

British Philatelic Bulletin

Volume 29

Number 2

October 1991



Contents

- 27 Christmas 1991
- 30 Christmas Stamp Book
 - Royal Mail Yearbook
 - 1991 Collectors' Pack
 - Our World Volume 3
- 31 Castle High Values
- 32 Definitive Withdrawal Dates
- 33 Punch and Archaeology Machine Books
 - Stamp Book Quantities
- 34 Six Month Digest
 - Tiverton Exhibition
- 35 Gems from the R M Phillips Collection
 - Competition
- 36 Postbag
- 37 Events
- 38 Themes of British Special Stamps: Flowers
- 41 Rugby World Cup
- 42 Philatelic Terms Explained: R.S.O. Postmarks
- 43 Railway Letter Stamps
- 44 Book Reviews
- 45 New Machin Album
 - Posting Boxes
- 46 Post Office Archives Engravings
 - Commemorative Covers
- 48 October Digest
 - Roll of Distinguished Philatelists
 - Ordnance Survey Exhibition
 - Obituary – R C Alcock

September Bulletin

We apologise for the late despatch of the September issue. Hopefully the problems encountered with the August and September Bulletins have now been resolved and this (October) issue will be out on time.

NPM News

Shown here is the souvenir cover which went on sale at the Museum on 30 August. The cover, showing Pearson Hill, inventor of the first stamp cancelling machine in 1857, bears a cachet applied by a full-size working replica of the



machine now on display at the Museum. The souvenir cover costs 75p at the Museum. Collectors may order by post – £1 for one cover, 75p each for two or more. Maximum order 10 covers. Orders should be sent to: National Postal Museum (Mail Order), King Edward Street, LONDON EC1A 1LP.

The Museum will issue four post card reproducing old Christmas cards on 12 November, day of issue of the Royal Mail Christmas stamps. Details of these cards will be published next month.



Mr Maurice Williams, Chairman of Australia Post (right) with Stan Goron, Manager of NPM, examining the Museum's collection of letter boxes. Mr Williams visited the Museum on 1 August.

Christmas 1991

12 November 1991



The five stamps to be issued on 12 November will be Britain's 26th Christmas issue (first in 1966) and the sixth to feature medieval architecture or artefacts.

The stamps reproduce details from a 14th century illuminated manuscript *Acts of Mary and Jesus* in the Bodleian Library, Oxford. The illustrations depict scenes surrounding the Nativity set within the manuscript's decorative initial letters. The first scene, on the **18p** stamp (basic inland 2nd class rate) depicts the Adoration of the Magi, set within the initial letter O.

The **24p** value (basic inland 1st class and EEC rate) shows the letter M for Maria, and portrays Mary placing Jesus in a manger. The ox and ass shown here were not recorded in the Gospels, but have become part of the traditional Christmas story.

The letter A contains a depiction of The Holy Family on the **28p**stamp (Europe, non-EEC rate) and the **33p** denomination (worldwide postcard rate) the letter O shows the Annunciation (when the Angel Gabriel reveals to the Virgin that she has been chosen by God to bear His Son).

The **39p** stamp (basic airmail rate, Zones 1 and 2) features the letter N encapsulating the flight of the Holy Family into Egypt.

The stories told in the *Acts of Mary and Jesus* were no doubt copied from earlier manuscripts. No one knows for certain who commissioned this particular manuscript; it was most probably a wealthy Venetian. Three subsequent owners inscribed their names on the end page — Antonius Turchonius, his grandson Joannes Turchonius (1557), and the Count of Malpaga (1637). In an important and prosperous city like Venice would have lived many families eager to commission their own books; professional scribes settled in the city to meet this need. (Some aristocrats even employed their own scribes.) Illuminated manuscripts once owned only by royalty, the higher nobility and the church, could now be obtained by the rich and educated classes.



The Acts of Mary and Jesus was acquired by a Venetian Jesuit Matteo Canonici, whose collection of 3,550 manuscripts was purchased by the Bodleian Library in 1817. This world-famous library, formally opened in 1602 now houses over 5.3 million volumes.

The term "Illuminated Manuscripts" is used to describe manuscripts adorned with burnished gold and other precious metals. Manuscripts were copied onto parchment (animal skin) by scribes using a goose quill and ink-horn; the scribe would outline initial letters which would later be completed by the illustrator. Initial letters and chapter titles were often "rubricated" (highlighted in red) — from such letters in liturgical calendars comes the term "red letter days". In addition to burnished gold, the illustrators used vermilions, azure blues, greens and purples to achieve their brilliant results.

Technical Details

The stamps were designed by David Driver and printed in photogravure by Harrison and Sons Limited. They are of horizontal format (41 x 30mm), printed in sheets of 100 with PVA Dextrin gum. Perforation measures 15 x 14. The 18p stamp is on fluorescent coated paper with one phosphor band, the 24p, 28p, 33p and 39p values are on phosphor coated paper.

Presentation Pack

The pack (No. 222) will cost £1.75. It was designed by David Driver with text by Sara Driver; made and printed by Raithby, Lawrence.

Royal Mail Stamp Cards

Cards, featuring enlargements of the stamp designs, will be available approximately two weeks before the stamp issue, price 21p each. They are numbered 139A-E.

First Day Cover

The Royal Mail first day cover will be available from the British Philatelic Bureau, Collections, philatelic counters and main post offices approximately two weeks before 12 November, price 21p. Two pictorial postmarks will be used for the first day cover service — one for the Bureau, the other for Bethlehem, Llandeilo, Dyfed.

A first day cover service will be provided by the Bureau with the official Royal Mail cover addressed to the destination required with the stamps cancelled with the requested postmark. Application forms, available from the Bureau

and main post offices, should be returned not later than 12 November.

Collectors may send their own cards/covers for the pictorial postmarks; these should be sent on the first day of issue in a stamped outer envelope endorsed "Pictorial First Day of Issue Postmark" to: British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, EDINBURGH EH3 5TT (Bureau postmark) or Wales & The West Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail Cardiff, 220-228 Penarth Road, CARDIFF CF1 1AA (Bethlehem postmark). Collectors wanting their cards/covers returned under cover should enclose a suitable addressed envelope. This need not bear additional postage stamps, the postage being already paid by the stamps affixed to the covers for postmarking.

First Day Posting Boxes will be provided at most main post offices for those collectors who wish to post covers to receive the standard, non-pictorial "First Day of Issue" handstamps. In addition, pictorial "First Day of Issue" postmarks will be used at City of London EC (shows City coat of arms), and Durham (Cathedral). Reposting addresses: London North SHC, Royal Mail City and International, King Edward Street, LONDON EC1A 1AA (City of London handstamp); and Northern England SHC, Royal Mail Newcastle, Forth Street, NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE NE1 1AA (Durham). These handstamps were introduced on 17 January 1989 and 22 March 1988 respectively.

A number of special handstamps sponsored by stamp dealers and others, will be used on 12 November — details of these will be found in the *British Postmark Bulletin*, available on subscription from the British Philatelic Bureau.

Souvenir Cover

A souvenir cover, of similar design to the first day cover, will be available from Collections and philatelic counters from 13 November, price 21p. This will be on sale for one year.

Earlier "Medieval" Christmas Stamps

Rather an interesting collection can be assembled of British Christmas stamps featuring medieval works of art and architecture. The 1970 Christmas stamps, designed by Sally Stiff, depicted Nativity scenes based on a medieval book of psalms, the *de Lisle Psalter*, part of the Arundel Collection then in the British Museum (now British Library). An article by Sally Stiff on how she set about designing these stamps was pub-

1991



Acts of Mary and Jesus (MS. CANON. MISC., 476) was eventually acquired by a Venetian Jesuit, Matteo Canonico, and in 1817 his collection of 15,550 manuscripts was purchased by Oxford's Bodleian Library for £5,144.¹⁰ In addition to maintaining its magnificent collection of illuminated manuscripts and preserving thousands of valuable books, the Bodleian is the owner of the copyright library, takes a copy of every book published in the United Kingdom and currently houses some 3.5 million volumes on over 138 kilometres of shelving. Restored by Sir Thomas Bodley for the English Republic use of Students, the Bodleian was formally opened in 1622. The mellow, honey-colored stone library is one of the oldest in Europe.



ONCE the text was finished the illuminator would outline the design, first with a lead point, then with a pen. The next step was to lay down beaten, burnished gold leaf. Then brilliant colours, vermilions, azure blues, greens and purples, were gradually built up layer upon layer until the whole intricate pattern was complete.

The mellow, honey-coloured walls of the library are a warm embrace. The mellow, honey-coloured walls of the library are a warm embrace.



ROYAL MAIL FIRST DAY COVER

1991

Mrs J Robinson
200 Manorbier Road
ILKESTON
Derbyshire
DE7 4AB

lished in the November 1970 *Bulletin*.

The following year's Christmas stamps featured medieval stained glass in Canterbury Cathedral showing the Dream, Adoration and Ride of the Magi; the stamps were designed by Clarke/Clement/Hughes design team. A "philatelic wall chart" (measuring 15 x 12") was produced by the Post Office for this issue; it featured further stained glass windows and a mounted set of the stamps.



In 1974 four stamps featured medieval roof bosses at York Minster; St Helen's Church, Norwich; Ottery St Mary Church; and Worcester Cathedral. The Peter Hatch Partnership, responsible for designing the stamps, wrote about their work in the *Bulletin* of November 1974.

The 1976 set depicted medieval embroidery — the so-called *Opus Anglicanum* — the embroideries featured the Virgin and Child; Angel with Crown; Angel appearing to the Shepherds; and The Three Kings. The stamps were the work of Enid Marx.

Finally the 1989 issue commemorated the 800th anniversary of Ely Cathedral, one of Britain's finest medieval buildings, by showing drawings of different aspects of the cathedral by David Gentleman, perhaps our best-known stamp designer.

Christmas Stamp Book

A book containing 20 second class (18p) Christmas stamps will go on sale at post offices, the British Philatelic Bureau, Collections and philatelic counters on 12 November, price £3.60. The books will remain on general sale until 24 December unless sold out earlier; they will remain on philatelic sale for one year.

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

Royal Mail Yearbook

Volume 8 of the Royal Mail Special Stamps Yearbook will go on sale on 12 November. The handsomely produced book contains background information about the development and production of all the special issues of 1991.

The book is hardbound with a matching slipcase and includes sets of all 1991 special issues: Dogs, Scientific Achievements, Europe in Space, Sport 91, Roses, Dinosaurs, Maps, and Christmas. It will be available from the Bureau, Collections, philatelic counters and main post offices, price £19.50.

1991 Collectors' Pack

The 1991 edition of the Collectors' Pack will be issued on 12 November, coinciding with the issue of Christmas stamps, price £11.50. The pack contains all 1991 special stamps mounted on a quality display board. In addition to the stamps, there is a colourful and informative brochure, giving details of the stamp subjects. The pack will be available from the British Philatelic Bureau, Collections, philatelic counters and main post offices.

Our World Volume 3

The third in the series of "Our World" books will go on sale during October, price £7.50. The first of these popular books was issued in October 1989 and contained 30 stamps relating to wildlife and ecology from six countries; the British set comprising the very popular Birds issue (January 1989). The second book, published on 30 October 1990 contained stamps with an environmental theme, the British contribution being the Kew Gardens set (June 1990).

The British representation in the new book will be the Roses set issued in July. The book will be available from the British Philatelic Bureau, Collections and philatelic counters. Further details will be given here next month.

All three "Our World" books will be available from the Bureau at a special price of £15.

Postal Rate Correction

The new rate from 16 September 1991, for second step (60–100g) inland first class letters is 36p not 35p as stated in the August *Bulletin* and in the new 50p and £1 machine stamp books.

Castle High Values

Early 1992

A new set of Castles High Values, to be issued early in 1992, will contain a range of features with the emphasis on security. Please note that these stamps will not now be issued on 26 November 1991 as announced here in September. The new date of issue will be announced as soon as possible.

A new ink, used for the first time on postage stamps anywhere in the world, along with changes to The Queen's portrait, paper and perforation all combined on a totally new engraving, will lead the drive on security into the nineties and continue the philatelic story of the stamps.

Martyn Fry, Assistant Manager, Definitive Stamps at Royal Mail Stamps Headquarters provides the background story to this new issue:

The first high value definitive stamps of Queen Elizabeth's reign were issued in 1955 and became known as "The Castles High Value" stamps. They featured the Dorothy Wilding portrait of The Queen and a royal castle representing each part of the United Kingdom. In 1988, a new set of Castles stamps, designed by HRH The Duke of York, were issued to recreate the spirit of the earlier stamps.

Against a backdrop of international concern over the security of postage stamps, in 1990 Royal Mail Stamps decided on a programme of initiatives to assess the security of its stamps and to investigate the opportunities for including features to counteract any threat to the integrity of its products.

Several types of ink were considered in the development process, ranging from thermally sensitive to solvent or water fugitive. One prime consideration, apart from security, was the philatelic market and the effect that these new inks may have. Fugitive inks were considered impractical from an operational and philatelic viewpoint. Imagine wetting the back of a stamp and wiping the ink off!

Thermally sensitive ink, whilst satisfying the philatelic requirements, did not react quickly enough to be of use as a security feature. The suggestion was that when attempting to copy a

stamp, the heat from the copier would bring up the word "Void" on the stamps.

It was finally decided that an optically variable ink (OVI) would satisfy our main security requirements. There are three colour options on the ink, each of which can change to show either the original colour or an alternative depending on the angle of viewing. Manufactured by Sicpa of Switzerland, this is the first time that the ink has been used on a postage stamp.

Looking at the design of the Castles stamps, the options available for including the new ink were limited. The castle name and the value were considered before deciding that it should be applied to a silhouette version of The Queen's head as used on special stamps rather than the half-tone version of the originals.

As a general requirement, encompassing security and machine handling capabilities, a change to the base paper was specified to exclude the use of optical brightening agents (OBA) – the aim being to highlight the presence of phosphor during the quality assurance process. There is a small additional benefit in that OBA free paper is more environmentally friendly and indeed the use of OBA is banned in some countries. However, this is counteracted to some extent by the additional of a fluor to the printing ink as another security device.

The final, major change to the appearance concerns the perforations. Throughout the discussions perforations were considered to be the main security feature working for stamps. They were immediately obvious to customers as symbolic of postage stamps. However, the one aspect that detracts from their effectiveness as a security device is the regularity of design. A variation to the design, whilst maintaining the ease of tearing, would be a significant advantage. The elongated perforation used on some savings stamps offered these qualities and, as a tried and tested production process posed no introduction problems.

The Castle stamps finally emerged in their new form, ready for introduction in early 1992, eighteen months on from the start of the reassessment programme, setting the standards for British postage stamps into the nineties.

Designs

The £1 stamp shows Carrickfergus Castle in Co Antrim, Northern Ireland. The castle was built in c 1180, in the reign of Henry II, by John de Courcy, and commands a strategic position at the entrance to Belfast Lough. The town of Carrickfergus thus developed as an important

town long before Belfast.

Caernarfon Castle in north Wales, depicted on the **£1.50** value, is best known for its association with princes of Wales. Caernarfon (*Segontium*) was fortified in Roman times and later a small castle was built as home of the native Prince of Wales. Following his conquest of Wales in 1282, Edward I decided to build several important castles in Wales and establish his base at Caernarfon.



The great national citadel of Edinburgh Castle features on the **£2** stamp. A fortification had existed on the extinct volcano known as Castle Rock since at least the 7th century; the present castle began to take shape in the reign of David II (1329-71) and has been added to over the years. The oldest structure is the Romanesque chapel of St Margaret; the Great Hall with its noted hammer beam roof dates from the reign of James IV.

The **£5** stamp depicts Windsor Castle – the home of successive kings and queens since the reign of William the Conqueror. With Buckingham Palace and the Palace of Holyroodhouse, it is one of the three official residences of the sovereign. Although originally intended as a fortress, controlling the trade routes from London, it soon became a residence, mainly because it was near forests for hunting. The castle was besieged twice during the reign of King John, the second time against the king's attempts to renege on Magna Carta. Henry III, Edward III and IV, Charles II, George IV and Victoria all initiated major changes to the castle, and Victoria spent much of her widowhood there.

Technical Details

The four stamps have been printed in intaglio (recess) by Harrison and Sons Limited, on the Giori press, in sheets of 100. The sheets contain four panes of 25, divided by horizontal and vertical gutters.

Each stamp measures 41 x 30mm and is perforated 15 x 14 with the security "elongated perforation" on the left and right edges. The gum used is PVA Dextrin. The colours for the stamps are as the previous issue (October 1988): £1 green, £1.50 burgundy, £2 blue, and £5 brown.

First Day Cover

A distinctive first day cover with a four-castle motif will be available approximately two weeks before the stamp issue, price 21p. Two pictorial postmarks, featuring Castle designs, will be used for the first day cover service, one for the British Philatelic Bureau, the other for Windsor.

A FDC service will be provided by the Bureau with the Royal Mail cover addressed to the destination required with the stamps cancelled with either postmark. Application forms, available from the Bureau and main post offices, should be returned not later than the day of issue.

Covers may be processed under the reposting facility by sending, on the day of issue, covers bearing the new stamps under outer cover endorsed "High Values First Day Postmark" to: British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, EDINBURGH EH3 5TT (Bureau postmark) or South East Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail Windsor, Peascod Street, WINDSOR, SL4 1AA (Windsor postmark).

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

Pictorial "First Day of Issue" postmarks will be used at the City of London, EC (shows City coat of arms) and Durham (Cathedral). Reposting addresses: London North SHC, Royal Mail City & International, King Edward Street, LONDON EC1A 1AA, and Northern England SHC, Royal Mail Newcastle, Forth Street, NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE NE1 1AA respectively.

A number of special handstamps sponsored by stamp dealers will be used on the day of issue of the new Castles stamps — details will be published in the *British Postmark Bulletin*, available on subscription from the British Philatelic Bureau: £9.35 UK, £11.50 Europe, £20.75 Rest of World (Airmail).

Presentation Pack

The pack – No 25a – was designed by Sedley Place Limited with text by Mike Barden; printed by C D T Printers Ltd. Price £9.80.



The now obsolescent 1988 Castle High Values with definitive-style portrait of HM The Queen

Definitive Withdrawal Dates

Dates of withdrawal from general sale at post offices were published in April. Omitted from the listing was the 13½p stamp which was withdrawn on 14 August 1981. The date for the 23p yellowish green stamp should read 30 September 1989 not 15 September 1990.

Punch and Archaeology Machine Books

"There is no occupation more miserable than that of trying to make the English laugh," said the late Malcolm Muggeridge, a former Editor of *Punch* magazine — 150 years old this year.

The first in a series of four *Punch* designs was used on the cover of the new £1 machine book issued on 10 September. The design, by John Gibbs, features an illustration of Punch by Richard Doyle on the front cover and a cartoon on the back by Hoffnung. Said Keith Fisher, General Manager of Royal Mail Stamps: "Punch magazine has become a great British institution. We wanted to honour that fact and celebrate its 150th anniversary by producing a series of *Punch* stamp books."

Punch was set up with £25 by wood engraver Ebenezer Landells and writer Henry Mayhew. The aim was to cultivate a higher literary standard than other contemporary publications. With Editor, Mark Lemon, a pub owner and former brewery clerk, they gathered a team of writers together for the first edition of 17 July 1841. Lemon, Editor for 31 years, had great talents as a maker of jokes and writer of plays. Whenever the magazine approached bankruptcy, Lemon wrote another farce to pay off debts. *Punch* was so successful as a morale booster during the First World War that the Kaiser put a price on the head of the then Editor, Sir Owen Seaman.

The first in a new series of 50p books was also issued on 10 September, the designs mark the 50th anniversary of the death of Sir Arthur Evans who discovered the ruins of Knossos in Crete. The cover design, by Allan Drummond, shows Sir Arthur and his excavations at Knossos.

The 50p book contains two 24p and two 1p stamps; the £1 book four 24p and two 2p values. Both are available from the British Philatelic Bureau, Collections, philatelic counters and from stamp book vending machines outside main post offices.

Stamp Book Quantities

The quantities quoted in the May 1991 *Bulletin* (page 210) may not in fact be the final figures; these are being checked by the Post Office's Postal Supply Department. Revised figures, if necessary, will be published here as soon as possible.

Six Month Digest

Listed below are the issues of the past six months and the proposed dates of issue for stamps until March 1992. Any change in these dates will be notified in the Bulletin. British Philatelic Bureau order codes are quoted where known.

9 Apr	CEPT/Space stamp cards (AQ157)
23 Apr	CEPT/Space stamps (AS452)
23 Apr	CEPT/Space pack (AP095)
14 May	Definitives Pack No. 24 (DR001)
14 May	NPM Stamping Mail cards (NQ908)
14 May	Scotland 22p CPL paper (SS224)
14 May	Scotland 26p CPL paper (SS263)
14 May	Scotland 37p CPL paper (SS371)
14 May	Wales 22p CPL paper (WS223)
28 May	Sport stamp cards (AQ162)
11 Jun	Sport stamps (AS457)
11 Jun	Sport pack (AP096)
25 Jun	50p book (Aero 4) (TB007)
25 Jun	£1 book (Mills 4) (TB008)
2 Jul	Roses stamp cards (AQ167)
16 Jul	Roses stamps (AS462)
16 Jul	Roses pack (AP097)
23 Jul	Gaidhealach Aerogramme (QS028)
30 Jul	DL stamped env. 1st class (RX001)
30 Jul	DL stamped env. 2nd class (RX002)
30 Jul	C4 stamped env. 1st class (RZ001)
30 Jul	C4 stamped env. 2nd class (RZ002)
30 Jul	C5 stamped env. 1st class (RY001)
30 Jul	C5 stamped env. 2nd class (RY002)
6 Aug	Dinosaur stamp cards (AQ173)
6 Aug	4 x 2nd class book/W (UB035)
6 Aug	4 x 1st class book/W (UB036)
6 Aug	10 x 2nd class book/W (UB037)
6 Aug	10 x 1st class book/W (UB038)
6 Aug	10 x 1st class book/H (UB039)
6 Aug	10 x 2nd class book/Q (UN040)
6 Aug	10 x 1st class book/Q (UB041)
20 Aug	Dinosaurs stamps (AS468)
20 Aug	Dinosaurs pack (AP098)
3 Sep	Maps stamp cards (AQ179)
10 Sep	6p Def. — lime green (DS060)
10 Sep	18p Def. — light green (DS182)
10 Sep	24p Def. — rust (DS242)
10 Sep	28p Def. — slate blue (DS283)
10 Sep	34p Def. — purple (DS344)
10 Sep	35p Def. — old gold (DS351)
10 Sep	39p Def. — rhododendron (DS390)
10 Sep	50p book (1p/24p stamps) (TB009)
10 Sep	£1 book (2p/24p stamps) (TB010)
10 Sep	New Defs. Pack (DP014)
16 Sep	£1.32 book (33p stamps) (UB043)

16 Sep	£1.56 book (39p stamps) (UB044)
16 Sep	18p Coil (XL-500) (DC851/DC051)
16 Sep	24p Coil (YL-500) (DC852/DC052)
17 Sep	Maps stamps (AS474)
17 Sep	Maps pack (AP099)
17 Sep	NPM Maps cards (5 cards)

Forthcoming

2 Oct	Mixed Value Coil (4p/5p)
8 Oct	Christmas aerogramme
29 Oct	Christmas stamp cards
12 Nov	Christmas stamps and pack
12 Nov	Christmas stamp book
12 Nov	1991 Year Pack
12 Nov	1991 Yearbook
12 Nov	NPM "Old Christmas" cards
19 Nov	Enschede 18p
3 Dec	18p, 24p, 28p, 39p Country stamps
31 Dec	Wintertime stamp cards

1992

Early	Revised High Values
14 Jan	Wintertime stamps and pack
28 Jan	Greetings stamp book
Jan	Happy and Glorious stamp cards
6 Feb	Happy and Glorious stamps and pack
25 Feb	Prestige Stamp Book (Wales)
Feb	Tennyson stamp cards
10 Mar	Tennyson stamps and pack

Notes:

1. Stamped envelopes available only from British Philatelic Bureau, Collections and philatelic counters.
2. The 2nd class books (6 August) have NVI stamps in bright blue. The 1st class books (6 August) have NVI stamps in flame (as previous issue) but with new Freepost address in London (previously Newcastle upon Tyne) printed on book cover. H = Harrison; Q = Questa; W = Walsall.

Tiverton Exhibition

The Tiverton Stamp Club is hosting the main exhibition of the Wessex Philatelic Federation at the East Devon College, Bolham Road, Tiverton (Junction 27 off the M5) on 5 October. Ten dealers will be present, refreshments available, free parking. Open 10.30am to 4.30pm. Enquiries: Mary Claydon, Hazelhurst, Tiverton Road, Bampton, TIVERTON, Devon, EX16 9LJ.

Gems from the R M Phillips Collection

190. Penny Black Plate 1

This month's Gem shows six stamps in an unique block of seven Penny Blacks from Plate 1 (1a) before it was hardened. The stamps show no sign of plate wear so are unquestionably from a very early impression from the unhardened plate. The stamp lettered OA shows the re-entry common to both states of the plate. That lettered QA has the double Q constant throughout the life of this plate. Stamp PA shows no doubled letters whereas stamps from the second state of the plate do. Stamp PB has additional lines outside the P square – found only on first state printings. The vertical guidelines of the north east squares of most stamps are clearer than those found on the second state. This magnificent item can be seen on page 10 of Volume 3 of the Phillips Collection in the National Postal Museum.



The Museum, located in the London Chief Post Office, King Edward Street, London EC1, is open Monday-Friday 9.30am to 4.30pm, Friday 9.30am to 4pm. Admission free. The Museum is a few minutes walk from St Paul's underground station and the Museum of London.

Two special exhibitions are currently on show: "Stamping the Mail" (until April 1992) and "Maps and the Post Office" (until 17 January 1992). A report on "Stamping the Mail" was published here in August (page 281).

Competition



Win £75 worth of British stamps

Enter this month's competition and stand a chance of winning £75 worth of current British philatelic products of your choice — stamps, stamp books, postcards, albums, etc. Answer the questions below, the answers will be found in this month's *Bulletin*, and send with your name and address on a postcard to: October Bulletin Competition, National Postal Museum, King Edward Street, LONDON EC1A 1LP to arrive by 29 November.

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

1. Who designed the 1991 Christmas stamps?
2. What do the letters R.S.O. stand for?
3. Who is Deputy Chairman of The Post Office, and what is his favourite sport?
4. Which city is celebrating its 800th anniversary this year?
5. Which company has produced a specialist Machin album?

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

The winners of the July competition were: M Thomson of Kent (£50 of Royal Mail products); B Raschkes of Cheshire; G Luke of Dorset; G McConnell of Germany; A Barrett of Middlesex and A Hansen of Denmark (Dinosaurs presentation packs).

The answers were: 1. Prof. R Owen; 2. Stamp Mail; 3. Ulster Museum; 4. 1893; 5. Sheffield.

Our thanks to all who entered.

Postbag

JOHN HOLMAN

Post Offices open during 1971 Strike

Further to the listings here in February, May, June and August, we can now add Fochabers, Morayshire; Newbold Verdon, Leicester; Presteigne, Radnorshire and Tarves, Aberdeenshire — reported, respectively, by Peter Dawson, Bryan Smith, Ken Rainey and David Smith. Further reports always welcome.

Pony Express

Glyn Rogers of Wrexham, Clwyd sent the photo reproduced here with the following request for information: "I read with interest your articles on various philatelic items in 'Postbag', and I would welcome your comments on the enclosed photograph taken a few years ago in a little village near to Solva in Pembrokeshire (now Dyfed). At the time there was no one



around to ask, whether the red stone with the pony on had any connection with the letter box on the adjacent wall of the house. I therefore took a picture in order to look it up, but alas to no avail! Perhaps through the *Bulletin* one of your readers may be able to come up with the answer."

Scientific Exploits

John Langford of Ipswich wrote concerning Barbara Last's article "Scientific Exploits" in March and Mr Selwood's letter in July. Mr Langford submitted a map showing the location of radar stations, stating that "...the centre point

of the beam shown on the PPI on the 31p radar stamp starts at a point very close to the Walton on the Naze area in Essex, there was a type 2 C.H.L. station at this point the rotating aerial mounted on an old tower built in 1796 and owned at that time by Trinity House. The range of this equipment would have been about 50 miles that would mean that this station would have been lapped by the next one up the coast at Bawdsey and the next one down which would have been across the Thames Estuary at North Foreland. Most of these radars were in groups, i.e. C.H., C.H.L. and C.H.E.L. — for instance High Street C.H., Dunwich C.H.L. and Thorpeness C.H.E.L. The next group down the coast was at Bawdsey where all three radars were on one site. The next two groups were in Essex at Great Bromley C.H. and Walton C.H.L., then down to Canewdon, then across the Thames Estuary into Kent. The radar stations at High Street, Bawdsey, Great Bromley, Canewdon, Dunkirk and Swingate were the first built to cover the Thames Estuary and were all C.H. stations which covered the approaches to London."

In praise of Dorothy Wilding

Ken Chapman, *Bulletin* contributor, and former Editor of *Stamp Collecting*, wrote concerning the report of the Dorothy Wilding exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery in the July issue: "It was good to see your reference to the photograph of Dorothy Wilding... To most philatelists she has been a name and nothing more for 40 years. Simultaneously, *The Independent Magazine* of 29 June carried an article by Jane Richards entitled "Remember Dorothy" which deals with her work much as you but does not mention stamps. However there are some points in that article which might usefully supplement your own account. By 1915 when she was 21 she opened her first studio — a daring step for a woman of that era. She was, it appears, with Cecil Beaton, that other distinguished royal photographer, a favourite with the Royal Family.

'Never a beauty (short and stocky, she wore horn-rimmed glasses and black beret)', writes Jane Richards, 'she seems to have used photography as a projection of her own female ideal... Tallulah Bankhead is said to have declared, 'This is the woman who made my name in London with her beautiful photographs of me'. To which Wilding replied, 'And this is the woman who made my name with her beautiful head.'

Sadly when she died in 1976, aged 83, not a single obituary was published according to Jane Richards. At least so far as philately is concerned, that omission has now been righted."

Stamp Book Centenary

Robert Bostock wrote from France: "Having just mounted a collection of stitched book covers, I was reminded of the fact that the April 1971 editions of 25p and 30p books had special covers to celebrate the 80th anniversary of British stamp books." Thus, says Mr Bostock, 1891 marks the centenary of British stamp books. He refers to an article in the October 1970 *Bulletin* entitled "The First GB Postage Stamp Books" by Stan L Hills. The books involved were not sold over post office counters but from machines operated by the Stamp Distribution Syndicate Ltd under licence from the Postmaster General. "These machines", Mr Hills tells us, "were fixed to posting boxes and were loaded with a memorandum stamp book which was approximately 3½ x 2¼ in, with a red linen cover. The back cover had an oblique slit into which was inserted a single 1d lilac Queen Victoria stamp which was 'security endorsed' with three initials S.D.S. through the face of the stamp. Inside the covers were 64 pages, some of which bore full-page advertisements..." Stamp books of a more conventional type, with panes of stamps, were issued during the reign of Edward VII.

Events

until 17 January 1992. "Maps and the Post Office" exhibition at National Postal Museum, King Edward Street, London EC1. Open Mon-Thu 9.30-16.30; Fri 9.30-16.00. Admission free.

until April 1992. "Stamping the Mail" exhibition at National Postal Museum. Details above.

12 October 1991. Torquex 91 stamp exhibition and fair at Oldway Mansion, Paignton, 10.30-16.30. Displays, dealers. Staged by the Torquay Philatelic Society which this year celebrates its 70th anniversary. Details from: L Watkins, 2 Locks Close, Babbacombe, TORQUAY TQ1 3TU.

15-20 October 1991. Autumn Stampex/BPE. National stamp exhibition at Royal Horticultural Society Halls, Greycoat Street and Vincent Square, London SW1. Open 15 Oct 12.00-19.00, 16-19 Oct 10.30-19.00, 20 Oct 10.30-

18.00, admission charge. Post Office representation at the exhibition will include a Royal Mail philatelic sales stand, National Postal Museum and Post Office Archives stands (special cachets available for application to postcards) and a Stamp Bug area for young collectors. A special handstamp will be applied to mail posted at the exhibition. Collectors unable to visit Stampex may send covers to: London South Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail London South West, 53 Nine Elms Lane, LONDON SW8 5BB requesting the Stampex handstamp; please state date required.



The Stamp Bug area at Spring Stampex, 1991 (Photo: John Holman)

17-20 October 1991 Stampa (Irish national stamp exhibition) at Riverside Exhibition Centre, Sir John Rogersons Quay, Dublin.

26 October 1991. Redhill Phil. Soc. Stamp and Postcard Fair, Harlequin Theatre, Redhill, 10.30-16.30, admission free.

26 October 1991. Association of Essex Philatelic Societies Autumn Rally, Holmwood House School, Chitts Hill, Lexden, Colchester, 10.30-16.30, admission free. Hosted by Colchester Phil. Soc. which this year celebrates its 60th anniversary.

2 November 1991. Dorchester and Weymouth Stamp Club Stamp Exhibition, United Church Hall, Charles Street, Dorchester. 10.00-16.00, admission 20p. Displays, dealers, refreshments.

2-3 November 1991. Scotex (Scottish national stamp exhibition) at Clyde Hall, Jamaica and Clyde Streets, Glasgow.

Themes of British Special Stamps

5. Flowers

G E DRABBLE

There are currently five issues only which have been dedicated specifically to flowers. These are: British Wild Flowers, 1967; Roses, 1976; British Flowers, 1979; Flowers, 1987; and Roses, 1991. Flowers appear in nine other issues: these are, Post Office Savings Bank Centenary, 1961; National Nature Week, 1963; Botanical Congress, 1964; Wildlife, 1977 Butterflies, 1981; Insects, 1985; Nature Conservation, 1986; Linnean Society, 1988; and Food and Farming, 1989. On the fringe so to speak, we find General Anniversaries, 1971, with an emblematic Flanders poppy, and a British red rose; Textiles, 1982, with a "Tulips" theme; British Gardens, 1983, showing only one flower-bed, the contents quite unidentifiable; Christmas 1986, the 12p and 13p bearing what might be the Glastonbury Thorn in flower; and finally, several stamps depicting the British Rose, or Thistle, of which, the Coronation of 1953 is a single example.



The Post Office produced its "Spring Collection" in April 1967 with six stamps depicting British wild flowers. The four 4d, in a se-tenant block, were the work of the Rev. Keble Martin, who must have been pleased to be represented on stamp design, in addition to

having had published his life's work, *The Concise British Flora in Colour*, at the age of 88; his drawings were based on those in his book. His four groups illustrate Hedges (hawthorn and bramble, or blackberry); Weeds (bindweed, or convolvulus, and viper's bugloss); Meadows (ox-eye or dog-daisy, coltsfoot and buttercup), and Woods (bluebell, red campion and wood anemone). Mary Grierson's designs for the 9d



and 1/9d tastefully complemented the block, with a very similar layout, showing the dog-violet, and primroses. The complete issue used eight colours, but the designs were enhanced by generous white background space, and made a very handsome display.

Wild Flower Miniatures

"Roses", issued appropriately in June, 1976, was a design of four stamps by aptly-named Kristin Rosenberg, a newcomer to stamp design. A painter of wild-flower miniatures, her bold simple design filled each frame with superbly-coloured large representations of the four roses of her choice, on a plain white ground. Each used six colours which combine in a celebration

of both the designer's and the printer's art, making a beautiful display on the album page. This must be a favourite of many collectors.

On 21 March 1979, the first day of spring, Peter Newcombe produced four stamps showing the most common of the spring wild flowers: primroses, daffodils, bluebells and snowdrops. His four pictures have a pleasing unity, with the flowers shown on a bank sloping up to the left, with a triangle of sky in the upper right hand. The snowdrop contrasts somewhat, with snow on the ground, and a very dark sky, apparently threatening more snow. The snowdrop is the first spring flower to appear, frequently when snow is still lying.

Photographic Approach

Eight years later, in January 1987, appeared the next issue of Flowers, again a set of four, by Alfred Lammer. His chosen medium was photography which he used to very powerful effect, enhanced with a near-square format and black background. Perhaps surprisingly for a British issue, none of the flowers illustrated was native to Britain. The designer himself, moreover, though naturalised British in 1941, was born in Austria. The very simple design comprised close-up heads of Gaillardia, Echinops, Echeveria and Colchicum, in superb detail and colouring, with the value, the Queen's head, and a neat sideways title, in silver. This was the first issue to bear the year, printed unobtrusively in the margin. For the technically-minded, Lammer makes use of the single-lens reflex camera for his effects.



July of this year saw a second issue titled "Roses", (marking the ninth World Congress of Roses in Belfast). The designer is Yvonne Skargon. The general form of the design is similar to the earlier issue, with close-up views of five popular roses on a plain white ground, but the stamps are 35 x 37mm, and the printing is by offset-lithography, a new departure in this series, the four previous Flower issues being

photogravure. This produces a more muted colour effect, which blends well with the very detailed line-work of the drawings, giving a suggestion of old prints.



Two of three stamps marking the Post Office Savings Bank centenary of August 1961 showed a stylised representation of Thrift, also called Sea-pink, and Armeria. The name Thrift derives from an Old Norse word meaning to grasp; a slightly infelicitous connection, as being thrifty is generally considered more complimentary than being grasping! Peter Gauld designed the 2½d and Michael Goaman the 1/6d stamp; both were to produce several more designs for British stamps. In common with many of these earlier issues, the three stamps did not constitute a unified set.

National Nature Week was marked by two stamps in May 1963, representing Flora and Fauna. Stanley Scott's 3d "Flora" was an attractive presentation of buttercups and daisies. With two specific themes to portray, the difference of the two designs was perhaps an asset rather than a fault. The modest display of two flora contrasts with Michael Goaman's rather crowded canvas of seven species of fauna.

Unified Designs

The partnership of Michael and Sylvia Goaman resulted in an outstanding issue in August 1964,

consisting of four stamps marking the 10th International Botanical Congress in Edinburgh. This was indeed a unified set, the left two-thirds of the horizontal frame devoted to four flowers: Gentian, Dog-rose, Honeysuckle, or Woodbine, and Fringed Water-lily, with drawings of seed-pods and sections of individual flowers in the lower right, below the Queen's head. The background colours were strong: purple; dark



green, orange and olive. This happy partnership - Sylvia Goaman produced the drawings, while Michael did the colouring and layouts - resulted in what many might consider to be the best issue ever, up to that date.

A set of five stamps, all 9p in a se-tenant strip, issued in October 1977, celebrated British Wildlife, and was the work of Patrick Oxenham. This was his first commission for stamp design, although he is one of Britain's leading artists of animals and wildlife. No specific anniversary or event was marked; the issue was designed to heighten awareness of wildlife, and the need for protection. The stamps picture the hedgehog, hare, red squirrel, otter, and badger, and each is shown amid typical vegetation. The hedgehog keeps company with a blue speedwell; primroses peep shyly round the rump of the hare, a couple of scabious flowers appear behind the squirrel, and what appear to be wild irises can be seen, presumably on a river bank, behind the otter. Even the badger makes an unusual daytime appearance in company with the shy violet. The issue, in common with many very successful designs, makes good use of a plain white ground, and the general red-brown tint of the colouring gives a pleasing uniformity which makes this probably the best issue of 1977.

Gordon Beningfield designed a set of Butter-

flies, issued in May 1981, and a set of Insects in March 1985, the two sets having an almost identical format, with the species shown again a background of appropriate plants and flowers.

Nature Conservancy

A set of four, under the heading "Nature Conservancy: Species at Risk" in May 1986 similarly used flowers as part of the setting for two of the four species shown. Again, this issue was enhanced by the judicious use of a white ground, with the subjects almost in the form of vignettes, the stamps being the popular "almost square" shape. Gold was used generously, to print the Queen's head, the titles, the values, and the CEPT logo. The designer Kenneth Lilly, a wildlife artist, added a little extra colour by placing his barn owl close to a dog-rose, while the natterjack toad appears to be almost buried under an exotic pink convolvulus.

The Yellow Water-lily was the subject of one of the four stamps appearing in January 1988 marking the bicentenary of the founding of the Linnean Society. This set has added interest by having facsimile appropriate written notes as background, parts of which are quite readable. The designer was Edward Hughes.

Food and Farming, in March 1989, though hardly a topic suggestive of flowers, nevertheless contrived to show a bright red poppy, and a cornflower, in the stamp showing cereal products, and perhaps less appropriately, buttercups and daisies, and possibly a stray cornflower again, among the dairy products. Even the fish are accompanied by herbs. This was another attractive design, by Sedley Place Ltd. with the original feature of picture-tiles in the backgrounds, recalling the old-style food stores.

"Symbols of Peace and Reconstruction" of June 1946 is probably the first occasion of flowers appearing in British commemorative stamps. The 2½d bears the four national emblems of rose, thistle, shamrock and leek (or daffodil). For 45 years we have had stamps bearing flowers. One hopes that the subject is not unlucky for the designer. The five issues specifically dedicated to Flowers were all first issues by their designers - and so far, none has produced a second issue.

Similar thematic reviews of British stamps by Mr Drabble were published in September 1990 (Aircraft); November 1990 (Literature); January 1991 (Sport) and April 1991 (Architecture). Further articles are in preparation. Ed.

Rugby World Cup

The Rugby World Cup is being staged this month with matches at Twickenham; Cardiff Arms Park; Murrayfield, Edinburgh; Lansdowne Road, Dublin and Parc des Princes, Paris. The final takes place on 2 November at Twickenham, headquarters of English rugby and widely regarded as the home of Rugby Union.

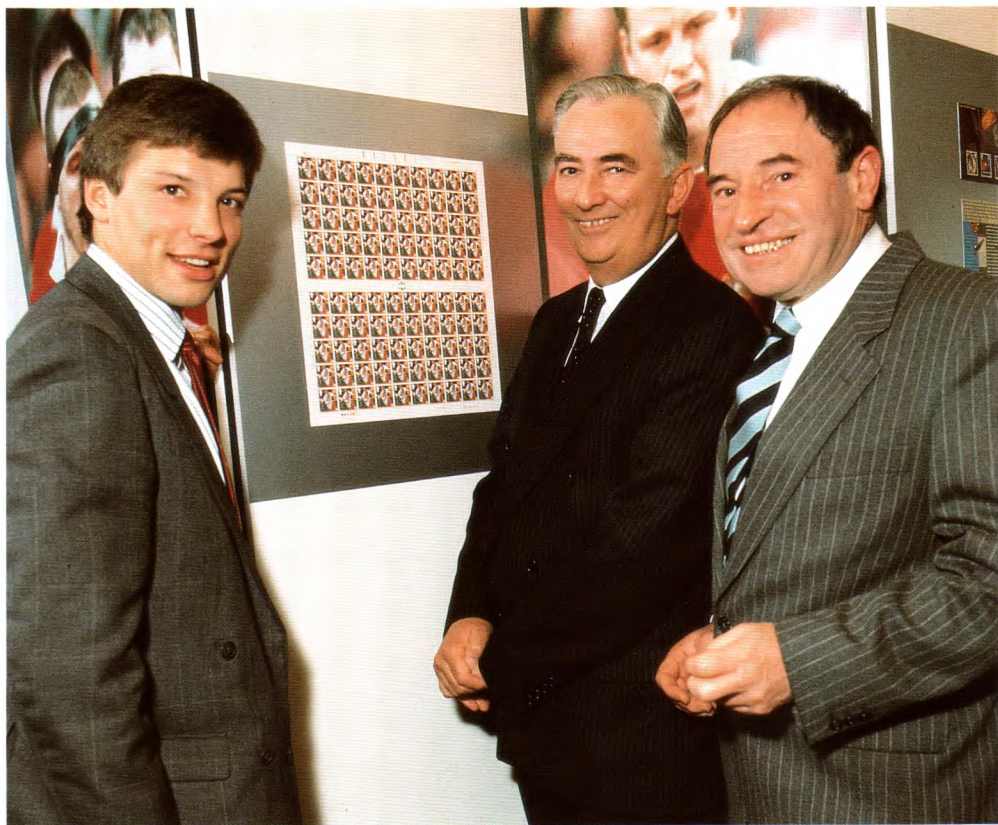
A reception to launch the Sport 91 stamps was held at The Post Office headquarters in St James's Square, London on 10 June, the day before the stamps were issued. Hosted by Mr Ken Young, Post Office Deputy Chairman and a rugby fan, the guests included many personalities and officials from the world of rugby. Our photograph shows Mr Young with England Grand Slam player Rob Andrew (left) and sports commentator Cliff Morgan (right)

The Sport 91 stamps are still available from the British Philatelic Bureau, Collections and philatelic counters. The 22p, 26p and 31p stamps



commemorate the World Student Games held in Sheffield in July; the 37p value marks the Rugby World Cup.

(Photo: David Rogers & David Jones Photography, London EC2)



Philatelic Terms Explained

KENNETH F CHAPMAN

No. 38 R.S.O. Postmarks

The inclusion, around 1868, of the letters "R.S.O." in a limited number of cancelling hand stamps in widely scattered areas of the country began a controversy which rumbled on for years. Did these three letters mean "Rural Sub-Office" or "Railway Sub-Office"?

Reference to the *Post Office Guide* of 1868 would have cleared the air. On page 68 the introduction of the "R.S.O." system was explained: "Where the name of a place (i.e. as listed in the P.O. Guide) followed by the letters 'RSO' and the name of a county in brackets and in italics, the office at that place is what is termed a Railway Sub-Office - that is, a sub-office receiving its correspondence direct from a Travelling Post Office instead of through a Post Town" (the latter was normally the site of the Head Post Office serving that particular area). The term "Travelling Post Office" was used in its widest sense to include "Railway Sorting Carriage". The purpose of the exercise was to differentiate an R.S.O. from a normal "S.O." (Sub-Office) i.e. an office which received part of its mail from an office other than its own Head Office (See P.O. Guide 1903).

Not all R.S.O.s were on, or even adjacent to main line railway routes normally used by the major TPOs. For instance, Ullapool R.S.O. in Ross-shire was some 60 miles from Inverness where Ullapool bags were transferred to the Kyle line. The alternative would have been for Ullapool mail to go on to its post town, Dingwall, only to be sent back to Inverness for transmission to destination. The RSO system gave Ullapool a delivery 24 hours earlier by short-cutting Dingwall.

Perhaps more remarkable is the inscription reading "ALDERNEY RSO (under Guernsey)" on an 1896 Parcel Post label. The explanation is that the sea mail deliveries to the Channel Islands from England were treated as railway mails and ships could deliver unopened bags of Alderney mail direct to the island on its outward voyage instead of taking it through to St Peters Port, Guernsey, (Alderney's post town) for re-shipment to Alderney.

Mail delivered to RSOs had either been cancelled at the point of posting, or on a TPO or RSC. Mail outward from an RSO received the local handstamp. The Post Office encouraged the public to include the designation where appropriate, when addressing envelopes, using the *Post Office Guide* to check the facts. For instance, any letters for Gerrards Cross (from any part of the country) should, properly, have "Gerrards Cross RSO Bucks" following the name of the addressee and the necessary street details. In effect, "RSO" was an early form of postal coding designed to speed up mail deliveries. Although at one time 1,700 offices were officially listed as RSOs in the P.O. Guide, only about 100 of them troubled to use new handstamps incorporating the magic letters. RSO



Illustrations reproduced, with permission, from James A Mackay: Postmarks of England and Wales, 1988.

cancels are, accordingly, scarce, especially on cover. Of course, there was no great point served by a special cancellation other than to advertise the status of the office, because only incoming mails was affected.

On 28 June 1905, the *Post Office Circular* announced the abolition of the designation "RSO". From then on all sub-offices were considered to be of the same status, indicated by the letters "S.O.". This was because improving mail and road connections throughout the country were lessening the necessity for the RSO arrangements. There was no instruction given concerning the handstamps in use. Many of the offices which employed "RSO" cancels con-

tinued to use them. Some deleted the letter "R" leaving an obvious gap preceding the remaining "S.O". The tiny village of Small Dole in Sussex (well away from a railway) cancelled very little mail over the years and its RSO handstamp was still in use until 1937.

Note: During the discussion in the correspondence pages of *Stamp Collecting* in 1966 (on which this article is largely based), Bill Newport pointed out that lists of offices controlled by a Head Office (normally the Post Town) were usually divided into "RSO" and "TSO" for internal convenience. In this context, the abbreviations were for Rural Sub-Office and Town Sub-Office. The use of these local designations in no way affected the Railway Sub-Offices. It merely added to the confusion!

Railway Letter Stamps

The Festiniog Railway issued two new stamps on 16 July 1991, comprising 25p and 5p surcharges on 20p stamps issued in 1987 to commemorate Henry Archer (1799-1863), railway pioneer and noted for his "Archer roulettes and perforations" on British 1d reds. The stamps were printed horizontally se-tenant in sheets of 10. The surcharging yields five of each new value per sheet. Rows 1, 3 and 5 have the left hand stamp surcharged "25", the right hand stamp "5". On stamps in rows 2 and 4 the order of the surcharging is reversed. This provides for the current 25p rate for railway letters and for visitors to affix 5p and 20p stamps to their mail; many wishing to use two rather than a single stamp. First day covers are available bearing a block of four stamps showing both orders of surcharge.

Souvenir covers were prepared on 24 April and 28 May to mark the visit of the Secretary of State for Wales, The Rt Hon David Hunt, MBE, MP, and to commemorate the centenary of the signing of the Railway Letter Agreement between the Post Office and the Festiniog Rail-



Rt Hon David Hunt, MBE, MP, Secretary of State for Wales (Photo: Jim Stagg, courtesy of Welsh Office)

way. Mr Hunt is a stamp collector and was presented with a folder containing Festiniog railway letter stamps. The cover commemorating the ministerial visit is illustrated here.

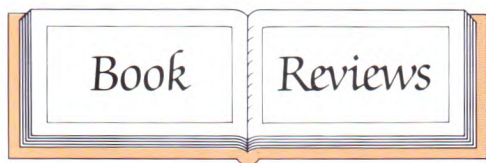
A list of stamps, first day and souvenir covers available can be obtained by sending a stamped addressed envelope to: Festiniog Railway (RLS Dept), PORTHMADOG, Gwynedd, LL49 9NF.



Nene Valley Rly stamp issued 15 September (see September Bulletin for details)

Mention was made in September of special railway cancels used by the Nene Valley Railway to mark the end of TPO services between Peterborough, Crewe and Lincoln (27 September) and the start of TPO services between Peterborough and Carlisle (30 September). Covers are available bearing railway letter stamps cancelled by the commemorative handstamps and Royal Mail stamps cancelled with eight different TPO datestamps. An order form is available by sending a SAE to: Nene Valley Railway Ltd (Stamp Issues), Wansford Station, Stibbington, PETERBOROUGH PE8 6LR.





The second edition of **Herewith My Frank...** by J W Lovegrove, FRPSL, is now available. The first edition of this well-known work appeared in 1975 and resulted, says the author, in "a tide of correspondence ... which has not slackened much fourteen years later." That in itself is evidence of the continuing interest in free franks and the value of his book. The new edition is arranged in eight parts, the first dealing with the Parliamentary Franking System of Great Britain and Ireland 1652-1840 – explaining its origins and legislative framework. All the relevant acts of Parliament are cited. We move on to the early "Free" handstamps used in London; the earliest recorded on a letter dated May 1764. The various handstamps are described, dated and illustrated. Handstamps including dates were introduced in 1791. Part 3 tells the story of "Protecting the Franking System" which involved the application of handstamps such as "Above Privilege Number" to mail contravening regulations. Parts 4 and 5 deal with the Free stamps used in Edinburgh and Dublin and special classes of free stamps as used on mail from government offices, charities, "at sea", etc. Part 6 records "marks dependent on or deriving from British franks" such as those used in Canada and Australia. Part 7 provides appendix listings of, *inter alia*, Masters of the Post, 1655-89; Postmasters General, 1687-1841; persons and offices eligible for the free frank; and a rarity guide. Part 8 – Acknowledgements – comprises an impression listing of "Fellow Students of Postal History" and "Professionals" (County Archivists and librarians) who have assisted Mr Lovegrove in producing this important new edition. Interest in official mail has grown considerably in recent years, especially since the publication of James Mackay's *Official Mail of the British Isles* (1983). The ending of the "Official Paid" device and the use of certifying stamps (official cachets) on government mail in the early 1980s has stimulated collecting and the Free Franks remain perhaps the best-documented and most collected area of official mail. Mr Lovegrove's book will be welcomed by existing collectors and by those seeking an aspect of postal history to collect and study. 140

pages, well illustrated, printed on art paper, hardback. Price £22 (\$40) plus £1.50 postage from: J W Lovegrove, 27 Lower Brook Street, WINCHESTER, Hants, SO23 8DR.

This book recently received a vermeil award at Orapex, organised by the Royal Philatelic Society of Canada, and a gold award in the Cardinal Spellman Philatelic Literature Competition. Our congratulations to Mr Lovegrove on these prestigious awards.

As part of the celebrations of Dundee's 800th anniversary, the Dundee & Tayside Chamber of Commerce & Industry has published **Highwaymen: James Chalmers & The London Mail** in a limited edition of 1,000 numbered copies. This contains extracts from the minutes of the Forfarshire Chamber of Commerce & Manufactures (and its successor, the Dundee Chamber of Commerce) for the period 1820-50 – years which saw the introduction of uniform Penny Postage and the transition from mail coaches to the railways. The Forfarshire Chamber was established in 1819 and took an early interest in postal services which were crucial to the linen merchants of Dundee; any measure that speeded up the receipt of orders was of vital importance. In 1788 Dundee contained under 10,000 inhabitants and only "about seven letters came to the town twice a week from London..." In 1822 letters from London took 49 hours to reach Edinburgh and a further 9½ hours to arrive in Dundee; the Chamber drew up a plan for the London mail to leave London at 8am, arrive at Edinburgh at noon the following day and Dundee at 9.30pm. Mail travelling south would leave Dundee at 12.30am, arrive at Edinburgh at 11am and be in London at 6am the second morning. Plans were also put forward to speed up services within Scotland. James Chalmers was elected a Director of the Chamber in 1824 and took a keen interest in the acceleration of the mail to London; his detailed proposals are reproduced in this book. The Chamber monitored the workings of the Dundee Post Master including the hours of opening of his office and "memorials" were sent from time to time to the Postmaster General. In 1843 they wrote concerning the inconvenience of the Dundee office: "There is no lobby or covered place for those who are waiting to receive letters, so that they have to stand on the foot pavement, much to their own discomfort in bad weather, & at all times to the annoyance of people passing along the street." The choice of Falmouth rather than Liverpool as the port of despatch for mail to the

West Indies and South America was also of concern. The views of the Dundee Chamber, and of industrialists throughout the country, were instrumental in the postal reforms of the 1840s and in 1844 the Chamber approved a resolution "That the respect & gratitude of the Public are justly due to Rowland Hill Esq the inventor of the uniform low rate of Postage for the great talent he has shown in planning the system, and for the very great exertions he had made in getting it carried into practice." Later the Chamber turned its attention to the use of the railways as a means of speeding the mail. This interesting book adds to our knowledge of the widespread and serious campaign for improved postal services in the early Victorian age. Price £5 (£6 in special Expo 800 cover with Dundee 800 slogan postmark), from: Dundee & Tayside Chamber of Commerce, Panmure Street, DUNDEE DD1 1ED.



New Machin Album

Connoisseur Publications have announced publication of *The Connoisseur Album for Machin Stamps*. The album, as comprehensive as the *Connoisseur Catalogue* itself, runs to nearly 100 pages with a space for every single pre-decimal and decimal Machin stamp, Country and Postage Due stamps listed in the catalogue, over 1,600 in total. This covers all paper, gum, perforation (including unperforated edges) and phosphor types, redrawn values and emblems, value settings and thicknesses, phosphor screens, glazed papers, phosphor under ink, screened values, major shades, etc. In addition there is also a space for every listed variety — errors of colour, missing colours, missing phosphors, broad bands, short bands, AOPs, uncoated papers, FBOs, Specimen overprints, etc. Only imperforates are excluded as they can vary in format but titled blank pages will be available for collectors to mount as they wish.

The album, available in late Autumn 1991, will cost £99.75. Orders/enquiries to: Connoisseur Publications, 27 Maiden Lane, LONDON WC2E 7JS; Tel. 071-836 2391/3780.

Posting Boxes

124. Blue Air Mail Box

Special "air Mail" boxes, painted blue, were put into use in London for the first time on 23 June 1930; they were subsequently installed in main towns and cities and remained in use until 1938. Jean Farrugia tells us in *The Letter Box* (1969): "The boxes themselves were just ordinary pillar boxes painted 'Air Force' blue. Type B (Medium size) boxes were used, the contract for these being held by the Carron Company. They were surmounted by blue, enamelled notices bearing the inscription 'Air-Mail' in white lettering. Later, in 1932, special, double notice frames were provided, suitable for receiving two notices to the public. One notice gave the latest times of posting and the other listed the various air-mail postage rates."

Our photograph, submitted by Mrs S Hawkes of Middlesex, shows a blue Air Mail box outside the Royal Mews in Windsor, on the site of the old Windsor Post Office and about ¼ mile from where the first air mail flight landed in 1911. This box was installed in the early 1980s at the suggestion of Fred Fuzzens, local historian and former Post Office employee. The box came from Canterbury and was painted blue



and fitted with the Air Mail sign and double notice frames as were the 1930s boxes. It is a fitting reminder of Windsor's importance in air mail history. We are obliged to Mr Fuzzens for supplying information about this box. A photograph, submitted by Mr Fuzzens, of one of the wooden posting boxes for mail carried on the 1911 Coronation air mail flights was featured here last month.

Readers interested in letter boxes are reminded of the existence of the Letter Box Study Group — details of which can be obtained by sending a stamped addressed envelope to the Secretary: Sally Jones, 43 Miall Road, Hall Green, Birmingham B28 9BS.

Post Office Archives Engravings

Post Office Archives will have a stand in the New Hall at the Autumn Stampex exhibition (15–20 October). In addition to offering a range of high quality historical maps, models, notices and the new issue of wartime postcards announced in the September *Bulletin*. Archives have commissioned a hand-coloured version of the limited edition 1844 engravings made from the original steel plates. These views, drawn by Sir John Gilbert and engraved by Ellis, show the interior of the Inland Office and the Letter Carriers room at the old GPO East Headquar-

the original price of £35 each. Each scene comes with full historical description in an acid-free folder.

Please remember that the Archives themselves are closed until 5 November because of their move to Mount Pleasant. However, if you are not able to get to Stampex, mail orders for the engravings or other products may be sent to: Post Office Archives, Phoenix Place, LONDON WC1. There is no additional postage or handling charge. Cheques should be made payable to "The Post Office".

*Dr Douglas Fermer
Deputy Archivist*

The 1844 engraving of the Letter Carriers Room

The 1844 engraving of the Inland Office

ters building. The skilful colouring brings the scenes to life quite remarkably and gives us what is probably the best representation of the bustle of an early Victorian sorting office. Fifty numbered pairs will be available from the Archives stand at Stampex, price £38 per engraving (including VAT). The engravings may also be purchased singly and sets of the engravings without colour are still available to collectors at

Commemorative Covers

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

Loch Ness Monster. Benham have produced a cover to honour "the last Dinosaur" — the Loch Ness Monster. The cover bears a special "Nessie" handstamp used at Inverness on 20 August when the Dinosaurs stamps were issued. Price £4.99 plus 40p postage. Covers are also available carried on the expedition vessel *Eos*, currently searching for "Nessie" and signed by the Project Leader Adrian Shine. Price £7.99 plus 40p postage. Orders/enquiries: Benham (A Buckingham) Ltd, The Bayle, FOLKESTONE, Kent, CT20 1SD.

Ordnance Survey. To mark the Maps stamp issue on 17 September, the Ordnance Survey hosted a bicentenary reception at Ruckinge, just down the road from Hamstreet. The celebrations included a mailcoach touring Ruckinge (delivering a personal letter to villagers) before going on to Hamstreet and back bearing the Director General of the OS, Peter McMaster, other OS staff in period costume and first day covers. These covers, which bear a special cachet to authenticate their mailcoach journey, are now available. Price £5 or £7.50 with signature of the Director General; numbers limited to 900 unsigned and 100 signed. Profits will go to the OS 200 charity, the RNLI. Orders/enquiries: Wendy Fellingham, Ordnance Survey, Romsey Road, Maybush, SOUTHAMPTON SO9 4DH.

Ordnance Survey. An interesting selection of philatelic "Ordnance Survey" memorabilia including official Royal opening covers, Ordnance

Survey postcards signed by the Maps stamp designer and various special pictorial postmarked covers are available from the Southampton cover specialist, G Eldridge. An illustrated list of OS covers and cards is available — postage appreciated. Enquiries: G Eldridge, 177 Mousehole Lane, Bitterne, SOUTHAMPTON SO2 4TD.

Maps/Darling Buds of May. Benham produced an official “Darling Buds of May” cover in conjunction with the Hamstreet Maps stamps on 17 September. The cover, produced in association with Yorkshire Television and Excelsior Productions Ltd, features “Ma” and “Pa” Larkin down on the farm. The special handstamp shows the farm and the famous Rolls Royce. The cover bears the four Maps stamps, price £4.99 plus 40p postage. Details of signed covers on request. Orders/enquiries: Benham, address above.

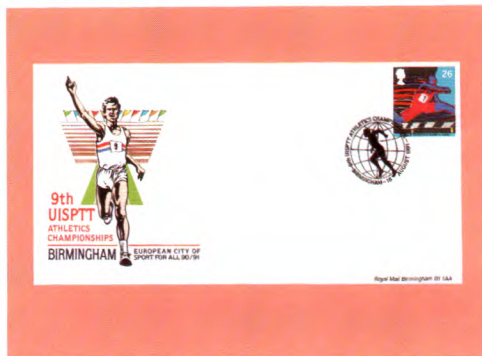
Christmas/Durham. Saxon and medieval manuscripts are amongst the items on display in the Durham Cathedral Treasury. With permission of the Dean & Chapter, A G Bradbury has produced a first day cover for the Christmas stamps which feature illuminated manuscripts. The cover features an 11th century manuscript with St Augustine (first Archbishop of Canterbury) seated and writing in the letter “G” beginning the word *Gloriosissimam*. The cover has been printed in full colour with a parchment-like effect and a gold-foiled finish. The special handstamp shows St Cuthbert’s Cross — on display in the Cathedral Treasury. Covers with single stamp £2.75, full set £5.50, signed £9.75. Overseas add £1. Orders/enquiries: A G Bradbury, 3 Link Road, LEICESTER LE2 3RA.

Christmas/Bodleian Library. The 1991 Christmas stamps feature medieval manuscripts from the Bodleian Library, Oxford. A G Bradbury has arranged with the Library a special first day cover featuring three miniatures taken from the Library’s manuscripts showing *The Flight into Egypt*. The covers are printed in full-colour and gold-foiled on a parchment-like finish. The special handstamp features a medieval book. Covers with single stamp £3.75, limited number with full set £9.75. Overseas add £1. Orders/enquiries: A G Bradbury, address above.

Christmas/Holy Island. A special cover featuring a painting of Lindisfarne Priory on Holy Island, Northumberland, by T M Richardson, Snr, is being produced by A G

Bradbury. The painting is reproduced by permission of the Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle upon Tyne. The Lindisfarne Gospels, now in the British Library, are amongst the finest surviving examples of Celtic art; they were written in honour of St Cuthbert, sixth Bishop of Lindisfarne. A special Holy Island handstamp will be applied. Price £3.75 with single stamp, £9.75 with full set (limited number). Overseas add £1. Orders/enquiries: A G Bradbury, address above.

Athletic Championship. A special souvenir cover has been produced by Royal Mail Birmingham Public Relations Dept to commemorate the 9th staging of the U.I.S.P.T.T. (Universe International Sportif de Postes Telephone et Telecommes) Athletic Championship. The championships are held every four years for the postal and telecoms employees of the 12 member European countries and were this year held at the Alexander Stadium, Birmingham. The cover bears a 26p Sport 91 stamp (hurdling) cancelled by a special handstamp on 16 July, the day of the opening ceremony. Price £2.50 postpaid from: Mr D Carless, Royal Mail Birmingham Public Relations, Royal Mail Street, BIRMINGHAM B1 1AA. Remittances payable to “Royal Mail”.



Yellow Brick Road. A souvenir cover has been produced in conjunction with a short series of special handstamps sponsored by Royal Mail Newcastle to raise funds for the Yellow Brick Road Appeal for a children’s hospital. The cover, showing the Appeal logo and Leo the Lion, bears a 22p Dinosaur stamp with special handstamp of 1 September. Orders/enquiries: Yellow Brick Road Appeal Office, 1 Tankerville Terrace, NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE NE2 3AH. Price £1.50, please enclose self addressed envelope (minimum 9 x 6 ins) with order.

October Digest

Issued in October

2 October: Mixed Value Roll - 2 x 4p and 2 x 5p stamps (18p).

Printing: Harrison & Sons Ltd, photogravure, Advanced Coated Paper (ACP), PVA Dextrin gum.

8 October: Christmas aerogramme, price 44p.

Designer: Jane Thomson.

Printing: McCorquodale Envelopes Ltd.

15 October: Post Office Archives Second World War postcards, price 25p each. *Available at Post Office Archives stand at Autumn Stampex, 15-20 October, Royal Horticultural Society Halls, London SW1.*

29 October: Christmas stamp cards (Nos. 139A-E), price 21p each.

October: "Our World" Vol. 3 - book containing nature stamps from Britain and other countries. The British stamps comprise the Roses set (July 1991). Price £7.50.

Withdrawn in October

15 October: Astronomy stamps, presentation pack, stamp cards and souvenir cover.

31 October: Royal Mail Exhibition Cards for ASDA National and Spring Stampex 91 exhibitions.

Roll of Distinguished Philatelists

Election to the RDP is regarded internationally as the world's pre-eminent philatelic honour. It was instituted at the Philatelic Congress of GB in 1920 and was first signed in 1921 by King George V and 39 other leading philatelists of the time.

Since then 232 more RDPs have been elected and a new parchment (the fourth) was required for this year's ceremony at the BPF Congress at Cardiff last month. The new parchment has been sponsored by the British Aerophilatelic Federation. Details of the BAF can be obtained from: B L Asquith, "Alandale", Radcliffe Gardens, CARSHALTON BEECHES, Surrey, SM5 4PQ.

Ordnance Survey Exhibition

The Ordnance Survey have a most interesting exhibition of mapmaking at their Southampton

headquarters. The press preview for the Maps stamps was held there on 24 July; the exhibition was much enjoyed by all present. Some 6,000 visitors are welcomed each year to the exhibition which is open to groups. Secretaries of groups and organisations who would like to visit the exhibition should write to: Visits Officer, Ordnance Survey, Romsey Road, Maybush, SOUTHAMPTON SO9 4DH.

Four Maps stamps commemorating the bicentenary of the Ordnance Survey, issued on 17 September, are available from the British Philatelic Bureau, Collections and philatelic counters. They were previewed in the August *Bulletin*.

Obituary - R C Alcock

Ronald Cecil Alcock, who died on 6 July aged 86, was the founder of dealers R C Alcock Ltd and the Colonial & Foreign Stamp Co Ltd of Cheltenham. He wrote, or co-authored, many important philatelic publications including books on GB Line-Engraved issues and postmarks. With F C Holland he compiled *British Postmarks. A Short History and Guide* (2nd edition, 1978) and *Maltese Cross Cancellations of the United Kingdom* (revised edition 1971).

British Philatelic Bulletin

ISSN — 0953-8119

The *British Philatelic Bulletin* is published monthly by Royal Mail (The Letters business of The Post Office).

Compiled and typeset by John Holman at:
National Postal Museum
King Edward Building
King Edward Street
LONDON EC1A 1LP

Editorial Adviser Douglas N Muir

Annual Subscriptions
UK and Europe £6.75
Rest of World (Airmail) £10.25

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

Single copies from Collections and philatelic counters: 60p

Binders, to hold 24 issues, are available by post from the British Philatelic Bureau, price £6.75. Also available, to callers only, at the National Postal Museum sales counter.

Printed in Great Britain by Raithby, Lawrence & Co Ltd, Leicester LE3 5AY for Royal Mail.