

BRITISH PHILATELIC

The ROYAL MAIL magazine for stamp collectors

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Bulletin

Materia Medica on stamps •
Stamped to order stationery



The 1997 Greetings stamps, featuring flowers, go on sale on 6 January. The stamps were previewed in November's *Bulletin*.

Forthcoming issues & withdrawals

Below are withdrawals from 19 February to the end of the month. Any changes or additions will be notified in this magazine.

19 February £2 book, Sir Rowland Hill no 4 (stamps with blue fluor)

28 February £5 Windsor Castle stamp with Dextrin gum. *Note: PVA gum version remains on sale*

NPM closed until spring The National Postal Museum, in King Edward Street, London EC1 will remain closed until the spring of 1997, while the building is undergoing renovation. The extensive construction work is part of the continuing programme to refurbish the entire King Edward Building, which until recently also housed a sorting office and post office. Mr James Foley, Post Office Director with responsibility for the National Postal Museum said: 'We are very sorry if anyone is disappointed at not being able to visit the Museum over the next four months or so. A temporary closure, however, is necessary for safety reasons.'

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, Grimsby 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.

6 January	Issue 1997 Greetings book (Flowers), and presentation pack
13 January	Issue 10 x 1st book with Asda promotion. <i>Note: first availability from Bureau; sold at Asda stores from October 1996</i>
14 January	Issue The Great Tudor (Henry VIII) stamp cards
15 January	Withdrawal £1 and £2 stamp books, issued 16 January 1996
21 January	Issue The Great Tudor stamps, presentation pack and postcard book
24 January	Withdrawal Robert Burns stamps, pack and stamp cards
28 January	Issue The Great Tudor philatelic numismatic cover
29 January	Withdrawal Railway aerogrammes (pack of six)
3 February	Issue Greetings book (Flowers) with promotional cover (Win flowers bouquet). <i>Note: stamps as in book issued 6 January</i>
4 February	Issue Books with amended covers: removal of Olympic/Paralympic logos and revised text; 10 x 1st, 4 x 1st, 4 x 2nd Walsall; 10 x 1st, 10 x 2nd Harrison; 10 x 2nd Questa; 4 x 37p, 4 x 63p Walsall • £1 and £2 machine books with amended copy on covers
5 February	Withdrawal Books with Olympic logos: Walsall 4 x 1st, 4 x 2nd and 10 x 1st; Harrison 10 x 2nd; Questa 10 x 2nd
12 February	Issue 4 x 1st NVI stamp book with Hong Kong pictorial label; also stamp card of label
13 February	Issue National Postal Museum Valentines Day postcards (ref 96/1-4). <i>Note: to be withdrawn at Bureau but remain on sale at NPM shop</i>
18 February	Withdrawal Disney promotional book, 10 x 1st

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

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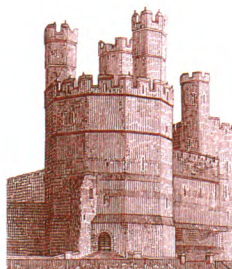
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Royal Mail news New label book, stamp books and decorative airpacks • Greetings promotional book • Special stamps promotion • StampMaster GB



New pictorial label book A book of four 1st class NV1 stamps with a pictorial label featuring Hong Kong will be available from 12 February from the British Philatelic Bureau, Post Office Counters philatelic outlets, main post offices, and the Royal Mail stand at the Hong Kong '97 international stamp exhibition. The label features the Hong Kong skyline, a junk and Chinese dragon, designed by David Loftus. The book has been printed by Walsall Security Printers. This is the fourth such label book, earlier issues featured the tercentenary of the Bank of England (1994), centenary of the birth of R J Mitchell (1995), and 70th

birthday of HM The Queen (1996).

A stamp card reproducing the Hong Kong label will also be available from 12 February, price 25p. Cards showing the earlier labels were issued in April 1996 and are still available – 75p the set of three •

1998 special stamp programme The subjects for the 1998 issues will be: Endangered Species • Heraldry/Chivalry • National Festivals (Europa theme) • Lighthouses • Health • C S Lewis (centenary of birth) • Comedians • Speed • and Christmas. Dates to be announced.

Collect special stamps promotion A joint Royal Mail and Post Office Counters Ltd promotion will be launched at selected outlets commencing with the issue of the Great Tudor (Henry VIII) stamps on 21 January. Customers wishing to participate

should pick up a leaflet at participating offices from 13 January. This will give information on how to obtain a 1997 stamp album containing information on all special stamps of 1997. The promotion will run at main post offices throughout the UK, and at sub post offices in London, the South East, Home Counties, and East Anglia.

The attractive hard-backed album will be obtainable by sending the leaflet, dated stamped on purchasing at least £1 worth of Great Tudor stamps or related products, and five 26p stamps to the address on the leaflet. In addition customers will be sent a collectors' card which will be dated stamped on purchase of future special stamp issues. Once the card has been stamped for each issue it can be submitted for a free 1998 special stamps album.

John Bliss, Royal Mail's Promotions Manager Collecting, is anticipating a big demand for the album which he believes will attract many new collectors to the hobby. The album will also appeal to existing collectors of special issues •

Greetings promotional book A special promotional book containing the new Greetings flower stamps will be available in stores run by several big retailers from February. The cover of the book will be different from the book issued on 6 January, although the stamps will be unchanged. The promotion involves a competition with winners receiving a free bouquet by post, or a £3 voucher towards buying flowers by post. The bouquet will comprise 12 carnations plus fern. Details of the competition are printed on the inside and back covers of the book. The offer is open until 31 October 1997 •

This promotional book will be available from the British Philatelic Bureau and Post Office Counters philatelic outlets from 3 February.

New stamp books Ten revised stamp books will be available from the British Philatelic Bureau and other philatelic outlets from 4 February. Whilst changes have been made to the covers, the stamps remain unchanged from previous printings. Of books containing xv1, 37p and 63p stamps, the Olympic and Paralympic logos on the back covers are being replaced by postal information. The white defacement bar will be removed from the stamp illustrations on the front covers.

The books concerned are: 10 × 1st class printed by Harrison and Walsall • 10 × 2nd class, by Harrison and Questa • 4 × 1st class, by Walsall • 4 × 2nd class by Walsall • 4 × 37p, by Walsall • 4 × 63p, by Walsall.

New printings of the £1 and £2 machine books, by Questa, will include amended copy on the inside covers •

Obituary: Jack Goodwin With regret we record the recent death of Dr Jack Goodwin, who worked as a philatelic consultant at the National Postal Museum, 1984-94. Born in the USA, Jack was literally a 'jack of all trades', working in many fields before a successful career in education. For some years he worked in Cyprus, teaching by day and writing novels and a two-volume history of the island in his spare time. At the NPM he remounted the All-World Collection of stamps and recorded the R M Phillips Collection on the Museum's Edicom computer system. However perhaps his main contribution was compiling the Museum's own listing (the *Chronolist*) of all British stamps since 1840. This useful work, which can be consulted at the Museum, formed the basis of the StampMaster computer catalogue. Jack was enthusiastic about new technology and pleased to see his work used in this way. Jack's interest in Cypriot stamps and postal history was shared by his wife Brenda and both wrote on the subject; Jack's articles appearing in the *Bulletin* in October 1986, February and April 1988. He was a great character, always good company with a fund of stories and wisecracks; he will be greatly missed. We extend our sympathies to Brenda and his sons. JOHN HOLMAN, EDITOR •

Royal Mail stamp supplements in national press Following the success of the 1996 stamp supplement in *The Daily Telegraph*, Royal Mail is delighted to be involved with two further supplements that will be issued in 1997. The first will appear in *The Times* on Tuesday 7 January, followed by a supplement in *The Daily Telegraph* on Friday 17 January •

Decorative airpacks Royal Mail International is currently trialling the sale of four decorative airpacks at post offices in London. The packs are available in two sizes: c3 prepaid to 500g, price £5.99 and c4 prepaid to 300g £3.99. They are available in four designs: Christmas Trees; Tartan; Snowmen; and Tulips and will remain on sale until February 1997 at the following post offices in the London area: 18 Harben Parade, Finchley Road, NW3 6JU • 10 Lombard Street, EC3V 9EB • 54-56 Great Portland Street, W1N 5AH • 111 Baker Street, W1M 1FE • Heathfield Terrace, Chiswick W4 4JF • Unit 30 Broadway Shopping Centre, Hammersmith Broadway, W6 9YY • Trafalgar Square PO, 24-28 William IV Street, WC2N 4DL • 110 Victoria Street, SW1E 5JU • 358 High Road, N22 4JW • 110 West Green Road, N15 5AA • 67 Bridge Street, Pinner, HA5 3JB • 64 High Street, Rickmansworth, WD3 1AA • 10 High Street, Croydon CR9 1HT • and 74 Mid Summer Arcade, Milton Keynes MK9 3AA. Please note that RMI Airpacks are not available from the British Philatelic Bureau •



Keith Macdonald leaves the Bureau After 15 years in the Post Office, the Bureau's Marketing Communications Manager, Keith Macdonald, has now left for pastures new. Before moving to the Bureau, 11 years ago, Keith worked on post office counters in Edinburgh where he learned about the foibles of us collectors, asking for cylinder blocks, traffic lights and other parts of sheets of stamps. Undeterred he joined the Bureau's Customer Care section, transferring to the Marketing department in 1989. Keith

undertook an important part in the development of the Bureau's direct marketing, involving the mailing of numerous leaflets, order forms, including *Stamp Preview*, and letters to its customers, and acted in a pivotal liaison role between the Marketing department and the operations side of the Bureau which despatches stamps, covers and products to collectors around the world. In particular Keith enjoyed managing the Bureau's stand at Stampex in London and at international exhibitions in Korea, Poland, and China where his patience and charm were appreciated by many customers and stamp dealers alike. Away from work, he is a keen sportsman and was a leading player in the Bureau's golf team. Well-liked by his Royal Mail colleagues in Edinburgh and London, we wish him success in his new post at the Royal Bank of Scotland. On a personal level, I also record my thanks for his help to me as *Bulletin* Editor over the past eight years. JOHN HOLMAN ●

StampMaster GB The StampMaster GB computer catalogue programme is now available in Windows and CD-ROM versions.

The Windows version contains all the important features of the original programme, such as full National Postal Museum data on every stamp deliberately issued by the Post Office between 1840 and the end of 1995, and the ability to record and value one's collection, with the ease-of-use of a Windows programme. This data includes: date of issue, face value, description, mint and used values, issue details, plate number (Victorian only), notes, colours, themes, printer, watermarks, printing method, perforations, phosphor bars, paper and gum types, designer, sheet layout, stamp size, and whether in sheets, coils or books. The user can add in other items into the database, even from other countries, as well as cross references.

First day covers, stamp cards, coils and label panes were included in the StampMaster database for the first time during the year. Both the Windows version and the DOS 2.1 update included revised values where these had changed from the original. StampMaster GB Windows will run on any computer that can run either Windows 3.1 or Windows 95. Price £49.95 for new users (reductions for transfers from the DOS programme) from British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, Edinburgh EH3 5TT.

StampMaster GB CD-ROM incorporates images of the GB stamps. High quality pictures of the commemoratives, for instance, reveal the detail and beauty of these designs, whilst separate images for over 900 Victorian stamps provide a wealth of comparative interest. Each stamp details data record includes a small image of the stamp, assisting with the identification. Clicking on this brings an enlarged picture to the screen.

StampMaster GB CD-ROM combines the attractiveness of a full pictorial record of a country's stamps with a highly comprehensive set of data, powerful search facilities and the ability of the user to create detailed collection records (or 'wants' lists). Setting up and using the programme is extremely simple. StampMaster GB CD-ROM is available from the Bureau, price £74.95 for first-time buyers, with reductions for those who already use an existing version of StampMaster GB ●

Great Tudor colours and cylinders

26p Henry VIII P47 (phosphor)

● 1A (gold) ● 1B (greenish yellow) ● 2C (bright purple) ● 1D (new blue) ● 1E (black)

26p Six Wives P48 (phosphor)

● 1A (gold) ● 1B (greenish yellow) ● 2C (bright carmine) ● 1D (new blue) ● 1E (black)

The Henry VIII stamp is from no dot and dot sheets; the Six Wives stamps from no dot, dot, and double dot sheets.

Enquiries about StampMaster GB should be addressed to: Philatelic Software Ltd, Valley View, Coleman's Lane, Nazeing EN9 2EA. Telephone 01992 893086.

Stamp scene January Stampex at the Business Design Centre



January Stampex will be open

22 January 12.00-19.00

23-25 January 10.30-19.00

26 January 10.30-17.00

January Stampex The first of this year's Stampex exhibitions takes place at the Business Design Centre, 52 Upper Street, London N1 0QH, 22-26 January.

THEMATIC AND POST BOX DISPLAYS The British Thematic Association, which incorporates 25 specialist societies, will be providing a major display – some 250 frames covering a wide range of subjects. Many of the collections in this display have received awards at national and international exhibitions. Stewards from the BTA will be available to offer advice on the Association, specialist societies, and thematic collecting in general.

David Harrop, a leading collector of postal memorabilia, will once again be providing a display, this time on 'The Great British Post Box'. Several actual post boxes will be included, the display tracing the history of the post box, its development and many designs.

CHILDREN WELCOME The Childrens' Supervised Crèche will again be available, so parents can tour the exhibition leaving their children in the capable hands of trained supervisors. No charge is made for this service.

DEALERS Many leading stamp dealers and postal administrations will be at Stampex, including some from Europe and America. All standholders are members of the Philatelic Traders' Society.

ACCESS AND ACCOMMODATION The Business Design Centre is well served by underground and bus services. The nearest tube station – Angel (Northern line) – is about five minutes walk. Buses serve Islington from all areas of London. Full details of bus routes available from London Transport Travel Service on 0171 222 1234.

Car parking is available at the exhibition centre and nearby in Berbers Road, Parkfield Street, and Elia Street.

Stampex have appointed booking agents for accommodation, offering a discounted reservation service for hotels in the Islington area. Contact Hotelfile Ltd, Freephone 0800 132279. For details of moderately priced local guest house and bed & breakfast accommodation phone Discover Islington on 0171 278 8787.

ROYAL MAIL AND STAMPEX HANDSTAMP Staff from the British Philatelic Bureau will be on hand to answer questions and the full range of stamps, books and related material will be on sale. A special handstamp will be applied to mail posted at the Royal Mail stand, or sent to the Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, Mount Pleasant, London EC1A 1BB requesting Stampex handstamp and stating date(s) required. Covers should be submitted not later than the date of the postmark required ●

Admission is £1 each day (including first day).

Complimentary tickets are available by phoning the Stampex office: 0171 490 1005.

All visitors to the exhibition will receive a free goody bag. A prize draw will be held, with posting boxes for draw entry forms scattered around the exhibition.

Stamp '96 Autumn Exhibition John Holman reports on a successful new venture

It was without doubt a most enjoyable event, well-organised and held in the prestigious National Exhibition Centre outside Birmingham. The NEC is ideally suited for exhibitions of this kind, easy of access by road or public transport, with halls of varying sizes so several exhibitions can be staged at the same time. Stamp '96 occupied Hall 7. Collectors in the Midlands had waited over 30 years for a major stamp exhibition to come to Birmingham and were not disappointed. Over 1000 people arrived in the first hour, with some 10,200 during the three days. The spacious layout, good attractions and facilities engendered a pleasant friendly atmosphere. Visitors looked as if they were enjoying themselves.

The excellent displays, aimed mainly at younger and thematic collectors, were worth the attention of the more traditional philatelist. John and Molly Fosbery displayed part of their extensive Cats collection and members of the Railway Philatelic Group showed railway thematics, postmarks, railway letter and parcel stamps, etc. Perhaps the most attractive was a fine display of Christmas stamps, postmarks and related material, ranging from pre-stamp covers posted at Christmas time to recent charity post issues from Scout and other groups. A section was devoted to the Santa Claus cards sent by the British and other Post Offices in response to youngsters writing to Father Christmas in Reindeerland, Toyland, Snowland, etc. 1996 Christmas issues were displayed by the Crown Agents.

David Harrop put on another of his intriguing displays of postal memorabilia, including letter boxes, postal signs, posters and photographs. These always attract many visitors who appreciate the link between the stamps they collect and the history of the postal service. David's display this time concentrated on the carriage of mail by road. Derrick Page from the National Postal Museum and staff from Walsall Security Printers gave talks on the Freddie Mercury Collection and on stamp design and printing projected onto a video wall.

Visitors who came looking for material to buy were catered for by dealers offering stamps of all periods, postal history, albums and accessories. The exhibition was opened by Lord Montagu of Beaulieu, founder of the National Motor Museum, who spoke of 'the postage stamp and motor vehicle as the inventions of the 19th and 20th centuries... both have played a major part for good and ill in improving our civilization.' He congratulated Royal Mail on the Classic Sports Cars stamps celebrating the centenary of the British motor industry.

Mr Paul Fraser and his team at Stanley Gibbons are congratulated on another successful exhibition. I look forward to Stamp '97 at Wembley in April, and further shows at the NEC planned until the year 2000 •



For collectors of exhibition souvenirs a limited edition 1932 model 'A' panel van was on sale at £7.95. A few may still be available from Stanley Gibbons. Telephone 01425 472363 for details.



There was a special postmark for mail posted in a replica Victorian postbox, and a special label, cover and cachet at the Walsall Security Printers stand where young visitors could enter a design a stamp competition.

Private stationery stamped to order part 2 The printed paper and postcard rates, by Colin Baker



Part one of this series described the introduction of the stamped to order facility in 1855, allowing private envelopes and lettersheets to be impressed with stamps of different values of those businesses that preferred to use their own stationery rather than that prepared by the Post Office.

In early 1870s, following the introduction of the postcard, the stationery trade campaigned for their members to be allowed to prepare and sell privately produced postcards. The PO eventually agreed to this and arranged for a new 1/2d die to be prepared, which was impressed in pink on private postcards from June 1872. This gave rise to the one exception to the standard system of dating stationery stamps used on envelopes and lettersheets, as the new 1/2d stamp never included date plugs within its design.

Abuse of the regulations Regulations required that private cards followed the rules laid down for all postcards. The cards had to be printed in a standard colour and could only include on the front the words 'Post card/The address only to be written on this side'. Many postcards followed these rules but some publishers consistently used alternative colours with fancy printing and occasionally included the Royal coat of arms.

The continual abuse of this system led the PO to make a complete change to the printing arrangements for private cards and from 1884 not just the stamp but the fronts of cards were printed at the Stamping Branch of the Inland Revenue at Somerset House. The new printing arrangements incorporated a revised design of postcard which was exactly the same as that employed on PO cards, but with one major difference. The coat of arms was deliberately omitted in order to identify private cards and to reinforce the authority's reasons for changing the stamping arrangements. However, from 1889 the coat of arms was reinstated, but because of the similarity that then existed between both the private and PO issues, it was felt necessary to distinguish between them. A section of chain on the neck of the unicorn in the coat of arms on private cards was removed, making it as easy today as it was then to identify the two types.

Following the introduction of these new printing arrangements, privately stamped postcards started to lead the field rather than follow the PO's initiative. Court cards were first available from private stationers, followed by a campaign by them to allow a message to be carried on the front of cards, after which they pressed the PO to increase the maximum size of the postcard allowable to that used on the Continent for picture postcards. In all these cases the PO eventually relaxed the rules, giving in to pressure from the trade. The stationery trade was also involved in having the regulations relaxed to allow postcards to pass with adhesive stamps, which was granted from 1894 onwards, only stationery postcards having been permitted at the 1/2d rate prior to this date. Cards which infringed this rule were treated as underpaid letter and surcharged 1d.

Opposite From the top: commercial wrapper for heavy weight papers or magazines; private newspaper wrappers, 1897 and 1903; another commercial wrapper (as at top); typical Victorian newspaper wrapper using a single embossed 2d stamp.



Extravagant printing such as this and the illegal use of the Royal coat of arms forced the Post Office to change the stamping arrangement.



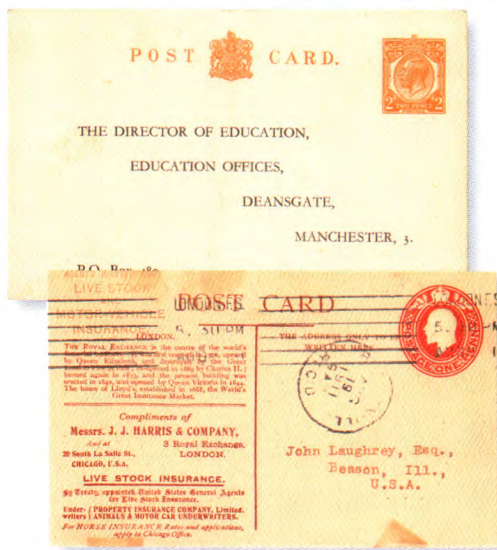
One other innovation introduced by certain businesses at the beginning of this century, but never undertaken by the PO, was the use of folded cards with tuck-up flaps (in both single and reply versions). Although these were ungummed, they gave a certain degree of privacy and the reply versions helped prevent the cards being reversed in the post, thus being inadvertently returned to the sender. Technically these cards were not 'postcards' but went under the heading of 'printed paper rate' material, and therefore some of these items carried embossed rather than letterpress stamps. However the postage rate of ½d was the same for both types of material and it made little difference to most people under which system they were charged.

In the 20th century the fronts of private postcards continued to be printed at Somerset House with various devices employed to identify these from the PO's own versions.

From 1908 a dot (or full stop) was printed after the words POSTCARD and in addition, during George V's reign, a dot was also included on the stamp design after its value in words, so that HALFPENNY indicated a stamped to order item, whereas HALFPENNY was PO issue. However this

practice of differentiating between the stamps ceased with the George VI designs and in 1941 the stop after CARD was omitted, so that from that date onwards the only means of identifying private cards from their PO counterparts is by the size, colour and printing details.

The postage rate for postcards was increased in 1918 and again in 1920, and then decreased in 1992, matching similar changes to the letter rates over the same period, all of which required revised stamp values. This did not create any problems in George V's reign as the 1d and 1½d dies were already available and in use on lettercards in 1918 and 1920 respectively. However, in 1940 no George VI 2d die was available and private cards had to be printed using the George V 2d die, even though his son had been on the throne for more than four years. This was at complete variance with the PO issued cards of the same period which had two George VI 1d stamps printed side by side until the new 2d die was made available. (See part 4 of 'Twentieth Century Postal Stationery' *Bulletin* March 1996).



Newspaper wrappers From 1855 publishers had the choice of having their newspapers taxed, which then afforded them free postage, or in not doing so and paying postage at the book post rate (which eventually became the printed paper rate). In either case wrappers were used so that the ends of the newspapers and their tax stamps were clearly visible in the post and it was obvious to PO officials that only printed matter was being sent. Many publishers who preferred not to pay the newspaper tax used stationery wrappers, having them privately stamped at Somerset House at the appropriate rate.

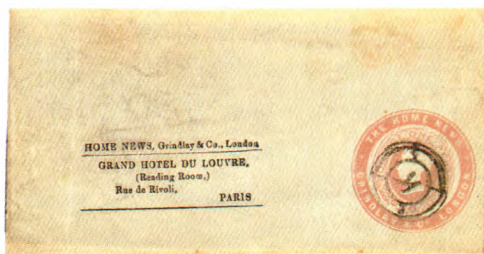
However in 1870 the newspaper tax and its associated free postage was abolished and new printed paper rates introduced. The PO introduced their own stationery wrappers, although publishers and private manufacturers could continue to have their own material privately stamped at Somerset House. From that date on, generally the standard ½d and 1d letterpress stamps prepared for PO wrappers were used to stamp private items at the ½d and 1d letterpress stamps prepared for PO wrappers were used to stamp private items at the ½d and 1d rates, although occasionally some of the embossed dies normally employed on envelopes and other private items were also impressed on newspaper wrappers, particularly if the rate to be stamped exceeded 1d. In the 19th century it was the general rule only to apply one stamp to private newspaper wrappers, combinations of ½d and 1d letterpress stamps rarely being used. In later years however, higher postage rates on wrappers were made with combination of either letterpress or embossed stamps.

In 1857 the PO officially sanctioned the addition of firms' names in a ring around embossed stamps used for stamping private material, which have today become known as advertising rings. Some of these stamp and ring combinations were printed in one operation at Somerset House, but many were added later by private printers in an attempt to simulate the official versions. The colours of these added rings often vary from, and can be incorrectly aligned with, the embossed stamps which can help in their identification. Mostly it was newspaper wrappers which were impressed in this way, although occasionally this arrangement was also used on envelopes.

Despite the name now given to these rings it is highly unlikely that they were added solely for advertising purposes, since most wrappers would already be boldly printed with firms' names and addresses. It is much more likely that these rings would have been yet another security device to prevent the fraudulent use of wrappers. Whatever the reason, the scheme lacked popularity and the use of rings was dropped towards the end of the 19th century. There are about 50 firms who are known to have used rings in this way, of which only 10 had the official stamp/ring combination impressed, the remainder preferring to have the rings added later by private printers. Relatively few of these wrappers and envelopes survive •

Opposite Above, an example of the fold-over card with tuck-in flap sent at the printed paper rate. This example prepared for the Army and Navy Stores in Victoria Street. Below, private postcard stamp with the George V 2d die for use after the rate rise on 1 May 1940, and a rare private postcard stamped at the foreign rate of 1d.

Advertising rings Above, integrally printed at Somerset House. The stamp has been precancelled, partly to reduce the risk of fraud and partly to speed up its despatch through the post. Below: added subsequently by a private printer; printed at Somerset House with the stamp.



Checklist of 1996 definitives and their sources



Above Se-tenant panes from £1 and £2 books yielding new 1p, 18p and 26p litho stamps (July)

We hope this list will prove helpful to collectors in completing their collections. Please read the following notes carefully.

We quote British Philatelic Bureau order number (prefixed TB, DS, etc) as given on Bureau stock lists. Some stamps were issued only in books and can be bought from Royal Mail only in complete books.

Printers (H) Harrison & Sons Ltd, photogravure; (E) Joh Enschedé Security Printing BV, photogravure; (Q) The House of Questa Ltd, offset-lithography; (W) Walsall Security Printers Ltd, offset-lithography.

Gum Both PVA (Polyvinyl Alcohol) and PVA-D (Dextrin) have been used; details are given in the list.

Phosphor bands These can be seen reliably only with the aid of an ultraviolet lamp. The phosphor inks now include an additive which has a blue (variable) fluorescence under either a long- or a short-wave lamp.

Perforations All stamps are perforated 15 × 14 with ellipses at the lower left and right sides unless otherwise stated.

Dates of issue Dates are usually when the stamp was first available from the Bureau, even if it was seen on sale elsewhere at an earlier date.

Prices The stated price of a book containing *NVI* stamps is that currently applicable.

10 January

10p (DS106), **35p** (DS354) and **38p** (DS382) sheet stamps with two blue fluor phosphor bands; gum PVA. (E)

16 January

New style machine-vend books in red covers with Royal Mail logo. They replaced the former books with pictorial covers as stocks were used up: ● 50p (TB053), containing 4 × 25p with two blue fluor phosphor bands, PVA gum. (Q) ● £1 (TB054), containing 8 × 25p. Stamps as in 50p books.

1 February

19p N Ireland sheet stamp with one centre blue fluor phosphor band (IS192); gum PVA. (Q)



Above Back cover of Olympics logos books (February onwards)

6 February

Five retail books with Olympics logos on the back cover: ● 76p (UB124), containing 4 × 2nd-class NVI stamps with one blue fluor phosphor band in centre; PVA gum. (W) ● £1.04 (UB123), containing 4 × 1st-class NVI stamps with two blue fluor phosphor bands; PVA gum. (W) ● £2 (UB125), containing 10 × 2nd-class NVI stamps with one blue fluor phosphor band in centre; PVAD gum. (H) ● £2 (UB127), containing 10 × 2nd-class NVI stamps with one blue fluor phosphor band centre; PVA gum. (Q) ● £2.60 (UB126), containing 10 × 1st-class NVI stamps with two blue fluor phosphor bands; PVA gum. (W)

6 February

Roll of 500 × 25p printed and reeled sideways with non-elliptical perforations and two blue fluor phosphor bands; gum PVAD. Sold in complete rolls (DC074) or as singles or strips (DC875). (H)

14 February

29p sheet stamp (DS294) with two blue fluor phosphor bands; gum PVA. (E)

19 February

£2.60 Disney promotional book Contains 10 × 1st class NVI stamps with two blue fluor phosphor bands; PVAD gum. (H)

20 February

£2 machine stamp book (TB055) Sir Rowland Hill, No 4 – Mulready envelopes, containing eight 25p

stamps with two blue fluor phosphor bands; PVAD. (H). The previous issue of this book, TB045 4 September 1995, contained stamps with yellow fluor phosphor.

5 March

1p (DS014) and **50p** (DS506) sheet stamps with two blue fluor phosphor bands; gum PVA (E)

25p N Ireland sheet stamp (IS251) with two blue fluor phosphor bands; gum PVA. (Q)

£1.50 Caernarfon Castle stamp (FS154) with PVA gum. The previous issue had PVAD.

19 March

Four retail books with the Olympics and Paralympics logos. One contained 1st NVIs, the other three had value stamps for overseas mail: ● £1.40 (UB128) containing 4 × 35p ● £1.64 (UB129) containing 4 × 41p ● £2.40 (UB130) containing 4 × 60p. All the stamps had two blue fluor phosphor bands; gum PVA. The 41p and 63p stamps were the first with blue fluor. (W) ● £2.60 retail book (UB131) containing 10 × 1st-class NVI stamps with two blue fluor phosphor bands; PVAD gum. (H)

26 March

Four sheet stamps issued with two blue fluor phosphor bands. The values were: ● 5p (DS058) ● 6p (DS063) ● 20p sea green (DS209) and ● 30p (DS303, DS304). The 30p stamp exists with blue tint and untinted gums and both are supplied by the Bureau, the white gum version being described as 'gum change'. (E)

16 April

£1.04 retail book (UL003) containing 4 × 1st NVIs attached to Queen's 70th birthday label. The stamps had two blue fluor phosphor bands; gum PVA. (W)

30 April

41p Wales (WS411) with two blue fluor phosphor bands; gum PVA. (Q)

2 May

£2 Edinburgh Castle stamp (FS024) with PVA gum. The previous issue had PVAD.



Left 21 April: Queen's Birthday label book.

Right Promotional books: W H Smith (July), Send a Cake (September) and ASDA (October)

Below Front cover of Olympic scratchcard book (May)

13 May

£2.60 retail Olympic 'Triathlon' scratchcard promotional books There were three cover designs: Shotput (UP011), Hurdles (UP012) and Archery (UP013). The books contained 10 × 1st NVIs with two blue fluor phosphor bands; gum PVAD. (H)

14 May

£6.48 Prestige stamp book European Football Championship (YB011). The book contained four stamp panes: ● pane 1; 4 × 19p Football Legends special issue Dixie Dean, with one blue fluor phosphor band, no ellipses ● pane 2; 4 × 25p Football Legends special issue Bobby Moore, with two blue fluor phosphor bands, no ellipses ● pane 3; mixed pane of 2 × 35p Football Legends special issue Duncan Edwards, 2 × 41p Billy Wright and 2 × 60p Danny Blanchflower, se-tenant. All with two blue fluor phosphor bands, no ellipses ● pane 4; mixed pane of nine comprising a pictorial label and eight 25p definitives se-tenant, viz: two each of the National and the three Country issues, all with ellipses. Two blue fluor phosphor bands; gum PVA. The label was non-phosphor. (Q)

25 June

Seven new sheet values in anticipation of the tariff increase effective from 8 July: ● 20p light green (DS200) with one centre blue fluor phosphor band, and 26p (DS263) with two blue fluor phosphor bands; gum PVAD. (H) ● 31p (DS313), 37p (DS372), 39p (DS391), 43p (DS430) and 63p (DS630). All had two blue fluor phosphor bands. Gum untinted (white) PVA, except the 43p which had blue tinted gum. (E)



8 July

New booklets and coils to meet the tariff increase effective from the day of issue. The rolls contained either 1st NVI, 2nd NVI, 37p or 43p stamps, all reeled lengthways. The NVI rolls were issued in two sizes, viz: 500 stamps (2nd DC076, 1st DC078) and 1000 stamps (2nd DC077, 1st DC079). The value stamps were issued only in rolls of 500 (37p DC080, 43p DC081). Single stamps and strips from each roll were supplied by the Bureau (2nd DC878, 1st DC880, 37p DC882, 43p DC883). The 2nd NVI stamps has central blue fluor phosphor band; others two blue fluor phosphor bands. Gum PVAD. (H)

There were two machine-vend books in red covers with contents to meet the new tariff. They replaced the books with 25p stamps ● £1 (TB056), containing 3 × 26p, 1 × 20p 2 × 1p, 2 labels. The 20p stamp has single central blue fluor phosphor band; others two blue fluor phosphor bands; PVA gum. (Q) ● £2 (TB057), containing 7 × 26p, 1 × 20p. Phosphor as for stamps in £1 book. The books were sold at a 2p discount.



There were two retail books with value stamps, viz: 4 × 37p (UB132) and 4 × 63p (UB133). The stamps had two blue fluor phosphor bands; gum PVA. (W)

15 July

£2.60 retail W H Smith promotional book (UP014). Contains 10 × 1st NVI stamps with two blue fluor phosphor bands; PVA gum. (W)

Note: these books were not available from philatelic outlets until 17 September, after the promotion ended.

23 July

New Country stamps for the increased tariff effective from 8 July: ● 20p light green (IS201, SS201, WS201 ● 26p (IS263, SS264, WS263) ● 37p (IS371, SS372, WS371) and ● 63p (IS630, SS630, WS630). The 20p stamp has blue fluor centre phosphor band; others two blue fluor phosphor bands. Gum PVA. (Q)

6 August

Four retail books with Olympics logos and printer's initial. The initial, H, Q or W, was printed on the back cover to identify the printer concerned without having to open the books: ● £2 (UB134) containing 10 × 2nd NVIs with one blue fluor phosphor centre band; gum PVAD. (H) ● £2 (UB135) containing 10 × 2nd NVIs with one blue fluor phosphor centre band; gum PVA. (Q) ● £2.60 (UB136) containing 10 × 1st NVIs with two blue fluor phosphor bands; gum PVAD. (H) ● £2.60 (UB137) containing 10 × 1st NVIs with two blue fluor phosphor bands; gum PVA. (W)

9 September

£2.60 'Send a Cake' retail promotional book There were two versions, with and without a small black box on the back cover. The latter were sold through retailers; the former through post offices. Both were available from the Bureau from 17 September (UP015 without box, UP016 with box). They contained 10 × 1st NVIs with two blue fluor phosphor bands; gum PVA. (W)

17 September

£5 Windsor Castle definitive with PVA gum (FS054). The previous issue had PVAD.

7 October

£2.60 ASDA retail promotional book The back cover contained a voucher worth £1 off the cost of four greetings cards bought in an ASDA store. The book contains 10 × 1st NVIs with two blue fluor phosphor bands; gum PVA. (W)

Note: the books will be available from philatelic outlets from 13 January 1997.

3 December

2nd NVI sheet stamp with extended phosphor bands (DS201). (Q)

12 December

63p from coil of 500, reeled lengthways Two blue fluor phosphor bands (H). (DC085 complete coil, DC885 single stamp) ●

Royal Mail thanks DGA Myall for compiling this listing. The Editor regrets he is unable to engage in correspondence regarding its contents.



Simulated stamp design
meter introduced from 1927
(above, and detail below)

75 years of meter marks James Mackay

Approaching the 75th anniversary of the postage meter, the interest in meter marks is greater than ever.



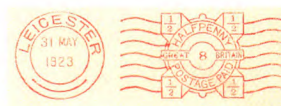
At the Madrid Convention of the Universal Postal Union in 1920 it was decided to permit the transmission of international mail whose postage was prepaid by some means other than adhesive stamps or postal stationery. This paved the way for the use of paid handstamps and machine marks, hitherto restricted to domestic mail, provided that the postmark incorporated the country name. Britain ratified this agreement in 1922 and it was from then onwards that dies inscribed GREAT BRITAIN came into use.

A spin-off from this agreement, however, laid the way open to the use of postage meters (or franking machines as they are sometimes known). Previously such devices had been confined to Norway, New Zealand and the USA but now they could be applied to international mail the companies manufacturing these machines soon made headway elsewhere.

In the United Kingdom the first in the field was Edward H Kinnard whose brother, Augustus David Klaber, was Managing Director of the Roneo duplicator company. In May 1922 Kinnard established a separate company called Universal Postal Frankers to market the Universal NZ model invented by Ernest Moss. The following September Pitney Bowes of America opened a British office and began marketing their A and B models. In 1924 Kinnard resigned from the board of Universal Postal Frankers and the following year founded Neopost to develop a machine of his own invention. Roneo marketed the Neopost machines and eventually this developed into the Roneo-Neopost Company. In 1966 this became part of the Vickers group. In 1980, when Vickers withdrew from the office equipment market, Roneo machines were taken over by CIT Alcatel of France. The UK subsidiary continued as Roneo-Alcatel until 1988, then as Alcatel alone



Stuart Rose's heraldic
flower design, 1963
(above); early 1920s
meter impression
(right)



Hasler meter impressions
(above and right), 1971 and
1967



until 1992 when Neopost acquired all the mail-room business from Alcatel. Today, Neopost Limited continues to trade from Romford where it has been based for over 70 years. Meter marks from Neopost machines can be recognised by the prefix letter J, N or R (often combined with a second letter) and 2N.

Meanwhile, closer co-operation between Universal Postal Frankers and Pitney Bowes led, in 1929, to a merger of interests. After the Second World War UPF was completely absorbed by Pitney Bowes of Harlow who are now part of a multi-national company making both cancelling machines and postage meters for virtually every country and very much the giant in the meter franking business. Pitney Bowes machines used letters which helped identify the model; thus A, B, F and H denoted models with these code letters, while NZ, M and S indicated the Universal NZ, Midget and Simplex models respectively. From 1935 onwards multi-value machines adopted the prefix letter P and since then this has been widely used. In more recent years the letters PB have been employed, latterly with subsidiary letters before and after the serial number.

Various designs Each of the companies operating in the 1920s and early 1930s produced its own versions of the design laid down by the Post Office in 1922. This consisted fundamentally of the indicium, with the numerals of value in the four corners, the value in words upper centre, a licence number in the middle flanked by GREAT and BRITAIN and POSTAGE PAID in a curve below. Seven wavy lines were incorporated while on the left appeared the dater die. Usually this took the form of a circular mark although the Universal NZ model at first had the name of the town and the date in two or three lines within the wavy lines.

General dissatisfaction with the prosaic style of indicia led to the design of a simulated stamp in 1927 by Henry J Howard, a pioneer meter philatelist, and this, with various modifications, continued until 1963. As this design incorporated a crown above the monogram of the reigning sovereign, it follows that changes were wrought in

1936, 1937 and 1952.

In 1963 Stuart Rose designed new indicia for use in postage meters. The basic design showed the heraldic flowers of the UK, with POST PAID flanking an imperial crown. Different indicia were produced for each model, and these varied in width and height. Usually GREAT BRITAIN appeared on a ribbon round the foot, but Pitney Bowes placed this inscription in a ribbon immediately below the crown at the top. With this design came a new system of numbering. Hitherto separate serial numbers were used by each town, but now a unified national system was adopted, prefixed by the code letter or letters of the model. Various methods of denoting the shillings and pence of the value were used, from diagonal strokes to single or double dashes, stars, treble dashes or the Latin notation 'd' or 's' alone.

The advent of decimalisation in 1971, however, meant that a simpler method of indicating the value was required, and from 1968 onwards indicia gradually adopted a simpler design which consisted of a rectangle with GREAT BRITAIN and POSTAGE PAID inscribed vertically at the sides. A crown surmounted the numerals of value, and the licence number and prefix letters appeared across the foot. This basic design in many different versions, has been in use now for almost 30 years.

In the 1960s other companies began to enter the market, producing their own distinctive versions of the standard design. First to enter the field was Hasler of Berne, Switzerland whose models were initially marketed by a subsidiary called Franking Machines Ltd, hence the lower-case letters 'fml' in the code. FML had their own quite distinctive design, showing GREAT BRITAIN to the left of a crown, with POSTAGE PAID across the foot. A distinctive feature of the value was the inclusion of an asterisk on the extreme right. When Hasler (Great Britain) Ltd was formed in September 1969 the standard decimal design was adopted, with the prefix letter H.

Postalia of Frankfurt entered the fray in 1967, but their multi-value models were marketed in Britain by Roneo Neopost and can only be identified by the prefix TN. Machines made in the USA



Left and above Meter impressions of Frama, Neopost and Postalia (left); Acral and Singer (Friden), above.

Below Pitney Bowes meter impressions, including two-coloured versions (stamp and date portions erroneously in blue on one example)



by Friden, a subsidiary of the Singer Corporation, were introduced in 1970 and had the code letter G.

In addition, however, Francotyp favoured indicia with very large, thick numerals of value, while Friden had very neat little dies with a narrow indicium and a single-circle dater. Friden pulled out in 1970 but subsequently Roneo Vickers negotiated an agreement with Singer of America to manufacture the Singer (Friden) models in the UK.

Frama of Switzerland came to Britain in 1982, the year of the diamond jubilee of meter franking, following the demonstration of their Model 100 machine at the International Business Show in Birmingham the previous autumn. Frama machines are marketed in Britain by Mailing and Mechanisation Ltd and their marks may be recognised by the code letters FSC or MMC. Apart from the codes, the impressions show large and prominent numerals of value.

Addressing Systems International, founded in 1960 and since 1968 based in Richmond, is the most recent company to enter the market, with the Alpha (ASA) and Minipost (ASM machines). Apart from the letter prefixes, the indicia in these machines are characterised by rather tall, narrow lettering.

Slogans From the outset, it was envisaged that postage meters would offer a slogan die but at first this was applied separately and therefore little employed. Only when the 'stamp' design was adopted in 1927 did the use of slogans become

much more widespread. Slogans were struck in the same shade of red ink as the rest of the meter mark until 1972 when the first slogans struck in blue began to appear. Other colours, including black, followed soon afterwards but to this day they are not all that common. A few instances have been recorded of the indicium and dater in blue and the slogan in red. Interest in meter slogans has developed enormously in recent years, and appropriate designs are now regarded as a *sine qua non* of thematics.

Apart from the usual application of postage meters to business mail, several special categories should be noted. In 1926 a modified Pitney Bowes machine was introduced at the Post Office Savings Bank in West Kensington; at first a dater die on its own was applied, but from 1940



Left Interesting meters:

Addressing Systems International demonstration impression; Pitney Bowes 50th anniversary; and meter slogan for Pobjoy Mint showing Penny Black coin.

Above Recent innovations: meter with encryption algorithm, and new design used at Watford.

onwards various savings slogans were employed. Similar machines were later allocated to the Bond and Savings Certificate divisions, denoted by their initials in town die, and to other departments located in Acton, Manchester, Harrogate, Richmond and Twickenham and Lytham St Annes. From 1941 till the end of the Second World War, Pitney Bowes meters were also used to frank airgraphs from servicemen overseas, with POSTAGE PAID or AIRMAIL POSTAGE PAID in the dater die.

Between December 1978 and February 1979 an experiment conducted in over 100 government offices made use of modified postage meters to gauge the volume of official mail being processed. A pattern of close wavy lines with a rectangular blank space was used by Roneo, straight bars by Pitney Bowes and four short wavy lines by Hasler. Subsequently meters replaced the Official Paid stationery in government offices. Most recently modified postage meters, struck in black, have been used to cancel British stamps on mail from BFPOs in Germany.

New technology Despite the inroads of Postage Paid Impressions (PPIs) in recent years, there are now over 165,000 postage meters in use in the UK. Although there are still some very robust hand-operated machines in use after 50 years, modern postage meters have adapted to the changing technology of electronics and computerisation.

For example, the Pitney Bowes series B700 PostPerfect machine permits (by means of eleven

numerals arranged in twin vertical columns) the actual metering of each piece of mail. The meter uses an encryption algorithm to encode data including the machine number, date, value and number of items processed on that date. This machine also uses a thermographic ribbon to produce a much sharper impression than the traditional inking method. Machines using the algorithm have so far been recorded from Aberdeen, Ashford (Kent), Bagshot, Bewdley, Birmingham, Camberley, Chertsey, Chester, Chichester, Dunmow, Epsom, Godalming, Guildford, Harrow, Honiton, Ingatestone, Inverness, Leeds, London N16, SW19 and W11, Mitcham, New Milton, Newtonards, Nottingham, Orpington, Peterborough, Rugby, Salisbury, Slough, Solihull, Southampton, Stockport, Sutton, Twickenham, Windermere, Windsor and Woking.

The latest development, given an extended trial in the Watford area from 29 February 1996, involved 100 machines fitted with a distinctive die with UNITED KINGDOM in the dater and 'Royal Mail' across the top of the indicium and two banks of barcode dots and dashes at the sides. These machines are being used in conjunction with the new Integrated Mail Processor (IMP) equipment at the Watford Automatic Processing Centre, and will eventually be extended nationwide. Plans are already in hand to supply indicia and daters inscribed in Welsh, for those who wish to make use of this facility.

As postage meters approach their 75th anniversary, therefore, the technical and aesthetic interest of meter marks is greater than ever •

Materia Medica on stamps of Great Britain Tom Wilson

Many United Kingdom stamps feature flowering plants which were not only used in folk medicine as herbs and simples, but also sometimes by doctors.

National floral emblems

(rose, thistle, daffodil, shamrock) on George VI (right) and Elizabeth II (below) definitives



We begin with the low value definitives issued at the beginning of the reign of King George VI (SG 462/75); all values portray the King's head surrounded by the national flowers of the 'four kingdoms'. Of course, these are only a secondary feature of the design. The Rose of England (*Rosa canina*) has been used as a tonic and for diarrhoea. The Thistle of Scotland (*Cnicus benedictus*) was used to disperse trapped wind and to allay feverishness.

The bruised leaves of the Shamrock of Northern Ireland (*Trifolium repens*) were applied to burned or inflamed skin. The same flowers later appeared (but only in the corners) of the 10s and £1 recess-printed definitive of 1939 and 1948 (SG 478/478b); and again on the QEII higher values of 1955-8. The emblem for Wales is the daffodil, which was used in 18th-century medicine as an emetic. The flowers were once used in France as an antispasmodic, eg for hiccough.

The principal feature on a pair of 1948 stamps commemorating the third anniversary of the liberation of the Channel Islands from German occupation are pictures of islanders gathering seaweed – 'vraicking'. (This issue was sold only at post offices in the Channel Islands and a few mainland offices for the benefit of collectors.) Vraick, known on the mainland as bladderwrack, is an industrial source of Iodine and Potassium, both of which are used in medicine. Boiled seaweed contains mucilaginous substances called Algin and alginic acid, and has been used for obesity, but its value is doubtful. Islanders gathering vraick are also seen on a 3d Occupation issue of 1943 (Jersey, SG 8).

At the commencement of the present reign new designs were prepared featuring the Dorothy Wilding head of Queen Elizabeth again surrounded by the same national flowers. Perhaps it would not be strictly ethical to claim these stamps as 'medicinal plants', since the flowers are not the principal feature in the designs. When, in 1958, the new regional definitive issues appeared (still using the 'Wilding Head'), the national flowers fulfilled a more important function.



The Northern Ireland trio, designed by William Hollywood of the Belfast College of Art, showed the Flax plant (*Linum usitatissimum*, a laxative and emollient) rather than the Shamrock. The

Glossary of terms

antidiarrhoeic to control diarrhoea

antipyretic prevents or reduces high temperature

antiseptic destroys disease germs

antispasmodic relieves involuntary muscle spasms

astringent reduces the flow of secretions or discharges

balsamic soothes inflammation

decongestant for congestive coughs

diaphoretic induces a healthy sweat

diuretic promotes the flow of urine

emetic induces vomiting

emollient softens the skin

expectorant clears phlegm for dry coughs

homeopathic therapy based on similarity between remedy and symptoms

laxative gently relaxes the bowels

miotic constricts the pupil of the eye

sudorific promotes a healthy sweat; cf diaphoretic

Welsh Leek (*Sempervivum arachnoideum*), whose bruised leaves were applied to burned or inflamed skin, was included for the first time in designs by Reynolds Stone for the 3d and 1s 3d stamps for Wales & Monmouthshire.

The national emblems feature largely in the design of the 4d value for the Coronation issue of June 1953 (SG 533). On the other hand, on the 3d National Nature Week issue of 1963 (SG 637), the posy of Spring Flowers really are the main feature and here we see Oxeye Daisy (*Chrysanthemum leucanthemum*) which is diuretic (stimulates the kidneys) and sudorific (promotes a healthy sweat); Buttercup (*Ranunculus*) – a homeopathic remedy for eczema; as well as a Bee (*Apis mellifera*) whose venom provides a homeopathic remedy for the inflammation caused by stings and bites. The 4½d value in the same set features 'Woodland Life' including leaves of the Beech Tree (*Fagus sylvatica*), which yield Creosote, for the toothache, also Hart's Tongue Fern (*Scolopendron officinale*) which was used as an expectorant for dry coughs.

The design by Faith Jaques on the 1s.3d stamp for the tercentenary of the General Letter Office embodies Oak leaves. Whilst Oak Bark is used in medicine as an astringent, (e.g. for a relaxed throat), the leaves do not appear to be of any value.

An attractive set of four for the International Botanical Congress of 1964 (SG 655/8) showed, on the 3d value, Spring Gentian, a bitter tonic and cooling medicine for fevers; the 6d bore the Dog Rose whose hips are rich in Vitamin c; the 9d has Honeysuckle (*Lonicera caprifolium*) valued as an expectorant and antispasmodic, and the 1s.3d a Fringed Water Lily (*Nymphaea alba*), source of a herbal tranquilliser.

A notable issue were the six stamps of April 1967 (SG 717/22), designed by the Rev Keble Martin and Miss Mary Grierson. These included Hawthorn (*Crataegus oxyacantha*), a heart tonic; Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*), a gargle for sore throat; Bindweed (*Convolvulus arvensis*), a vigorous purgative; Viper's Bugloss (*Borago officinalis*), for coughs and fevers; Oxeye daisy (see above); Coltsfoot (*Tussilago*), an expectorant; Buttercup (vs); Wood Anemone (*Anemone nemorosa*), a homeopathic 'cure-all'; Dog Violet (*Viola odorata*) – expectorant; Primrose – expectorant and diuretic; and the lovely Red Campion (*Lychnis*), which Culpeper (1653) claimed would help to expel urine, gravel and stone in the kidneys!

Other articles by Mr Wilson, a retired pharmacist, were published here in January 1989 (British Stamps of Medical Interest) and October 1994 (British Discoveries in Medicine on Stamps).

For details of the Medical Philately Study Group write to Mr Wilson: 162 Canterbury Road, Kennington, Ashford, Kent, TN24 9QD.

1960s special issues

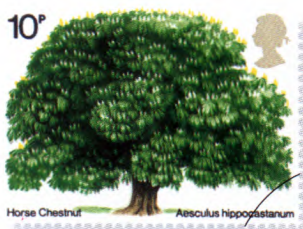
Spring Flowers (above left)

Spring gentian (below left), and Honeysuckle (below right)



Hawthorn and Bramble (above left), and Bindweed and Viper's Bugloss (above right)

1970s specials Horse Chestnut (right), Vitamin C (below right), and Daffodils and Bluebells (below)





leaves and berries of Holly were a folk medicine for fevers and the gout.

1987 saw a delightful set of flowers photographs (SG 1347/50) which included the Globe Thistle; the roots and leaves were recommended by Galen for convulsions. The 34p value features the Autumn Crocus (*Colchicum autumnale*), a dangerously toxic plant which yields Colchicine, formerly used to relieve the agony of gout.

The 26p stamp in the 1988 set in honour of the Linnean Society depicts the Yellow Waterlily (after Major Joshua Swatkin), which has been used for diarrhoea and as a tranquilliser.

The scientific study of plants and their uses may be said to have begun with the establishment of botanical gardens in the 16th century. The Royal Horticultural Society's Garden at Kew was laid out in 1789 by the widow of Frederick, Prince of Wales and was the subject of an attractive set of four in 1990 (SG 1562/5). The Cycad may be a source of Palm Oil, used in pharmacy as an ointment base. The shoots of the Stone Pine are balsamic and expectorant. The bark of the Willow Tree (*Salix alba*) was an ancient remedy for rheumatic pain; it is the natural source of salicylic acid, the parent substance from which Aspirin is derived. Finally, Cedar leaves yield an insecticide and can be used to expel intestinal worms.

Orchids featured on a set of four in 1993; as well as on 50p stamp books in 1984/5. Culpeper says that the roots of many species can be used to make a nourishing gruel, Tubera salep, used at one time as a strengthening tonic.

1980s specials Frankincense, Globe thistle and Autumn Crocus (above left to right), and Yellow Waterlily (below left)





Materia medica on 1990s issues Blackberry, Hazel and Rowan

Charlotte Knox's Autumn set of 1993 (SG 1779/83) included the Horse Chestnut (mentioned above), also the Blackberry. The Hazel Nut (*Corylus avellana*), a familiar fruit of our hedgerows, is described as antipyretic, antidiarrhoeic and diaphoretic. It is used in the cosmetic industry for cleansing face-masks; altogether a very useful plant! A liquid extract from the Rowan, or Mountain Ash (*Sorbus* species) is used as an aperient, emetic and diuretic. A second Seasons set in 1995, featured the Dandelion (*Taraxacum officinalis*) a diuretic and a mild laxative; Sweet Chestnut (*Castanea sativa*) whose leaves are astringent, containing much tannin; Garlic (*Allium sativum*) which is widely used for rheumatism and high blood pressure amongst its many valuable properties; and Hazel, already mentioned.

Stamp books were first issued during the reign of Edward VII, but the earliest of interest to the 'materia medica' collector are the 50p books of 1971 depicting the Large Bindweed, Primrose, Honeysuckle and Hop (*Humulus lupulus*), well known as an appetizer and digestive. The following year, the 50p book featured the Common Violet (expectorant for coughs), Lords-and-Ladies (*Arum maculatum*) which is an irritant poison; Wood Anemone (*A nemorosa*) a toxic, used externally as a liniment and Deadly Nightshade (*Atropa belladonna*) which, though very poisonous, is used in minute doses in medicine to relieve muscle spasms and in eyedrops to dilate the pupil.

I conclude with a few examples from the offshore islands, starting with Guernsey 1972, Spotted Orchid (*Orchis maculata*). The tubers were once ground and used to make a nourishing gruel which was sold as a tonic. A 1976 stamp (SG 141) shows a Pine Forest – the shoots are balsamic, antiseptic and expectorant for bronchial coughs. The 1978 Christmas set (SG 173/6) includes Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), used for fevers and diarrhoea; Christmas Rose (*Hellebore*) source of alkaloids for blood pressure; and Mistletoe (*Viscum album*) which reduces blood pressure.

Jersey issues include Jersey Orchid and Viper's Bugloss (*Borago officinalis*) for coughs and fevers (SG 71/2) and Anemone (*A nemorosa*) applied externally for rheumatic pains; and Purple Iris, expectorant and kidney stimulant (SG 104).

Stamps from the Isle of Man feature Red Poppies, a sedative for children's coughs (SG 205), and The Three Kings bearing Gold used for injections for arthritis, Frankincense (*Olibanum*) for fumigating sickrooms; and Myrrh (*Commiphora molmol*), an antiseptic for mouth ulcers.

I must stress that even natural remedies can be dangerous; *they should never be used except on the instructions of a qualified doctor* ●

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Look before you lick! 14 Building a good collection

by Matt Hinton



Above The 1988 set with Machin-style Queen's head; 1992 £2 re issue (middle) with silhouette head; and 1994 (right) 'enhanced' printing with clearer and deeper printing of the castle.

Above right Plate block of four of £2 Edinburgh Castle stamp.



The 'Castle' high-value GB definitives have always provided food for fort-ress for collectors, as they have survived – on and off – for over 40 years (since 1955); a credit to their good designs and ability to withstand attack!

1988 The same four castles are used today as in the 1950s – Edinburgh, Carrickfergus, Caernarfon and Windsor – and, in more recent times, the 1988 set proved to be less well fortified than previous issues – lasting just three years. Varieties to appear included shades of the £2 value and the £1.50 and £2 on thicker, glazed paper – the £2 being particularly scarce and, thus, valuable.

Plate block collectors (a plate block is a block of four taken from the bottom left-hand corner of the sheet, where the plate number is visible in the margin) may wish to know that there are 56 differ-

ent blocks on the 1988 series and the £1.50 2J, as well as the £2 2M, 2N and 2O blocks, shows an erroneous '1' beneath the '2'.

The £2 can be purchased with the 'EDINBURGH CASTLE' wording inverted, reversed and offset at the top of the stamp! Any more displaced and it would be back where it started! One explanation for this is that the castle's defences were down: protective covers were not left between the wet sheets at the printers.

Windsor and Carrickfergus both sustained damage at one point, when copies of the £5 were discovered with the perforations displaced 5.5mm to the left and similar examples of the £1 turned up. They both sell for around £100.

Security features 1992 saw the need for more secure castles and they were re-designed with new security features – security paper, security ink, security designs and security perforations. (Security very much the theme on this issue!) As with all the best defence systems, the fortifications are difficult to detect (but more effective than boiling oil over the battlements!) Later into the set's existence, the gum became creamy, making the paper appear more opaque.

The security Optically Variable Ink (Queen's head) was partially or wholly omitted on some £5 stamps defeating the object somewhat!

Examples of the £1.50 and £2 once again turned up in all sorts of strange shades – the £2 ones being generally very bright – and the £2 can be obtained with bluish paper or with the foreground features much brighter than elsewhere. The other values, not to be left out, can be found misperforated such that the castle name appears at the top of the stamp. The £1 can also be found with the design inverted and printed on the *back*, and the £2 exists with the same feature – and sometimes with the head alone affected. The prime suspect is the same cause as that on the 1988 series.

If you had trouble keeping up in 1988, there are even more plate blocks to collect on this second series as the plates needed to be replaced so frequently! £5 2A and 2B blocks show that enigmatic '1' hovering beneath the number and the

£1 1C block sometimes bears a dot. The 1Q block, also on the £1 value, exists both with and without a line between the box and the 'Q' and the 1B can be found with '2A' etched beneath the number. I estimate its value at around £70.

One example of this has been reported to me where the erroneous '2A' has been removed. I don't know where this ended up – perhaps you have it in your collection?

The £2 exists with an incredible paper fold at the top right hand corner of the sheet and, finally, the £1 exists with a constant flaw green circle in the gutter margin.

1994 Yet further refurbishment of the monuments was carried out in 1994, when the designs were enhanced – the engraving is deeper making the design appear clearer and deeper, with a less obvious contrast between shadow and light.

Top tip: look at the Queen's head to tell the new designs apart from their predecessors: The originals use interlacing of diamonds whereas these are squares on the 1994 examples.

Fascinating fact: these improvements were carried out entirely by computer!

The same variations in paper/gum (translucent and opaque) apply to this set and the translucent £1.50, £2 and £5 can be collected as either creamy or white versions. The £1.50, £2 and £5 with both PVA and greenish PVA Dextrin gum, the £1 was not reprinted on PVA paper. Also, the same colour error occurred on some £2 values (both papers) as in 1992.

A £3 Carrickfergus was added to the set at this time (have we run out of other castles to use?) and exists on both translucent and opaque papers. As yet it only exists with PVA Dextrin gum.

If defended effectively, the castles should weather well and values should Wind-soar in the future!

Thanks for all the letters you send me. Have you an interesting philatelic story or comment? Or perhaps you have something to report? I look forward to hearing from you, c/o the Editor ●

Competition Win football commemorative covers and post cards this month – sponsored by Dawn Cover Productions

Introducing Dawn Cover Productions Stuart Renshaw of Dawn Cover Productions produced his first cover in 1966 for the England Winners stamp, as there was a lack of covers available at the time. The first significant cover was produced through the RAF Wildenrath Philatelic Society for the 20th anniversary of NATO when the RAF station was open to the German public. Proceeds from the sale of this cover went to the RAF Museum. After his tour of duty, as a weather forecaster in Germany, Stuart decided to link his interests of football and philately and after much research the ideas and designs were approved by the Football Association and the Football League. The Official Football Cover Series started in 1971. Researching and producing the covers and special handstamps, which tell the history of Association Football, has involved much hard work for Stuart and his wife who jointly run the business. The series has always lived up to expectations with collectors in many countries. The format has changed over the years but the quality has remained high. Another of Stuart's interests has led to another series of covers – on Transport, and in particular Trams and Trains. A complete set of the recently completed series of 'Footballer Steam Locomotive' covers is offered as first prize in this competition. The covers reproduce paintings by transport artist G S Copper, involving time-consuming research to ensure the accuracy of the background scenery. The latest series of fdc's links in certain locomotives with new issues of stamps. There will probably be three or four covers a year, the first featuring locomotive *King Henry VIII* in Royal Leamington Spa station.

For details write to **Dawn Cover Productions, 27 Ashfield Road, Davenport, Stockport SK3 8UD** enclosing stamped addressed envelope marked 'PB'. Any subsequent order will attract a significant discount.

To enter the competition answer the questions below and send, with your name and address, on a postcard or back of envelope to: January Bulletin Competition, Royal Mail, 22 Finsbury Square, London EC2A 1NL by 21 February. Entries must be posted separately; multiple entries in one envelope will be disregarded. Answers will be found in this *Bulletin*.

- 1 Who designed the forthcoming Hong Kong pictorial label?
- 2 Spring Gentian appeared on which value stamp in 1964?
- 3 When was the Official Football Cover series started?
- 4 Where was the Universal Postal Union convention held in 1920?
- 5 Who is Chairman of the Scottish Post Office Board?

The competition is not open to employees, families or agents, of Royal Mail or Dawn Cover Productions ●



1st prize Set of 25 Railway 'Footballer' Locomotive covers and postcards (list price £85)

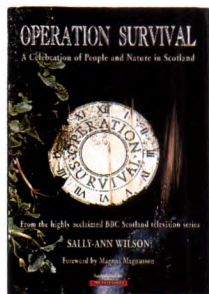
2nd prize Collection of 27 Official Football covers, 1977-95 (list price over £100)

3rd prize Cover for *Newcastle United* locomotive bearing full set Age of Steam stamps and special postmark, 18 January 1994. Signed by cover designer, G S Cooper.

The winners of the October competition were Mrs B Porter of Argyllshire, R Hanson of Spain, and C Turling of Gloucestershire

The answers 1. Laura Stoddart; 2. Benjy Bear and Harry Hedgehog; 3. Sir William and Lady Gomm; 4. 1871; 5. Stan Goron. Our thanks to all who entered.

Books *Operation Survival* • *Collecting British First Day Covers*



Bulletin readers may obtain *Operation Survival* at a special price of £15 UK, £20 overseas inclusive of postage and packing.

Orders to Mainstream Publishing Co (Edinburgh) Ltd, 7 Albany Street, Edinburgh EH1 3UG. Please quote Philatelic Bulletin Special Offer. Offer closes 31 March 1997.

Operation Survival This book, subtitled 'A Celebration of People and Nature in Scotland' has been written by Sally-Ann Wilson, producer of BBC Scotland's acclaimed TV series and published with support of the Scottish Post Office Board. In his preface, Kenneth Graham, Chairman SPOB, points out that The Post Office serves all Scottish communities, from city centre to remotest Highland and Island – 'this ubiquity provides the rationale for supporting this book which...reminds us that survival of the diversity of our natural world in Scotland involves us all.' The foreword, by Magnus Magnusson, Chairman of Scottish Natural Heritage, lauds the programmes' coverage of 'the rich variety of habitats and species which make Scotland so special' and the 'fascinating insight into the not-so-glamorous realities of the "glamorous" world of the wildlife film-makers.' The book's eight chapters cover dolphins, the corncrake, the Caledonian pine forests, the white-tailed sea eagle, butterflies and moths, red deer, wild plants, and the flora and fauna of the coastline. The spectacular colour photographs – of animals, birds, plants and landscape – will delight naturalists and all who love Scotland. This is a worthy companion volume to *The Nature of Scotland*, reviewed here in February 1992. The *Nature of Scotland* aerogramme, issued in April 1992, will be joined by another on the theme in July this year. The chapter on wild plants tells us that in some parts of the country 40% of the Heather moorland has already been lost, warning that if more goes 'then the damage to the culture and communi-

ties of Scotland will be significant with the loss of many jobs in stalking and keeping. In such sensitive rural areas the loss of employment also means the loss of the local culture: schools and post offices close and homes are abandoned leaving ghost glens.' This book is thought-provoking as well as a joy to read or simply to browse through. 160 pages, hardbound with dust jacket. Available from bookshops, price £20 •

Collecting British First Day Covers The 1997 edition of this popular work, by Norman Porter and Adrian Bradbury, provides a clear, well-illustrated listing of fdc's from the introduction of the Uniform 4d Post in 1839 to the 1996 Christmas stamps. Commemoratives are listed separately from definitives which includes country and to pay issues. The extended General Notes section explains the many different types of covers and postmarks. Whatever your opinion of fdc's, do not dismiss them out of hand as of no monetary value. True many still clutter dealers' boxes at stamp fairs, but some rare modern covers now command hundreds of pounds. Covers of the first Christmas stamps (1966) cancelled by an ordinary circular datestamp are priced at just £2, but a staggering £250 with the counter datestamp of the Welsh villages of Bethlehem or Nasereth, or with the 'Post Early for Christmas' slogan postmark. Do not confuse the Bethlehem cds with the village's first day of issue postmark – catalogued at £10 (the £4.50 price in Gibbons *GB Concise Catalogue* may be more realistic). Covers with ordinary first day postmark on the

1970 Philypia set are valued at a mere £1 (£1.25 in SG), but a massive £500 if cancelled by the International Stamp Exhibition, Philypia 70 slogan! At these prices, covers must bear a full set of stamps and be in good condition. Today's fdc collectors are spoiled for choice of sponsored special postmarks (some might argue there are too many). Some send covers by priority services to get relevant counter datestamps such as Croydon, London SE19 (Crystal Palace), Much Wenlock, Wandsworth, Wembley, and Wembley Park for the recent Olympics issue. Currently priced at £10 each, what they will be worth in 30 years time! 200 pages, card covers. Available from stamp dealers or direct from A G Bradbury, 3 Link Road, Leicester LE2 3RA. Price £6.50 postpaid UK, £7.50 overseas •

Events

Now showing A new 'Mail by Rail' exhibition at National Railway Museum, York, sponsored by Royal Mail. Enquiries: Candace Brownlee 0171 320 7078

Now showing Postal Memorabilia display, by David Harrop, at City Square Post Office, Leeds. Enquiries: D Harrop, 15 Hawthorne Road, Heaton Mersey, Stockport SK4 3DQ

Until 4 May 'Keeping You Posted' exhibition, marking 60th anniversary of Preston & District PS, at Museum of Lancashire, Preston. Open 11.00-17.00 (except Thursday and Sunday). Enquiries: P Gaywood 01772 684302, or J Rayment 01722 264061

18 January Telford Phil Soc Stamp & Postcard Fair at Civic and Leisure Centre, Wellington, 10.00-16.00. Stamp and card auction at 15.00. Admission 30p, children and senior citizens 15p. Enquiries: P Morris-Jones, 01952 223926

22-26 January January Stampex at Business Design Centre, 52 Upper Street, London N1. Enquiries: Stampex, 0171 490 1005 •

Postbag

Christmas stamps In the October *Bulletin* you state that Royal Mail has now issued 139 Christmas stamps. This set me looking through my collection to see which set I liked best over the past 30 years. Of the religious designs, I favour the 1971 Canterbury Cathedral stained glass windows set, with the 1974 Roof Bosses a close second. Of secular designs, I find it difficult to decide between 1983 and 1995 but think Tony Meeuwissen's Birds and Chimney Pots just have the edge – they were great fun. There are no Christmas issues that I really dislike although I found the 1973 set rather 'bitty' and the 1985 Pantomime set rather gaudy. I was slightly disappointed with the 1996 set, preferring the darker backgrounds of the 1st and 2nd class stamps to the paler hues of the top three values. I also enjoy the Christmas aerogrammes and send them to relatives overseas and receive favourable comments about them after Christmas. My personal favourite is the 1984 issue featuring Mail Coaches. MRS JOYCE RUSSELL, WOLVERHAMPTON •

Machin surfeit I have collected the Machins since they started in 1967. Whilst I still like the design and enjoy collecting the many variations in phosphor, gum, paper, etc, I really think time has come to draw this series to a close. Perhaps on the Machin's 30th birthday next June, Royal Mail could announce a new definitive series. I, and no doubt many others, could then finally update and close our Machin albums and start again on the new set. Perhaps Mr Machin could provide a new Queen's head – Machin 2? GEORGE FRAZER, LIVERPOOL •

Bulletin back issues J A Evans of Fleet offers Vols 26-33 of this magazine, in immaculate condition, free to any reader prepared to collect them from him. Telephone 01252 628733 • V P W Cooper of 135 Hewlett Road, Cheltenham GL52 6AU offers volumes 25 no 5-27 no 4 in binders, 27 no 5-28 no 11, 29 no 1-11 and vol 30 to present out of binders for sale. Offers and postage costs to above address •

RELIVE THE COURT OF HENRY VIII WITH ROYAL MAIL'S GREAT TUDOR JEWELLERY COLLECTION



To mark the 450th anniversary of the death of King Henry VIII, Royal Mail will issue seven stamps reproducing portraits of the King and his six wives on 21 January. Such portraits were often commissioned in order to enable the wealthy to show off their favourite jewellery. This inspired us to create a range of jewellery in Tudor style:

Pendant & chain (red or blue)	£14.95 each	Also available:	
Earrings (blue)	£14.95	Stamp set	£1.82
Ear studs (blue flower or heart)	£ 8.95 each	Presentation pack	£2.20
Cuff links (red or blue)	£ 8.95 each	Stamp card set	£1.75
Brooch	£ 8.95	Postcard book	£3.50
Earring & pendant set	£23.95		
Brooch, earring & pendant set	£33.95		

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