

BRITISH PHILATELIC

The ROYAL MAIL magazine *for stamp collectors*

Volume 47 Number 4

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Bulletin

Girlguiding issue • 2009 poll
• Stained glass • Airletters



This month, as Royal Mail's new Christmas issue celebrates the Nativity story in stained glass, Dorothy Martin investigates the art of church illumination.

Forthcoming issues and withdrawals



Cover Royal Mail's Christmas stamps were previewed in the August *Bulletin*. Background photograph: the church of St Mary the Virgin, in Rye, East Sussex (the location of the window on the 90p stamp) © Phil Sayer.

Availability All items available from Royal Mail Tallents House (address below). Selected items are available at Post Office branches and Post Office philatelic outlets at the main post offices in: Bristol, Cambridge, Chester, Colchester, Coventry, Croydon, Durham, Edinburgh, Exeter, Glasgow, Grimsby, Harrogate, Lichfield, London (Eastcheap & Trafalgar Sq), Norwich, Nottingham, Plymouth, Portsmouth, Southampton (High St and Hedge End), Southend-on-Sea, Stevenage, Stroud, Trowbridge, Truro and York.

Royal Mail Tallents House 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB, UK. Telephone order line (08.30-17.00 Monday to Friday): 08457 641 641; from overseas +44 131 316 7483. Minimum handling charge UK £1.45, Europe £1.55, rest of world (airmail) £2.15. Some products can be ordered on Royal Mail's website: www.royalmail.com/shop

1 December

Issue Security Definitives coin cover – new £1 (Matthew Dent) coin and Machin high value stamps with security features

4 December

Issue Monacophil exhibition sheet (Hello stamps)

5 December

Withdrawal Lest We Forget 2008 medal cover

31 December

Withdrawal 2007 Yearbook (standard & de luxe versions) and Yearpack

7 January

Issue Classic Album Covers stamps, souvenir sheet, prestige book, pack, stamp cards, souvenir cover

7 January

Issue Olympic & Paralympic Games stamp book – Judo and Paralympic Archery stamps and 4 × 1st definitives

12 January

Withdrawal Design Classics stamps, pack, stamp cards, prestige book, Mini generic sheet

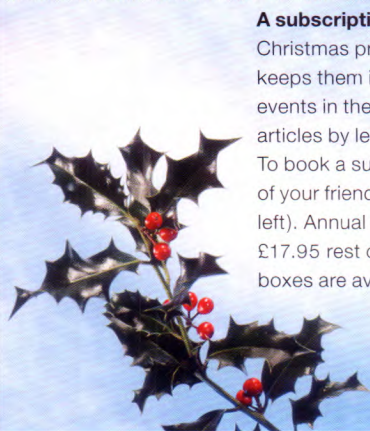
21 January

Withdrawal Robert Burns miniature sheet, presentation pack, stamp cards and press sheet

26 January

Issue Business Customised & Smilers stamps – miniature sheet, pack, generic sheet and stamp cards ● Silver Stamp Collection No 6: 81p St Magnus Cathedral Kirkwall stamp ● 6 × 1st stamp book with inside cover text change

A subscription to this magazine makes an ideal Christmas present for a philatelic friend or relation. It keeps them informed of new Royal Mail issues and events in the philatelic world and provides interesting articles by leading philatelists and postal historians. To book a subscription, send the name and address of your friend or relative to Tallents House (address at left). Annual subscription £12.95 UK and Europe, £17.95 rest of world (airmail). Binders and storage boxes are available, at £8.50 and £9.95 respectively.



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The British Philatelic Bulletin is published monthly by Royal Mail, 35-50 Rathbone Place, London W1T 1HQ • **Editor** J R Holman • **Price** £1.20 each from Post Office Ltd philatelic outlets • **Annual subscription** £12.95 UK & Europe; £17.95 elsewhere. Send subscriptions to Royal Mail Talents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB • **Binders** (to hold 24 issues) £8.50, storage boxes (about 30 copies) £9.95 available by post from Royal Mail (Edinburgh address, above) • Royal Mail also publishes the fortnightly *British Postmark Bulletin*, giving details of forthcoming special handstamps. Available on annual subscription from Edinburgh address above: £12.25 UK and Europe, £24.95 rest of the world • **Copyright** Design & text Royal Mail Group Ltd, unless attributed to a specified author. All requests to reproduce any articles should be sent to the Editor, British Philatelic Bulletin, Royal Mail Letters, 35-50 Rathbone Place, London W1T 1HQ • **Design** Robert Maude • **Printed** in Great Britain by Westerham Press • **ISSN** 0953 8119 • Royal Mail is a trading name of Royal Mail Group Ltd. Registered in England and Wales no 4138203 registered office 148 Old Street, London EC1V 9HQ

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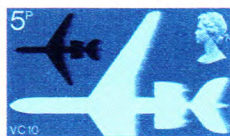
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This month The Editor previews this issue

IT'S TIME once again to invite your votes for your favourite stamps, FDC and presentation pack, also for your favourite *Bulletin* writer. See the special stamps of 2009 on pages 114-15, and tell us your top three sets and individual stamp on the enclosed voting form. All forms will be entered in a draw for 2009 Yearbooks. Remember to return the form by 15 January.

This month's issue includes our annual Christmas feature from Dorothy Martin, this time on stained glass windows, which are the subject of this year's Christmas stamps. Richard West reviews 2009 from a philatelic point of view, and Colin Baker concludes his survey of airletters (aerogrammes). Glenn Morgan reports on events, publications, and other news in Stamp Scene, and in his Online Philately article looks at the BPMA website. We show two new issues for February – a miniature sheet for the centenary of Girlguiding, and 10 stamps for the 350th anniversary of the Royal Society.

From January we hope to include more details of the numerous events throughout the UK that will make up the 2010 'Festival of Stamps'. Meanwhile I hope you will find much of interest in this *Bulletin*, and wish you a happy and peaceful Christmas and a good New Year. JOHN HOLMAN •

Stamp scene News and upcoming events: Glenn Morgan keeps you posted

1 February - 30 October Exhibition on King George V at Bath Postal Museum, Bath

1 April - 14 November 'Impressions of Africa: Money, Medals and Stamps' exhibition at British Museum, London WC1

5-6 May Philatex Extra at Horticultural Halls, Greycoat Street, London SW1

6-7 May Display by other Royal Philatelic Societies at Royal Philatelic Society London, 41 Devonshire Place, London W1

7 May - 25 July Exhibition 'Empire Mail: George V and the GPO' by the BPMA and Royal Philatelic Collection at Guildhall Art Gallery, London EC2

8-15 May London 2010 International Stamp Exhibition at the Business Design Centre, London N1

London 2010 Festival of Stamps The main events are listed opposite. The British Library Philatelic Collections will be redisplaying their 1000 philatelic frames with significant and rare new material, and running educational talks. The Library is in Euston Road, London NW1, near St Pancras station. The British Postal Museum & Archive is to mount a 'Treasures from the Archive' display at Freeling House, London WC1, from May. The BPMA's major exhibition will be at the Guildhall Art Gallery (see opposite). Tours, talks and activities will also be held throughout 2010.

The Colne Valley Postal History Museum will mount displays on the development of the Postal Service in the reign of George V on 29 May, 10 July and 11-12 September. Exhibitions and displays will also be staged at the following venues, dates to be announced: Bletchley Park, National Codes Centre, Milton Keynes; Marylebone Cricket Club Museum, Lord's Cricket Ground, London; Museum of World Rugby, Twickenham Stadium, Middlesex; Wimbledon Lawn Tennis Museum, Wimbledon; Crewe Heritage Centre; and Aberdeen Maritime Museum. Other events will be held at stamp shows nationwide, hosted by the regional federations of the Association of British Philatelic Societies (ABPS) on various dates •





Isle of Man Christmas Ruddy checked, white bearded and red cloaked... who could mistake Santa Claus? Like many mythical figures, his appearance has evolved with time, and this Isle of Man stamp issue illustrates the changing image of Father Christmas over the generations. Just for Christmas, the local rate postage is reduced to 30p with the 10M and UK values available in the form of 'retail sheets' and as a set of two stamps ●

Isle of Man Christmas The face values of the set are 30p, 33p, 56p, 62p, 81p and 90p (shown here at reduced size). Enquiries: www.iomstamps.com or email stamps@iom-post.com

Stampex There was much to see at Autumn Stampex in September. For GB collectors, the following 'National Exhibition' entries were of particular interest: Queen Elizabeth II Photogravure stamps (John Marks); Pricing in Proportion, April 2006-June 2007 (Bran Sole); Exeter Penny Post and Two Penny Post (Michael Lockton); The Maltese Cross (Bernard Ridley); British Army Post Offices Postmarks from a Forgotten War (Barry Staggs); Welsh Postal History c1740-1870 (Richard Thomas); and 1840 and 1841 issues (Ian Marshall). Although styled 'National Exhibition', there were entries this year from collectors in Denmark and Sweden, providing an opportunity for collectors here to see exhibitions not normally on view in the UK.

Amongst entries in the British Youth Stamp Championships was 'Blood, Toil, Tears & Sweat' by *Bulletin* contributor Simon Moorcroft, who told the story of Britain in the period from the outbreak of war in September 1939 up to the American victory in North Africa in May 1943. In particular, he focused on the role that Churchill played leading the nation during the Second World War. Simon wrote about his Churchill collection in the January 2009 issue of the *Bulletin* (pages 146-49).

The British Postal Museum & Archive mounted an interesting display on the Blists Hill Post Office at the Ironbridge Gorge Museums in Shropshire. This is part of the 'Canal Street' project, constructed to show a selection of trades from the Victorian era. The BPMA is now constructing an exhibition on the first floor above the post office showing the role of the Post Office in the community.

Spring Stampex 2010 will be at the Business Design Centre, London N1, 24-27 February, and will include a one-frame competition. This idea proved highly successful this past spring, when over 60 exhibits covered a diverse range of subjects. I recommend having a go, as 16 pages must be within the reach of many readers. Mind you, as the rules state: 'Exhibitors should note that "One Frame" exhibits need to give an introductory page and the treatment should be as complete as possible in relation to the subject chosen. Thus, the choice of subject is crucial and simply extracting one frame of material from a multiple frame exhibit is absolutely not allowed.' ●

For the Palmares detailing all results, see www.abps.org.uk/userimages/2009_Autumn_Stampex_Palmares.pdf

Blists Hill PO and Ironbridge www.postalheritage.org.uk/ironbridge or www.ironbridge.org.uk or contact Alison Norris at the BPMA: telephone 020 7239 5174 or email alison.norris@postalheritage.org.uk

One-frame competition To download details, see www.abps.org.uk/userimages/file/spring_stampex_2010_final.pdf

Sheffield 2011 enquiries For further information visit www.sheffield2011.org.uk

Sheffield 2011 A preliminary announcement has been received that the 2011 ABPS National Philatelic Exhibition will be held at Pond's Forge International Sports Centre, Sheffield on Friday and Saturday 6-7 May 2011. There will be philatelic displays, talks and meetings, stamp and postcard dealers and an awards dinner among the attractions. Located in Sheffield city centre with on-site parking, easy access to all public transport and the M11 motorway, plus close proximity to hotels, city centre shops, restaurants and entertainment, it is clearly one for the diary •

First Day Coverage Contact Terry Barnett, Hon Secretary, 7 Macketts Lane, Hunts Cross, Liverpool L25 0QA or email sheridanfdcs@aol.com

Topical Time enquiries Write to ATA, PO Box 8, Carterville, IL62918-0008 USA, see www.americantopicalassn.org or email americantopical@msn.com

Methodist PS enquiries Mrs Sheila Kent, 3 Gayhurst Close, Moulton, Northampton NN3 1LQ; phone 01604 499468 or see <http://methodistphilately.blogspot.com>

Journals received *First Day Coverage* is the newsletter of the Association of GB FDC Collectors. This 24-page A5 publication is aimed at those who love modern British FDCs. The October issue has features on first day postcards, postmarked in a tent (1969 Investiture), a crossword, the first regional definitive issue and other items of interest to its 300 members •

Topical Time, the American Topical Association's bi-monthly journal of thematic philately, comprises 92 oversized A5 pages, some in colour. Issue 357 includes feature articles on Puccini Operas, Ragamala Paintings, John Milton, Famous Douglas Commercial Aircraft and the 1928 Amsterdam Olympics. The lead article in this issue is about the National Topical Stamp Show 2009, and comprises a nine-page report with many photographs and, especially useful to thematic exhibitors, eight full-colour album pages from the Grand and Reserve Grand award winners. It is always useful to see how others lay-out pages, even if the theme is not collected, and Beguiling Orbs of Beauty (the female breast from a western perspective) and The Canoe in Pacific Island Culture were no exception. The magazine also includes the regular useful features on Cinderellas, publication reviews, meter markings, postal stationery, postmarks, youth, units in action, chapter chatter, checklists, awards, etc, making it a must for all thematic collectors.

Incidentally, although it has always been the American 'Topical' Association, I note an increasing use of the word 'thematic' within its pages, and even the American spelling 'stationary' is now shown as 'stationery'. Maybe they are slowly moving towards the day when they change the name of their association and journal title, to bring them in line with the majority of the rest of the world; after all, they could still be known as the ATA •

The Methodist Philatelic Society Newsletter (ISSN 0140-9003) is a full-colour 24-page quarterly publication for those interested in Methodism. Issue 152 contains articles about mail from missionaries in Tonga, meter markings, Brian Thompson's Bible, Joshua Thomas – the parson of the islands, a cover from Rev D Cargill 1842, among several others •

ABPS News Editor After two years as Editor, Hugh V Feldman has stood down to concentrate on a research project. His successor is Dr John Gledhill, who started his tenure from last month's issue. To contact the ABPS for general enquiries, write to Colin Searle, The Old Post Office, 1 Wellesbourne Road, Barford, Warwick CV35 8EL. For editorial matters send copy to Dr John Gledhill, 4 Valletta Way, Wellesbourne, Warwick CV35 9TB; telephone 01789 842112 or email him at jmgstamps@jgledhill.me.uk •

Stamp collecting without stamps? Not very easy you might say. The volunteers at Stamp Active Network, which runs Kids' Corner at Stampex, would be the first to agree. Unfortunately they will soon be faced with this problem, as stocks are very low. Can you spare some stamps? Nice, clean singles, pairs, on or off cover are needed. Perhaps you collect them from your daily mail? However they come, the team will be grateful for any contributions. Better items will become auction lots for the kids at Stampex, prizes in the tombola, or for the competitions that they run. This request for help is especially important at this time, with London 2010 Festival of Stamps just around the corner and the surge in demand that this will generate. Thank you on behalf of the next generation of stamp collectors •

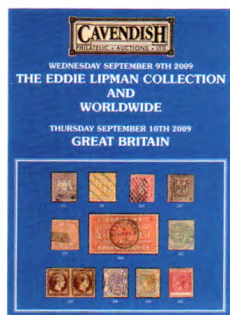
Auctions Cavendish's 10 September GB sale started with an 1840 House of Lords envelope addressed by the Duke of Wellington making £5060 (lot 858, est £3000); the rare violet 1911 Aerial Post card sent by the founder to India made £1495 (lot 946). The Angus Parker 2d blues transatlantic covers collection and a stunning 1843 cover to New York with 12 x 2d blues made £3910 (lot 966, est £750); the following lot with 6 x 2d blues also to New York, made £2300 and lot 978, a cover from Cornwall with a strip of 6 sc36a was sold at £805. An 1817 cover from Brazil with Rye Ship letter marking (lot 1031) made £2990 and a Limerick Ship Letter cover of 1840 made £747 (lot 1156) while the collection of Irish Railway Letter Stamps reached £1495 (lot 1187). The auction of the Angus Parker collection of Coffee House Mail saw lots average well above estimate, with lot 1236, a Grays Inn Coffee House cover from Lincolnshire, selling at £1265, a Horatio Hardy signed cover from a coffee house to India in 1828 made £805 (lot 1256), as did lot 1264, the six Lloyds Coffee House covers. £1380 was taken for lot 1284, Mr Osmond's Coffee House cover of 1685, while £1955 was the top realisation in this section for lot 1331, the 1840 illustrated letter sheet of the Colonial & Travellers Coffee House in Edinburgh •

Grosvenor held their 50th auction in their salerooms in the Strand on 23 September. This was an exceptional sale to mark the occasion, with the final total achieving £799,225. At just before 6pm the gavel came down on the 76,283rd lot to be offered at Grosvenor since its foundation in 1997. In the past 12 years, stamps and postal history sold through the company's auctions have in sum realised over £36.2 million. The day's total of 1834 lots became the highest number of lots to be offered in a single day. Billed as 'An exceptional sale featuring Great Britain and countries of the British Empire', their next sale is scheduled for later this month. Complimentary copies of the catalogue are available on request, and will also be available to view on the Grosvenor website. Unfortunately, more detailed information was unavailable at the time of going to press •

Stanley Gibbons entered the second half of its financial year in optimistic mood after lifting profits by 13% in the first six months and making a strong start to the second half. Profit before tax for the six months to 30 June 2009 jumped to £1.43m from £1.26m in 2008 on sales up 18% to £9.6m •

Stamp donations Please bring your stamps to the Kids' Corner stand at Stampex, or send them to Dave Armitage, 2 Shut Lane, Earls Colne, Colchester CO6 2RE.

Visit www.planetstamp.co.uk to see the UK website for kids who collect stamps.



Cavendish enquiries www.cavendish-auctions.com

Grosvenor enquiries Visit www.grosvenorauctions.com or write to them at Grosvenor Philatelic Auctions Ltd, 399-401 Strand, 3rd floor, London WC2R 0LT.

Royal Mail news New issues and products



Scottish Castles sheet The third Castles generic sheet, now on sale, contains 20 1st class Scottish Flag stamps (as on Celebrating Scotland miniature sheet, November 2006) and labels showing 10 castles (two of each – see September *Bulletin*, p15). Price £8.35 (also for Northern Ireland and England sheets). It was designed by Atelier Works and printed by Cartor in litho. A Welsh Castles sheet follows on 1 March 2010 (St David's Day) •

Exhibition sheets The last of this year's three exhibition sheets will go on sale on 4 December, to mark the Monacophil exhibition in Monte Carlo. The sheet, shown here in September (p15) bears 20 1st class Hello stamps with labels showing an

aerial view of Monte Carlo. It was designed by Mark Studio and printed in litho by Cartor. Similar sheets were issued for the Bangkok and Italia exhibitions in August and October (August *Bulletin* p360 and September p15). Price £8.35 each. The Monacophil exhibition is now an established part of the international philatelic scene, where some of the world's top collectors display prized material from their collections. The Monaco Post Office issued a special stamp to promote the exhibition on 7 February 2009 •



Christmas Smilers Five Christmas Smilers sheets are available for customers wanting their own image on labels adjoining Christmas stamps. They are available in sheets of 20 × 2nd class (£9.50, or £8.50 each for two or more); 10 × 1st (£7.50); 20 × 1st (£13.50, £12.50 each two or more), 10 × 56p (£9.50, £8.50 each two or more), and 10 × 90p (£13.50, £12.50 each two or more). Each has a different background showing Nativity scenes.

For those preferring secular stamps, reprinted 2006 Smilers sheets are also available – 20 × 2nd class Snowman, 10 × 1st Santa and 20 × 1st Santa. Prices as corresponding religious Smilers sheets. These sheets differ slightly to their 2006 counterparts, being inscribed at the bottom 'Christmas' instead of 'Christmas 2006', and with the copyright line amended to Royal Mail Group Ltd in place of Royal Mail Group plc. Please note, the reprinted 2006 sheets are Smilers (with customer's image), not generic sheets as stated in November (p73). We regret any confusion caused. To order Smilers sheets phone 0845 074 2000 •



Special stamps This month we preview the Girlguiding miniature sheet (p112) and, above, the Royal Society stamps (25 February). There will also be a prestige book with three panes of Royal Society stamps and a mixed definitive pane of four 22p and four 54p. Details next month.

Issues for 2010 are listed below, with alternative First Day of Issue postmark locations. Please note some changes to the list published in March. Stamp values and other details will be published nearer the time of issue •

The Royal Society stamps (to be issued 25 February) were designed by Hat-trick Design. Shown above at smaller than actual size.

07.01 Classic Album Covers: Oldfield, Keighley
02.02 Girlguiding (centenary): Guide, Blackburn
25.02 The Royal Society (350th anniversary): London SW1
11.03 Battersea Dogs & Cats Home: London SW8
23.03 Monarchs 3, House of Stewart: Linlithgow, W Lothian
13.04 Action for Species 4, Mammals: Batts Corner, Farnham
06.05 Accession of King George V: Sandringham, Norfolk
08.05 The King's stamps: London N1

13.05 Britain Alone (commemoration of 1940): Dover, Kent
15.06 Children's Books: Hartfield, East Sussex
27.07 Olympic & Paralympic Games 2: Rowington, Warwick *
19.08 Stage Musicals: Dancers End, Tring
16.09 Great British Railways: York
12.10 Monarchs 4: House of Stuart: Royal Oak, Filey
02.11 Christmas: Blenheim, Llandoilo
 Provisional date *

Coming off sale The 2007 Yearbook and Yearpack will be withdrawn on 31 December 2009. Remaining stocks of the Robert Burns miniature sheet, pack, press sheet and stamp cards will be withdrawn on 21 January 2010 •

Royal Mail Christmas cards Cards featuring the stained glass windows on this year's 1st and 2nd class Christmas stamps are on sale at most main PO branches. Price £3 for a pack of 10 (five of each design), £5 for two packs. For every sale a donation will be made to our charity partner, Barnado's •

New Recorded Signed For stamps Stamps for use on Recorded Signed For mail sent at 1st class standard or 'Large' are now available at Post Office branches, and from Royal Mail Tallents House. Price £1.14 for standard (39p postage and 75p Signed For fee) or £1.36 'Large' (61p postage, 75p fee). These stamps are intended as valid only on mail sent by the Signed For service •





The 10 new stamps in the gummed miniature sheet.

To order Smilers Use an order form at Post Office branches, or write to Smilers, Freepost SCO 5817, Edinburgh EH12 9PH, phone 0845 074 2000, or see www.royalmail.com/smilers

New Business Customised and Smilers stamps Ten new stamps, designed specifically to meet the needs of customers ordering business customised and Smilers sheets, will be available from 26 January. They will also be offered in a gummed miniature sheet and self-adhesive generic sheet for collectors who do not use the business customised or Smilers services.

The four Smilers stamps comprise two 1st class featuring a birthday cake and wrapped present, a Europe rate stamp depicting a bird with an envelope in its beak, and a Worldwide stamp showing a plane flying a 'Hello' message. The Europe and Worldwide stamps are valid on mail weighing up to 20g. The six Business Customised stamps feature a seal and crown, the 2006 Lest We Forget poppy stamp, and four types of transport – plane, ship, train, and car. The stamps were designed by Hat-trick (seal & crown), Andrew Davidson (transport), Lucy Davey (Europe & Worldwide), and Annabel Wright (cake & present), and printed in litho by Cartor (miniature sheet) or litho by Cartor (generic sheet). Price £4.58 miniature sheet (£5.10 in presentation pack), £9.70 generic sheet. A set of 11 stamp cards (10 stamps and miniature sheet) will cost £4.40.

Serviced first day covers with Tallents House or Happy Valley, Malvern postmarks can be ordered from Royal Mail Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB by the day of issue, price £5.86 UK customers, £4.99 overseas. Collectors may send covers for postmarking on the first day to Tallents House (for the Tallents House postmark only) or to their nearest Royal Mail Special Handstamp Centre for the Happy Valley postmark. Details of any sponsored handstamps for 26 January will be given in the *British Postmark Bulletin* which is available on subscription from Tallents House. For a sample copy write to: the Editor, British Postmark Bulletin, Royal Mail 35-50 Rathbone Place, London W1T 1HQ.

Smilers sheets, with customers' images on the adjoining labels, can be ordered from Tallents House. Sheets of 10 1st class Cake or Present stamps will cost £7.58 each, sheets of 20 £13.62 each. Sheets of 10 Europe or Worldwide stamps will cost £9.58 and £13.62 respectively. The handling charge on Smilers orders is £1.45 •



Left: the high value security definitives coin cover will be issued on 1 December, price £15.95.

Below: the first Games stamp book, to be issued 7 January, includes Judo and Paralympic Archery stamps.

HIGH VALUE DEFINITIVES

SECURITY FEATURES & £1.50

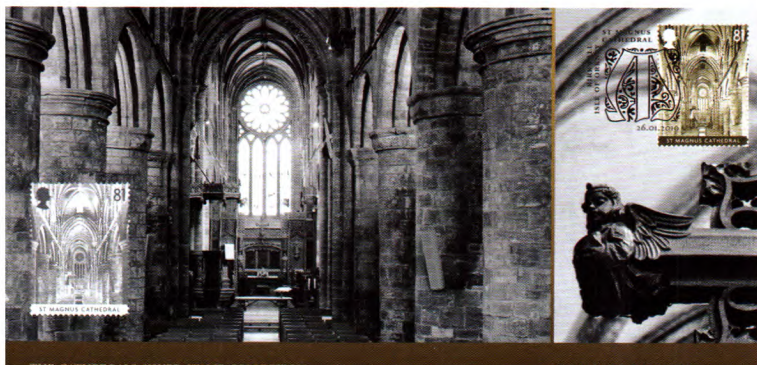


Games stamp books A book containing Judo and Paralympic Archery stamps from the Olympic & Paralympic Games issue (22 October) and four 1st class definitive stamps will be issued on 7 January. A second Games book with Track Athletics and Basketball stamps and four definitives follows on 25 February. Both will be printed by Walsall in gravure, price £2.34 each •

Stamp book variation The 12 x 1st book has been reprinted, now without the printer's name on the back cover. This will be available from Tallents House and Post Office philatelic outlets from 15 December; regular order customers will be sent this book in January •

Coin cover A new 'High Value Security Definitives' coin cover bearing the £1.50, £2, £3 and £5 high value stamps with security features and a 2009 £1 coin will be available from 1 December, price £15.95. The coin is a new design by Matthew Dent introduced in 2008. The design features the shield of the Royal Arms; parts of the design on other denominations make up a composite image. The stamps will be cancelled by a special Windsor postmark. The cover features the Machin head as used on definitive stamps, and the 'ROYAL MAIL' wavy-line background as on the security definitives. The filler card gives histories of UK high value stamps and £1 coins, and profiles of Arnold Machin and Matthew Dent. Machin designed the first decimal coinage (1968) as well as the definitive stamp, and Matthew Dent won a competition to design the new coins. Limited edition of 12,500 •

Silver stamps The sixth issue in our silver stamp collection featuring the 2008 Cathedral stamps will be available from 26 January 2010. It features the 81p St Magnus Cathedral, Kirkwall stamp. Price £24.42.



Classic Albums PSB The *Classic Album Covers* prestige stamp book, to be issued on 7 January, contains four stamp panes, as follows. Pane 1: definitives – top & bottom rows 20p, 62p, 20p; middle row 54p, label showing a record, 54p. Panes 2 and 3: a double-spread pane of the 10 Album Covers stamps. Pane 4: definitives – top and bottom rows 10p, 22p, 10p; middle row 5p, 10p, 5p. First day covers will be serviced bearing the 20p, 54p, and 62p definitive stamps pane; the FDC and the Classic Albums stamps were shown in last month's *Bulletin*, on pages 80-81 •



Year Collections The 2009 Yearbook and Yearpack, containing all the year's special stamps, are now on sale, and will remain available until the end of 2011. Both contain all the special stamps of 2009. The standard version of the Yearbook costs £65, or £105 for the de-luxe, leather-bound version. The colourful Yearpack, price £60, includes concise background information on each of the special issues, with technical details of the stamps and illustrations of the alternative 'First Day' postmarks for each issue. 2009 Miniature Sheet Year Pack and Presentation Pack Collections are also available, priced £21.30 and £65 respectively •

Posting dates for Christmas The latest posting dates for airmail letters for delivery by Christmas are as follows. 4 December: South & Central America, Caribbean, Africa, Middle East, Far East, Asia, Australia and New Zealand. 10 December: Japan, USA, Canada and Eastern Europe. 11 December: Western Europe. 18 December: UK 2nd class mail. 21 December: UK 1st class mail. 23 December: UK Special Delivery service. The vast majority of UK cards qualify for the 'Letter' rate of 39p or 30p (1st or 2nd class). The weight limit is 100g. For larger cards over 240mm long or 165mm wide or 5mm thick, the 'Large Letter' rate applies: 61p 1st class or 47p 2nd class, up to 100g. The latest dates for sending parcels by Parcelforce Worldwide 48- and 24-hour services are 22 and 23 December respectively. For further information see www.royalmail.com/christmasposting •

2009 stamp poll Once again we invite you to vote for your favourite stamps and *Bulletin* writer of the year. The special stamps issued during 2009 are shown on pages 114-15. Tell us your top three sets and favourite individual stamp on the enclosed voting form. In 2008 the favourite set was Cathedrals, and the Lest We Forget stamp was the most popular individual stamp.

We also invite you to vote for your favourite FDC envelope and presentation pack of 2009 – please vote for the design of the envelope and pack, not for the stamps for that issue. In 2008 your favourite FDCs were for the Rescue at Sea and Cathedrals issues (joint winners), and Cathedrals was voted top pack design.

Finally we seek your votes for your favourite *Bulletin* author. Last year's winner was Douglas Myall, with the late Ron Negus in second place.

All voting forms received go into a prize draw, and the first five 'out of the hat' will each be sent a 2009 Yearbook. Remember to return your form by 15 January – we look forward to hearing from you •

Collect British Stamps The 2010 (61st) edition of the ever-popular Stanley Gibbons *Collect British Stamps* colour checklist is now on sale, price £12.95. Since it was first published in 1967, over 3 million copies of this catalogue have been sold. It can be ordered from Royal Mail Talents House (handling charge £1.45 UK, £1.55 Europe, £2.15 rest of world), as well as from Stanley Gibbons, and stamp and book shops •

British Postal Museum & Archive On show until April is a special exhibition honouring the eminent stamp designer David Gentleman, who has designed more than 100 issued stamps for Royal Mail since 1962. The exhibition features artwork for many of these and other designs not previously shown in public, and the revolutionary 'Gentleman Album' of 1966, which greatly influenced British stamp design – see articles by Douglas Muir (June 2007 *Bulletin*) and Richard West (June 2009). A new exhibition, of Treasures from the BPMA, will be shown from May 2010.

The BPMA is open Monday to Wednesday and Friday 10.00-17.00, Thursday 10.00-19.00, and on certain Saturdays – see their website for dates and details of BPMA lectures and other events •

THE BRITISH POSTAL MUSEUM & ARCHIVE

The BPMA Freeling House,
Phoenix Place, London WC1X
0DL (near Mount Pleasant).
Phone 020 7239 2570 or see
www.postalheritage.org.uk

That was 2009 A review of the past year, by Richard West

How will 2009 be best remembered? As plans for London 2010: Festival of Stamps gain momentum, perhaps it will be the international exhibition in Luoyang in China that will remain in the memory. It may prove the last of the truly magnificent stamp exhibitions, with estimates of attendance varying from 750,000 to one million: whichever figure you choose, it remains impressive, and the event was always packed with visitors, many willing to queue for up to five hours for a glimpse of items from the Royal Philatelic Collection. The opening ceremony, which packed a sports arena, with thousands taking part, and more thousands – perhaps millions, as the event was televised – watching, will surely never be matched. The scale of this event dwarfed the other internationals of the year in Bulgaria, Germany, Israel and Italy.

Home exhibitions In the UK, the traditional Philatex and Stampex in February attracted many collectors, and dealers reported highly satisfactory results, seemingly belying the gloom of the credit crunch. At Spring Stampex a new competition was launched, for exhibits of one frame: it proved highly popular. For many years June has brought us Thematica, but sadly this event closed its doors for the last time in 2008. It was, in effect, two events, with dealers balanced by competitive displays arranged by The Friends of Thematica. In 2009 these two went their separate ways: many thematic dealers supported the new event, called Thematix, held at Twickenham. The Friends of Thematica competitions were held at Midpex, the exhibition staged near Coventry every two years, aimed at members of specialist societies. Midpex had a change of venue this year, but that did not deter the visitors, who so filled the halls that they became rather crowded. Autumn Stampex was again the venue for the national competitions – for the past few years, these have been held outside London. Curiously, events near the end of the year reported lower attendances, and less of a willingness to spend by visitors. Perhaps everyone is saving themselves, and their money, for London 2010?



Some stamp issues of 2009 recalled by Richard West and, far right, a David Gentleman design at the BPMA and code identifying a stamp's source.

New issues Royal Mail offered a fine assortment of themes and designs in 2009. The year started with Design Classics, clearly seen as having wide appeal, for the designs appeared on sheet stamps, two generic Smilers sheets (Mini and Concorde), in a prestige book, and in four retail stamp books (telephone box & Routemaster; Concorde; Mini; miniskirt). The Post Boxes miniature sheet has a clear appeal for many collectors, and was appropriately accompanied by the *Treasures of the Archive* PSB, exploring the unique heritage maintained by the British Postal Museum & Archive (BPMA).

While as collectors we look forward to 2010, for the nation the sights are on 2012 and the London Olympic Games. Having marked the handover of the Olympic flag from Beijing in 2008 with a miniature sheet, Royal Mail has embarked on a series of three issues (in 2009, 2010 and 2011) that will feature 30 Olympic and Paralympic sports, interpreted by 30 different artists. Another three-year series, of the uniforms of the armed services, drew to a close by looking at the Royal Navy. As mentioned, the year's themes were varied: from Darwin to Endangered Plants; from the Tudors to Robert Burns; from the Industrial Revolution to the Fire and Rescue Services; from Mythical Creatures to Christmas. The Eminent Britons set showed that our nation has much to celebrate: a reminder of earlier 'General Anniversaries' sets, which brought together many events in one issue.



Post & Go Many collectors, of course, complain that items posted over a Post Office counter will frequently receive a label, rather than a stamp. That does not prevent there being much interest shown by collectors in such labels. Those labels dispensed by the 'Post & Go' machines which are now being found in an increasing number of post offices, changed design during the year, and now resemble the 'Smart Stamp' design, thereby looking a little less basic. However, the major excitement was generated by the 'experimental' labels which were affixed to Special Delivery mail, and only at the Camden Town post office in London from 8 June to 11 September. The labels in question were printed in gold with a design featuring the Machin portrait of The Queen. We will wait to see whether the same or similar labels are used elsewhere, perhaps nationwide.

Another complaint focuses on stamps that are not postmarked when received on mail. To prevent the fraudulent re-use of these stamps, Royal Mail introduced 'security slits' on the 1st and 2nd class stamps and high values. In addition to the slits, there is also a background design that makes multiple use of the words 'ROYAL MAIL'. However, the actual source of a stamp (whether from standard sheets, business sheets, rolls or booklets) can be identified, by the fact that one of the letters – a different letter for each source – of 'Royal Mail' is changed.

Designers Two stamp designers hit the news during the year. The career of David Gentleman is celebrated by an exhibition in the Search Room at the BPMA (until April 2010). Sadly the death of Michael Goaman was recorded: in the 1950s and 60s Michael designed a number of British stamps, often with his wife Sylvia.

Another era came to an end in October. In the 1960s, the Crown Agents Stamp Bureau moved from the headquarters of the Crown Agents at 4 Millbank to Sutton in Surrey: in 2008 a majority interest was acquired by Harry Allen, with the creation of CASCO. On 1 October the operation left Sutton and moved to Poole.

Fun stamps Looking overseas, two issues caused some amusement. In January Malaysia issued a Unique Birds miniature sheet, but omitted to include the country name on the stamp. In Finland most homes have a sauna: a stamp depicting five men in a sauna features the aroma of birch.

We now look forward to 2010 – a year of celebration with the Festival of Stamps, embracing not only the international stamp exhibition at the Business Design Centre, but also major events at the Guildhall Art Gallery, British Library, and many other venues across the nation. We may not be able to boast one million attendance at a single event, but it would be a good target for the Festival as a whole •

Girlguiding Royal Mail celebrates this year's

Girlguiding UK



The Girlguiding stamps and miniature sheet, designed by Together Design and printed by Cartor in litho. The stamps measure 37 x 35mm, and the sheet 190 x 67mm.

A MINIATURE sheet containing four stamps marking the centenary of Girlguiding will go on sale at Post Office branches, Tallents House and Post Office philatelic outlets on 2 February 2010. The stamps depict girls at various stages of Girlguiding life, on a background of appropriate activities: 1st class Rainbows, 56p Brownies, 81p Guides, and 90p Senior Section.

FIRST DAY FACILITIES Orders for serviced FDCs must reach Tallents House (address below) by the date of issue. Collectors may send stamped covers on the day of issue to: Royal Mail Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB (Tallents House postmark), or to their nearest Royal Mail Special Handstamp Centres (Guide, Blackburn postmark), marking the outer envelope 'FD1005' or 'FD1006'. Covers can be posted or handed in at main Post Office branches for the Guide postmark.

For sponsored handstamps and Handstamp Centre addresses, see the *British Postmark Bulletin* – available on subscription from Tallents House (£12.25 UK/Europe, £24.95 elsewhere). For a sample copy write to: British Postmark Bulletin, Royal Mail, 35-50 Rathbone Place, London W1T 1HQ.

Guides centenary The only previous British stamp featuring the Girl Guide Movement was the 29p value in the 1982 Youth Organisations issue. The Girl Guides were founded by Lord Baden-Powell and his sister Agnes in 1910. Now known as Girlguiding, it is the UK's largest organisation for girls, with over 500,000 members. The Girl Scouts of America, founded in 1912 by Juliette Low, was modelled on the British Girl Guides. Worldwide Girlguiding has a membership of over 10 million. Centenary events launched in September 2009 will continue until October 2010. A Girlguiding UK Centenary Camp will be held at Harewood House, 31 July - 7 August 2010. ●

centenary with a miniature sheet of four new special stamps

**Girlguiding prices**

Miniature sheet	£ 2.66
Presentation pack	£ 3.20
FDC envelope	£ 0.30
Serviced FDC (UK customers)	£ 3.60
Serviced FDC (overseas customers)	£ 3.07
Stamp cards set (5 cards)	£ 2.00
Coin cover	£15.45

'We always have, and always will, put girls in the lead!'

LIZ BURNLEY, Chief Guide

Guiding has always been shaped by the ambitions and needs of girls, giving them a **voice** and providing a unique **girl-only space** where they can be comfortable just being themselves. How else could it remain **relevant** for 100 years? **Volunteers** are the engine that drives guiding. More than 80,000 individuals contribute over ten million hours to guiding

every year in the UK. More are always needed! Being a **Rainbow, Brownie, Guide** or member of the **Senior Section** is lots of fun and a great way to make friends, learn new skills and have adventures. And because they're **girl-led**, the girls' learning and activity programmes are constantly evolving. Read on to find out more!

Rainbows look, learn and laugh

They play games and do activities as part of their programme called the Rainbow Jigsaw. Everything a Rainbow does helps her to develop and think for herself within a safe, girl-only environment.

- Girls can become Rainbows between the ages of five and six (four-year-olds can join).
- The Rainbow Jigsaw has four areas that give it balance and Laugh and Love. Each activity a Rainbow does is based on it.
- Rainbows do so many fun things together. They go to the zoo and they also enjoy sleepovers, which encourages them to develop a feeling of independence.

Did you know? The Rainbows section was introduced in 1910 and more than 14 per cent of six-year-old girls in the UK are Rain

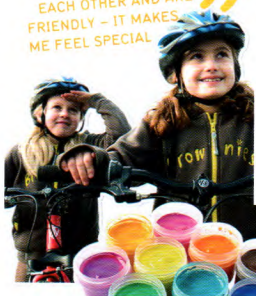
" WE PLAY GAMES, WE CELEBRATE THINGS, WE WRITE IN OUR BOOKS, WE PLAY ON THE COMPUTER, WE DO PAINTING ... "



Girlguiding UK



" IT FEELS NICE TO BE PART OF A GROUP OF GIRLS WHO HELP EACH OTHER AND ARE FRIENDLY - IT MAKES ME FEEL SPECIAL "



Girlguiding UK Centenary



Royal Mail First Day Cover

Philatelic products The pack (left) is written by Neil Young, and designed by Together Design. The five stamp cards feature the four stamps and the complete miniature sheet. A coin cover includes a new Royal Mint 50p coin marking the Girlguiding centenary.

Mrs J Robinson
200 Manorbier Road
Ilkeston
Derbyshire
DE7 4AB

to take care of her and makes her feel that she belongs to something special. The Brownie programme is called the Brownie Adventure. Brownies do so many exciting activities, including cycling, baking, painting, learning to map-read, and taking part in science and nature investigations.

Did you know? Around a quarter of all eight-year-old girls in the UK are Brownies - and almost half of all British women have been involved in guiding at some point in their lives.

Favourite stamps poll 2009 Let us know your favourites

Tell us your top three sets and favourite individual stamp on the enclosed voting form. Return your form by 15 January for entry in our prize draw. Stamps are numbered from left to right in each set ●

British Design Classics

1 2 3 4 5



British Design Classics

6 7 8 9 10



Robert Burns

11 12



Charles Darwin

13 14 15 16 17 18



Darwin miniature sheet

19 20 21 22



Celebrating Wales

23 24



Industrial Revolution Pioneers

25 26 27 28



Industrial Revolution Pioneers

29 30 31 32



Monarchs: House of Tudor

33 34 35 36 37 38



Tudors miniature sheet

39 40 41 42





Plants 43 44
45 46 47 48 49



Plants 50 51
52 53 54 55 56



Mythical Creatures
57 58 59 60 61 62



Postboxes
63 64 65 66



Fire & Rescue Services
67 68 69 70 71 72



Naval Uniforms
73 74 75 76 77 78



Eminent Britons
79 80 81 82 83



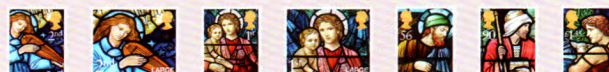
Eminent Britons
84 85 86 87 88



Olympic & Paralympic Games
89 90 91 92 93



Olympic & Paralympic Games
94 95 96 97 98



Christmas
99 100 101 102 103 104 105

British air letters Part 4: armed forces and stamped to order issues, by Colin Baker



To end my series, I look at items created purely for philatelists, but begin with a much more important part of this story: air letters introduced for writing to those serving in our armed forces, and those air letters intended only for use by military personnel.

Three Forces air letters The first pre-stamped air letter to be issued in Great Britain was only available for sending to prisoners of war and internees being held in countries occupied by, or allied to Germany. This was issued in 1941 and printed

with the King George VI 2½d letterpress stamp, the current inland letter rate, which was also the rate for forces surface mail. These air letters were not sealed, but were secured with a tongue which slipped into a slot on the reverse side. This was to allow them to be opened and then resealed easily, so that censorship could be undertaken by both sides without the need for sealing labels and pots of glue. Even the sides of these air letters were open so that it was impossible to include an enclosure. Despite their name of 'air mail letter sheet', a good portion of their journey was undertaken on land. They were normally carried by air as far as Lisbon, and then proceeded through Spain, into France and onward to the German-run prison and internment camps.

Although members of the armed forces had a specially reduced rate for air letters, families and friends writing to them did not, and they had to pay the civilian rate of 6d. There were also airgraphs of course, but these had a very small writing area compared with that of the normal air letter. It was not until 1945 that a special air letter was issued for those writing to members of the armed forces serving overseas. The increasing availability of aircraft in the last few months of the Second World War allowed the authorities to reduce the cost of air letters sent to those 'on active service' to 1½d, even less than it cost to send a normal letter within the UK. These air letters followed exactly the same format as the 6d civilian issue (see part one of this series, in the September *Bulletin*) and were folded into four and sealed with two small gummed flaps. They were printed on a buff-coloured paper with the King George VI 1½d stamp.

Why not try *e-bluey*, log on and register at www.bfpo.org.uk

Operation/Exercise

(Enter the operation or exercise name here to validate for free postage)

To:

1 British Forces
Postage Paid



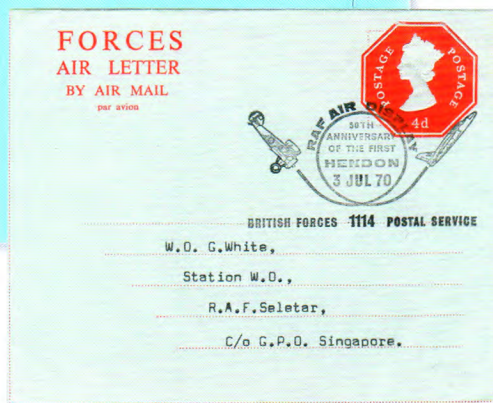
As with their civilian cousins, these forces air letters can also be found with both solid and dotted address lines. Solid lines in both cases are much less common, and worth looking out for.

Only three different pre-paid forces air letters have ever been issued, the last of these appearing in 2003. This used the A4 format that we are now all used to, and stated it could be sent postage free to those personnel on active service. It was up to the person buying the air letter to show that this was the case, otherwise payment equal to the standard postage was required.

Air letters Stamped to Order (STO) From 1957 until the stamping to order service was withdrawn in 1973, many pre-printed air letters had stamps privately impressed onto them, either to pay the full air letter postage rate or to uprate them to the then current postage rate for air letters. In nearly every case, these stamped to order items were created for philatelic rather than commercial purposes.

Unstamped air letters could be bought from major stationery shops and suppliers, and were approved by the Post Office for sending at the current air letter rate, postage being paid by means of adhesive stamps or franked impressions. Air letter sheets were also supplied to the forces, as they were eligible for free postage whilst they were on active service. If this was not the case, they had to pay the appropriate postage in adhesive stamps.

The creators of the stamped to order material took these unstamped air letter sheets and then had a variety of stamp values and types added. This created a wide variety of different air letters, almost none of which were used for their correct purpose. However, they can make an attractive and colourful addition to a collection of air letters, and so we must not dismiss them out of hand. ►



Opposite page Left: the first stamped air letter, 1941, was for sending to prisoners of war in German-occupied territory. Right: the air letter introduced in 1945, for use to members of the armed forces overseas.

Above Left: a 2003 forces air letter, postage free to servicemen on active service. Above: an unstamped forces air mail letter sheet with stamp added under the STO facility, with an RAF special handstamp.

Only one King George VI air letter was treated in such a way, and it was stamped with the STO 6d embossed stamp (shown opposite). The air letter was actually created in 1957, five years into the reign of our present Queen. The Post Office had been slow to produce the higher value embossed dies for stamped to order work, which is the reason why the King George VI die was still being used.

Later that same year the new Queen Elizabeth II dies had at last been produced and these were used to create prepaid forces air letters, using the unstamped forces air letters to do this. There was no commercial need for these and most have either not been used, or have commemorative cancellations, often with an RAF or armed forces connection.

There are several instances of private commemorative air letters being produced which could have been used by the public. The Royal Wedding of 1973 gave rise to one of these. Rather than using one of the approved unstamped air mail letters, a completely new printing was undertaken with silhouettes of the couple framed in a pink design, alongside the address area. A 6p stamp was never prepared for use on either Post Office or STO stationery, and to make up the correct rate for air letters at that time it was necessary to impress two 3p stamps side by side.

Two years later, in 1975, a similar situation arose when a private air letter was produced to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the United Nations. This time a 2p and 4p stamp were struck onto each item, making up the 6p small-size air letter rate. I have not seen either of these air letters genuinely used, which is not to say they do not exist, so it's worth looking out for them. Don't forget to keep your eyes open for any other examples as well.

Post Office air letters with added stamps Some air letters have used standard Post Office issues, overprinted with a commemorative design. Others have simply had an additional stamp stuck alongside the existing Machin stamp to bring the air letter up to the correct rate.

There are numerous combinations of stamps that have been impressed on STO air letters, and well over a hundred have been recorded to date. There may be others out there waiting to be discovered. Whether you find one of these or not, collecting air letters in either mint or used condition can be a colourful, satisfying part of your hobby. There are specialist large albums available if you would like to display your collection to the full, and plenty of information is available on each issue. Many air letters have been fully described in this *Bulletin* over the years, and back numbers are sometimes offered for only the cost of the postage. A full list of all air letters issued in Great Britain, together with colour illustrations of the vignettes and etiquettes is given in the new postal stationery catalogue by Alan Huggins and Colin Baker published in 2007.

Many of the Post Office issue air letters are sold by dealers and auction houses at very reasonable prices and these can usually be found without a great deal of effort. The hunt for the STO varieties can be more difficult, but that's the fun of collecting. So there should be no excuses for those who want to have a full and attractive collection of British air letters ●

Postal stationery articles by Colin Baker were published in October and November 2004, January, September and October 2005, and February 2008. *Collect British Postal Stationery* by Alan Huggins and Colin Baker was reviewed here in March 2008.

Postal Stationery Society For details write to Mr Baker at 4 Greenhill Gardens, Sutton Veny, Warminster BA12 7AY.



From top left: another unstamped forces air mail letter sheet with stamps added under the STO facility; the King George VI 6d STO air letter of 1957; a 9d STO used by a dealer to his client; the Royal Wedding air letter of 1973; and an example of an added stamp – there were many private air letters produced under the stamped to order facility, nearly all of them philatelic.

The world of online philately by Glenn H Morgan FRPSL



The home page of the BPMA website: www.postalheritage.org.uk

THE BPMA WILL BE well known to readers of the *Bulletin*, because it features regularly within these pages. The curatorial staff cares for the written, visual, and physical records of over 400 years of British postal development, including the rapid changes now occurring in the postal system. The BPMA's website is constantly updated with all the work that staff are currently undertaking in preserving and, just as importantly, making readily accessible, this history, whether it be for those visiting online or in person.

The site uses all the modern methods at the disposal of webmasters, including the ability to have the current page read out extremely clearly to you, while summaries of key information are available in French, German, Spanish and Welsh languages. Ease of use is at the heart of this site, and a simple menu system ensures that navigation is free of difficulties.

The Home page contains all the latest news, events and site highlights. It also enables access to a search engine, help screen, email updates, external links, contact details and a site map. There are also links entitled About Us, Visiting, History, Exhibitions, Collections, Catalogue, Learning, Shop, Support Us, Podcast and Wiki. These are far more powerful sections than the short, snappy titles might imply and a visit to any of them will open up a whole new world of information.

'Exhibitions' for example, will allow you to read about not only current and upcoming exhibitions and events by the BPMA at its own premises in London and Debden, but across the country, too, invariably in partnership with other museums. There are currently details of two exhibitions that are available for other venues to display (Brunel: Speeding the Mail and Moving the Mail: Horses to Horsepower), plus 13 online virtual exhibitions, comprising current and closed events going back to 2006.

For researchers, it is the 'Catalogue' link that will hold the most interest, for this makes it possible to decide exactly which files you wish to examine from the comfort of your home in advance, saving valuable time when visiting the Search Room. There are increasing numbers of images to view on-screen as well, including philatelic material such as items from the Reginald M Phillips Collection and many of the fascinating posters deployed down the years. Incidentally, at the separate website to be found at www.postalheritageprints.co.uk you can now buy high quality digital prints of a selection of these posters.

The BPMA website is your gateway to the treasures of the museum and archive and is a 'must visit' for anyone with an interest in philately, family history and social history. Even those without these interests, or whose interests lie elsewhere, will soon find something that will hold their attention, for the postal service continues to touch all of our lives, even in these increasingly electronic times ●

The stained glass window Dorothy Martin

looks at the history of a unique art form

I START with a brief history of the origin of glass. There are several views on this, the most popular being that some Phoenician merchants trading in Nutron, a soda-based embalming material, made a campfire on the beach using the soda as a wind-break. The next morning they found the inside of the soda block had fused with the beach sand to give a primitive form of glass. The basic constituents of glass are silica, used in the form of sand and heated with an alkaline flux such as soda or potash. The heat causes a fusion of the sand and soda to form glass. The addition of various metal

oxides gives colour to the molten glass, such as cobalt for blue, copper for green and iron for red. Colours were varied according to temperature and/or a combination of colouring agents. Glass blowing, thought to have been discovered in Syria c50 BC, revolutionised the glass industry; this method is still used to this day. The first man-made glass was produced in Syria and Egypt. Glass-making evolved over time, and many different methods for colouring glass and making glass objects were introduced. There are several different views about the earliest glass; some say the glazing of beads took place between 3000-2000 BC. The earliest use of transparent coloured glass, created to a design of Christ which has survived, is possibly from the 6th century church of San Vitale, Ravenna in Italy.

Northern monasteries The first British stained glass dates from as early as 675, when Anglo-Saxon Abbot Benedict Biscop sent to Gaul for glaziers to work on monasteries in Monkwearmouth (near Sunderland) and Jarrow. The Frenchmen taught their craft to the English, making Sunderland the birthplace of stained glass in this country. Parts of the original windows have been excavated at Monkwearmouth. The early glass was probably yellow and green and made with potash obtained from wood ash, cut into pieces to form a coloured mosaic. To make a window, small pieces of glass were arranged in patterns, held together by strips of lead and supported by a rigid frame. Painted details were often applied to enhance the design.

Educational tool Stained glass is part of the architecture and decoration of churches and cathedrals, but it also had an educational value. In ancient times the average person could not read or write, but the illustrations in the windows were something they could understand. An excellent example of this is a window in Canterbury Cathedral, known as the 'The Poor Man's Bible'. In some churches there is a series of windows illustrating the same narrative. It is thought the oldest surviving stained glass windows are to be seen in the 'Prophet Windows' in Augsburg Cathedral (1065). ►



As the theme for the new Christmas stamps is the Nativity as depicted on stained glass windows, my article this year is a brief look at the development of this essentially Christian art form.



Above: a stamp from the 1982 Sweden issue featuring glass paintings in the 14th century church at Lye, Gotland (top), and one of the 1984 Australia Christmas stamps – this value reproducing a window from St Mary's Cathedral, Sydney.

Opposite: two pages from the author's stained glass window collection.

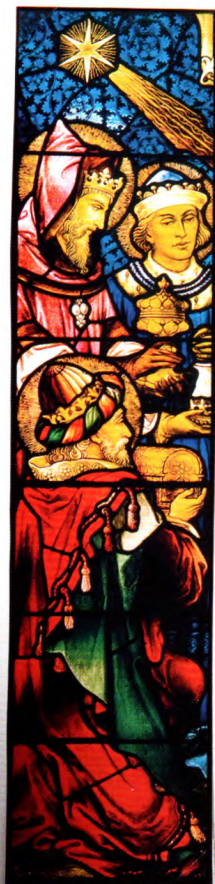
It was not until the 11th and 12th centuries, when many new churches and cathedrals were built, that the demand for coloured glass began to increase, reaching its highest level during the 14th and 15th centuries. Styles changed during this period to complement the evolving architecture as the window openings became longer and narrower. The introduction of enamel paint also meant that it was no longer necessary to have so many pieces of coloured glass; in addition, political upheavals caused changes and affected the survival of existing windows. Stained glass was an important part of the Gothic style of architecture which originated in the 12th century, and windows survive at Chartres, Notre Dame and St Denis in France. Canterbury Cathedral, then a place of pilgrimage, is the only English cathedral to contain any quantity of 12th century stained glass, when the choir was destroyed by fire in 1174 and rebuilt. Medallion windows originated at the end of the 12th century, and show pictures and figures in circular framed medallions; some can be seen at Canterbury. Grisaille windows were introduced at the end of this century, and were usually composed of uncoloured glass in which the design was created by leads. In later years, Grisaille windows were covered with patterns of painted foliage or other suitable designs, sometimes with silver stain added.

Self depiction Since the 12th century, donors and patrons often depicted themselves in the windows they commissioned. Donors were of high social rank until around the 18th century; thereafter wealthy people of lower rank were included. During the 14th century architecture changed and window spaces became wider, which in turn meant church window spaces became larger and designs for church windows had to be adapted accordingly; these were called Figure and Canopy windows. Silver stain was introduced in this century and became one of the valuable techniques for window design.

In England, after Henry VIII dissolved the monasteries in 1536-40, many great buildings were demolished, and windows were lost. Further destruction occurred during Cromwell's time. The objection was to religious pictures, not to stained glass; therefore in other countries of Europe religious pictorial windows continued to be produced in the 16th and 17th centuries, but in England glaziers had to turn to other subjects such as heraldry, animals and floral designs.

Translucent oil painting During the 16th century figures became more realistic and were often set in landscapes. It was also discovered that coloured glass paint and enamel could be made from powdered coloured glass mixed with borax; when it was fired, it fused with the surface of the glass, making it no longer necessary to cut separate shapes in glass and leadwork. Because religious glass was more or less banned after the Reformation, heraldic glass was much in demand throughout the 17th century, and painting with the new enamel paints was used to supplement the more traditional techniques. In the 18th century there was a renewed demand for pictorial windows. Stained glass was being considered more as a translucent oil painting and lead was not so often used to follow the outlines of the drawing. ►

From the 13th - 15th Centuries stained glass windows changed to complement successive architectural styles. The introduction of coloured enamel paints meant it was no longer necessary to have separate pieces of coloured glass.



Stained Glass

Essentially a Christian art form, the origins of stained glass date back to the 1st Century A.D. It reached a high point in the late Middle Ages, the pictorial aspect helping to instruct a largely illiterate population in the stories of the Bible and teachings of the Church.

The requirements of Churches often called for cycles of stained glass windows round a central theme.

Nine such windows were installed in the Church of St Francis, Melbourne, Australia, the cycle being dedicated to the life of the Virgin Mary.



Angel (detail)
St Francis Church, Melbourne



Angel & Child
Holy Trinity Church
Mullers Point, NSW



Veiled Virgin & Child
St Mary's Church
Geelong, Victoria



The Three Kings
St Mary's Cathedral
Sydney



Madonna & Child (detail)
St Bartholomew's Church
Norwood, S. Aust



This Australian stamp is from a 1986 set featuring details from the James Cook stained glass windows at Cranbrook School in Sydney.

The 19th century saw a great revival. The Victorians built new churches and restored old ones in a deliberately medieval style, stained glass being a vital part of this process. More windows and panels were made for domestic and other buildings. One such building is the Cranbrook School in Sydney, Australia, the stately home of the wealthy politician James White. He commissioned a suite of nine windows depicting James Cook's voyage of discovery in the *Endeavour* along the coast of South Australia.

A departure from the medieval tradition came through the firm founded by William Morris 1861. He developed a freer style with strong glowing colours and often called on the services of artist Edward Burne-Jones who, like Morris, understood the principles of how to use leading and the shape of the window to full effect. Although the conventional tradition of stained glass continued, the stage was set for experiment and abstract or modern design. Coventry Cathedral provided the best-known commission in 1962, and the Baptistry Window designed by John Piper is an excellent example of this. Such developments have produced a new interest in stained glass, and suggest a much wider role for the art in modern times ●

Text © Dorothy Martin 2009

Commemorative covers New this month

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Methodist Philatelic Society
R J Macmillan, Cluny, 11
Cullaloe Court, Dalgety Bay,
Dunfermline KY11 9NW.

Nene Valley Railway
(Stamps) Wansford Station,
Stibbington, Peterborough
PE8 6LR. Telephone 01780
784444.

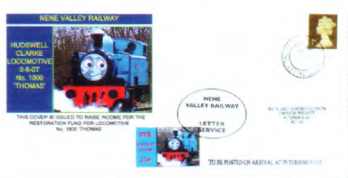
Royal Naval Philatelic Society 19 College Road, HM
Naval Base, Portsmouth PO1
3LJ. Telephone 023 9281
5494. www.rnphilatelic.org/
rnps



Chapman & Mitchell Covers FDC (edition of 250) featuring Madras Cricket Club, Chepauk by G D Paul Raj, from the MCC Art Collection series. A Union Flag stamp with MCC label is cancelled by a 12 September handstamp for the NatWest Series England v Australia match at Lord's Ground. **Price** £15, postage £1.50 ●



Methodist Philatelic Society FDC to mark the Methodist Conference in Wolverhampton, 2-9 July. A Royal Mail 1st class Post & Go stamp is cancelled by a 4 July Wolverhampton packet-style datestamp. **Price** £2.50 postpaid. For MPS details send SAE to T M Smart, 11 Northwood Park, Woodlesford, Leeds LS26 8PE ●



Nene Valley Railway FDC featuring 'Thomas' to raise funds to restore Hudswell Clarke loco *Thomas*. A NVR railway letter stamp is tied by a NVR Letter Service cachet, and a Royal Mail 1st class stamp is cancelled by 1 August NVR TPO datestamp. **Price** £3.50, postage 50p ●



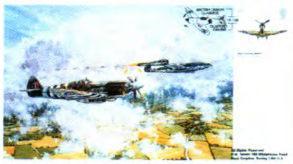
Royal Naval Philatelic Society Naval Uniform FDC serviced on 17 September. 500 covers in seven editions: WRNS stamp and Portsmouth anchor postmark £10.90; same but with Portsmouth FD postmark £10.90; Captain 1941 stamp £10.90; three 90p stamps £17; double-signed £15.30; triple-signed £21; multi-signed £52. 50% discount to RNPS members ●



GB Covers A Christmas FDC (40 numbered) with 'Christmas Lane' handstamp: 'With loving greetings to all who are good at heart'. **Price** £16 plus £2 postage, payable to GB Covers ●



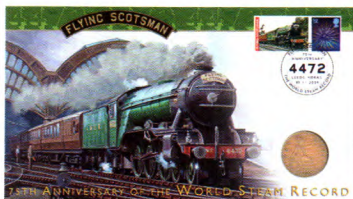
Dawn Covers FDC serviced 8 October with an Eminent Britons Sir Matt Busby stamp, with a filler card. **Price** £7 plus £1 postage: £1 from each sale is donated to cancer research ●



M Tanner FDC (15 numbered) showing Flying Officer K Collier's Spitfire with V1 flying bomb. 1st class Spitfire stamp postmarked Duxford, Cambs 13 Jan 2009. **Price** £14.99 plus £1.50

Cover producers wishing to announce a recent or forthcoming cover should submit copy of up to 75 words in the style above. The text should briefly describe the cover, state the stamps and postmarks it will bear, and give retail prices and an address for orders and enquiries. Announcements are published on a first-come-first-served basis and may be modified or shortened. Copy for consideration for the February *Bulletin* should be sent to The Editor (address on p99) by 8 December. Copy for March should arrive by 9 January. The Editor regrets he cannot enter into correspondence or telephone conversations concerning announcements in this Covers section.

postage worldwide. Supplied with filler postcard. Maximum card with same images is £9 each plus postage. Additional postcards 60p each plus postage if ordered separately ●



Buckingham Covers FDC for the 75th anniversary of Flying Scotsman's world steam record bearing 1st class Fireworks stamp with Flying Scotsman label and 1934 1d coin. Cancelled 30 November by a special Leeds handstamp. **Price** £16.95 or £24.95 signed by Sir William McAlpine, who owned Scotsman 1973-86 ●



Mid-Suffolk Light Railway A Hawthorn Leslie locomotive cover, bearing two MSLR carriage labels tied by cachet and a 1st class definitive cancelled 2 August with a special handstamp. **Prices** £3.25. Block of six labels £1.50; A5 sheet £3, A4 sheet £6, per or imperf. Postage 60p UK, £1.10 Europe, £1.50 elsewhere ●

Orders and enquiries

Buckingham Covers Warren House, Shearway Road, Folkestone, Kent CT19 4BF Telephone 01303 278137. www.buckinghamcovers.com

Dawn Cover Productions 27 Ashfield Road, Davenport, Stockport SK3 8UD. Telephone 0161 483 1297. www.footballcover.co.uk

GB Covers 102 Regal Way, Kenton, Harrow HA3 0RY. e-mail derek@gbcovers.co.uk

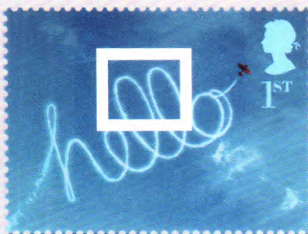
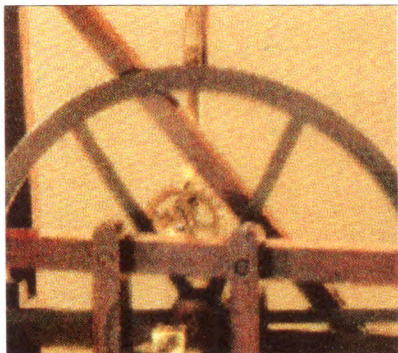
Mid Suffolk Light Railway B R Reynolds, 74 Edgecomb Road, Stowmarket IP14 2DW. e-mail barry.reynolds@tiscali.co.uk to order by credit card, via PayPal

M Tanner 180 Whitehorse Road, West Croydon CR0 2LA. Fax/Answerphone 020 8684 9757 (for credit card orders only)

Special draw Win a de luxe 2009 Yearbook

THIS MONTH our main prize is the de luxe (leather bound) 2009 Yearbook. Four runners-up will be sent the Christmas presentation pack and stamp cards. To enter, send your name and address on a postcard (or back of a sealed envelope) to: Yearbook Draw, British Philatelic Bulletin, Royal Mail, 35-50 Rathbone Place, London W1T 1HQ to arrive by 8 January 2010 ●

Competitions 2009 Miniature Sheet Collections to be won



September identify The detail is from the Hello greetings stamp. The winner was A Loppinet of France.

September knowledge The answers: 1) Peter Gauld; 2) bright carmine (red); 3) 1975. The winner was I Baker of Ayrshire.

Runner-up prizes were also sent for each competition. Our thanks to all who entered.

FIRSTLY, identify the stamp from the detail above. Send your answer to December *Identify* Competition. Secondly, test your philatelic knowledge by answering the questions below. Send your answer to December *Knowledge* Competition.

- 1 Who designed the 1970 Christmas stamps?
- 2 Which issue of stamps featured Bishop Richard Davies?
- 3 Where in Europe is a major stamp exhibition being held this month?

Send your answer (addressed to either December *Identify* competition or December *Knowledge* competition), name and address on a postcard or back of a sealed envelope to: British Philatelic Bulletin, Royal Mail, 35-50 Rathbone Place, London W1T 1HQ. The senders of the first cards drawn in each competition on 8 January will each receive a 2009 Miniature Sheet Collection. Runner-up prizes of presentation packs, FDCs, or stamp cards will be awarded in each competition. The competitions are not open to Royal Mail employees ●

Events

Until Spring 2010 David Gentleman exhibition at British Postal Museum & Archive, Freeling House, Phoenix Place, London WC1. **Enquiries** 020 7239 2570, e-mail info@postalheritage.org.uk

Until 9 January 2010 Philatelic exhibition at Birmingham Museums & Art Gallery to mark the 125th anniversary of Birmingham PS. Includes material from the Society and from the Thomas Evans collection. Free admission. **Enquiries** A Spencer, 0121 459 7650

4-6 December Monacophil, Monte Carlo, Monaco. **Enquiries** www.oetp-monaco.com

1 February-30 October George V exhibition at Bath Postal Museum, 27 Northgate St, Bath. **Enquiries** 01225 460333, www.bathpostalmuseum.co.uk

24-27 February Spring Stampex at Business Design Centre, London N1.

5-6 May International Stamp & Cover Show (Philatex Extra) at Lawrence Hall, Royal Horticultural Halls, Greycoat St, London SW1. 5 May 11.00-19.00, 6 May 10.00-18.00. **Enquiries** 01793 513431 or www.stampshows.net

8-15 May London 2010 International Stamp Exhibition (Festival of Stamps) at Business Design Centre, London N1

Festival of Stamps For details of events to be held during 2010 see page 100 of this *Bulletin*, and page 297 of the June 2009 issue ●

Late news

Festival of Stamps Further information is now to hand about Festival events. The Crewe Heritage Centre will host an exhibition of railway philately in conjunction with the North Western Federation of Philatelic Societies, expected to be staged June to October. The National Football Museum, Preston, is also working with the Federation on a display of stamps, FDCs, football and the World Cup, to form a part of the Museum's celebration of the World Cup in South Africa. The Aberdeen Maritime Museum, with the Aberdeen Philatelic Society, will have changing displays of maritime philately plus further activities to celebrate the Society's centenary. The displays will run from 18 July to 14 November 2010 •

Christmas exhibition The Bath Postal Museum is celebrating Christmas by holding an exhibition of Christmas memorabilia from the last 150 years, including Christmas cards of the past, with some beautiful Victorian cards adorned with 'lace' and tinsel, wonderful calendars of the 19th and 20th centuries, a selection of Christmas stamps from the very first issues to the present, and Christmas air letters for those special letters to relatives and friends overseas. This year's Christmas stamps are on sale at the Museum shop. The first Christmas card in the world, which was printed in 1843, has a strong connection with Bath; it was the idea of Henry Cole, who had helped to pioneer the introduction of the penny post in this country. Cole was born in Bath in 1808. The exhibition will be on display at the Bath Postal Museum, 27 Northgate Street, Bath until 31 December. Open Monday to Saturday 11.00-17.00. For details see www.bathpostalmuseum.co.uk

Postbus History The Post Office Vehicle Club and Postbus Appreciation Society have published *Postbuses 1998-2009*, a useful history of these services, including information about the vehicles, tickets, etc. The well-illustrated 60-page book is priced £5 postpaid, and is available from Post Office Vehicle Club, 124 Shenstone Avenue, Norton, Stourbridge DY8 3EJ •

South West of Scotland Philatelic Congress John Baron, Chairman of the ABPS Executive, opened the Congress at Queen Margaret's Academy, Ayr, on 3 October. He presented Lise Whittle with the Bill Hart Award, which is given annually by the Stamp Active Network to an adult who has made outstanding contributions to the promotion of Youth Philately in the UK. Lise started a stamp club at Doonfoot Primary School nine years ago and has been encouraging young collectors ever since. It was very fitting that the presentation was done locally, and that friends and children from the school were present •

NPS Library expands on-line facilities The recent National Philatelic Society seminar presented a history of the library and gave an insight into its extensive holdings and its current organisation. The NPS Library, now over 100 years old, is one of the three major philatelic libraries in the UK. Keeping abreast of the internet age, the NPS website www.ukphilately.org.uk/nps now offers enhanced on-line search facilities. The new features, announced at the seminar, involve the holdings of Philatelic Exhibition material and auction catalogues. The Library Search page on the site will allow viewers to search on-line from 7500 philatelic books, 1100 philatelic journals past and present, 1000 exhibition and show programmes and catalogues, and 2300 auction catalogues. The site also includes links to an on-line index of the NPS's magazine *Stamp Lover* and an Article Index. NPS members in the UK may borrow most of the books and periodicals either in person or by post. Other material may be used for reference purposes at the Library, which is based at the British Postal Museum & Archive, at Freeling House, Phoenix Place, London WC1X 0DL •

Revised stamp book The 6 × 1st stamp book is being reprinted. The website address shown on the inside front cover will be amended to www.royalmail.com/postcodes4free. The first day of philatelic availability will be 26 January •

Historic Pillar Boxes Collection

Royal Mail is pleased to offer these 1/19 scale miniatures of four iconic boxes, cast in pewter and hand finished in the UK.



Science & Arts Used in Edinburgh, Manchester, London and Dublin, only two now survive.

Penfold Our miniature is based on an example in the BPMA, one of the five different styles produced.

Double Aperture This classic design was first made in 1899. Our miniature is a reproduction of a George VI box, only three of which now remain in use.

Airmail Model based on Box 13, which stood outside the London Chief Post Office in King Edward Street, London.

Throughout the UK, the familiar red pillar box is a popular item of 'street furniture', and there is a thriving society whose members study, photograph and record our boxes. Posting boxes featured on stamps in 2002 and again this year.

Science & Arts Designed by the department of that name in 1857, only 50 of these ornate boxes were made • **Penfold** This elegant box, named after its designer J W Penfold, was the standard pillar box of 1866-79 • **Airmail Box** Used from 1930-38 for posting air-mail letters, this was notable for its colour and 'AIR MAIL' plate • **Double Aperture** A classic design with double aperture for letters for London & Abroad and Country, found primarily in large cities.

Order codes and prices Science & Art: VA136, £26.95 • Penfold: VA134, £26.95 • Airmail: VA133, £26.50 • Double Aperture: VA135, £28.95. **Handling charge** £2.95 UK, £5 Europe, £14 elsewhere



Royal Mail, Talents House,
21 South Gyle Crescent,
Edinburgh EH12 9PB

Telephone orders:
UK 08457 641 641
overseas +44 131 316 7483
www.royalmail.com/shop

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