP DESIGNS



HONG KONG 香港



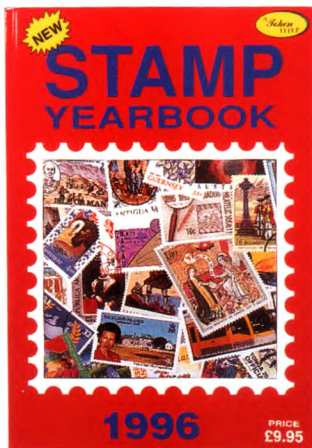
Royal Mail's Olympic stamps were issued on 9 July. Shortly we will feature some of the 1996 Europa issues on the subject of Women of Achievement (the British set goes on sale on 6 August).

Books *Stamp Yearbook • British External Airmails until 1934* by Alex Newell • *British Postal Mechanisation: a Handbook* • New Stanley Gibbons catalogues

Stamp Yearbook Token Publishing Ltd are to be congratulated reviving the *Stamp Yearbook*, the 1996 edition of which is now available. It is over

20 years since the last annual for stamp collectors was published in the UK, and it is to be hoped that the new *Yearbook* will have a long publishing life. Written by James Mackay, the new publication includes sections on the philatelic events and comings and goings of 1995; auction reports, a review of stamp design; a look at Cat stamps (theme of the year); philatelic terms and multi-lingual glossary; key words and abbreviations found in stamp, label and postmark inscriptions; a listing of European postal museums and philatelic counters; philatelic bureaux of the world, a listing of dealers; and a useful section on stamps and the law. There is an interesting chapter on British postmarks of 1995, with illustrations from the *British Postmark Bulletin*, and a look at the stamps of four nations which ceased issuing in 1994 (Bophuthatswana, Ciskei, Transkei, and Venda) and at the issues of the one newcomer – Palestine. For those with an interest in the philatelic past, the 'Looking Back' section dealing with issues of 50, 100 and 150 years ago makes fascinating reading. Dealing with 1895, for instance, Dr Mackay tells the stories of issues from Madagascar, Uganda, Mozambique, Taiwan, and Zanzibar. The book is well printed with black & white and some colour illustrations. Whilst some of the information is available elsewhere, it is good to have it in one handy publication. It would make a useful present for collectors of all ages and levels of experience. 176 pages, card covers •

Stamp Yearbook is available from booksellers or from Token Publishing Ltd, PO Box 14, Honiton EX14 9YP. Price £9.95 postpaid until 31 August 1996; thereafter postage £1.50 extra



British External Airmails until

1934 A second edition has recently been published of Alex Newell's book *British External Airmails until 1934*. In his Preface the author defines the coverage of his generic title: Mails carried by air from and to the British Isles; Mails carried by British airlines abroad; Mails carried by the Royal Naval Air Service, the Royal Flying Corps, the RAF and any military flying units prior to the creation of the RAF; Mails carried on trial, survey, experimental and demonstration flights derived from British initiative, Mails carried on flights representing individual efforts of British pilots; Independent airmail feeder services connecting with British air routes; and British mail carried on foreign airmail services.

The work is divided into two main sections – a Chronology and Glossary. The former lists flights from the first, allegedly mail-carrying, balloon flight over the English Channel in January 1785 to the Singapore-Rangoon flight of 31 December 1934. Details are given of items carried, with number of covers recorded, and a valuation or a rarity guide where 25 or less examples are known to the author. Each item is given a reference number and indication of further information in the Glossary if applicable. Some of the more interesting covers are illustrated. The Glossary provide a more detailed account of significant events, beginning with 1870 Ballon Monte mail. Again the reader is well supplied with illus-

trations of covers carried on important occasions in airmail history. The 14 appendixes cover subjects as diverse as RAF Mail Services for the British Expeditionary Army in France and Germany; British Mails carried by Zeppelins; Airmail Charges on European Routes, and the England to Australia Air Race, 1919/20. The book concludes with a bibliography of about 60 main references.

As might be expected in a book of this size, it is not without faults, and specialist collectors/dealers might quibble at some of the valuations. There is a confusion about the 1919 strike – this was a railway strike, not a general strike which occurred seven years later. It is stated that 31 bags of mail were flown on 1-4 October 1919 – this figure refers to 1 October only, a further 78 bags were carried the following day as recorded in Richard Beith's article here in June 1995 (page 298). The Dutch airline KLM's direct Holland-North of England service, introduced on 1 June 1934, is said to be short-lived although it operated again each summer in 1935-39.

Nonetheless this work contains much useful information, good illustrations, and is handsomely produced, as one would expect from a Christie's Robson Lowe publication. 456 pages, 16 colour plates, hardbound with dust jacket. Available from James Bendon, PO Box 6484, 3307 Limassol, Cyprus. Price £50 (US \$78.50) postpaid •

British Postal Mechanisation: a Handbook The Postal Mechanisation Study Circle has published two further chapters, 4 & 6, to be added to its loose-leaf *British Postal Mechanisation: a Handbook*. (The first instalments – chapters 1-3, were reviewed here in September 1993.) Chapter 4, by Jack Peach, is entitled Cancelling Machines – Who Made Them and How They Worked, 1900-09. He provides a well-written and clear account of the Columbia; Krag Continuous Impression; Sylbe; and Columbia Continuous Impression machines, with numerous photographs and line-drawings as well as examples of the postmarks applied by these machines. A few Krag machines are still in use – recorded by Colin Peachey in *British Postmark Bulletin*, 31 May 1996.

Chapter 6 on the First British Sorting Machines is the work of Douglas N Muir. After the introduction of the Dutch Transorma at Brighton and its operation on live mail from October 1935 a specification for an ideal sorting machine was drawn up by the Postal Services Department in 1938. Research into letter sorting machines was interrupted by the Second World War but from 1946 two projects were followed. The first concerned coding desks for placing what were then termed 'fluorescent' marks on letters which would subsequently be sorted automatically; the second the construction of manually-operated letter sorting machines along the lines of the Transorma. By 1950 it was clear that manually-operated machines were 'a more immediate practical approach' and the so-called Interim machine was developed. Mr Muir provides a detailed account of this and the later Single Position Letter Sorting Machine (SPLSM) which was first trialled at Mount Pleasant in 1955. Information is given of where the machines were used and the quantities of mail handled. The chapter is well-illustrated including a picture of the last SPLSM now preserved at the National Postal Museum. Close-ups of some of the machines reveal their Heath-Robinson appearance in comparison with today's high-tech sorting machinery.

Supplied with chapters 4 and 6 are some pages to update earlier chapters. 70 pages. Available from: Bob de Vekey, Rivendell, 215 Hempstead Road, Watford WD1 3HH, price £5 postpaid UK (overseas postage £1). The complete work to date, chapters 1-4 & 6 in binder is offered at £12.50 postpaid •

New SG Catalogues Stanley Gibbons have recently published the 4th edition of their popular *Collect Birds on Stamps* catalogue, listing over 12,500 stamps showing 2400 different bird species, and the 5th edition of Part 7 of their standard catalogue covering Germany. Price £19.95 each, postage £3 UK, £6 overseas. Available from SG Strand shop, booksellers and stamp dealers, and by post from Stanley Gibbons Publications, Parkside, Ringwood BH24 3SH. Telephone 01425 472363 •

Competition Win 1994 Christmas Imperf Pair



This month's competition is sponsored by Royale Stamp Company – a famous name in the stamp world. The prizes supplied by Royale comprise:

1st prize 1994 19p Christmas in imperf pair – SG 1843a, cat £250

3 × 2nd prize 1981 Butterflies 18p with substantial shift of Queen's head to right

10 × 3rd prize 1971 9p Machin orange & black broad phosphor band right variety

The winners of the April competition were A Jermyn of London (Edward VII £1 stamp); D Lockhart of North Wales (Penny Black); and P Pincket of Belgium and G Royston of Cambridge (Jersey 1969 2/6d Postage Due)

The answers 1. Culloden; 2. Preston; 3. 1963; 4. Christmas. Our thanks to all who entered.

The winners of the March competition were D Ward of Australia, R Steven of Edinburgh and E Tuvey of Hertfordshire.

The answers 1. Richard Hobson; 2. Six; 3. Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust; 4. 2½d.

We regret the wrong winners names and answers were published here last month. We are pleased to set the record straight.

Introducing Royale Stamp Company The origins of Royale Stamp Company stretch back to before the war when John Poole founded a 'new' company to deal with leading collectors and dealers of the day – he would be proud to see how his baby has grown!

By the late 1970s Royale had become one of the largest stamp companies in the country with a very keen and knowledgeable staff, indeed much of our growth has been due to that very knowledge and integrity when dealing with stamp lovers worldwide.

After a quiet period in the early 1990s, Royale is back, rejuvenated and with Jerry Brown and Graeme Harrison from 'The Old Crew' as part of the team. With over 30 years of combined experience they are always willing to help and advise on anything from postal history to specialised Machins. The popular 'Blue List' has also made a welcome return covering all GB issues from 1840 to date and a brand new shop will shortly be opening in London's stamp heartland.

This is a very exciting time in the market with interest in stamps growing once again and new exhibitions and venues pointing to a bright future with demand growing rapidly for fine quality material in all fields.

As a special offer to *Bulletin* readers you can receive a free copy of Royale Stamp Company's 48-page Blue List (cover price £1.50) simply by writing, phoning or faxing the address below – or why not visit us? We are always delighted to chat about your collection, whether you collect Line Engraved, or Lions, Belgium or Bears – we will do our best to help friends, old and new. Royale Stamp Company, 77 The Strand, London WC2R 0DE. Telephone 0171 379 5439, Fax 0171 240 5419.

To enter the competition answer the questions below and send, with your name and address, on a postcard or back of an envelope to: August Bulletin Competition, Royal Mail, 22 Finsbury Square, London EC2A 1NL to arrive by 27 September. You may submit as many entries as you like but each must be posted separately; multiple entries in one envelope will be disregarded.

- 1 Who purchased a toy bear in Blackpool in 1948?
- 2 In which towns can the Royal Mail sponsored travelling Burns exhibition be seen during August?
- 3 Who had the idea of a modern Olympic torch relay?
- 4 Where did the Bureau move to in 1966?
- 5 What anniversary will be commemorated by the 1997 prestige stamp book?

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

Events

Until 3 August Olympihex '96 – World Olympic & Sports Stamp Exhibition, Atlanta, USA. Enquiries: Organising Committee, Olympihex '96, PO Box 1996, Lexington GA 30648, USA, or UK Commissioner Mrs F Rapkin, Eaglewood, Sheet-hanger Lane, Felden, Hemel Hempstead HP3 0BG

Until early September Letter Carriers Framed! exhibition of paintings at National Postal Museum, King Edward Street, London EC1A 1LP. Open Mon-Fri 09.30-16.30. Enquiries: 0171 600 8914

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

10-11 August Bristol & District Federation of Philatelic Societies Annual Convention at Somerset Hall, Portishead, Bristol. 10.00-17.00. Dealers: stamps, postal history, postcards; specialist society meetings; displays; junior attractions. Enquiries: J Tovey, 36 Northville Road, Bristol BS7 0RG

12-18 August Hungaria 1100-Budapest '96 international stamp exhibition, organised by National Federation of Hungarian Philatelists (MABEOSZ) and Hungarian Post Ltd. Enquiries: MABEOSZ, H-1387 Budapest, Pf4, Hungary

28-31 August The Postcard Show '96 (BIPEX) at Royal Horticultural Hall, London SW1. Open 28 August 12.00-21.00; 29-30 11.00-20.00; 31 11.00-18.00. Enquiries: Derek Popplestone 01703 446143

14-15 September Brussels '96 at Sheraton Airport Hotel, Brussels, open 10.00-18.00. Displays, dealers. Enquiries: Lone Kamper Jensen, Telephone 02 767 64 97, Fax 02 767 06 83

18-22 September Autumn Stampex at Business Design Centre, 52 Upper Street, Islington Green, London N1. Enquiries: 0171-490-1005 •

Postbag

Bulletin back numbers Derek Hunt of 9 Harrington Close, Windsor SL4 4AD offers vols 13-24 of this magazine for sale.

Inphil/Stock Lists wanted J T Hague of 20 Plovers Mead, Wyatts Green, Doddinghurst, Brentwood CM15 0PS wishes to purchase the following Inphil leaflets: nos 1-67, 71, 80, 91, 101, 108, and 109. He also requires all Bureau stock lists to July/August 1987, November/December 1987 to May/June 1991, May/June 1992, March/April 1994, and November/December 1995 •

Notices

Correction The front cover of the July *Bulletin* was wrongly headed volume 34 No 11, instead of volume 33. We regret any confusion caused.

Readers are reminded that the Olympic Triathlon books (13 May 1996) include an offer for free postcards reproducing the Olympic stamp designs without the Queen's head, value and inscription. The offer ends on 31 August 1996.

New definitives The 1p stamp in the new £1 book has two phosphor bands, not one as stated here in June. The new coils are all vertical delivery. The 20p sea green was withdrawn from sale at post offices on 6 July. The 30p Country stamps will remain on sale in the respective countries until supplies are exhausted, the 30p national definitive will then be available.

Olympic display at NPM A display of the new Olympic stamps, including unadopted designs is on show in the temporary exhibition gallery at the National Postal Museum until 8 August. An exhibition of photographs of sub post offices opens on 12 August •

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letter (Postbag). Author's
name in italics.

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plement to each issue.

Burns Bicentenary 1996 writ-
ten by James Mackay was
given as a supplement to
January *Bulletin*.

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