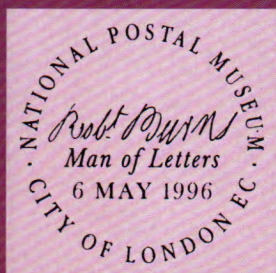


May 1996



British Philatelic Bulletin

Volume 33. No: 9 The Royal Mail Magazine for Stamp Collectors Price 75p



Two postcards for
National Postal
Museum exhibition
May-December 1996



Robert Burns—Man of Letters

Royal Mail Stamp Cards



Royal Mail's very popular Stamp Cards reproducing the designs of special stamps were introduced in 1973. Some are now highly-priced collectors' items.

Definitive Stamp Cards started in 1993. Three new cards featuring the 1994 Bank of England, 1995 R.J. Mitchell, and 1996 Queen's Birthday

commemorative labels (from 4 x 1st stamp books) have recently been added to the series. Also available are cards showing the £1.00 Machin, £1, £1.50, £2, £3, and £5 Castles and £10 Britannia. Price 25p each.

Stamp Cards are ideal to send to your friends, philatelic or otherwise.



Available from: **British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, Edinburgh EH3 5TT**
and from Post Office Counters philatelic outlets.

British Philatelic Bulletin

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20 Brandon Street
EDINBURGH EH3 5TT.

Binders to hold 24 issues, price £7. Available by post from British Philatelic Bureau (address above).

Royal Mail also publishes the fortnightly **British Postmark Bulletin** giving details of forthcoming special handstamps and postmark slogans. Available on annual subscription from British Philatelic Bureau (address above) UK & Europe £10, Rest of World £21.75.

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Front Cover: Unadapted designs for 1996 Burns stamps on new National Postal museum postcards- See page 261

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1995 Stamp Poll – Readers' Comments 282

Your views on the Cats, Springtime, National Trust, Peace & Freedom, and Science Fiction issues. Further views on other 1995 sets next month.



Royal Mail News

Olympic Triathlon Promotion Stamp Books

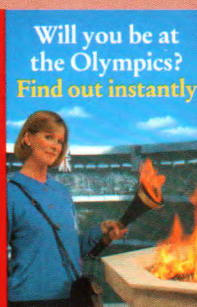
Three new "Olympic Triathlon Promotion" NVI stamp books will be available from the British Philatelic Bureau and Post Office Counters philatelic outlets from 13 May 1996, price £2.50 each. The books, containing 10 1st class NVI stamps, will have a "scratch panel" competition on the back, giving customers the opportunity to win a range of prizes, including visits to the Olympics, portable TVs, and watches. Even if you don't win a major prize, you can still benefit. All runners up can claim a set of five free Olympic postcards by sending in any three Olympic game books to the address printed on the inside cover of these Olympic books. The cards offer is made whilst stocks last.

The front covers share a common design, showing the Olympic torch and flame. The back covers feature Archery, Hurdles, and Shot Put. Books will be supplied from the printers in packs of 50 containing 17 of each of two designs and 16 of the third. Winning books will be distributed throughout the entire promotion.

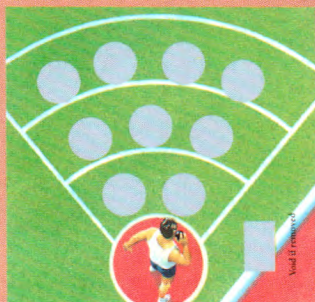
The books have been printed by Harrison & Sons Ltd and contain 1st class NVI stamps with two phosphor bands, PVA gum, and elliptical perfs on the left and right sides.

New Postbus Services

News is to hand of further postbus services operated by Royal Mail's Anglia Division. A new route in the Watton/Thetford area of Norfolk was introduced early in March and a further service in the St Neots area is expected to start in July/August 1996. Somewhat belatedly we record the introduction of services from Saffron Walden to Butts Green on 1 August 1994 and Ware to Buntingford on 22 November 1994. An article, by Martin Robinson, on postbus tickets and other collectable material, was published here in June 1993.

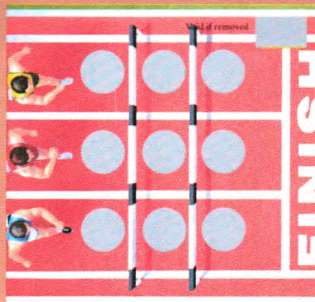


10 First Class Stamps



10 First Class Stamps





Robert Burns Exhibition

Royal Mail is sponsoring a touring exhibition in Scotland of the Life and Works of Robert Burns, arranged by the National Library of Scotland. During May this can be seen at: Stranraer Museum (until 13 May); Strathkelvin District Libraries HQ, Kirkintilloch (from 13 May); and Paisley Museum. The exhibition will be on tour until the end of January 1997 – further venues will be published later.

Cylinder/Plate Number Update

The cylinders used for the 100 Years of Going to the Pictures stamps are:

19p P34 (phosphor) 2A (black) 2B (greenish yellow) 2C (silver) 2D (bright magenta) 2E (new blue)

25p P36 (phosphor) 1A (black) 1B (greenish yellow) 2C (silver) 1D (bright magenta) 1E (new blue)

30p P36 (phosphor) 2A (black) 1B (greenish yellow) 2C (silver) 1D (bright magenta) 1E (new blue)

35p P36 (phosphor) 1A (black) 1B (red) 2C (silver)

41p P36 (phosphor) 1A (black) 1B (greenish yellow) 2C (silver) 1D (bright magenta) 1E (new blue)

The plate numbers for the Football Legends stamps are:

19p 1A (vermilion) 1A (black) 1A (pale grey) 1A (grey)

25p 1A (bright emerald) 1A (black) 1A (pale grey) 1A (grey)

35p 1A (orange-yellow) 1A (black) 1A (pale grey) 1A (grey)

41p 1A (new blue) 1A (black) 1A (pale grey) 1A (grey)

60p 1A (bright orange) 1A (black) 1A (pale grey) 1A (grey)

The plate numbers used for the Queen's Birthday pane were W38 W45 W48. The 1p and 50p definitives with blue fluor are from cylinders 1 and 2 respectively. The plate number used for the £1.50 definitive with PVA gum was 4N. The National Postal Museum reports the following plates for Country stamps: Scotland 19p Q9Q9 and Q10Q10; 25p Q11Q11 and Q12Q12; Wales 19p Q7Q7 and Q8Q8.

National Postal Museum News

The special exhibition gallery display on "The Story of Greetings Stamps" finishes on 3 May, to be followed from 13 May until 28 June by an exhibition of Student Stamp Designs. Some of the student stamps are shown elsewhere in this *Bulletin*.

A special exhibition entitled "Robert Burns – Man of Letters" will open on 7 May and be on show until the end of the year. This features the 1966 and 1996 Burns stamps, artworks, postmarks, etc, also Burns cinderella labels, medals, etc. Four cards are being issued, featuring unused designs from the 1966 issue:

96/9 Design by Jock Kinneir, based on the John Miers silhouette portrait, with "UK postage" replacing The Queen's head.

96/10 Design by Ruari McLean, based on the Alexander Nasmyth portrait with "UK Postage" instead of Queen's head.

96/11 Design by A B Imrie, showing the ER Royal Cypher and Scottish Crown in place of Queen's head.

96/12 Design by A B Imrie, showing the Brig of Doon.

The cards will be on sale at the Museum shop, price 25p each, or as a set of four (£1) from: British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, Edinburgh EH3 5TT. Two of the cards are shown on this month's front cover.

The Post Haste! display of postal artefacts can be seen in the former London Chief Post Office area of the Museum and permanent displays from the R M Phillips and other Museum collections are on view in the main (top floor) gallery.

Visitors to the Museum can browse in the interesting shop which stocks a wide range of books, postcards, models and other goods of interest to philatelists, postal historians, and tourists. The NPM is open Monday-Friday 09.30-16.30, admission free. The Museum is a few minutes walk from St Paul's Cathedral and underground station. Enquiries: National Postal Museum, King Edward Street, London EC1A 1LP, Tel. 0171-239 5420.

Football Products

Royal Mail is producing a number of products coinciding with the Football Legends stamps (14 May). A 16-page *Stamp Album* will contain special pages for the Football issues of Royal Mail, Guernsey, Jersey, and Gibraltar, plus other pages on which to mount other football stamps to allow for an expanding thematic collection. The album will be supplied with sets of the British, Guernsey, Jersey, and Gibraltar stamps, plus a pack of 25 cancelled football stamps. Price £9.95 (includes VAT).

A *Postcard Book* will include 10 cards of the players short-listed for the special stamp issue. Five cards are based on the stamp designs, the other five feature photographs of the other great players: Peter Docherty, Alex James, Joe Mercer, Billy Meredith, and Frank Swift. The book includes information and biographies of all the players, also a section on great managers. Price £2.95. This is the fourth *Postcard Book*, following issues for Cats, Rugby League, and Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust.

A *Football Legends Sticker Book* has been designed to pay tribute to all the players considered for honour on the special stamps. The lavishly-illustrated A4-size book includes pictures and biographies of 64 players, including all 41 of the players originally listed by the Football Associations of England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland for consideration for the special stamp issue. The players featured are from the pre-war years to the 1980s and includes Hughie Galagher, Tommy Lawton, Sir Stanley Matthews, Sir Matt Busby, Geoff Hurst, Sir Bobby Charlton, Billy Bremner, Colin Bell, Ossie Ardiles, and Gary Lineker. Price £4.95.

All these football products can be ordered

from the British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, Edinburgh EH3 5TT. They will also be available from selected Post Office Counters outlets.

Royal Mail Exhibition Cards

Royal Mail will be trialling two new exhibition cards for China '96, to be held in Beijing, 18-24 May 1996. There will also be two China '96 cachets which, in addition to the exhibition cards, will only be available from the British Post Office booth at the exhibition.

Postal Stationery News

A special aerogramme, featuring sport drawings by Eliza Marchant, winner of a children's competition, is to be issued on 18 June. The second Scottish aerogramme of 1996, commemorating the 50th Edinburgh International Festival, will go on sale at post offices in Scotland, the Bureau, and Post Office Counters philatelic outlets from 2 July.

Two aerogrammes will shortly be withdrawn from sale: 3 July European Youth Olympics; 17 July Prehistoric Scotland. Collectors still needing these should order from the Bureau, price 45p each.

The 1991 design Post Paid Envelopes will be withdrawn from sale on 1 July. These bear an imprinted stamp featuring the Machin head of The Queen within a black octagonal frame, with "1st" or "2nd" class indicators alongside. They were replaced by new envelopes featuring The Queen's profile within a circular frame in July 1995.

Please note that the pre-stamped Burns cards, announced here in December 1995 (page 103) have been cancelled. Royal Mail regrets any disappointment caused.

European Football Championships Prestige Book

Specialist collectors should note that the 25p Country stamps will have wider phosphor bands than those from sheets, viz 9.5mm as opposed to 8mm. The 9.5mm bands on the 25p definitive are the same width as those on stamps from the £1 and £2 machine books printed by Questa and issued in January. All phosphor bands include blue fluor.

Blue Fluor Update

The 30p definitive with blue fluor in the phosphor bands exists on paper with blue tinge and transparent gums. Both varieties are available from the Bureau, as are the similar gum variations on the 25p stamp issued last October.

Stamp Scene

Putting a Fine Point on it

The Deegam Settings Gauge is a deceptively simple device which opens up a whole new world. Essentially it is a small, pocket magnifier with a lens that is surely a masterpiece of German precision optics, set in a plastic mount with a straight forward serrated ring for adjusting the focus. The lens provides 10x magnification, powerful enough to show clearly the texture and fibres of paper as well as the individual screening dots in photogravure or offset litho stamps. Just place the gauge on the stamp or postmark you are examining, with the light aperture facing away from you, and hey presto, the object in view is revealed in microscopic detail.

As its title suggests, however, it is much more than just a magnifier. At the base of the image area is a calibrated scale of one centimetre, subdivided into millimetres and tenths of millimetres which show up with such exceptional clarity that you can easily count them. The first thing I discovered – rather disconcertingly – is that the so-called precision ruler which I have been using for many years to measure postmarks is almost a millimetre under in every centimetre of length! Testing the Settings Gauge against overprints of a known length, I found that it was absolutely spot on.

One of the major problems for students of the Machin definitives has been to distinguish between the various numerals in the values which have differed over the years in thickness,

style and in relative positions. These minute differences in thickness and spacing can often be detected with the naked eye, but it takes years of experience in handling Machins to reach that level of expertise. For most collectors, however, sorting out the different value settings has so far proved a baffling and daunting exercise. Now this gauge has come to the rescue and the precise, measurable differences can be seen sharply in an instant. The subtleties of phosphor bands are made crystal clear, as are the enhanced versions of the Castle series.

Although Douglas Myall devised this gauge specifically for Machin collectors, its applications to other aspects of philately and postal history are infinite. Whether your interests lie in the Victorian line-engraved stamps or the overprints and surcharges of modern Guyana, this gauge will prove an immense boon. I have also tested it against both certified and dubious Hitler Head stamps of 1945 overprinted locally, and been able to sort the sheep from the goats with comparative ease. When you are in a position to check the dimensions of a typographical overprint to the nearest tenth of a millimetre like this, all the problems of comparison vanish immediately.

The Deegam Settings Gauge is available from Douglas Myall, 2 Elizabeth Avenue, Bridport, Dorset DT6 5BA, post-free (UK and Europe) for £16; for other addresses add £1. Cheques should be made payable to "D Myall" or Giro account 48 260 4085. Payment should be in sterling and free of banking costs. Overseas customers may, if preferred, remit £15 in banknotes and the balance in mint GB stamps valid for return postage.

James Mackay

Astro Space Stamp Society Design Competition

Readers are invited to enter a design competition to be judged by an independent professional artist. Prizes have been donated by the Australia Stamp Bureau and the Crown Agents. Designs should be for stamps on the following themes: Astronomy, Anniversary, or Fantasy. All entries should contain the initials "ASSS" (as country name on stamp), value or indicator (1st, 25p, 25c etc), and a legend of up to 24 characters detailing the theme or topic. The competition is open to all readers over the age of 11. For full information and information on the Society send a stamped addressed envelope or two international reply coupons to: Brian Lockyer, 21 Exford Close, Weston-super-Mare, BS23 4RE.



Cardinal Spellman Philatelic Museum

RON NEGUS FRPSL



During a recent holiday in the USA, I had an opportunity to visit the Cardinal Spellman Philatelic Museum in Massachusetts. The Museum was created by a local religious leader, the late Cardinal Francis J Spellman, who decided in the late 1950s that his own collection had become so extensive that he would set up an independent and non-sectarian museum to exhibit his stamps to the general public.

An embryo museum was established in part of the Regis College campus in 1957 at Weston, Massachusetts, a small town not far from Boston. It rapidly outgrew the space available, however, and, using donated funds, a separate building was built in the College grounds. The current Museum was formally opened in 1963, with over 7000 square feet of usable floor space. This houses three exhibition galleries, a 40,000 volume philatelic library, and photographic and research laboratories. The whole building is light and airy and is far away from the dusty image often associated with museums. There is also a shop where philatelic accessories and books are on sale and which incorporates a branch of the US Post Office – Boston Station No. 4.



Ron Negus (left) with Joe Landry at the Museum

The Cardinal's original collection is now only a small part of the Museum's four million item holdings that include the collections of President Dwight D Eisenhower, General Matthew Ridgeway and violinist Jascha Heifitz, amongst others. Specialist collections of Poland, Jammu

and Kashmir, and of Roman States are also amongst the items available for exhibition and study. Of particular interest is the special album personally given to Cardinal Spellman by Prince Rainier III of Monaco to celebrate his marriage to Grace Kelly.

A number of philatelic groups use the Museum premises for their meetings and exhibitions on a regular basis. Each month, the Ben Franklin Club, an organisation open to local school children with an interest in stamp collecting, also meets there. In addition thematic exhibitions organised by the Museum staff are mounted on a regular basis. Past ones have featured "Women in World War II", "Flowers on Stamps" and a "Philatelic Music Hall", all aimed at interesting the general public visiting the premises. The Museum has a small permanent staff, some of whom are currently engaged in putting details of the holdings on to a computer database. Their efforts are supplemented by a number of volunteer helpers who assist in the day to day tasks. A newsletter, called *Museum Post Rider*, is published four times per year and sent to all those who pay a small annual subscription to be a friend of the Museum, in a similar manner to the scheme used by equivalent organisations in the UK.

On my visit, I was shown around by the Philatelic Consultant to the Museum, Joseph Landry, who kindly allowed me to have access to those parts of their holdings that were of particular interest to me. I was also able to meet other members of the staff and had the opportunity to browse through the Library. For any collector who finds himself in this delightful part of New England, I would thoroughly recommend a trip to Weston. They will be greeted with delightful hospitality and have the chance to see a custom-built Museum where the staff are dedicated to encouraging philately through every available means. The address is 235 Wellesley Street, Weston, MA 02193, USA..

The Museum is open: Wednesday 09.00-16.00; Saturday 10.00-16.00, and Sunday 13.00-16.00.

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Twentieth Century Postal Stationery

COLIN BAKER

Part 5. Elizabeth II Pre-Decimal issues

During the first two decades of Queen Elizabeth II's reign, up to the introduction of decimal currency, the postal service continued to develop, mechanisation gradually taking over the handling of mail. This period also saw a steady rise in postage rates, ending with the longest strike in the history of the PO and covering the transition into decimalisation with its associated issues of new stamps and postal stationery.

In 1968 the printed paper and postcard rates, which had survived for nearly a century, were replaced by a two-tier system in which mail was given priority treatment according to the service chosen. Postal stationery had to change to keep pace with this development and phosphor bands began to appear on most items of stationery to enable them to be faced and sorted into 1st and 2nd class mail.

Stationery envelopes with the new QEII 2½d embossed stamp first went on sale at the end of November 1954. The bust of Her Majesty, based on the Dorothy Wilding portrait, was encircled by the word POSTAGE and the value in both words and figures, all set within a Tudor rose border. Although this stamp was pleasing to the eye, it did not match the plain design of the letterpress stamp used for postcards and lettercards.

In the late 1960s the stamp for use on envelopes was redesigned by Stuart Rose (1912-93) to incorporate the bust of The Queen by Arnold Machin, set in an octagonal frame. The new stamp was intended to complement the adhesive Machin series, then being issued, but with its eight sided border and the word POSTAGE repeated on each side, it failed to match the simplicity of its adhesive counterpart.

A Simple Stamp Design

The letterpress stamp for postcards and lettercards was designed by John Brinkley using The Queen's profile based on the Dorothy Wilding photograph which was also used in the design of the adhesive stamps. Brinkley's design was graceful and clean omitting the four country emblems, although there was still a simple

4d
A SIZE
10
ENVELOPES
4s 0d



McCORQUODALE & CO. LTD.

5d
A SIZE
10
ENVELOPES
4s 10d



McCORQUODALE & CO. LTD.

The 1969 issue of 1st and 2nd class envelopes in revised colours including wrappings printed with details of selling prices, etc.

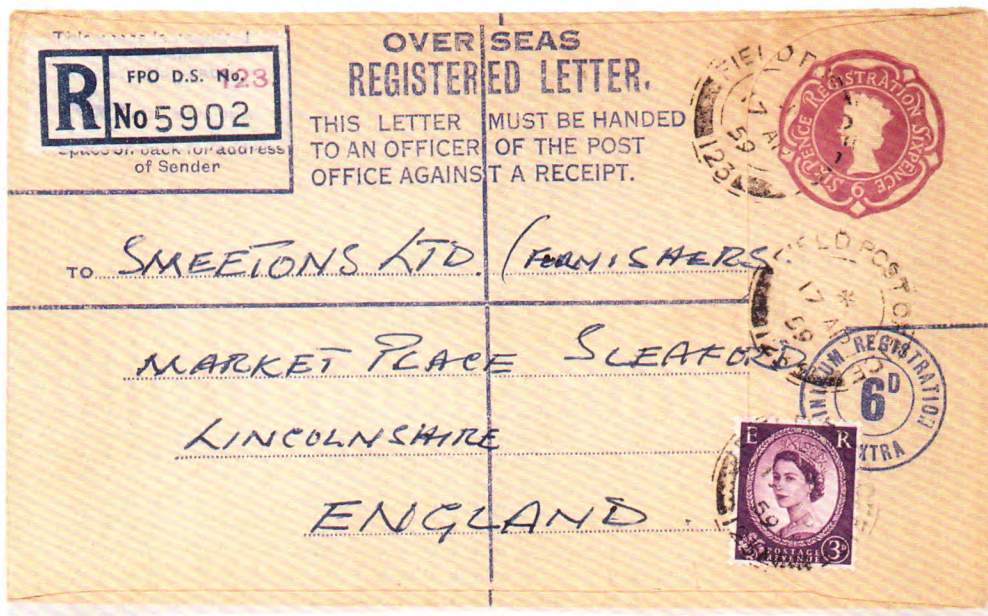
border around three sides of the stamp.

The postcard started this reign with the same Garter arms designed by Garth Jones that had been used for both George V and VI issues before. However, in 1957 the arms were completely redesigned and from then on postcards carried the now familiar arms of our present Queen. When the Post Office became a public corporation rather than a government department, the use of the Royal Arms was no longer applicable and they were gradually removed from all items of postal stationery.

In 1968 Brinkley's design was replaced by a stamp with the words POSTAGE and the stamp's value set away from the new Machin head. This design was prepared so that the value of the stamp could be changed with the least possible effort, although visually, without the restraint of a border, it appeared to spread out from the corner of the card.

Commemorative Air Letters Take Off

Britain's second commemorative air letter was issued to celebrate The Queen's Coronation and was the first item of postal stationery to bear a stamp of her reign. It closely followed the same



Overseas registered envelope of 1957. The stamps only covered the basic registration fee of 1/-, postage being paid by adhesive stamps

format as the George VI air letters, although the airmail device was redesigned and it included the Coronation symbol printed on the face. This large Coronation design, surmounted by the four country emblems, took up most of the front, leaving just enough room for the stamp and address lines.

The 1s. 6d adhesive Coronation stamp by Michael Farrar-Bell (1911-93) was selected for these air letters but inscribed with the new value 6d. The original words POSTAGE-REVENUE across the top had to be changed to POSTAGE-POSTAGE at the insistence of the Inland Revenue, since the

stamp could only be used for postal purposes.

These air letters were printed by McCorquodale and then sent to Harrison and Sons who added the stamp, finally being returned to McCorquodale for cutting and gumming. They were released on 3 June 1953, the previous day having been a public holiday with all post offices being shut. Over the next 18 months the Coronation airmail stamp was used for the normal issue of air letters, although the date of the Coronation was replaced by the value Sixpence and the Coronation symbol on the front was omitted, from January 1955 onwards.

With the Coronation issue came the first faltering step towards accepting the international word "Aerogramme" instead of "Air Letter" for this type of stationery. But for the next 29 years both words were used until 1982 when the term Air Letter was finally dropped.

To mark the 46th Interparliamentary Conference in September 1957 an entirely new stamp appeared on air letters. This was designed by Lynton Lamb (1907-77) and showed the Houses of Parliament and Big Ben. Subsequently the air letters were re-issued without the commemorative overprint. In October 1966, along with other postage increases, the cost of an air letter became 9d and the same stamp was revalued accordingly. This design was retained until July 1968 when it was replaced by David Gentleman's outline of the VC10, a tribute to aircraft design in this country.



Inland postcard with Brinkley's clean design based on the Wilding portrait of HM The Queen. Private overprint for Shakespeare anniversary



1953 commemorative Air Letter – the first item of stationery to be issued for the present reign

After a gap of six years the PO re-introduced commemorative issues, starting in 1963 when views of Tower Bridge and the Houses of Parliament were printed on otherwise standard 6d air letters. Put on sale at 10d each, this was the first time that air letters had been sold above their face value, a policy subsequently adopted for all subsequent commemorative issues.

Shakespeare errors

The 1964 Shakespeare Festival air letters contained two errors. The Royal Shakespeare Theatre was incorrectly captioned as the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre; this was spotted halfway through the print run and the text revised accordingly. The second error appeared in the 6d stamp designed by David Gentleman. It was based on a 17th century engraving of



1964 Air Letter celebrating the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's birth. The stamp shows the Hope theatre and not the Globe as labelled

London by Hollar in which he transposed the names of the Globe and Hope theatres. The PO did not attempt to correct this error since they considered that the engraving was so well known that a subsequent issue was not justified.

The first Christmas air letters appeared in 1965. The first design included a snowflake in the stamp, complemented by a nativity scene, the second featured stylized snowflakes which were also included in the stamp design. Even though these cost more than the normal air letters, they were still very popular. Christmas air letters have become regular favourites ever since, with different stamp designs appearing until recently.

In 1969 a third special issue commemorated the Investiture of HRH The Prince of Wales. This was Britain's first bilingual air letter, with inscriptions in Welsh and English. It carried the standard 9d air letter stamp but was printed in the top panel with David Gentleman's drawing of Caernavon Castle.

Registered Envelopes

The steady rise in postage rates and increases in registration fees over this period created numerous changes to registered envelopes to the extent that new stamp dies were not always available to meet pending price increases. On several occasions envelopes had to be printed with an additional plain impression reading "Minimum Registration Extra" or "Minimum Extra Postage".

Between 1953 and 1970 the stamp design used for registered envelopes closely followed that impressed on plain envelopes, but with the stamp value and words Registration and Postage crammed around the bust of The Queen within the Tudor rose outline.

In 1970 the same octagonal stamp developed for use on other stationery was redesigned to suit registered envelopes, with new wording and values arranged around the Arnold Machin bust of Her Majesty, all contained within the same octagonal border. However, with more space available in this design, the stamp did not have the same cramped appearance of its predecessor.

The numerous increases in both registration fees and compensation rates gave rise to a number of errors in which information printed on the backs of these envelopes failed to keep pace with the value of stamps on the front. Examples of these errors are not often seen as the mistakes were quickly rectified.

© Colin Baker 1996

Competition

SPONSORED BY
OMNIPHIL APPROVALS



Win a GB Queen Victoria 1884 £1 Brown-Lilac Used cat £950!

The prizes for this month's competition have been supplied by OMNIPHIL, specialists in supplying fine stamps on approval, without obligation, by post.

*1st prize: GB Queen Victoria 1884 £1 brown-lilac, letters AP, SG 185, lightly cancelled cds, good looking example with couple of faults but well-centred for this issue. SG cat £950.

*2nd prize: GB Queen Victoria 1840 1d black, letters ND, scarcer plate 1a, extremely fine used, four wide margins, cancelled by well-positioned red Maltese Cross, slightly worn plate appearance. Lovely example. SG cat £180.

*3rd prize: GB Edward VII 1902 10s ultramarine, good colour collectable example with faults, usefully cancelled by clear DE 4 1903 cds enabling positive identification of printing. SG 265 cat £200 as fine.



Introducing OMNIPHIL APPROVALS

When I was a lad...

...I thought that asking to see a selection of stamps upon approval would place me under some onerous obligation. What a pleasant surprise awaited me (after dithering for months before asking to see a selection of stamps from OMNIPHIL). That must have been some 26 years ago and now I actually own the same company! Strange world...

...But some things have not changed and OMNIPHIL is one of them – still providing high levels of service and stamps upon approval to many hundreds of collectors worldwide after over 35 years...

...which is why we would like to entice you to try our approvals without let, hindrance or obligation, by giving you a FREE GB 1841 2d blue SG cat £35 only if you have never tried before (or if you stopped our service some time ago and wish to resume now).

We supply stamps from most countries/areas of the world in addition to GB, but unfortunately the organisation of our stock does not permit us to handle wants lists or latest issues – but if your collection is missing stamps from 1840 to the 1980s all you have to do is tell us ALL the countries/areas that you collect, and we will send a suitable selection as available without obligation, plus the free £35 cat 1841 2d blue, yours to keep whatever you decide. You can stop our service anytime.

Presently OMNIPHIL are offering all *Bulletin* readers the chance to participate in their "WE'LL PAY YOU £100" Discounts Promotion – so if you have not already applied now is your chance. Write now stating all countries you collect and whether you collect mint and used to:

OMNIPHIL APPROVALS
BULLETIN BLUE OFFER
PO Box 29
STROUD
Glos
GL6 6RW



To enter the competition answer the questions below and send, with your name and address, on a postcard or back of an envelope to: May Bulletin Competition, Royal Mail, 22 Finsbury Square, LONDON EC2A 1NL to arrive by 28 June. You may submit as many entries as you like but each must be posted separately; multiple entries in one envelope will be disregarded.

1. Who designed the 1936 *Queen Mary* souvenir postcard?
2. In what year was Lynton Lamb born?
3. Which philatelic organisation is now celebrating its 25th anniversary?
4. In which town is the Cardinal Spellman Philatelic Museum?
5. Who is the author of *Mail By Rail*?

The answers will be found in this *Bulletin*. The competition is not open to employees, families or agents of Royal Mail or Omniphil.

The results of the February competition will be published next month.

The Queen Mary's Maiden Voyage

JAMES NEGUS FRPSL

An event to brighten the brief reign of King Edward VIII took place 60 years ago this month: on 26 May 1936 the passenger liner *Queen Mary* sailed on its maiden voyage. That day was also the 69th birthday of HM Queen Mary herself, who had launched the ship from John Brown's yard on the Clyde in September 1934.

In his memoirs *A King's Story* the Duke of Windsor has recorded travelling to Glasgow as King early in March 1936 while the 81,000-ton vessel was undergoing final fitting-out before being delivered to the Cunard White Star Line. His object was to draw "the world's attention to this stupendous product of British industrial skill". Prior to the voyage he also visited her again at Southampton, the port from which she was to sail to New York.

Philatelic Souvenir

A pleasing souvenir postcard exists as reminder of the maiden voyage, presented with the issue of the magazine *Stamp Collecting* for 2 May 1936. It was given "to enable readers on both sides of the Atlantic to exchange philatelic greetings" and is printed in deep brown on light cream stock,

165 x 101mm, showing the liner and suitable symbols of Britain and the US in an ornate artistic style referring back to pioneer Atlantic steamship crossings (Fig.1).

Extra copies of the postcard were available at 4s (20p) per dozen. For 6d (2½p) *Stamp Collecting* offered to mail a card to any American or Canadian address using the office franking machine fitted with a first-voyage slogan (Fig.2). This machine was a Neopost serial N130, franked 1d, GvR cypher, the town die reading "LONDON / 26 V 36 / W.C.2." The facility was available by sending the card to the magazine's London office "or our stall at New York". The latter would presumably mean a booth at the Third International Philatelic Exhibition (TIPEX), held in New York from 9 to 17 May 1936.

The first return voyage from New York took place on 1 June 1936 and cards can be found postmarked for this event. The one illustrated (Fig.3) has a New York NY 32 paquebot machine cancellation and bears 3c US postage. The reason for the additional 1½d KGV stamp is not known; possibly it was philatelic embellishment, as the US stamp should have been sufficient for paquebot handling. *Stamp Collecting* had arranged "for a limited number of cards to be forwarded to our New York representative for despatch to England and Europe generally by the return voyage." The cost *Souvenir postcard*





Meter-stamp slogan die

was 6d per card, the same as for the outward trip.

Cards used as souvenir of the event cannot, of course, bear adhesives of King Edward VIII, as these were not issued until September 1936, after the *Queen Mary's* maiden voyages. Had they been available they would have made a vivid contrast to the stately, but curiously old-fashioned, image presented by the postcard's design.

The Artist

The drawing was by Sydney Robert Turner (1881-1972) a name revered among Cinderella collectors. Turner formed remarkable collections of fiscals, railway letter stamps and newspaper tax stamps and was a leading authority on La Guaira steamship stamps, long before such specialities were widely recognised. Alone or in collaboration he wrote extensively on these and other subjects, sometimes publishing as brochures in extremely limited editions much sought now by bibliophiles. For four years after 1908 he published with his brother, Guy, the

Used on first return voyage

Record of the Philatelic Students' Fellowship, another literature rarity.

Turner's professional skill in draughtmanship (he was an architect) had always been in demand in philately and examples of his distinctive style will be found in several publications, including his own works. He was first President of the Cinderella Stamp Club on its foundation in 1959, standing down through advancing years in 1967. At his death in 1972 he bequeathed a fiscal collection to the Club, from the auction of which a Sydney R Turner Award was inaugurated. Rather than a trophy or medal, the Club took the enlightened decision to make the award periodically in cash to the author of any substantial monograph on a Cinderella subject submitted for consideration. This best perpetuates his memory as student and writer.

As to the subsequent history of the *Queen Mary*, during the Second World War she served as a troopship. In 1967 she was sold to an American company and berthed at Long Beach, California. She has featured on stamps from a number of countries: Hungary (SG 1029), Ivory Coast (818), St. Vincent (MS 1229, MS 1572), Tonga (MS 1063), and Tristan da Cunha (260).

This simple souvenir card proves to be an interesting memento of an important national event in far-off days.

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Great Britain Decimal Stamp Book Study Circle 25th Anniversary

ALAN PEIRCE

This year marks the silver jubilee of the Great Britain Decimal Stamp Book Study Circle.

GB DSB SC was founded in 1971 by four eminent philatelists. The late Leonard Newbury was the Circle's first President and contributed articles for the *Bulletin* for many years before his death in 1991. The late Ken Davis was the Circle's Treasurer for 20 years and Neville Emms was its first Secretary. Douglas Myall originated many of the Circle's reference systems, including those for Decimal Books (DB series), Decimal Panes (DP series) and perforation types. He wrote and edited the first six editions of the Circle's catalogue. He currently compiles the special series on "Decimal Stamp Books" in the *Bulletin* and is the author of the *Complete Deegam Machin Handbook* and of *Deegam Report* updates.

Complex and interesting

It is doubtful if the founders realised at the time that their vision would develop into a collector and study circle concerned with one of the most complex and interesting themes in British philately. From 1971 to 1975, the "Stitched" booklets had many marginal perforation types, constantly changing cover designs and, towards the end of that era, different paper types. The "Folded" booklet period, from 1977 until 1987, again had regularly changing cover designs and, with a seemingly endless series of changes of postage rates, resulted in a flow of new issues. There followed the current "Window" type booklets which, in their early days, were the subject of Royal Mail and printers' trials, resulting in many different formats. Printers' trials and experiments still continue today. While all changes are not obvious to the non-specialist collector, they are of significant interest to those who study the subject in depth. It can be seen that there has been a consistent flow of varying study material throughout the decimal era and that stamp books provide a fascinating subject for collectors. Stamp books are the only source of many of the varieties of the definitive issues.

The casual collector may be forgiven for believing that Non Value Indicator (NVI) stamps never change and that, apart from cover

variations, there is nothing to collect in the modern booklet era. This is not true. All-over phosphor coated paper was superseded by paper overprinted with phosphor bands that fluoresced yellow and, more recently, by bands that fluoresce blue. Marginal perforation layouts differ. Stamp panes for booklets can be guillotined and/or torn from the primary sheet and paper and gum changes occur. The stamps themselves also undergo subtle changes. For example, the different thickness and positioning of the value provide an interesting study subject. The lithographic printings by Walsall Security Printers Ltd and The House of Questa provide regularly changing printing plate numbers. Since they commenced printing booklets containing red (flame) 1st class definitive NVI stamps for the Royal Mail in 1990, Walsall's plate numbers had progressed from the initial W1 W1 W1 combination to W45 W33 W39 by the end of February 1996 with many combinations in between.

Worldwide membership

Membership of the Circle exceeds 500 worldwide. Members' interests cover a wide spectrum from collectors whose main interest is in the continual flow of New Issues to those who specialise and research all or part of the subject in great detail. The Circle's award winning publication, *The Bookmark Journal*, is published five times a year, running to 150 pages in a typical year. All New Issue reports are supported by booklet cover illustrations and diagrams where appropriate. The results of research are included as soon as the information becomes available, enabling members to search for any elusive material that may exist. An ongoing series concerned with the continuing development of booklets produced by the different printers keeps members up to date. Technical articles for the student who wishes to specialise in greater depth are regularly included, as are items relating to material associated with booklets – bundle and parcel wrapper labels, cover marker bars, sample books and the Post Office's official and promotional literature. *Deegam Reports* are distributed with *The Bookmark*

For details of membership of the Circle, write for an information pack and a sample copy of 'The Bookmark' Journal, to:

Hon. Membership Secretary, GB DSB SC
3 Buttermere Close
BRIERLEY HILL
West Midlands DY5 3SD



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First class
stamps

Journal. Members are encouraged to air their views and to submit articles to the Editor.

Plating Charts

Cylinder plating charts, enabling the reader to "plate" an individual booklet pane into the correct position on the printer's primary sheet, are created for all the photogravure printings of Harrison and Sons Ltd. To date, over 170 plating charts have been compiled. The Circle is the only source for this detail. The charts are created by studying a large number of stamp panes in the issued booklets to identify constant printing flaws. These are meticulously recorded and compared with the reference primary sheet for the relevant cylinder number held at the National Postal Museum. Charts are then produced in a "grid" format detailing the row and column positions of the identified flaws. The completed charts are distributed with the *Journal*. It is not possible to plate the lithographic printings produced by Walsall Security Printers Ltd or The House of Questa.

The seventh edition of *The Bookmark Catalogue*, which uses the DB and DP referencing system, is due to be published later this year. Very comprehensive detail, illustrations, diagrams and editorial comment are included on each individual booklet issue. The different printing processes, primary sheet layouts, perforator types, marker bars, phosphor inks and papers used are dealt with in detail, accompanied by check lists where relevant. For those who might not wish to collect/study in depth, the catalogue contains simplified listings of all relevant information. It does not quote valuations or prices; the specialised dealers cover this aspect with their up-to-date listings.

Meetings, Auctions, Library

Meetings of the Circle are arranged in London and Birmingham during weekends, usually four times a year. Those attending find the meetings

lively encounters with buying, selling and exchanging among members, occasional displays and an opportunity for an informal get together and pooling of knowledge.

Postal auctions of members' material are held regularly. A typical auction consists of about 1000 lots and includes material to interest both beginner and specialist collectors. Each auction covers a particular theme. Stitched books, folded books, machine vended books and early Window books are included in rotation. Most auctions include recently issued material.

The Circle maintains a steadily increasing library. Members may borrow their needs on request to the Librarian, for the cost of postage and packing.

Anniversary Booklet

Permission has been received from Royal Mail for the Circle to produce a private booklet to mark the 25th Anniversary. It will contain the pane of stamps and label commemorating The Queen's 70th Birthday. Members will each receive a free copy of this limited edition. The booklet will be made available to collectors.

New members, whether beginners or experts, are always welcome and all receive the full benefits of membership. If you are interested, please write to the Hon Membership Secretary, GB DSB SC, 3 Buttermere Close, Brierley Hill, West Midlands, DY5 3SD. You will receive an information pack, full details of membership and a sample copy of *The Bookmark Journal*. Those who join by 30 June, the end of the Circle year, will receive all back issues of the current volume of the *Journal*. In this Jubilee year, they will also receive a free copy of the souvenir booklet.

Enquiries concerning the souvenir booklet should be addressed to The Hon Treasurer, GB DSB SC, 4 Gorse Meadow Drive, Barnt Green, Birmingham B45 8XS.

Look Before You Lick!

10. Window Cyl-inders

MATT HINTON

Plate and cylinder numbers are rather like Margaret Thatcher – people seem to either hate them or love them. Personally, I think that the numbers in window books tell a fascinating story about the printing process and a complete set of one series forms an incredible collection on its own.

Although the first window books were only available from 1987, plate and cylinder numbers had been around for a long time as a new one appeared every time a new stamp was issued or damage to the equipment producing a current issue occurred.

The first variety to be seen on a number in a window book was, however, on the first 10 x 13p book where the phosphor cylinder number B74 was displaced such that it was not visible on the selvedge. It appears on what would otherwise be a plain book. A pair sells for around £15. The phosphor cylinder number B75 is displaced on a few books of four and it can be found either above or below the colour cylinder number.

There are more phosphor number dry-printings on the 4 x 14p and 10 x 14p and a few of the 4 x 14p books have missing phosphor. Some numbers are only partially dry-printed with the remainder “smudged”.

Bars and Sliced Figures

Harrison 10 x 19p books can be collected with a thick coloured bar showing above the “B17”. From mid-1989 bars were generally part of Walsall’s primary sheets, appearing on a few

selvedges to the left of the plate number.

About one year later, imperfections in the plate numbers themselves began to be noticed. On the 4 x 1st books some of the “3”s appear with the right of the digit not printed – and a similar fate met the “4” on the 4 x 1st books of mid-1990.

The “5”s did not escape either. A few books issued after March 1991 show it sliced at the right. Some of the earlier 4 x 1st books display either a very weak first “W1” of W1W1W1, only the “W” affected, the base of the “W” omitted, or the “W1” a completely different colour to that intended – ochre-brown instead of pale flame.

Some 1990 10 x 2nd class W2W1W1 books bear a large dot just below the second “W1” and the positions of the individual numbers constituting the plate number vary as well. On some of the 4 x 1st books there is one “W4” only against the top row of stamps whilst on others there is another number which would normally be printed alongside the lower row. The middle “W4” of combination W3W4W4 appeared at the top row on some books and at the bottom row on others.

Chipped “7” and Coloured Dots

In 1992 the number “7” began to appear chipped at the right, or with a blue spot above it, in some books of 10 x 2nd class stamps. Also look out for a blue dot right of the “W6” on the 4 x 2nd W6W7 books. An orange spot is visible to the right of a number of 4 x 1st W6W14W10W3 books which, for a short time, were printed from four plates. There is a scratch visible to the right of the “W10” on some W5W11W10W1 books in this series. A slightly larger blue spot can be found at the top of the selvedge on some

Harrison and Walsall books showing bar (above B17) and to left of second W1)





Walsall 4 x 2nd SAMPLE book (front & back)

W14W9 10 x 2nd class; and on some copies of the 10 x 1st W12W10W12 books there is a large orange spot under the first "W12".

In 1993 the NVIs in the window books included security features, and some of the cylinder numbers began to slant – although presumably not intended as one of the anti-forgery features. The "1" became the latest victim of the phantom plate number slicer, and on the 10 x 1st W24W14W18 books an orange dot is sometimes seen above and to the left of the "W14" with a few examples of the "W18" displaying a small nick. Neither of these varieties add any value to the plate numbers, however.

As plate "W26" appeared, the format of the number altered, appearing much leaner and thinner – slimmer of the year, perhaps! It is worth keeping an eye out for plate W26W14W20 with a pale "W20" as this feature doubles the value of an already scarce number.

Flat 6 and Decapitated

A book which rarely attracts any interest is the Harrison 4 x 2nd class. However, on the September 1993 issue, its cylinder number B6 can be obtained with a flat "6". The phantom plate slicer continues to ravage the issues! On the November Questa 10 x 2nd class it swiped at plate Q2Q2 and succeeded in decapitating the

number. However, on its next attack, where it seriously injured a "W21", it must have been rumbled as no other instances exist after this.

A new overseas rate book containing 4 x 60p stamps was issued in August 1994. This bears plate number W1W1, sometimes with a kind of inverted "T" in the margin. This occurs both in the original book and the Christmas reprint (October 1994) which included some Christmas labels and had a jolly cover design.

The July 1994 Walsall's 10 x 1st book was reissued, this time with the chance of winning a kite inside. Thinking back to my few but eventful experiences with kites, I am not sure that I would want to win another! A much more welcome sight inside the cover was a huge blob on the second "3" of "W33" which is quite a scarce and attractive variety. It never fails to amuse me how much we are willing to pay for essentially faulty books whilst we would never settle for a less than perfect chair or table.

Plate Numbers Galore

A 10 x 2nd Questa book, available from August 1994, can be found with 11 different plate numbers - Q12Q12Q1 (phosphor); Q13Q13Q1; Q14Q14Q1; Q15Q15Q1; Q16Q16Q1; Q17Q17Q2; Q18Q18Q2; Q19Q19Q1; Q20Q20Q1; Q21Q21Q1; and Q17Q17 no phosphor. One of these, Q16Q16, can be obtained with a white spot inside the "Q" of the first "Q16". Finally, the most recent variety first appeared on the "Stampers" promotional books of September 1994 where the "3" and "5" of plate number W35W22W27 are touching.

To finish off I would like to remind you that it is not always necessary for plate and cylinder numbers to contain a curious variety or error in order to be of value. In 1992 eight books were issued with the British Olympic and Paralympic logos printed on the covers. The Walsall 4 x 1st class book can be collected with 14 different plate numbers. Some are very similar indeed – such as the W5W11W10W1, W5W11W9W1, and W5W10W9W1 numbers. In this instance, however, W5W11W10W1 sells for around £3 whilst W5W10W9W1 fetches at least £100 where available, and W5W11W9W1 retails at over £400!

There is a definite moral to this story – always check those "ordinary" books carefully and just imagine how many of the above were destroyed and became victims of an unknowing public's army of tongues!

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Illustrations courtesy of Hampstead Castle (Machin dealers)

"Christmas" Student Stamp Designs

Each year the Royal Society of Arts organises a Design Competition for students at colleges of art. The competition is sponsored by leading companies and organisations, including Royal Mail and stamp printers Harrison & Sons Ltd and The House of Questa. Established in 1924, the competition aims to identify young designers of outstanding promise and to bring their talents to the attention of industry.

Of particular interest to *Bulletin* readers are entries in the Postage Stamp section of the competition. The brief for the 1995/96 competition was to design a set of Christmas stamps; some 345 entries were received from 50 colleges. Students were asked to "consider the various themes, objects, rituals, etc associated with the festival of Christmas and then produce five stamps which reflect and enhance this celebration." The project "offers considerable scope to students of graphic, typographic, photographic or illustration disciplines to explore many images which encapsulate personal perceptions of the theme..."

Students were supplied with some essential guidelines, such as:

1. Think on a small scale from the outset. Once research is complete and decisions have been made on the approach, preliminary visuals should be executed at stamp size using the stamp blanks provided.
2. Since a stamp on an envelope is a prepayment for postage and because the recipient is primarily interested in the content of the envelope, each stamp must convey an immediate message.
3. The format of each set of stamps should be either vertical or horizontal. Do not mix vertical and horizontal formats in the same set.
4. The overall dominant colour of each stamp should be sufficiently different from others in the set to avoid confusion between the stamps which can cause operational difficulties.

The stamp entries were judged by: Dennis Bailey (Chairman), Ronald Maddox (stamp designer), Barry Robinson (Design Director, Royal Mail), W F Rodgers (House of Questa), and John Orford (Sales & Marketing Director, Harrison & Sons). Bursaries were awarded to:



Christze Ferdinando



Marek Slodkowski



Will Anderson

Will Anderson (Bath College of Higher Education) £2000; Frederica Shallis (Bath College) £1500; Marek Slodkowski (Kingston University) £1000; Christie Ferdinando (Surrey Institute of Art & Design) £750; Iris Kiewiet (Edinburgh College of Art) £750; and Daniel Bonner (Edinburgh College of Art) £500. Thomas Barker (Richmond-upon-Thames College) and Andrea Scheier (Southampton Institute) were both highly commended.

To the depths of tradition...

Will Anderson's designs feature religious and secular images connected with Christmas, such as the Three Kings, Father Christmas, a reindeer, and an angel. His research took him "to the depths of tradition, religious symbolism and the commercial plasticity and glitz of modern day celebration...Primarily I wanted each stamp to capture a feeling of tradition, commerciality and celebration. A dream like nostalgia that reflected the beauty and falseness surrounding Christmas." He used computer generated images. He explains his work thus: "First the characters were photographed and then

repainted in photoshop, finally adding the symbols and other details. I also wanted to work with the values on the stamps. This part of stamp design is often neglected. I used Bodoni, a classical and traditional typeface that was also still modern. After adjusting the typeface to give it a new rounder edge the numerals were made translucent."

Time for Children

Frederica Shallis's designs feature children at Christmas. She commented "In nearly every primary school in the country, children perform a school pantomime. Parents make home made costumes, out of a wide variety of materials. Children wear these with a variety of feelings, from apprehension to excitable anticipation." Each year for five years she has photographed children from a local school and for the stamp designs chose children in homemade costumes, with a Christmas theme: a teddy bear, Father Christmas, a shepherd, a fairy godmother, and a reindeer. The photographs were printed on Kentmere Document Art Paper, toned in copper red, and finally coloured with oil paint.

Marek Slodkowski's designs take a child's viewpoint of parental behaviour at Christmas, the stamps featuring a party, "daddy being silly at christmas", giving presents, and visiting relatives. The designs reflect some contemporary social concerns: alcoholism, homelessness, drink-driving, and debt repossession. The child's innocent perceptions are reflected in the words used on the stamps.

More Familiar...

The work of Christie Jay Ferdinando returns to a more conventional idea of Christmas. His designs feature angels, the nativity scene, and Father Christmas. The designs reflect his outgoing personality.

Examples of the work of these four students are reproduced here. The designs submitted by other students will be featured shortly. An exhibition of the student designs can be seen at the National Postal Museum, King Edward Street, London EC1A 1LP from 13 May to 28 June 1996. Open 09.30-16.30, admission free.

The Postage Stamp section of the RSA Competition started in 1971; subjects in recent years have included Museums; Sport; Shakespeare; Summer Time; Peace & Freedom; and 50 Years of Children's Television. Some of the winning designs have featured in this *Bulletin* and in other philatelic publications.



In My View...

**2. Chris Harman, interviewed by
John Holman**

I first met Chris Harman about 20 years ago when we were both new members of a philatelic society (I later became Secretary, and Chris the Chairman). I was impressed then, as now, by his enthusiastic approach to philately, he always enjoys the hobby and wants others to share that pleasure. Today Chris collects a considerable range of material, reflected in his membership of the National Philatelic Society and Collectors Club of New York, and specialist organisations as diverse as the British West Indies Study Circle, China Philatelic Society of London, Spanish Main, Revenue Society of GB, American Revenue Association, British Decimal Stamps Study Circle, and the GB Decimal Stamp Books Study Circle. He serves on the Council of the Royal, has been Treasurer and Membership Secretary of the GBPS, and Chairman of the Cinderella Stamp Club, and is Secretary of the CSC's British Private Posts Study Group.

Chris began collecting, age six or seven, in 1956/57. His father and aunt, both collectors, gave him control number strips of GB stamps overprinted for use in Ireland which they purchased at Irish post offices. Sadly Chris was persuaded by a school friend to divide the strips, the friend gaining the important control numbers. It was an early lesson in philatelic wariness. Chris wrote on stamps for the school magazine, including an article on the famous

Chris Harman, FRPSL



Post Office Mauritius.

By 1969/70, after general "All-World" collecting, Chris had become interested in GB George V – particularly the Downey Heads. A worthwhile collection had been assembled by 1974 when disaster struck and most of the collection was lost in a house fire. The items that escaped the flames were sold and Chris started again, but this time looking for more unusual material in order to produce a "more rounded collection" that would include essays, proofs, covers, examples of usage, as well as basic stamps. In 1975 he obtained a collection of GB postal fiscals, and the following year his first Circular Delivery stamps. He is now an expert on these, author of the standard work (reviewed here in October 1990). In 1982 he bought part of the late Brian Turnpenny's collection of College stamps, adding to his rapidly growing collection of British Private Posts.

Reading the Robson Lowe *Encyclopaedia* "opened all sorts of doors" – discovering "whole areas beyond the SG catalogues". He soon found that in the realms of cinderella material considerable rarities could be purchased at sensible prices, and a collection formed that was both out of the ordinary and one he would be proud to own and display.

Attracting and Developing New Collectors

I asked Chris why he thought fewer children now collect stamps. He believes that many people have a "collecting instinct", but it needs some stimulus to get them started. He thinks it sad that so few of today's youngsters have much interest in history – and history in all its aspects (social, economic, and political) is important in philately. "Maybe", he says, "we are as a country losing our historical perspective, perhaps because it is so long since we were involved in a war". He explains that the threat of disaster "concentrates the mind, faced with losing what we have we appreciate our heritage more". Collecting stamps "can offer all sorts of insights into subjects such as social history, literature, and architecture – areas perhaps not so well covered at schools". Chris believes firmly that schools need to "get back to basics", teach facts properly, with less emphasis on "option teaching" that has developed in recent times.

Moving on from straight-forward stamp collecting to philately "requires a certain state of mind, a degree of concentration, eye for detail, and a willingness to become immersed in a subject". Those who are prepared to spend time

on a specialised subject will find great satisfaction. This applies not just to stamps but to every collectible. In addition to stamps Chris has a reasonable working knowledge of, and collects, furniture and silverware.

Wide Ranging

Chris's collections are many and varied. Most concentrate on the period up to the First World War, although he does have some later material. His favourite collections are of Locals and Forgeries. Both are worldwide in scope, although the Locals collection is particularly strong in GB. The study of forgeries is a vital part of his expertising work and he is about to start on a book on the forgeries of George Kirk Jeffries and the London Gang. Other collections are of Queensland, Grenada (particularly Chalons), Nicaragua, Chile, late 19th century Brazil, China middle issues (1890-1940s), and a reference collection of *Machins* used primarily for expertising purposes on the Expert Committee of the Royal Philatelic Society.

Chris likes the *Machin* as a stamp design, finding it "rather pleasant and the range of colours used over the years can make a fantastic show". However he feels that it has now gone on too long, and that bringing it to an end would enable collectors to finally sort their collections and make a fresh start on a new series. He fears that some *Machin* dealers and collectors search for variations that are of little real philatelic significance, almost to the point of creating varieties. They are in danger of becoming "too close to the subject" and the level of specialism at which they collect may be fundamentally flawed. Will, he wonders, items reckoned of significance now still be distinguishable as such in 20 or 30 years time? He also suggested a simple test for the current significance of variations: "Sort a large number of *Machins* (or another specialist area) into different variations and note what you have found. Mix them all up again and re-sort – see if you come to the same conclusions as before!" I have to admit that my own attempts at sorting *Machins* have sometimes resulted in items classified as a certain printing in one sorting session being designated otherwise in another.

I believe these remarks are important, not just for *Machin* collectors. There is a danger in over-specialisation, the old adage about "knowing more and more about less and less". It pays to have a broad view of stamps as well as specialist knowledge. Chris believes in collecting the

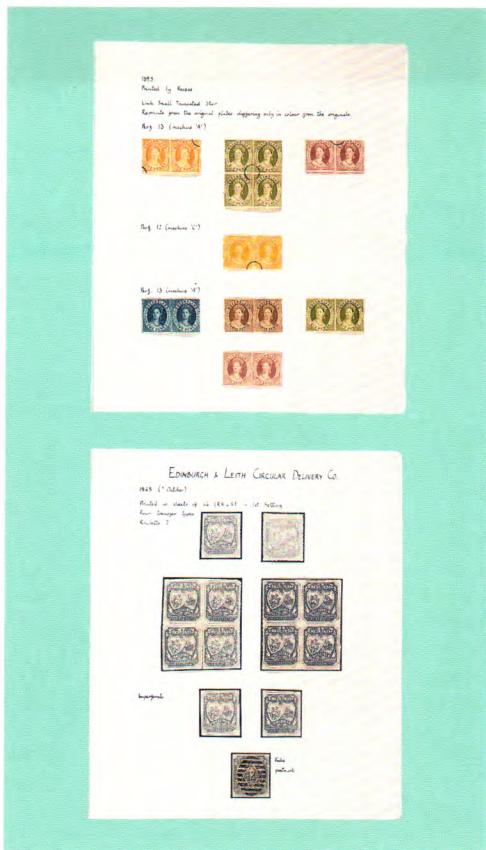
stamps of more than one country – comparing the stamps, printing techniques, postal services of one with another – "you can always learn from such comparison" he says. I concur with this belief- having enjoyed and understood my own specialist collections more since restarting an "All World Used" collection some years ago. Chris sums it up rather neatly: "Collect with the eye of the specialist but with the enthusiasm of the general collector."

Chris is developing an interest in ephemera, seeing this as an important adjunct to philately in the future. He wants to find out how the mail was carried, the story behind the stamps and covers in his collection. He proudly showed me some faded photographs he had found of 19th century parcel carriers and their vehicles – possibly the very people who delivered the packages which bore the stamps now in his albums.

Arranging the Collection

Chris places great store on making his collection look appealing, making each page tell a story. In order to achieve this a page is likely to bear more than one example of a given stamp, including multiples, covers, proofs and colour trials – "every colour trial always looks nicer than the one selected". He enjoys giving displays to societies, sometimes presenting a good mixture of pages from his many collections, say 12 pages of eight subjects to make a 96 sheet display. This might range from Queensland Chalons to the Sun Yat-sen issues of China. Societies often seem to like displays which appeal to a wide audience, although the *College* stamps of Oxford and Cambridge remain a firm favourite.

The collection is written up by hand, although Chris is now experimenting with a word processor and "Deskjet" printer. As a partner in Frank Godden Ltd, leading manufacturer of stamp albums, he, not surprisingly, uses their album pages, of two different sizes depending on the collection, and made to a standard acceptable for long-term "archival" storage. All his pages are stored in album binders as Chris enjoys browsing through the albums. A good album, he feels, adds to the pleasure of collecting. New acquisitions are stored in boxes until mounted and written up. Like most collectors Chris used to find writing up "rather terrifying and nerve-racking", worried about making a slip and having to start again. Now he is more relaxed about it, and rather enjoys the task "especially when I have done it!" He likes the challenge of



Pages from Chris Harrman's Queensland and Circular Delivery Companies Collections

designing the page to give an overall pleasing appearance, mounting all stamps, except Machins, with hinges. For Machins, Archival polyester mounts are used. All pages are stored in "Archival protectors".

Chris acquires most of his stamps from auctions, a small number of dealers, club packets, and occasionally by exchange with other collectors. He spends 4-5 hours a week on his collection: sorting, mounting, writing-up and researching. Most days he browses through the many auction catalogues he subscribes to. He doesn't keep records of his collection or wants, and now spends less time on organised philately. "I don't go looking for jobs", he says, "but when I undertake work for a society I like to do the job well." He describes himself as a quite well - organised collector but admits to "losing" items from time to time, recently spending two days looking for some sheets he had misfiled. "Normally", he says, "I find things easily."

Literature

Philatelic literature is important to Chris. His extensive library (not, he says, on the scale of Francis Kiddle - see interview in January, *Bulletin*), contains a couple of thousand books as well as large numbers of journals and old auction catalogues. He stresses the value of indexes in helping to locate articles for research purposes and always keeps indexes to hand. He makes photocopies of important articles in the general journals, such as *Gibbons Stamp Monthly* and *Stamp Magazine*. He subscribes to this *Bulletin*, and his Stamp Poll entries sometimes include stringent comments on stamp designs he considers fall below the standards expected of Royal Mail. He does not have favourite writers but always looks for articles by acknowledged experts in their field.

Meet Other Collectors

Chris is a great advocate of meeting other collectors and viewing other peoples' collections, particularly for the newer collector. He believes that the best advice for the keen newcomer is to "view as many auctions lots as possible - in this way you will discover items you never knew about and will find tips on how to arrange your own collection". He enjoys buying small collections at auction and using these as a basis for expansion. His Nicaragua collection started in this way. He advises always looking for more than one philatelic avenue that interests you but warns not to dissipate energy "down too many bye-roads". Good advice.

Exhibitions and Museums

Chris likes exhibitions and has attended internationals in France, Netherlands, South Africa and the USA. As a national judge at Stampex, he finds viewing exhibits at internationals very useful. He liked the 1990 international at Alexandra Palace - a "good venue although I accept not ideal for everyone". He is looking forward to The Stamp Show 2000 at Earls Court, hoping it will cater for traditional philatelists as well as attracting newcomers who will "get a lot out of it". He hopes, however, that it will not be "too space age" with too much concentration on modern issues - "that could sow the seeds of disaster to the hobby rather than the fillip the exhibition should be."

He takes judging very seriously and gets annoyed with judges who are too dismissive of exhibits. "We must remember", he says, "that collectors have spent a great deal of time preparing an exhibit, even if it is judged as not

that good". He has found that discussing the exhibit with the owner after the judging can be particularly rewarding. He accepts that competitions are not for all collectors, but suggests more might try – "putting together a coherent exhibit is a challenge and will teach you things about your material that you never knew before."

Chris uses the National Postal Museum and the British Library in his researches, and would like to visit them more. He is pleased the Phillips Collection remains a prominent part of the NPM displays. Like Francis Kiddle, he believes institutions such as the BL can become "conservation obsessed", but he sees no problem in having to make appointments to see BL material. From being "virtually closed" a few years back, "it is now receptive to the people going there." It is a pity though, he believes, that a museum often seems unable to develop a "live" collection – "The Getty Museum in California improves its collections by buying and selling items. It may be appropriate to view the Tapling Collection as a time capsule showing the style of collecting in the 1890s but does a museum really need the massive duplication of the Fletcher Collection of GB postal history and stamps?"

Royal Mail and the BPT

Chris sees the main function of Royal Mail within the philatelic world as issuing stamps which will "excite the collecting gland" in potential collectors, starting a chain reaction which will lead people to collect, and stimulate their interest in social and postal history. He fears that too many of today's special issues appear "one and the same" and interest is lost. He praised Royal Mail involvement, with Stanley Gibbons, in Stamp '95 – "a most unusual and stimulating exhibition – tremendous for children with gift bags, etc to kindle their interest in stamps". He was looking forward to Stamp '96.

But he described the linkage between Royal Mail and more advanced philately "as a *non - sequitur*", with the exceptions of the Museum as a resource for philatelic study, and the research articles published in the *Bulletin*. He knew too little of the work of the British Philatelic Trust to comment on its value to the philatelic community, except that its contributions had helped the publication of a number of worthwhile books.

He would like to see more about stamps in the national press and on TV, perhaps in an

"Antiques Roadshow" style of programme, which is already being done in Scotland on the radio from time to time.

Philatelic Mentors and Achievements

Chris was somewhat reticent when asked about today's philatelists he admires. Of the past greats he singled out Sir Edward Bacon (1860-1938) whose books he commends: "Although they were written long ago they are still 80% right. Bacon's great knowledge helped George V with his collection, and in arranging the Tapling Collection." Of today's philatelists, Robson Lowe is praised for his "vast contribution", in particular the six-volume *Encyclopaedia* first started in 1947. "So often", says Chris, "research has proved his original theories were correct".

Of his own achievements, Chris cites winning the Windsor Bowl (top National class prize) at Stampex 1978, for an exhibit of GB Postal Fiscals, as giving him most pleasure, closely followed by publication of his book on Circular Delivery stamps. Asked about the favourite pieces in his collection, he says he is "torn between" two items. Firstly, a reprint from the original plate (now lost) of the Post Office Mauritius 1d and 2d. Produced in 1912, this comprises the two stamps, in black, two of each value tête-bêche. Secondly he chose Perkins Bacon die proofs of the first issue of Queensland.

What, I asked to end the interview, would he take if cast away on a desert island? No hesitation – the Robson Lowe *Encyclopaedia* (plus the second part of Vol 6 when published), and "a pile of Cypher labels" used from 1701 to the 1920s in GB (but also New South Wales, New Zealand, and Queensland) to cover the seals of revenue stamps on documents (see October 1995 *Bulletin*, page 52). Hand-engraved, and printed in red or black on various papers, these are normally only found as singles. Chris would enjoy trying to reconstruct the plates from his pile of labels.

As always after talking to Chris, I came away with renewed enthusiasm for my own research and writing. His approach to the hobby shows that serious philately need not be stuffy and boring. Quite the reverse – it stimulates interest and enjoyment in areas hitherto unexplored, and for those with a degree of concentration, an eye for detail and a willingness to become immersed in a subject, will ensure a lifetime hobby offering satisfaction and pleasure.

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Exhibition News

Capex '96

Visitors to this international exhibition in Toronto (8-16 June) will be able to see several "galleries" featuring unique or rare philatelic material – some never before on public view.

The *Queen's Court* will feature outstanding examples of British North American issues from the Royal Philatelic Collection at Buckingham Palace.

Selected items from *The Mizuhara Philatelic Centre Foundation* will cover the history of the postal system in China, the Imperial Post and include classical Chinese philatelic material.

The *Canada-France* gallery will chronicle the 300-year-old postal relationship between Canada and France, presenting an intriguing collection of historical philatelic material assembled by the Musée de la Poste de Paris, in cooperation with institutional and private collectors in the two countries.

The material in the *Gems of British North America* gallery has been assembled by some of North America's foremost BNA dealers and specialists.

Capex '96 is a World philatelic exhibition organised by the Royal Philatelic Society of Canada with the support of the presenting sponsor, Canada Post Corporation. It will be held at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre. Enquiries: Capex '96, PO Box 204, Station Q, Toronto, Ontario, M4T 2M1, Canada.

Decimal Exhibition at Bank of England

An exhibition is currently on show at the Bank of England Museum marking the 25th anniversary of the introduction of decimal currency. Included in the displays are early decimal stamps, the printing plate of the 1970 £1 definitive (recess printed in sheets of 100) and Post Office leaflets and literature announcing the change in currency and its effects on the postal service. These items are from the National Postal Museum and the private collection of Lionel Jones. The Bank of England Museum is open Monday-Friday.

Post Office Archives Centenary

The Post Office Archives & Records Services this month celebrates its centenary. On 1 May 1896 it became a centralised unit providing historical information services to PO officials and public access to the archives. To commemorate this milestone in its history, the Archives & Records Services is delighted to announce the latest addition to its historic miniature collection. This, the eighth in the series, depicts a 1938 boy messenger. Feature articles on the Boy Messenger grade and the uniforms worn, and on the history of the Archives will be published here shortly.

As with previous miniatures, this new figurine will be available for a limited period (until 30 June 1996) at a special introductory offer price of £21.95; thereafter £25. Please state *Philatelic Bulletin* with your order. A handling charge of 60p should be added; remittances, made payable to "The Post Office" in £ sterling, should be sent to: Post Office Archives & Records Services, Freeling House, Mount Pleasant Complex, Phoenix Place entrance, London EC1A 1BB.



1995 Stamp Poll – Readers' Comments

Last month we published the results of our 1995 Stamp Poll. This month, and next, we publish a selection of your views on each issue, also some of your general comments on our stamp design and policy. As always the Editor enjoyed reading the voting forms which came from all parts of the world. It is very pleasing that *Bulletin* readers take such an interest in this annual poll.

Cats



They look like real cats with distinct personalities, not exotic types in unlikely settings...I liked them so well I bought the collector plates and mugs as well as the stamps.
J Tompkins-Scott, Canada

They so accurately illustrate the relaxed, languorous attitude of the feline species.
D V Knight, Dorset

A great opportunity to display originality has been missed; what we got was pure sentimentality.
W Leamy, London

My book *Stoke Mandeville Hospital Cats* has just been published. Everytime I corresponded with the publisher I used the Cats stamps – for luck!
D Kirby, Bucks

I like the subject, I like the layout and I particularly like the full Queen's head.
G Williams, Oxon

I adore cats – on my lap and on my stamps.
S Evans, London

The Cats would have been superb if photographs had been used instead of artistic impressions.
F E Croft, Notts

Elizabeth Blackadder has caught real cats – ones we all know or can imagine, not stylised.
S Klar, London

Perfection itself in every respect.
S Peruerd, France

Appealing without being oversentimental, bright without being garish.
B Leveridge, Yorkshire

Excellent artwork and printing with great clarity of value.
W H Davies, Lancs

Horrible animals!
J C Twomey, Devon

They are feel-good stamps.
B F Wilds, Essex

Colour gradation is superbly done.
T S Camplin, W Midlands

Graceful...Dignified...Could Elizabeth Blackadder do the same again on a future issue of Greetings stamps please?
J P Mager, Glos

There is calm and humour in the designs without the jarring unevenness of some of the other sets.
M Gibson, Sussex

Awful drawings.
A Willis, Surrey

Well-observed miniature paintings of cat behaviour.
R R Burges, Co Durham

The Cat stamps look like they're not finished!
M Williams, Hants

As an ailurophile, the cats set won paws down!
C A Slater, Cheshire

The designs are cat-like without being cute-sy.
S Marriott, W Yorks

Springtime

I was amazed to find Goldsworthy's wonderful sculptures translated so well to the miniature format. Truly works of art in every sense.
A F Wilson, Surrey

The whole set was excellent, every stamp a gem in its own right.
J Cobbold, Hants

Spring Grass (41p) epitomizes new fresh life



with its beauty and purity rising out of the dark hole of winter and death. *A G Stewart, Edinburgh*

They arrested my attention. They called me to study, contemplate and wonder. Thanks for a year of interesting and enjoyable stamp offerings. *F Schlador, USA*

Bizarre! *P M Mitchell, Somerset*

The Springtime issue puzzles me. *W M Jackson, Sussex*

Superb ideas, well designed and made. Looked even better on the postcards. Even my daughter at Bath Art College was impressed and that is something. *J McCaig, Kent*

After the delightful Seasons stamps of previous years, Sprintime proved an anticlimax. *A Partington, Tyne & Wear*

I was disappointed in Sprintime although the designs are very clever. *V Anslow, Essex*

They show amazing shapes made by just simple leaves hitting your eyes. *J Copey, Italy*

A friend asked me what a liquorice allsort, shells, and a bullet hole had to do with Springtime. Enough said? *J H Miller, Devon*

Having seen this artist's work "in the flesh" I am very impressed at how well it has transferred to stamp-size. Congratulations to Royal Mail for encouraging contemporary art. *A Kinkead, Hants*

To my opinion the set of five stamps depicting fossils form a perfect entity as well in subject as in composition. *R M Ulmann, Netherlands*

Combines excellence of design, colour, and reproduction of fine detail with botanical

interest. *I Morrison, Glasgow*

Very original and bursting with new life. *M A Walton, Co Durham*

The 41p stamp looks like its a window that's had a bullet fired through it! *S Stanley, Middx*

They evoke the promise of Spring to come... *N Tyson, Somerset*

Clever design and colour well in scale with stamp size, and individually strong on any envelope. Queen's head clearly displayed and accompanied by very form value figures. *F W Hadgkiss, Spain*

Worst of all time. *P Hampshire, London*

Very attractive; unfortunately I can't see any connection between them and Spring. They would have been more relevant to an Autumn/harvest festival or nature issue. *A J Birch, Bristol*

A tellingly subtle set, beckoning us to use eyes and imagination to produce wonderful symbols of Spring from nature's bounty. *M C Davenport, Herefordshire*

Good idea to make such sculptures from natural materials...natural beauty of these stamps. *Z Perojevic, Croatia*

Worst set of the year. I gather I'm not the only person to mistake their meaning and honestly wondered what fossils and molluscs had to do with Sprintime! *D J Cargill, Middx*

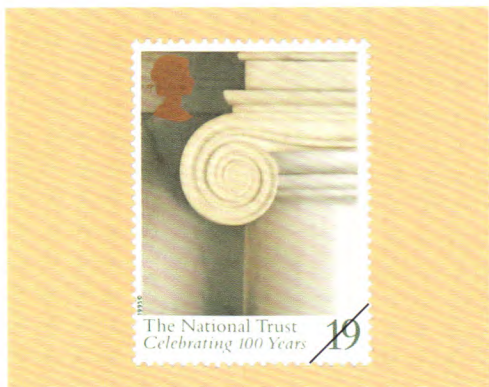
I feel a real opportunity to show the loveliness of an English Spring was sadly missed. Even the colours of the stamps were more those of Autumn. *P Padgham, Kent*

National Trust

An excellent set of stamps...I hope they will awaken interests in a few people and encourage them to join the NT. *J A Everett, Leics*

The set showed a bigger range of NT involvement than most people realise. A very fine colourful set. *L Andrews, Beds*

Excellent designs displaying consistency over a



wide range of subjects, buildings, art, coastline and land. The superlative 19p crowns the series. *S H Pickett, Dorset*

An imaginative elegant set. The detail and colour of the 30p stamp is wonderful and I can only describe the 19p, my favourite of the year, as supremely elegant. *A Nimmo, Glasgow*

Worst of all is the unicornd Queen's head on the 25p NT stamp. *E Christie, Glos*

Perfectly epitomised all aspects of the NT. *F B Sole, Surrey*

Conveys all that is beautiful and precious to England's heritage especially in the eyes of an Englishman living far from England's shores. *E D Savage, Canada*

Not as good as hoped – unlike the previous NT set which was one of the best ever. *R Dixon, Berks*

Peace & Freedom

A wonderful eclectic mix of subjects and styles... caught the mood of the nation and did the main job of any stamp – they looked good on an envelope! *B Elrick, Aberdeen*

A fitting tribute to those whose sacrifice we can never fully repay. *M Maitland, London*

Why was Folon given another commission after the debacle of his previous "Europe in Space" set? *S Chamberlain, Surrey*

I vote for them for the meaning behind the symbolism, rather than the visual content of the

stamps. *R Shaw, Essex*

These beautiful stamps go all over the world showing clearly the Red Cross and Dove of Peace which meaning is universally understood. *D J Halloran, Edinburgh*

What an awful mess this issue was. And such an important event! *P A W Overell, Derbyshire*

They commemorate something really worthwhile. Many sets although attractively designed, mean little to wide world collectors and recipients. *K R Tillet, Essex*

Stamps 19 and 20 bring back memories – both good and bad memories in my case. *M Lendelson, Glasgow*

The picture of St Pauls came to symbolise the hope and spirit the nation would not give up. *R Owen, Essex*

What a pity the Peace & Freedom issue didn't hang together as a set. *R Smith, Surrey*

Most suitable for the occasion. *R Bull, Clwyd*

Stamps 19 and 20 are a tribute to Britain and its people's immense contribution to the victory in 1945. *R Kern, USA*

Peace symbolism said nothing to me. *W K Lacey, New Zealand*

End of War very good, Red Cross and UN poor – as expected from the designer of the Europe in Space stamps. *P Domone, USA*

Collection enriching. *J C Proenca, Portugal*



Oh dear! *J C Tivomey, Devon*

There is no better way for our country to show the world our desire for universal Peace & Freedom for all peoples – everywhere – than these stamps on every envelope. *F M G Davis, Suffolk*

Peace & freedom is surely everyman's desire. Particularly for all the people of Northern Ireland and Bosnia. *R Powell, Middx*

May God forgive Royal Mail for Peace & Freedom set! I never saw anything worst than these poor stamps. *M Ravera, Italy*

Science Fiction



Vivid and imaginative, representing science fiction very well. *J Protasiewicz, London*

Innovative and different. *M Nunes-Váz, London*

Lets you escape from the real world for a while. *C McKenzie, Surrey*

These stamps stood out in an otherwise bland stamp year. *D Williams, Liverpool*

Awful. Whoever decided on the subject and the designs needs sacking! *C S Hallifax, Surrey*

Best designed GB set for a very long time, regarding colour and innovation. A refreshing change. *P Hampshire, London*

Involves the use of colours to a wonderfully dramatic effect. *G A Oakes, Oxon*

1995 plumbed the depths and scaled the heights!

The nadir was the puerile sherbet labels called Science Fiction. (The Globe stamps were inspired and Christmas Robins just beautiful.) *A W Rhodes, Shropshire*

Being so colourful they may appeal to younger people and get them interested in philately. *A Hicks, Mid-Glamorgan*

A brave move away from the "comfortable" usual run of designs. *J Lewis, Somerset*

Although they commemorate something from the past, this is the first issue for many years which looks "forward" into the future. The designs were vibrant and stunning. *J Swanborough, Worcs*

Whilst they are brash, they are exciting. *J A Heys, Sussex*

Unusual in design but bright and colourful which really stands out on any envelope or parcel. A good overall concept. *M A Popejoy, Surrey*

The most ugly set issued in recent years. Ugh! *G W White, Staffs*

Look like stamps from third World poor republic just issued to make money. *R C Barber, Surrey*

American comic art. Ugh! *J C Tivomey, Devon*

Worst!! No more like these please. *A T R Hutchinson, Zimbabwe*

The most original and outstanding design I have ever seen on British stamps. *I Griffiths, Derbyshire*

A fun set – bright, bold, modern. Cocks a snook at stuffed shirts who sneer at the genre. *B Calvert, Notts*

Expresses in colourful symbolism what Wells wished to convey. The combination of literary message and philatelic skill makes a piece of art. *H-D Payer, Germany*

Very ugly. *E A Beard, Berks*

Views on Shakespeare's Globe, Communications, Rugby League, Christmas, and Greetings, also some general comments on stamp design and policy next month.



Hospitals Stamp Club

DEF Murphy writes:

May I seek your assistance in bringing the existence of the Hospitals Stamp Club to the notice of your readers?

A pilot group was set up in Margate in 1992 with the simple objective of taking collecting to children stuck in hospital to give them something different to do. It is not a covert recruiting scheme but we naturally hoped that some would continue after leaving hospital and we give all the encouragement we can. The HSC has achieved all it set out to do and is now firmly established. It is not really a club but more an overall framework that can be applied anywhere. Efforts have been made to start groups in other areas but all have foundered due to lack of volunteers. We believe the idea is well worth pushing and a team of four would be quite adequate. We work in two teams of two with one pair operating each Monday afternoon. We give any interested youngsters a small stock book, magnifier and pair of tweezers to keep and a bag of stamps to sort through. We are there to help as required and we often find parents take a keen interest.

The British Philatelic Trust recognises the HSC as an approved organisation in the junior philatelic field and will give material assistance to any group linked to a properly constituted philatelic society. Our group is a member of the ABPS; our membership fee being donated by a supporter. Stamps, etc are donated by friends in our local society.

With a captive audience, the HSC is a useful means of taking collecting to the younger generation. We have produced a background paper on the HSC together with some notes on setting up a group which I would be pleased to send to anyone interested on receipt of a SAE. Write to: D E F Murphy, "Langano", Painters Forstal, Faversham, Kent, ME13 0DU (Tel. 01795 532664).

Sub-Post Office Photographs

Tony Buckingham writes:

Help needed with interesting Sub-Post Office

photographs.

To coincide with the issue of stamps featuring Sub-Post Offices (October 1997) Benham are looking for really interesting and unusual sub-post offices. We need colour transparencies or prints which we can use to illustrate our individual sets.

If any readers could help us, we would be delighted and of course would reward them with philatelic "goodies". If anyone can help us, would they please write to our Design Department, Malin Fletcher, The Benham Group of Companies, Benham House, Tontine Street, Folkestone, Kent CT20 1SD.

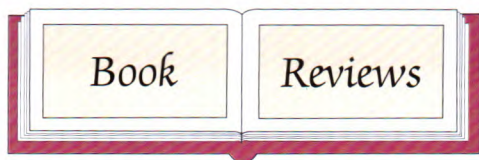
Bulletin Back Issues

Three readers have back issues for sale: Mr B McGee of 2 Greatfield Drive, Ossett, W Yorkshire, WF5 0SA has issues from 1981-90, with three binders. Mr J Hallewell of Gelli Goch, Trawsfynydd, Gwynedd, LL41 4YD offers issues of 1972 to the present, with 1972-79 issues in binders, for £30 postpaid anywhere in the UK. Thomas Rowley of 42 Torcross Road, Higher Blackley, Manchester M9 3QP has for sale September 1973-February 1982, also November 1970 and May 1973 issues, mostly in bound volumes and including indexes.

Stamp Sorter Wanted

Volunteer needed for a national charity based in Camden Town, London working to improve the quality of life of older people and their carers. We require a volunteer to sort and process used stamps sent in by our members. If interested, for further details please call the Appeals Manager on 0171 485 4513.

The Editor is always pleased to receive contributions for Postbag, especially letters adding information to that already published, so benefiting fellow philatelists. All letters to the Editor are carefully read; matters of general interest will be dealt with in "Postbag". The Editor regrets that he is unable to reply personally to letters.



Peter Johnson has spent many years studying and photographing Travelling Post Offices. Now a decade after his book *The British Travelling Post Office*, he has written **Mail By Rail: The History of the TPO & Post Office Railway** which will be welcomed by collectors of TPO postmarks and all interested in the carriage of mail on our railways. For over 150 years the railways have provided Royal Mail with an essential transport service. Over the years the pattern and nature of the railways' operations have changed, TPO routes have come and gone and more change is likely in the future.

Mail By Rail is a handsome production, extremely well-illustrated with many photographs taken by the author on his travels around the country. These feature TPO services in action, carriages in sidings, and on preserved railways and museums. Illustrations include the famous lineside apparatus used to pick up mailbags from TPOs travelling at speed, the interior of TPO carriages showing sorting frames, and staff at work processing mail. Various special events, organised by Post Office Public Relations in recent years, are depicted, including special trains hauled by *Mallard* in 1988 as part of the launch of the Transport & Communications stamps. Mail was sorted on the train – see Mr Johnson's report in the August 1988 *Bulletin*.

The book is arranged in eight sections, beginning with a brief account of TPO history, followed by listings of TPO services, 1838-1995 and chapters on TPO Rolling Stock; Working the Apparatus; TPO postmarks, the Late fee and Collectables; The Gentlemen of the TPOs; Railnet; and The Post Office Railway (London). The Collectables chapter includes some good postmark illustrations. Mr Johnson writes: "Good strikes of older TPO datestamps and markings are scarce and attract good prices. Impressions can be found cancelling loose stamps which are still collectable. For postwar items the strikes must be clearly legible. The scarcest modern postmarks are those of the Chester Relief Sorting Carriage, followed by the

temporary TPOs and first/last days of new/withdrawn services." Models of TPO vehicles are also popular with collectors – a Hornby production of 1986 is featured.

The chapter on the well-known Post Office Railway explains the workings of this system, opened in 1928 and still going strong. Approval for the underground railway needed both Cabinet approval and an Act of Parliament which received Royal Assent in 1913. Work was delayed by the First World War, and the empty tunnels were used to store treasures from London museums until 1919. Illustrations include vehicles in the repair section as well as in use carrying mail, track diagrams, and the commemorative cover marking the line's 50th anniversary.

Mr Johnson and the publishers, Ian Allen, are to be commended on a well-written and illustrated volume. 128 pages, hardback with dust jacket. ISBN 0 7110 2385 9. Price £16.99. Available from bookshops, including Ian Allen shops in Birmingham, London and Manchester, or by mail order from Littlehampton Book Services, 10-14 Eldon Way, Lineside Estate, Littlehampton, BN17 7HE, Tel. 01903 721596.



May/June Digest

To be issued in May/June

6 May: National Postal Museum postcards: "Robert Burns Man of Letters" reproducing unused designs for 1966 stamp issue

7 May: Football Legends stamp cards

13 May: 10 x 1st stamp book with Olympic Triathlon promotion (3 versions)

14 May: Football Legends stamps, pack, and postcard book

14 May: European Football Championship prestige stamp book

8 June: Football Legends Philatelic Numismatic Cover (includes £2 commemorative coin)

18 June: Olympics aerogramme

To be withdrawn in May/June

1 May: Peace & Freedom stamps, presentation pack, stamp cards

4 May: National Postal Museum postcards – Victorian Post Office and Freddie Mercury Album. *Note: To be withdrawn from sale at Bureau; will remain on sale at NPM shop.*

15 May: £1 book – Inspiration for Victory 3 (*Contains 25p stamps with yellow fluor*)

15 May: 4 x 1st stamp book (R J Mitchell) and Mitchell label pane

15 May: 4 x 35p, 4 x 41p, 4 x 60p stamp books (issued 16 May 95) (*Contain stamps with yellow fluor*)

5 June: 50p & £1 books – Sea Charts 3 and Sir Rowland Hill 3

28 June: 29p definitive with yellow fluor (*printing with blue fluor remains on sale*)

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

Events – May 1996

until 3 May: "The Story of Greetings Stamps" exhibition at National Postal Museum, King Edward Street, London EC1A 1LP. Stamps, stamp artwork, *The Times* cartoons. Open Mon-Fri 09.30-16.30. Admission free. Enquiries: 0171-239 5420.

until 30 June: Display of Seychelles/Zil Elwanngen Sesel 1983 Wildlife issue (artwork, essays, proofs, issued stamps) at British Library, Great Russell Street, London WC1. Open Mon-Sat 10.00-17.00, Sun 14.30-18.00. Enquiries: 0171-412 7635/6.

4-12 May: Aviacion Y Espacio '96 Aero and astrophilately exhibition commemorating 75th anniv of Spanish Civil & Postal aviation. With Espamer '96 national stamp exhibition, Seville, Spain. Enquiries: British Commissioner – B Asquith, Alandale, Radcliffe Gardens, Carshalton Beeches, SM5 4PQ.

7 May-31 December: "Robert Burns – Man of Letters" exhibition at National Postal Museum. Open Monday-Friday 09.30-16.30.

11 May: Spring Assembly of Midland Philatelic Federation at King Edward VI College, Lower High Street, Stourbridge, W Midlands. Open 10.00-16.30. Hosted by Dudley Phil Soc. Stamp fair, Dealers, Refreshments, Car parking. Admission Adults 30p, Concessions 15p Displays. Refreshments. Enquiries: E R Clark, 122 Coniston Road, Wolverhampton WV6 9DU.

13 May-28 June: Student Stamp Designs exhibition at National Postal Museum, King Edward Street, London EC1A 1LP. Royal Society of Arts 1995/96 Design Competition. Open Mon-Fri 09.30-16.30, admission free.

18-24 May: China '96 – 9th Asian International Philatelic Exhibition, China International Exhibition Centre, Beijing.

25 May: StampEssex '96 (Spring Association of Essex Phil Socs Day), hosted by Sudbury Phil Soc, at St Peter's, Market Hill, Sudbury. 10.00-16.00. Enquiries: I Pittway, 01787 461691

