

January 1994

British Philatelic Bulletin



Royal Mail

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British Philatelic Bulletin

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Front Cover:

Biggles from the 1994 Greetings stamps (see page 128).

Contents

The Oldest Working Post Office in the World – Sanquhar, Scotland	116
Phosphorescent Materials Sort The Mail – Stamp Tagging	119
Philatelic Terms Explained – Aerogrammes and Airgraphs	124
Competition – Win “Alice in Wonderland” stamp case	126
Customer Knows Best – Cartoon Fun	127
Royal Mail News – 1994 Greetings stamps, etc.	128
Imperial Mail Delivery – Postal Services in Shimla	134
Collectors Club for young philatelists – New Royal Mail club	139
Book Reviews – PO History, First Day Covers, Letter Boxes	140
Stamp Scene – Stamp Master, Railway Letter Stamps, etc.	142
January Digest & Stop Press – To Pay labels	144

Main Feature

Age of Steam

135

Martyn Fry looks at the history of the Midland and North British Railways and the thematic appeal of railways on stamps.



The Oldest Working Post Office in the World

JAMES MACKAY

The October 1966 *Bulletin* included the results of a survey conducted earlier that year to determine the oldest post office in the United Kingdom. It was claimed that the post offices at Edderton, Shipton-under-Wychwood, Kingsworthy, Wormshill, Dennington, Donaghmore, Guyhirn and Potterspury had functioned in the same buildings since the middle of the 19th century. The claim of the Sanquhar sub post office to the title of the oldest rested on the statement of the then sub postmaster, James Hogarth, that the office had been in the same building "since 1800, if not earlier". The building itself was of considerable antiquity, as title deeds existed from 1757 onwards. The late Joe Henderson found a reference to the Sanquhar post office in the *Edinburgh Almanac* of 1763, and on this basis dated the foundation of the office to that year, when he published his book on Scottish post offices later in 1966. As a result, the title of Sanquhar as the oldest working post office in the same building was established and a board stating that it was *Sanquhar Post Office* (Photo: James Mackay)

opened in 1763 was erected above the doorway. Oddly enough, that board is still *in situ*.

I first cast doubt on these facts about 10 years later when I acquired a letter posted at Sanquhar in 1738, with a very nice, clear impression of a small straight-line postmark. This proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that a post office had been in existence in Sanquhar in 1738, if not earlier. Indeed, the fact that Sanquhar had a name-stamp at such a relatively early stage (even Glasgow did not have one till 1740) implies that, even then, it was an office of importance, let alone some years' standing. Subsequent investigation revealed that the *Edinburgh Almanac* had been first published in 1763; Mr Henderson had merely assumed a date of establishment of Sanquhar post office from the fact that details of its postal services were given in that volume.

Early 18th century

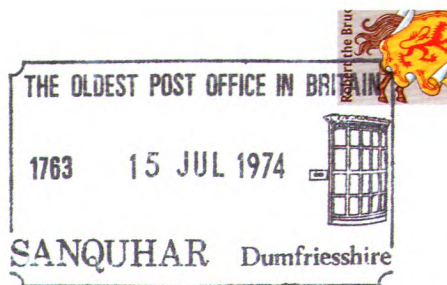
Research in more recent years, principally in Register House, Edinburgh and the Dumfries and Galloway regional archives, has revealed



that a cross-post linking Dumfries and Ayr via Sanquhar and Cumnock was established either late in 1711 or early in 1712. What is now the post office in Sanquhar is one of the oldest buildings in the town. What is even more remarkable is the fact that it has survived the modernisation of the High Street when many other buildings of a comparable vintage have been demolished. Today, it is sandwiched between two taller buildings of more recent origin, but it retains the original bow-fronted window which, alone, would make it an attractive feature to visitors. Its narrow frontage is very deceptive, for the post office actually runs back from the main street, in a succession of additions and extensions dating to various times in the 19th century, as the importance and manifold duties of the office expanded. At the back of the office is a narrow garden terminating in a two-storey stable block giving on to the street which was, two centuries ago, the main road through Upper Nithsdale. The building was originally a change-house where coaches halted and horses were exchanged for fresh beasts. The postmaster was originally no more than a horse-hirer (indeed, the term "postmaster" survived with this archaic meaning till the beginning of this century). It seems logical that, when the Nithsdale cross-post was established in 1712, the change-house should also have been the place where the mail-runners rested and exchanged bags before starting on their respective return journeys back to Dumfries or on to the next stage at Cumnock. Architecturally the building is of considerable interest and dates from the late 17th century. A carved stone bearing the date 1700 is still embedded in one wall.

The Crichtons

At this particular time the building belonged to Abraham Crichton, who disposed it in 1712 to his nephew James Cringan and his wife Jane Barrie. Abraham Crichton was the scion of a wealthy and powerful family, descended from the Crichtons of Eliock who were the principal landowners in the area. Over the centuries the Crichtons lost most of their estates but they continued to own a great deal of property in the burgh and, more importantly, to wield almost dictatorial powers, often holding the offices of Town Clerk, Dean of Guild and Provost simultaneously. It is not known whether Abraham Crichton was appointed postmaster in 1712 or not, as no record of an actual name has



1774-75 tourist handstamp

been preserved in burgh archives till December 1739 when John Forsyth was mentioned as being paid 8 shillings for the transmission of two letters about the town's affairs. Forsyth was elected a councillor in 1730 and subsequently became Deacon of the Masons and Wrights trade guilds and a Bailie in 1742. He was succeeded by Alexander Bradfute who also served as burgh schoolmaster from 1758 to 1762. When he demitted office he was succeeded by James Crichton, grandson of Abraham and already holding office as Town Clerk (since 1759). The earliest documents so far discovered are the accounts of the post office for the period ending 5 April 1763, showing that the revenue from letters posted in Sanquhar amounted to £1.17s.5d. The postmaster's salary was £3.12s, paid in quarterly installments. Out of this Crichton had to pay the meagre salary of a deputy for manning the office, as well as contribute towards the wages of the runners who carried the letters south to Dumfries or north to Cumnock. The earliest runners of whom we have record were Archibald Frazer who held the appointment till he retired in 1740, and his successor Robert Slowan who carried the mails till 1745. In addition, however, there was a horse-post from the capital. According to the *Edinburgh Almanac* of 1763 the Edinburgh-Sanquhar Post left the capital at 9pm three times a week. Letters are recorded from 1747 at least, from London to parts of Nithsdale endorsed "by the Sanquhar Bagg via Edinburgh" indicating that, by that date at any rate, Sanquhar ranked as a Post Town.

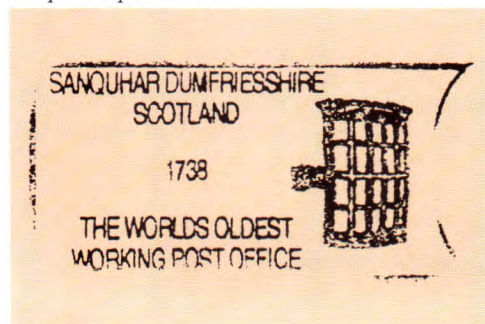
What has now emerged is that, apart from the Crichtons, various people who were related to them (usually by marriage) held the postmastership, as far back as parish records go. Another interesting fact is the extremely long service of some of these postmasters. John Crichton held office from 1762 till 1806. His

successor John Halliday was postmaster from then until 1858. The family connection was broken that year when James Kerr took over the office which was, even then, such a hallowed institution that it featured prominently in the earliest known photograph of Sanquhar, taken about that time. James Kerr was succeeded by his son William who retired in 1908. Matthew Hogarth took over then, and was followed by his widow in 1932. She handed over to her son James who was postmaster from 1936 till 1970. He was succeeded by William Horgan who retired in 1990 when the present postmaster, Ken Thompson came to Sanquhar from Stanley, County Durham.

After the 1966 survey James Hogarth had the sign painted and also had adhesive labels printed, featuring the quaint old window and its letter box alongside. This motif was subsequently reproduced on the pictorial postmark used on tourists' mail in 1974-5. It is a matter for regret that this facility was then withdrawn, but in succeeding years Bill Horgan applied various cachets to first day covers and other philatelic souvenirs. A circular mark is known in various colours, followed by a six-line unframed mark, both denoting mail "posted at Sanquhar the oldest post office in Britain, est. 1763". Recently Ken Thompson procured a rubber stamp showing the old window but now inscribed SANQUHAR DUMFRIESSHIRE SCOTLAND / 1738 / THE WORLD'S OLDEST WORKING POST OFFICE. Even this does not do justice to the true antiquity of the office, but reflected the progress of research at the time it was commissioned.

Other contenders

In 1978-79 while doing research for my book *Stamps, Facts and Feats* (Guinness, 1982) I contacted various overseas postal administrations in order to determine the oldest Sanquhar – private cachet



working post office in the world. It transpired that a strong contender was the head post office in Santiago, constructed in 1772 and still going strong. Chile issued a stamp in 1992 in honour of this historic old building in the colonial Baroque style.

Another contender was the building at Lilla Nygatan 6 in Stockholm. Purchased by the



The overseas contenders

Crown in 1720, it served as the only post office in Stockholm till 1865 when some branch offices were opened, and it continued until 1903 when a new head office was erected nearby (itself the subject of a handsome 5 kronor stamp at that time). The building was re-acquired by the Swedish Post Office and refurbished as a postal museum in 1955-56. Its facade bears the carved inscription KUNGL. POSTHUSET (royal post house) to this day. Although it has a philatelic sales outlet and boasts both an operational cds and a pictorial handstamp, the Postal Museum is *not* classed as a post office, according to information furnished recently by its Librarian. The facade of this building appeared on one of Sweden's Europa stamps of 1990 when the theme was post office buildings.

Britain's contribution to the theme was a set of four – two of which had no postal relevance whatsoever but alluded to the fact that Glasgow was European City of Culture. The remaining stamps featured the building at 20 Brandon Street, Edinburgh which is now the Philatelic Bureau, and Alexandra Palace, venue of the London 1990 International Philatelic Exhibition. Among the rejected designs, however, was a splendid essay showing the Sanquhar post office. It is to be hoped that, now that its world title has been established, it will not be too long before this is placed on record in time-honoured philatelic fashion.

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Phosphorescent Materials Sort The Mail

Part 1 – Historical Background and Stamp Tagging

Dr A R LANE *Royal Mail Research & Development Centre, Swindon*

Phosphors have a wide range of application in the technology of our lives today; television and computer screens would not work without them for instance. The light emitting property of these substances has been adapted to a number of purposes, for in their short lifetime form they are used for specialised lamp coatings, while the longlife products are used to indicate emergency exits when a conventional lighting system fails. Their afterglow can thus be controlled from a few milliseconds to many hours, but to many of us they are not obvious or well known products. A further important application of these materials relates to the fast sorting of mail and this article describes their contribution to this process. Fluorescent materials with lifetimes of less than one millisecond are not considered in this article.

Historical Background

During the years following the Second World War, scientists working for the General Post Office started to experiment with materials suitable for marking or coding the mail to allow stamps to be automatically cancelled and letters mechanically sorted. After a long investigation of products such as metallic foils and graphite bars, a change was made to a consideration of light emitting substances. The wartime defence industry had developed such materials for radar screens and other applications and although the phenomenon of phosphorescence was well known in nature, it had been relatively difficult to synthesise stable products with a short reproducible duration of afterglow. These new materials were not in any way related to the corrosive and reactive element phosphorus, but the name derived from the same Greek origin, meaning of "light bearing" nature.

The trials at the Studd Street Laboratories suggested that phosphors held considerable potential for assisting the processing of mail if the letter facing, cancelling and sorting machines could be equipped with ultra-violet light sources and photosensitive detectors with the ability to identify and analyse the signals.

At this time the cathode ray tube phosphors

were largely based on a pure form of zinc sulphide doped with a range of transition metals. The choice of doping agent and its concentration decided the colour of the emitted light, its intensity and the duration of the afterglow (Ref. 1). Due to their novelty and the need to work to high levels of purity, the relatively high cost of these products was a major disadvantage and experiments commenced at the Post Office Laboratories to

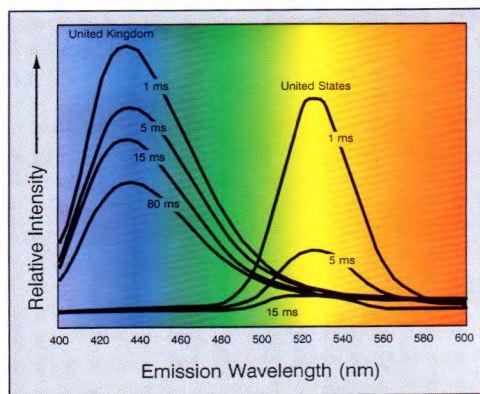
Figure 1

Comparison of British Melamine and American Zinc Silicate Stamp Phosphors

Intensity as a function of time Excitation

Wavelength 254nm.

Light emission curves demonstrating duration of afterglow



Measuring Equipment – Perkin Elmer LS50 Spectrophotometer

synthesise organic compounds which might be used instead. It was known that phosphorescence could only be obtained from a solid matrix, and hence a search was undertaken for a suitable resin which would provide a rigid, chemically or physically bonded environment which, according to Jablonski (2), would allow the electron triplet state from a photo activator molecule to exist for a significant time without reverting to the singlet or ground state by the usual pathways of fluorescence or emission of heat.

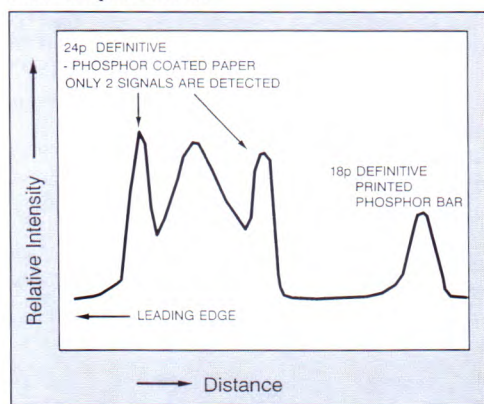
The aminoplastics such as urea-formaldehyde

Figure 2

Phosphor Signals Emitted by British First and Second Class Stamps

254nm Ultra Violet Radiation RCA 931A

Photomultiplier Detector



Bars on first class stamps give two peaks only. There is then no signal from the Queen's head area. Curves obtained from: Rotating drum with fixed lamp and detector. Detector 931A Photomultiplier
Illumination: 4 watt lamp G4T5 (Low pressure mercury)

and melamine formaldehyde were found at length to be the most suitable resins and the most promising activators derivatives of benzophenone, which had well characterised properties and were known to phosphoresce at 77 K (3). During the 1950s and 1960s, Forster (4) and Walker (5) produced a number of variations on these pigments which were excited by UV light of different wavelengths. It was possible to consider, therefore, a means of labelling stamps which could be activated by short wave UV light (254 nm) and a method of generating a postcode which would glow if subjected to UV radiation of a predominate wavelength of 365 nm; the two being totally separate in their functional response.

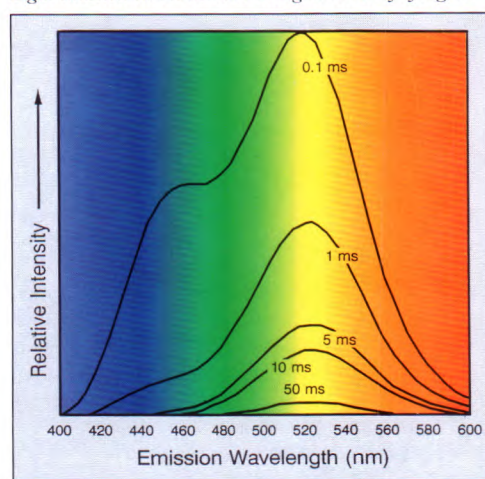
As a result, one pigment was developed as a component of the coating of stamp paper, or printing ink, and another which comprised part of the formulation applied to a tape which could be transferred to letters by an impact printer. The UK introduced the short-wave phosphor on to stamps in November 1959 and the long wave excited postcode material in 1960, although the latter was in a vertical format at that time and did not develop to the existing horizontal thermal transfer print until 1966.

The costs of the materials concerned were, in both cases, cheaper than the inorganic

Figure 3

Copper Activated Zinc Sulphide Stamp Phosphor

Light emission curves demonstrating duration of afterglow

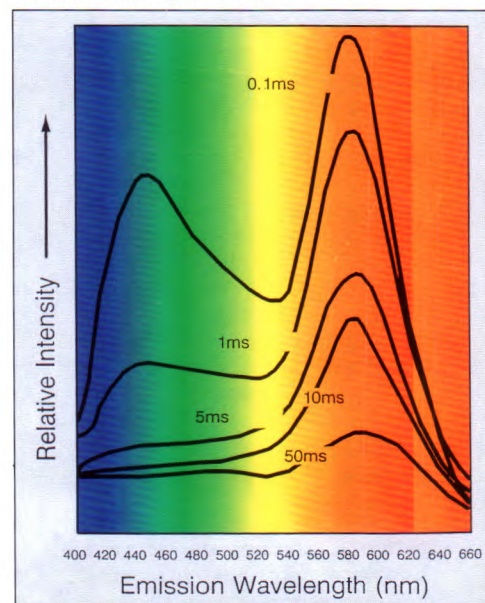


Excitation Wavelength 365nm. Measuring Equipment – Perkin Elmer LS50 Spectrophotometer

Figure 4

Manganese Activated Zinc Sulphide Stamp Phosphor

Light emission curves demonstrating duration of afterglow
Excitation Wavelength 365nm



Measuring Equipment – Perkin Elmer LS50 Spectrophotometer

phosphors, very few of which were activated solely by short-wave ultra-violet light.

It has been found subsequently that the organic materials are less stable to moisture and long exposure to light than their inorganic counterparts, but their performance is considered adequate for there has to be a balance between the short-term requirements for rapid mail processing and the high cost of long-life products. Only the organic phosphors, however, are available as true solutions, and thus perform the best in jet printers.

Factors which affect Phosphorescent Emission

The amount of light produced by a phosphor is dependent on the amount of energy of the appropriate UV wavelength which initially falls upon it. The shorter UV wavelengths have higher energy than the longer ones. In simple terms, the amount of light emitted by a phosphor is dependent upon the number of photons of the required energy that have reached it in the period of illumination, and this figure will depend on the lamp energy in watts.

It is therefore extremely important that measurements of phosphorescence for comparative purposes are all made with the same equipment, as a change of lamp or photodetector will produce entirely different results.

The measurement of light intensity at time



The new Mark IV phosphorimeter developed by the Royal Mail to control the signal of post coding and stamp facing materials more accurately. It is intended to support the increased use of phosphors by the new, fast automatic machines.

zero (t_0) is also difficult and hence the overall peak heights shown in the figures are not the maximum brightness values for the phosphors concerned. These arbitrary maxima should not be used directly to compare the relative output but should only be used as a guide, as the final performance on the sorting machine will depend on the lamp used, the photodetector installed, the distance between these two devices and the speed of the mail through the equipment, all of which should be fixed parameters.

Phosphors for the automatic facing of letters and cancelling of stamps

Phosphor bars are printed on stamps, or directly onto the envelope in order to separate the mail stream into urgent or non-urgent categories, known in the UK as first and second class. Two phosphor bars are used to indicate the former and one bar the latter. Coated paper has also been used instead of two printed bars, but the signals received by the facing and cancelling machine are the same.

Phosphors used for stamp tagging in other countries

As other countries found the need for the mechanical facing of letters and obliteration of stamps, they also began to examine luminescent products. In contrast to Great Britain (6), they almost all examined proprietary products and chose between yellow fluorescent materials and the inorganic phosphors (7,8,9). A very wide range of these was available by the late 1960s, supplied by companies such as Sylvania Electric Products Company in the USA, Riedel de Haen in Germany and Nemoto in Japan. The choice for stamps has been limited to about four types, although the USA has experimented with rare earth element phosphors (10).

Inorganic stamp phosphors fall into three types: The first and most commonly used is copper activated zinc sulphide, $ZnS(Cu)$; a moderately fast product activated by 365nm ultra violet light. This product is more often used in paper coatings but France prints it in ink form in the same single or double bar sequence used by GB. It gives a strong yellow emission and was until recently also used by Italy for post-coding purposes.

A close relative to the above product is the manganese doped version, $ZnS(Mn)$, Helicon red, which has a weaker level of emission with a very fast diminishing afterglow and is used by



French definitives viewed under normal and ultra-violet light to indicate the position of the phosphor bars. British stamps use a similar principle. (All photos Royal Mail)



both Australia and New Zealand. It is excited by UV light of both 254 and 365 wavelengths, but responds more strongly to the longer wavelength. In both countries it is usually incorporated into the paper coating. Photomultipliers tend to be less sensitive to the red end of the spectrum, which makes this product more difficult to detect for a given lamp excitation than the other phosphors described.

The third common product, which is used by the USA, is manganese doped zinc orthosilicate, $\text{ZnSiO}_3(\text{Mn})$. This strong yellow-green emitter absorbs very specifically in the short wave (254 nm) region of the ultra-violet spectrum and also has a very rapid fall in afterglow. It is the hardest of the pigments and was originally overprinted in a varnish on American stamps but progress is now being made to include it in the stamp paper coating.

To be continued

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Countries currently using Phosphorescent Products on Stamps

Country	First use	Type	Colour	Form
Argentina	1971	ZnS(Cu)	Yellow	Paper coating
Australia	1963	ZnS(Mn)	Red	Paper coating
Belgium	1967	ZnS(Cu)	Yellow	Paper coating
Brazil	1972	ZnS(Cu)	Yellow	Paper coating
France	1970	ZnS(Cu)	Yellow	Printed bars
Finland	1972	ZnS(Cu)	Yellow	Paper coating
Hong Kong	1987	ZnSiO ₃ (Mn)	Yellow	Printed bar
Israel	1975	ZnSiO ₃ (mn)	Yellow	Printed bars
Netherlands	1967	ZnS(Cu)	Yellow	Paper coating
New Zealand	1985	ZnS(Mn)	Red	Paper coating
Portugal	ca 1972	ZnS(Cu)	Yellow	Printed bars
Singapore	1980/1	ZnS(Cu)	Yellow	Paper coating
South Africa	1971	ZnS(Cu)	Yellow	Paper coating
Spain	1984	ZnS(Cu)	Yellow	Paper coating
Tunisia	1982	ZnS(Cu)	Yellow	Paper coating
United Kingdom	1959	Melamine	Blue-violet	Paper coating Printed bars
USA	1963	ZnSiO ₃ (mn)	Yellow	Paper coating Printed film

Note: Portugal discontinued the use of phosphorescence in 1992

A number of countries use phosphor for stamps on a non-continuous basis, including China and Japan and the Philippines. Others use a fluorescent material for the facing and cancelling process.

Countries currently using Phosphorescent Products for the Postcoding of Mail

United Kingdom	(i) Polyester tape	Urea	Blue
	(ii) Jet printer ink	Melamine	Yellow-green

Writing for the Bulletin

The Editor will always be pleased to receive for consideration articles on any subject related to British stamps, postmarks and postal stationery for publication in the *Bulletin*. Articles should normally be up to 1500 words and should be typed, double-spaced, on A4 paper. Payment is made if articles are accepted for publication. All typescript should be sent to: The Editor, British

Philatelic Bulletin, Royal Mail, 76 Turnmill Street, LONDON EC1M 5NS.

1993 Special Stamps Poll

We thank readers who have already sent in their voting form for the 1993 Special Stamps Poll (December Bulletin). The closing date for receipt of votes is 28 January – if you have not yet voted, we look forward to hearing from you.

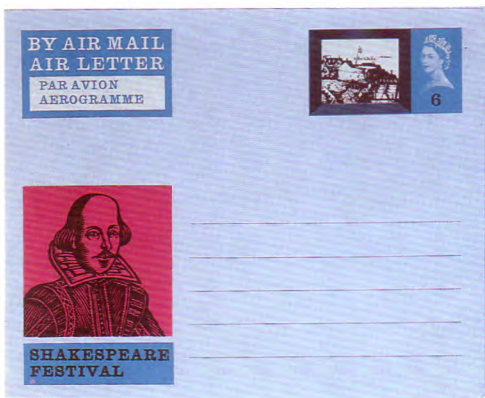
Philatelic Terms Explained

KENNETH F CHAPMAN

No. 42 Aerogrammes and Airgraphs

Those convenient pieces of postal stationery we call aerogrammes began life in Iraq as "Air Mail Letter Cards" in 1933. Douglas Gumbley, the British born Inspector General of Posts and Telegraphs and Director of Civil Aviation in Iraq was at the centre of an expanding air service not then used for carrying air mail to any extent because air mail fees on normal letters and small packets were so high.

Gumbley set about designing an air mail letter card weighting just four grammes but allowing generous space for letter-writing. A 15 fils imprinted stamp was intended to pay postage but, in practice, an additional 5 fils adhesive stamp was found to be necessary in order to balance the books. By limiting the weight of each missive (no enclosures were allowed) to four grammes a vastly greater number of pieces of mail could be carried and airmail became a practical proposition.



1964 Shakespeare aerogramme

During the Second World War, the Australian government asked Gumbley to advise on a similar system of cheap and rapid communication between Australian forces in the field and their families back home. Naturally Gumbley advised the adaptation of his Iraq "card" of 1933 which would be issued free to Australian troops once a week. British and other Commonwealth services soon followed suit.



Welsh and Scottish aerogrammes

The British Air Letter Card had a 3d stamp imprinted.

By August 1941 the facility had been extended to British civilians for whom an Air Letter was provided with an imprinted 6d stamp; this fee remained in force until 1966.

Post-war, many Commonwealth and foreign countries adopted air letters, some with spaces for adhesive stamps to be added and others with imprinted stamps. Finally, the Universal Postal Union decreed at its 13th Congress, held in 1951-52 at Brussels, these useful missives should be styled "Aerogramme", which was to be printed on all such items, each country being allowed to add its own definition if it wished.

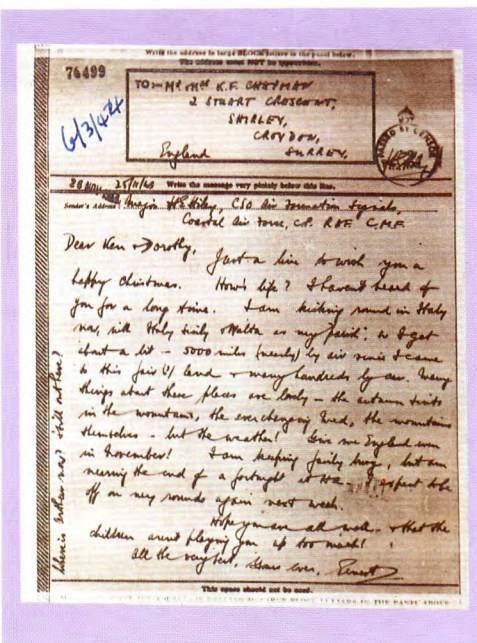
Pictorial additions promoting tourism began to appear as early as 1950 in Rhodesia. In 1963 Great Britain took the plunge with pictures of the Tower of London and the Houses of Parliament, to be followed by an issue featuring the Royal Shakespeare Theatre at Stratford-upon-Avon. Since then special Christmas aerogrammes have become popular despite a substantial fee on top of the postal face value. Welsh aerogrammes were issued 1973-76, and Scottish aerogrammes regularly since 1974.

Airgraphs

Although considered one of the Second World War postal wonders, the principle of the airgraph dates back to the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71 when pigeons were flown out of besieged Paris with *pelicules* of microfilm attached to them. The film contained miniaturised negatives of personal letters, documents of various kinds including news-sheets. On receipt, the film was developed and enlarged and hand written transcriptions of personal letters were sent on to the addressees.

The airgraphs of 1941 onwards were more sophisticated. Originally intended for servicemen in the Middle East wishing to write home, the service by-passed the Italian operations in the Mediterranean and North Africa. The service was quickly opened up to the public for writing to relatives in the forces. Following the setting up of a processing station at Cairo, the scheme spread and similar facilities were set up in Nairobi, Johannesburg, Bombay, Melbourne, Wellington and Toronto.

Kodak originated the scheme which was based on their service to the banks for whom they micro-photographed cheques. The idea was for the troops to fill special forms with letters in normal handwriting. These were grouped in



Wartime airgraph

batches of 1700 and given serial numbers. Each batch was then micro-photographed on to 100 feet of film weighing 5½ ounces. The film was flown back to England and processed into 1700 separate letters, reduced from the original but still very readable, and put into window envelopes which displayed the addressee's name and address as written by the sender.

Once the film had been developed in England, the original messages held at the despatch point were destroyed. This practice covered loss in transit, as happened when the flying boat *Clare* was lost in 1942 and it was possible to re-photograph the 55,000 airgraphs on film and achieve delivery within two weeks of the loss.

James Mackay in his book *Airmails 1870-1970* (BT Batsford Ltd, 1971), explains that the airgraph service was closed down on 31 July 1945, giving way to the more roomy aerogramme, still only costing 6d. In four years, 350 million airgraphs had been processed on film weighing a maximum of 50 tons, compared with 4500 tons deadweight for the same number of average letters and envelopes.

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Editor's note: The Gumbley Iraq Air Card was illustrated here in August 1993 (page 288).

Competition

SPONSORED BY:
RUSHSTAMPS



Win an "Alice in Wonderland Postage Stamp Case"

This month's competition is sponsored by Rushstamps (Retail) Ltd of Lyndhurst. The prizes, supplied by Rushstamps, comprise:

- ★ Five 1st prizes of "Alice in Wonderland Postage Stamp Case" (retail price £78)
- ★ Five 2nd prizes of Postal Numismatic Cover for the 40th anniversary of the Coronation (bears £10 stamp and contains £5 coin)
- ★ Ten 3rd prizes of fine used copy of 1993 £10 Britannia definitive.



Introducing Rushstamps

Rushstamps are celebrating their 35th anniversary and are pleased to join Royal Mail in sponsoring this New Year Competition.

Rushstamps deal in all British stamps from 1840 to the present, stocking stamps in mint and used condition. In addition we carry a comprehensive stock of first day covers, presentation packs, air letters (aerogrammes), errors and varieties, locals, cinderellas, etc. We also stock stamps of the Channel Islands and Isle of Man and are noted for our Worldwide Special Offers.

We supply odd values as well as sets in unmounted mint, mounted mint, fine used, and "spacefiller" condition. We attend most international exhibitions and will welcome *Bulletin* readers to our stand at Spring Stampex (1-6 March 1994). Complimentary tickets are available from us on request (please enclose stamped addressed envelope).

Our 200-page catalogue, free on request, is

cramped with special offers and includes a priority discount voucher entitling you to 10% discount on all GB mint commemorative sets. All orders are subject to full satisfaction or refund within seven days. Just compare our prices and save!

We look forward to serving you at Spring Stampex or to sending you our catalogue. Write today to:

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To enter this month's competition answer the questions below and send your answers with your name and address on a postcard to: November Bulletin Competition, British Philatelic Bulletin, Royal Mail, 76 Turnmill Street, LONDON EC1M 5NS. Entries should arrive by 25 February.

1. What is the theme of the 1994 Greetings stamps?
2. Where is the oldest working Post Office in the world?
3. How many Airgraphs were processed on film weighing a maximum of 50 tons?
4. In what year was St. Pancras Station opened?
5. What is the name of a new computer stamp catalogue?

The answers to all these questions will be found in this month's *Bulletin*. The competition is not open to employees of Royal Mail or Rushstamps.

The winners of the October competition were: Mrs M Neil of Glasgow (£75 worth of philatelic products); Le Sjödel of Sweden, H Kings of Northants, W Collier of Herts, N Pearson of Suffolk, and K Jansen of Germany (Christmas presentation packs).

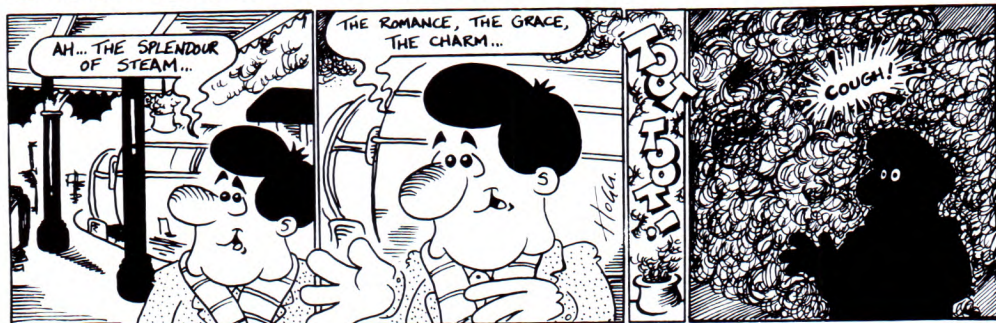
The answers were: 1. Downing College; 2. Mark Twain; 3. Lisbon; 4. Ray Pottle; 5. 8 June 1993.

Our thanks to all who entered.



In 1890 a small book measuring 3" x 4" was printed, entitled "Eight or Nine Words about Letter Writing"! This consisted of 40 pages devoted to four witty chapters on writing a letter. The author? Lewis Carroll! To complement this little book a "Postage Stamp Case" was also prepared. It would accommodate 12 stamps in special pockets which indicated a range of values from $\frac{1}{2}$ d to 1/-. The Stamp Case was supplied in a special Slip Case which depicts Alice holding the Duchess' crying baby. When the actual Stamp Case is removed it transforms into Alice holding a contented pig! To add further interest, on the reverse of the Stamp Case and the Slip Case is the infamous Cheshire Cat in all its glory – and then – disappearing!

CUSTOMER KNOWS BEST.



Royal Mail News

1994 Greetings Stamps

The sixth issue of colourful Royal Mail Greetings Stamps will be released on 1 February 1994 comprising 10 first class NVI stamps each with a different design. The stamps will be sold in a book, including 20 free Greetings labels, available from post offices, selected retail outlets, the British Philatelic Bureau, Collections, Post Shops Plus and philatelic counters, price £2.50.

The theme of the designs is "Messages" The stamps will feature perennial favourites from fairy stories, comics and children's literature. These characters include: Dan Dare, The Three Bears, Rupert the Bear, Alice (in Wonderland), Noggin the Nog, Peter Rabbit, Red Riding Hood, Orlando the Marmalade Cat, Biggles and Paddington Bear.

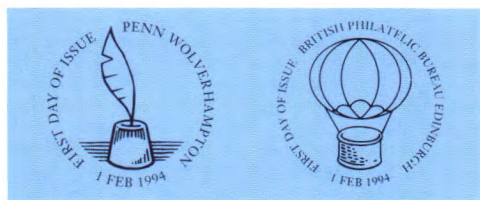
The book will also contain 20 colourful labels bearing greetings messages and illustrations.

The stamps were designed by Newell and Sorrell; details of the origination of each of the designs are printed on the inside back cover of

the book. The cover of the book features Rupert Bear, Paddington Bear, and the Ice Dragon from Noggin the Nog.

Technical Details

<i>Printer:</i>	Harrison and Sons Ltd
<i>Process:</i>	Photogravure
<i>Stamp size:</i>	41 x 30mm, horizontal
<i>Perforation:</i>	15 x 14, with elliptical perforation on vertical edges of each stamp
<i>Phosphor:</i>	2 bands per stamp
<i>Gum:</i>	PVA Dextrin
<i>Presentation pack:</i>	No. G3 price £2.85
<i>Stamp cards:</i>	Nos GS2A-J, price 25p each
<i>Pane:</i>	The pane consists of 10 stamps in two rows of five horizontally The labels are printed five across and four deep, separated from the stamps by a gutter margin The overall size of the finished book is 95 x 60mm.



First Day Facilities

Unstamped Royal Mail first day cover envelopes and stamp cards will be available from main post offices, the Bureau, Collections, Post Shops Plus and Philatelic Counters approximately one week before 1 February 1994, price 25p each.

Collectors may order the Royal Mail cover bearing the 10 stamps cancelled with a pictorial "First Day of Issue" postmark of the Bureau or Penn, Wolverhampton, price £3.36 (including VAT) to UK addresses, £2.86 to overseas addresses (no VAT). Orders for first day covers must be received at the Bureau by 1 February.

Collectors may send their own stamped covers or stamp cards, on the day of issue, for the Bureau or Penn cancels, to: British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, EDINBURGH, EH3 5TT or Midlands Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, BIRMINGHAM B1 1AA. The outer envelope should be endorsed "Bureau (or Penn) First Day of Issue postmark".

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

Details of other special handstamps, sponsored by Royal Mail, stamp dealers and others, will be found in the *British Postmark Bulletin* – Royal Mail's magazine for postmark collectors. It is available on annual subscription

from the British Philatelic Bureau: £10 UK and Europe, £21.75 Rest of World (Airmail)

Earlier Greetings Book

The Gift Giving book (issued 2 February 1993) will be withdrawn from sale at post offices on 31 January 1994, being replaced the following day by the new "Messages" greetings book. "Smiles" (1991), "Memories" (1992), and "Gift Giving" (1993) books will continue to be available from the British Philatelic Bureau, Collections, Post Shops Plus and Philatelic Counters until further notice.

And a Greetings History

The Greetings stamps issues will be detailed in a special Royal Mail book to be published in September 1994. This will take a behind the scenes look at each issue from the designers perspective.

1000th Special Stamp

1994 is the 70th anniversary of the issue of Britain's first commemorative (special) stamps – the 1924 British Empire Exhibition 1d and 1½d. The 30p value in the "Age of Steam" set (18 January 1994) will be Britain's 1000th special stamp, in our 260th set. For purposes of compiling the statistics, the Greetings stamps have been included, but miniature sheets excluded. It is fitting that the 1000th special





1984) will be of interest to those who like the background story of the designs on stamp book covers.

The new £1 book begins the "Prime Ministers" series with a design showing Herbert Henry Asquith (1852-1928), Liberal leader and Prime Minister (1908-16). Asquith, son of a Congregationalist businessman, was born at Morley, Yorkshire and educated in London and at Balliol College, Oxford. After training as a barrister, he became MP for East Fife in 1886. In 1894 he married, for the second time, Margot Tennant who became a noted political hostess. Asquith was Chancellor of the Exchequer from 1905 until he succeeded Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman as Prime Minister three years later. His government introduced much important legislation including the Parliament and National Insurance Acts of 1911. He was confronted by the Suffragette Movement and the Home Rule for Ireland campaign. In 1915 he brought the Conservatives into a wartime coalition government which divided his Liberal Party. Conscription and the ending of the Easter Rising in Dublin led to unpopularity, and in December 1916 he was replaced as Prime Minister by David Lloyd George. In 1918 he lost his East Fife seat but was returned for Paisley in 1920. He was recognised as Liberal leader from 1923 to 1926, but the Liberals did

not regain their earlier position in national politics. He was created the 1st Earl of Oxford and Asquith in 1925.

Bangkok 1993

A major International Philatelic Exhibition was held at the Queen Sirikit National Convention Centre in Bangkok from 1-10 October 1993. It was attended by many postal administrations which included Royal Mail. The Royal Mail team members, from the British Philatelic Bureau in Edinburgh, were Lynne Kendal, Elaine Conway and Kenny Messer.

Over 250,000 people visited the Exhibition, a figure well in excess of the 100,000 anticipated by the Organising Committee and as a result sales were so good that some booths came very close to closing down whilst waiting for extra stock! Lynne Kendal, Manager of the Royal Mail Stand said, "a chaotic success sums up the exhibition! It was a wonderful experience and so refreshing to see so many young people at a stamp exhibition. Out stamps were very popular, especially the brightly coloured designs such as the Greetings stamps and the Inland Waterways issue."

As a trial exercise a block of four 18p Autumn stamps with an exhibition logo cacheted in the margin were sold at the Royal Mail stand. Like most Royal Mail products, these were very popular and were sold out by the end of the exhibition.

Friends of the NPM

The Autumn 1993 issue of *Cross Post* – journal of the Association of Friends of the National Postal Museum – is now available. Edited by Allan Daniell, it contains much of interest to philatelists and postal historians. Michael Bament writes about the material deposited in the Museum and British Library from the Customs & Excise in 1992. Mr Bament has carefully examined all the material checking the postal markings to see if it could add to existing knowledge at present recorded in the Willcocks and Jay series of *British County Catalogues of Postal History*, Volumes 1-5. From 756 entire letters in the British Library, 46 items were found to add useful data to the catalogues. His findings will be of considerable interest to collectors of early 19th century postal history. John Maxwell Jones provides a useful account of the Museum of the Swiss PTT at Berne. The first Swiss postal museum dates from 1907, the current premises, opened in 1990, provide a “hands-on learning experience” dealing with three main themes – Postal History, Philately & Writing, and History of Telecommunications. The layout and content of the Swiss museum will no doubt be taken into account when a new NPM here in Britain is eventually opened.

Jean Farrugia, MBE, The Post Office's Chief Archivist reports on a “Special Review” organised to find “important official records of all kinds... still held in local Post Office buildings.” This project has given the Archives & Record Centre its first-ever real opportunity to identify and reclaim “lost” material. Mrs Farrugia also gives details of a new “Encyclopaedia Project” which in the longer term will result in a much-needed *Encyclopaedia of Post Office History*

Patrick Awwcock, in Part 2 of his detailed account of “Postal Mechanisation at Brighton” deals with Second generation Manual Coding Desks, Optical Character Recognition System (OCR), Culler Facer Cancellor (CFC) and NP4000 Sorting Machine. He looks at the future of the Automatic Processing Centre at Brighton, reminding us that “Royal Mail is currently embarked on a massive process of investment in new equipment to fully automate the process of mail handling.”

Tony Gammons, the Museum's Exhibitions Officer, provides a useful advance account of some of the gems in the “Victorian Valentines” exhibition which opens at the Museum in January. Many of the early Valentine cards were

made by the sender and featured the endless “lovers knot” By the end of the 1700s publishers such as John Fairburn of London were producing cards printed in colour and including small areas of paper “lace” The Museum's collection includes some delightful three-dimensional and fan cards.

Part 16 of Dr J W M Stone's account of the “Peover Papers” details some of the earliest records of postal administration (1672-77). Amongst the references to posts are ones relating to the “settling a new road from the Devizes to Taunton”, and the neglect of the duties by the deputy postmaster at Newark. The Editor, Allan Daniell, reviews Douglas Myall's monumental work *The Complete Deegam Machin Handbook*. There are reports of the Association's activities and accounts, and a profile of one of its hardest working officers, Cyril Macey.

Copies of *Cross Post* are available to non-members of the Friends, price £2. Orders and requests for details of membership to: Ray Pottle, PO Box 40, UCKFIELD, E Sussex, TN22 2SP.

Postal Stationery

Post Paid envelopes bearing the Machin head of The Queen in a black octagonal frame were issued in July 1991 (see *Bulletin* July 1991, page 251). These are still available in three sizes DL, C5 and C4. They prepay UK postage up to 60 grammes (DL) and 100g (C5 and C4). The C5 envelope is being produced to indicate prepayment up to 60g and will sell at 31p (1st class) and 25p (2nd). The C5 envelope will also continue with indication of prepayment up to 100g (42p 1st class, 33p 2nd). The new C5 envelopes will be available shortly from the British Philatelic Bureau.

Revised prices, from 1 November 1993, for the DL envelopes are: 30p (1st) and 24p (2nd) and for the large C4 – 43p and 34p. The new prices for the blue Royal Mail envelopes (introduced 1983) are: 30p 1st class (£2.70 pack of 10) and 24p 2nd class (£2.15 pack). All are listed on the Philatelic Bureau's stocklist and order form.

Rowland Hill Fund

Established over 100 years ago, The Rowland Hill Fund is a registered charity founded as a memorial to Sir Rowland Hill the great postal reformer and inventor of the Penny Post.

Today, as always, the Fund exists solely to help serving and retired Post Office staff and their families. Widows and widowers are the

main beneficiaries. People of all ages get into financial difficulties but the hardest hit are usually the sick and elderly - those least able to help themselves.

The Fund has helped over 1000 people of all ages over the last year at a cost of £300,000, nearly £850 per day, and managed to make life a little bit easier for each of them. The Fund relies on generous donations and regular subscriptions. The "thank you" letters from beneficiaries are often heart rending and always appreciative for the extra food or heat or comfort the donations provide.

As part of a campaign to increase the level of help given the Fund is seeking to increase the level and number of subscriptions and donations received. To help increase awareness of the charity and its work amongst PO employees it has designed and issued a Rowland Hill Fund lapel badge. This attractive item will be issued to all new subscribers to the Fund. The badge may also be an attractive collectors item and is, therefore, offered for sale at a price of £2.50. Proceeds from the sale of these badges will be donated to the Rowland Hill Fund.

Applications for the badge should write to the following address enclosing £2.50 for each badge required: Rowland Hill Fund, Palmerston House, 80/86 Old Street, LONDON EC1V 9PP. Remittances should be payable to "Rowland Hill Fund".



Edipost

Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) has revolutionized the way businesses communicate with their trading partners, providing competitive advantage by creating a more efficient trading cycle. EDI shortens both the purchasing and payment business cycles.

At present businesses have to supplement EDI with a traditional paper document to reach trading partners who do not trade electronically. This creates more work and extra cost.

The Royal Mail now offers a solution to this problem by providing a service called EDIPOST,

which will enable EDI users to communicate all transactions electronically - reducing costs and speeding up operations.

The EDIPOST service was piloted with a number of key British companies early in 1992, with full operation of the service beginning in the Summer of 1993.

Messages that cannot be sent electronically to particular trading partners, can be diverted to a central processing unit at the Royal Mail's Electronic Mail Centre in Mount Pleasant, London. There, the EDIPOST service receives standard EDI messages and prints them out with company logos on pre-arranged company forms, envelopes them, and feeds them into the first class letter service. The envelopes used bear an EDIPOST symbol and "PHQ421" printed postage impression.



Connection to the service can be via a company's Value Added Network, or by direct link: EDIFACT, Odette or TRADACOMS standards may be used.

Companies tell Royal Mail which data contained within their EDI messages require to be printed. EDIPOST then extracts that data from the message and merges it onto a blank electronic form. This form already contains all the static data associated with a company's particular message, ie row and column lines, logos, signatures, headings, etc. The complete electronic form is high quality laser printed and enveloped.

Companies select the form layout they require. The forms can be landscape or portrait, or both. Continuation sheets, with page numbering if required, are automatically printed. All forms are printed on high quality A4 cut sheet paper.

Logos, signatures and any other form of graphics can be scanned and digitised at the Electronic Mail Centre or loaded directly from a company-supplied computer graphics file. As well as offering different forms for different messages, EDIPOST can also provide multiple versions of a particular form.

Imperial Mail Delivery

KRIS MENON,
Postmark Manager Royal Mail

During my recent visit to Simla, 5000 miles above sea level, in the foothills of the Himalayas, I had the opportunity to go into the public library where I came across bits and pieces of interesting news items from the imperial era! Shimla was the summer capital of the British Raj, where the ruling fraternity shifted, en masse, to escape the soaring temperature of the plains! This article is the result of the visit.

Just imagine if you lived in the picturesque hill station, Imperial SIMLA, the summer capital of British Raj (now changed to SHIMLA and headquarters of the Himachal Pradesh state) and a letter from abroad had arrived at the Head Post Office.



The present Simla Post Office. Photo. Kris Menon.

Within minutes of the arrival of "Walayat Dak" as the foreign mail was then called, a red coloured flag with the words "Foreign Mail" would be hoisted on top of the tower of the Head Post Office and a special messenger called the "Ghantiwala" (the bell-man) would ring the bell to announce to the postman and other personnel living in quarters below, that they should hasten to attend to the delivery of the foreign mail.

And be it rain, hail or snow, your letter was bound to be delivered to you even if it was past midnight!

Behind the delivery of letters lies the story of sweat and toil and high sense of duty of Shimla's

postal personnel.

Imperial Simla's postal department also boasts of having another unique feature – the Mail Tonga Service – which was only one of its kind in the world.

Before the advent of regular trains in Shimla, mail used to be taken from Kalka to Shimla, a distance of 90km, by tongas (a pony drawn carriage). These tongas drawn by Kabul ponies and driven by rugged Pathan drivers, braved storm, rain and snow and kept the mail running with inimitable regularity throughout the year without any break. When not in use these tongas were halted in front of the Head Post Office.

If you walk a little beyond the State Bank of India Office, on the Mall, you will find a small post office facing the Railway Board building. This was the place which was used as a stable and store for tongas and grooms. As years elapsed, modern methods of communication and transportation came into vogue. With the advent of regular trains, the Railway Mail Service was introduced.

As no vehicles are to be driven on The Mall, a special kind of rickshaws were manufactured in order to carry mail from the railway station to the Head Post Office. The rickshaws were painted with the familiar red colour, the shade of the letter box. Four men were required to pull each rickshaw having mail.

Today the same building of the Head Post Office houses the General Post Office, situated in the heart of Shimla. It occupies the site of the old Conny lodge, once owned by Peterson, the manager of Shimla bank. It was purchased from him to construct a post office, which started functioning there from 1883.

It is said that the building was built around six huge hollow iron pillars, wherein firewood was burnt (till 1920) to provide heated comfort to the postal staff. Interestingly half of Shimla's postal staff move down to New Delhi, the winter capital of Imperial India, from Mid-November to mid-March but World War II put an end to this practice in 1942.

Unfortunately most of the old records perished in the fire of 1972. The general Post Office has been renovated and modern day visitors would see a prominent display of a philatelic counter which unfortunately is open for limited hours for every day service. Since then Shimla's postal staff continue to serve its residents by walking in all weathers in the hills, carrying on the tradition of duty and dedication.

©Kris Menon 1994

Age of Steam

MARTYN FRY

The Midland Railway

1994 marks the 150th anniversary of the formation of one of the most influential and dynamic companies in the colourful history of British railways. The Midland Railway emerged from the complexity of minor entrepreneurial lines, spawned as a result of the first wave of "railway mania" which swept the country in the early part of the 19th century.

Railway development up to that point had been haphazard. Intense rivalry between companies brought about duplication and confusion and it was only through a number of later amalgamations that the first semblance of a rail network emerged, albeit of limited scope.

The Midland story begins with the formation of the North Midland Railway in 1836, following authorisation of a line from Derby to Leeds. In the same year, two more companies established themselves in Derby, the Birmingham and Derby Junction Railway, whose 48 mile line linked the town with the London and Birmingham Railway at Hampton-in-Arden, and the Midland Counties Railway, whose line to Rugby, authorised on 21 June, was later chosen by Thomas Cook for his first excursion on 5 July 1841.

The three companies finally came together, not only under the same roof, with the building of Derby station in 1839, but following their amalgamation in 1844 to form The Midland Railway.

Steady growth was maintained throughout the following decade and it is indicative of the confidence of railway companies at the time, that by 1858 the Midland was one of the largest corporate businesses in the country with total capital of over £21 million. One of the predominant features of the new company was its management style, always quick to seize the opportunity for improvement and development.

The Midland empire continued to spread in all directions and in 1863 an extension into London was authorised, the crowning glory of which was the opening in 1868 of the magnificent St Pancras station. Its single span roof, 240ft wide and 100ft high, was the largest

of its kind in the world at that time. Five years later, the impressive Midland Grand Hotel, was added, probably one of the finest pieces of railway architecture ever built in this country.

Gladstone's Regulatory Act of 1844 had prescribed minimum standards for low fare passengers and this encouraged many railway companies to adopt active policies to attract the high volume business of cheap travel. Indeed, one of the main features of the 1850s was the growth in third class travel, which by the mid-1860s accounted for two thirds of journeys. It was surprising that, with total passenger journeys reaching 60 million, not all trains catered for third class fares. On average, passengers paid just over a penny a mile and by the early 1900s, with low fare policies, the cost had reduced by half, while standards had improved dramatically.



Midland Railway carriages at the National Railway Museum (Photo: Martyn Fry)

During the early 1870s the Bank Holidays Act, introducing holidays with pay, opened up a vast new excursion business for the already affluent railways and passenger journeys reached the 300 million mark. The Midland stole a march on its competitors with the introduction in 1872, of third class carriages on all trains, followed three years later by the abolition of second class travel and a general improvement of third class accommodation.

Competition between railway companies for fast express routes to the north and Scotland was intense. The long standing rivalry between the Midland and the London and North Western Railway for the prestigious western route was heightened when the Midland board decided to construct its own line rather than to enter into negotiations with the LNWR for joint use of their line. The result was one of the most

famous lines ever built, the Settle and Carlisle, with the Ribbleshead Viaduct the most notable of its many stunning engineering achievements.

By the turn of the century the railway map shows why the Midland took such a prominent role in the later LMS Railway. From Swansea in the west to Yarmouth in the east and from Bournemouth in the south to Carlisle in the north, the Midland network could get you almost anywhere. Wherever you found the Midland you found competition from other railway companies, but its success was built on the quality of the service it provided and with passenger and goods receipts totalling over £3500 per mile, the Midland was one of the largest of the pre-grouping companies.

In 1921 railways were effectively freed from government control. However, the Railways Act ensured that a unified approach to planning and organisation was maintained by amalgamating some 120 separate companies into four large groups: the London, Midland and Scottish (LMS), the London and North Eastern (LNER), the Great Western (GWR) and the Southern (SR). These groups remained in being from 1923 until nationalisation in 1948, the birth of British Railways. It was a measure of the quality of the Midland approach to service, that it was to dominate the style and performance of the LMS for many years.

Locomotive Power

The Midland believed that the best way to compete was to provide frequent services and consequently smaller trains. This allowed greater use of the smaller classes of engine, notably the 2-4-0 and 4-4-0 arrangements, rather than the six-coupled types of its competitors. Indeed the Midland took the bold step of returning to single-wheeler locomotives after an absence of over 20 years. The Johnson "Spinners" as they were known put in some sterling work and it is a tribute to the quality of the Midland design that a number of the engines were still in service in the mid-1920s.

Matthew Kirtley, the first locomotive superintendent of the Midland left a range of locomotives which were arguably the finest in the country at the time. His successor, S W Johnson, who took over in 1873, continued the fine tradition with his own 2-4-0 design, introduced in 1876 to coincide with the opening of the new Settle to Carlisle route. These new engines worked the fastest Scotch Expresses for over 10 years.

Towards the end of the century the now

famous Midland Crimson Lake livery was introduced and the "Derby Red" as it became known, accentuated the graceful lines of the Kirtley and Johnson locomotive designs. The locomotives and rolling stock were kept in superb condition, the coaches alone received a staggering 17 coats of paint and varnish, while the locomotives had to make do with only 12 coats!



Special cancels for 130th anniversaries of Midland and North British Railways

Midland preservation

From 1923 the "Big Four" companies began to develop larger and more powerful engines for their heavier and faster services. Consequently many of the late Victorian designs began to be withdrawn. These historic locomotives were set aside for preservation as their working lives came to an end and the embryonic National Railway Collection began to take shape.

This process gathered speed at an alarming rate in the 1960s; wholesale withdrawal of entire classes followed the Beeching rationalisations and the gradual introduction of diesel engines throughout the system. Many notable engines were saved and put on display at the Clapham Railway Museum prior to a final move to the National Railway Museum at York. Unfortunately not all classes are represented and some sad omissions are a glaring reminder of the haste with which BR acted to rid itself of the

"outdated" steam engine. Enthusiasts, shocked at the decimation of many of their favourite locomotives, some only a few years old, took matters into their own hands and purchased the slowly rusting engines direct from BR and painstakingly restored them to pristine condition. Some even extended this into the purchase of entire railway lines and stations. The steam age was being recreated, albeit in miniature.

The Midland Railway Centre at Butterley opened in 1981 following an initiative by Derby County Council to create a museum dedicated to the memory of the Midland. The Centre is an ambitious project, with the site occupying 57 acres around Butterley station and boasts the largest museum building in railway preservation. It took over a 3½ mile length of the 1875 line from the Nottinghamshire coalfields to Manchester.

The Centre is home to a number of important locomotives, most precious of which is the historic Kirtley 2-4-0 No. 158A, built at Derby Locomotive Works, in 1866. Four other Midland engines have survived the passage of time, a Johnson 4-2-2 "Spinner" No. 673, Midland Compound No. 1000 and two of the 0-6-0 standard 4F goods Nos. 44027 and 4422.



North British Railway Waverley Class loco "Abbotsford", 1876

The North British

Railway development in Scotland, or North Britain as it was often referred to in the 19th century, had followed a similar pattern to England. The first line to link the two countries followed an act of parliament sanctioning a new railway line to run from Berwick on Tweed to Edinburgh and in 1846 the line opened, the North British Railway was born.

The NBR had started out as a subsidiary of the Edinburgh and Glasgow Railway, a 46 mile railway between the cities. The E&GR opened



LNER A4 "Pacific" class locos "Sir Nigel Gresley" and the record-breaking "Mallard"

in 1842 and within four years had been extended from Haymarket in Edinburgh to Waverley Bridge to meet the North British. While the old Haymarket station has long since disappeared, the original 1842 timber and cast iron trainshed has survived and can be seen on the Bo'ness and Kinneil Railway.

Like its counterparts in England, the NBR was keen to increase the spread of its network and set its sights on Aberdeen, with the promotion of the North British, Arbroath and Montrose Railway to link the Tay Bridge with Aberdeen. In the opposite direction, the West Highland Railway, another NBR promotion, sought to counter the Callander and Oban Railway to reach the Scottish west coast. The line was opened to Fort William in 1894 and extended to include Mallaig by 1901. One of the most beautiful stretches of railway in the British Isles, the West Highland runs alongside Loch Lomond and across Rannoch Moor on its journey to the coast. The line still plays host to the steam engine with regular visits by privately owned, preserved locomotives. One of the many interesting features is the viaduct at Glenfinnan. Built by "Concrete Bob" McAlpine, it is the first structure of its kind to be built almost entirely of concrete.

By the time of the grouping in 1923 and its amalgamation into the LNER, the North British, with its stock of 1075 locomotives, was the largest of the Scottish companies, with over 50 subsidiaries. It had an extensive network of

lines from the industrial heart of Scotland, to the west coast and was to become the main artery for the LNER in Scotland.

Stamps

Railways have always been a popular subject for thematic stamp collectors and entire series of stamps featuring locomotives have appeared throughout the world. In Britain a number of popular issues have included both the North British and its later big brother, the LNER.

In 1975 the 150th Anniversary of Public Railways, set included an example of a North British Waverley Class locomotive "Abbotsford" while in 1985 and 1988, LNER A4 Pacifics No.4498 "Sir Nigel Gresley" and No.4468 "Mallard" appeared in the Famous Trains and Transport issues. Midland Railway lineage was also in evidence in the Famous Trains issue with



LMS Duchess class locomotive "City of Lancaster" hauling the "Royal Scot" express train

the inclusion of the LMS "Royal Scot" hauled by Duchess Class Pacific class No.46243 "City of Lancaster".

With the latest issue, "The Age of Steam", Royal Mail passes over the golden era of the steam locomotive. The monotone photographs were taken during the 1960s, at a time when the romance and glamour of the steam engine had all but disappeared in favour of the depressing, grimy, badly maintained locomotives evident in the last appearances of these long serving workhorses. The colourful "Big Four" companies with their red, green or blue liveries, the glamorous trains such as "The Royal Scot" "Atlantic Coast Express" or "The Orient Express", their stations proudly advertising their exotic destinations, all give way to a period in railway history notable only for the severity of the destruction to the system, and for the death of steam.

The 19p shows the ever popular ex-LMS "Black Five", one of 842 engines built and the

most prolific steam design ever seen in this country. Double-heading with the "Black Five" is an ex-LNER B1, a combination often seen on a line where steep gradients are the order of the day. On the 25p the ex-LNER Peppercorn A1 Pacific, No. 60149, "Amadis", one of 49 of these powerful locomotives, waits at Kings Cross. Sadly none of these fine engines has survived, although ambitious enthusiasts are attempting to build an example from scratch.

The 30p features a "Crab", the powerful workhorse of the LMS, resting at Blyth North Shed before its next working. This engine, No. 43000, was withdrawn 10 months after this picture was taken. The old Great Central Railway terminus, Wigan Central, is the destination of the ex-LMS 2-6-4T tank locomotive No. 42455, as it makes a fine display on an early morning local service – shown on the 35p value. The subject for the 41p is "Devizes Castle", No. 7002, steaming steadily across the Worcester and Birmingham Canal on its way to the London home of the GWR at Paddington.

Depicting the "new steam age" on stamps is the province of the many preservation societies with their railway letter stamps. One of the most prolific being the North Yorkshire Moors



Recent North Yorkshire Moors Rly letter stamp

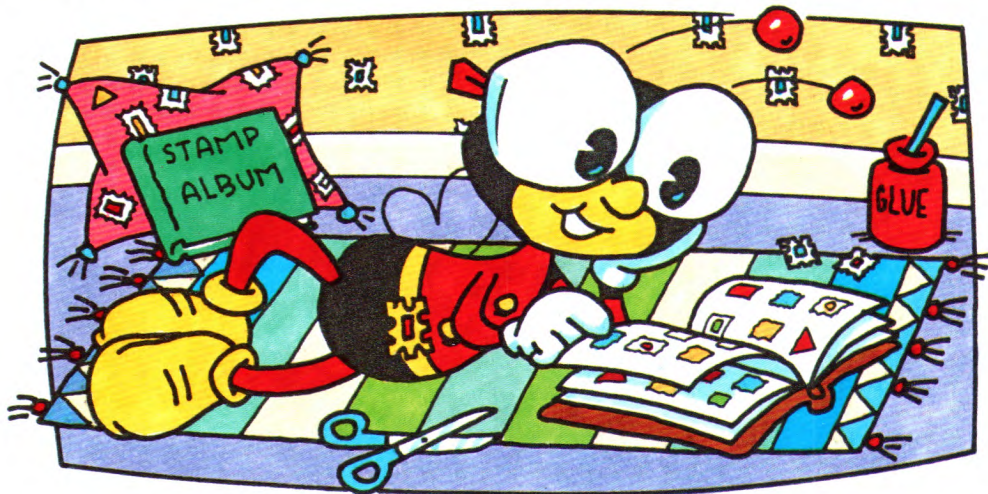
Railway which in 1994 is scheduled to issue no less than 15 stamps solely dedicated to "living" steam. The Mid-Hants Railway, similarly issues a range of stamps commemorating significant events on the line, from the arrival of a new locomotive, fresh from restoration to the Christmas "Santa Specials". Perhaps more societies, will become signatories to the agreement with Royal Mail and instigate regular stamp issues as an effective means of promoting their efforts in steam restoration and reflecting the ever-widening appeal of the steam locomotive.

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Collectors Club – for young philatelists

Collectors Club is Royal Mail's new stamp club for young collectors. In January it will officially take over from the Stamp Bug Club, which provided philatelic news to its 70,000 members since 1980.

It's not just the name that's changed. The club package has been fine-tuned and enhanced to bring it more in line with the requirements of young people.



A nation-wide survey of Stamp Bug Club members and other young collectors revealed an interesting insight into the old club package. The survey provided a wealth of ideas for improving the club, many of which have been included in the Collectors Club.

The club magazine has been expanded and redesigned to make it more comprehensive and easier to read. Collectors Club magazine will have twice as many pages as *Stamp Bug News*, and for the first time will also include articles on stamps from all over the world as well as providing a window into the National Postal Museum.

To help new members build their collection an improved starter pack will include 100 used GB stamps plus hinges, a pocket guide to stamp collecting, in addition to illustrated album pages, stamp calendar, club badge and a membership card. New members will receive their starter pack in an attractive collection box which could also double as a stamp storage box. At £5 for two

years the Club is still good value for money.

Finally, the Stamp Bug, veteran of television adverts and guest appearances at Stampex will bid farewell to the Club in the new year. Stamp Bug will set off on a world tour in search of the rare and interesting stamps! However, a younger relative Sammy the Stamp Bug will continue to excite members with a regular appearance in Collectors Club magazine.

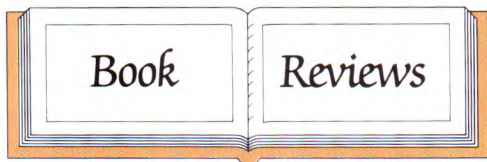
Collectors Club is set to rejuvenate the philatelic market by presenting a modern image of the hobby whilst meeting the needs of the discerning young collector. As the only national

junior stamp club it will endeavour to keep young people informed and advise them on how to develop their stamp collection. An interest in stamp collecting can provide a lasting source of enjoyment as well as the obvious educational benefits. In a recent survey 84% of children said that they were proud of their stamp collection, 77% felt that stamp collecting was great fun and 70% felt that stamp collecting helped them "to learn things". It makes sense to encourage young people to collect stamps and Collectors Club is an ideal starting point.

To join Collectors Club write to:

Julietta Edgar
Manager of Youth Philately
Collectors Club
76 Turnmill Street
LONDON
EC1M 5NS

for an application form or pick up a Royal Mail Stamp Calendar at your local Post Office.



According to the publisher's press release Christopher Browne's book **Getting the Message** "is (surprisingly) the *first* complete history" of the Post Office, yet the list of references at the end of the book, which serves as an inadequate substitute for a bibliography, mentions at least half a dozen books which cover the subject far more satisfactorily, and infinitely more accurately. The same press notice claims that the author (a professional journalist and theatre critic) has delved deeply into Post Office archives, but there is precious little evidence of this. Delved deeply into the Post Office photographic library perhaps, for the one saving grace of this pot-boiler is its illustrations. Even these are marred by the jokey and often punning captions that accompany them. It just will not do to caption a portrait of Oliver Cromwell with "Rent-a-post" because he farmed out the running of the postal service.

When he gets on to historical matters, however, the author really reveals his shaky grasp of the facts. The first chapter is a lightning romp through thousands of years, from Biblical times to the time of Abraham Lincoln, "North America's most distinguished postmaster" (whatever happened to Benjamin Franklin?) but it is riddled with errors, inaccuracies and misleading half-truths. The date of the Battle of Salamis may be a small matter (480 BC, not 479 BC), but to represent Xerxes as the Greek king when he was, in fact, the ruler of their enemy, the Persians, is merely a portent for the slapdash treatment of facts nearer the present time.

Thus, on page 18, we learn that King Charles I passed an Act of Parliament in 1635 establishing the Post Office. This blithely overlooks the fact that there was no Parliament between 1626 and 1637; nor is the significance of the Bagshot Declaration (not named) brought home to the reader – that the King, unable to obtain revenues voted by Parliament, raised funds on his own initiative, and throwing the postal service open to the general public was merely one of these ploys.

Elsewhere we learn to our surprise that the

privileged few franked letters by endorsing the back of them, whereas franked correspondence required the sender's signature in the bottom left-hand corner of the *front*. So too, we are amazed to discover that the Bishop marks showed the date *and* place of posting. The writer is oblivious to the fact that such marks bore the day and month of posting but did not include a place-name. His assertion that such marks were applied to the top right-hand corner of covers makes one wonder whether he has ever seen old letters, which had the markings anywhere but the top right-hand corner, and more often on the back flap than not.

The significance of William Dockwra is entirely lost, in the statement that he approached the government with a plan to divide London into ten postal districts. The inference is that his London Penny Post was an official service, which it was not until it was suppressed and taken over in 1682 by the Post Office. Nor is there any mention of Peter Williamson's private penny post which operated successfully at Edinburgh for 20 years before it was "nationalised". Indeed, the scanty reference to the spread of the penny posts to the provinces is misleading and unsatisfactory. On the subject of the Dockwra triangular postmarks we are told that they "showed the first letter of the district in which they were posted (i.e. W for Wandsworth)". For the record, the letters L, P, T and W denoted Lime Street, St Paul's, Temple and Westminster, while B – the only other letter recorded – probably indicated Borough. The author's treatment of money orders and the early registration of mail is too ludicrous to call for detailed comment.

This gives something of the flavour of this book. Dip into it at random on any page and the glaring errors and palpable untruths will leap up at you. On page 99, for example, a section headed "Postman's Knack" (*ugh*) tells us that the postcard was invented by a German, Dr Heinrich von Stephan, thus confusing the founder of the Universal Postal Union with Professor Emmanuel Herrmann (an Austrian, actually). Flicking forward I alighted on page 173 where, in a paragraph about the First World War (1914) we learn that the British government, knowing that letters would be intercepted by the Gestapo, sent counterfeit letters with morale-lowering messages about Hitler. Quite so, but Adolf was merely an

obscure *Gefreiter* in the First World War and the Gestapo was not even a glimmer in Himmler's eye. The appalling factual errors that permeate this book are compounded by printer's literals. Fortunately most readers will know enough to realise, for example, that the *Rocket* made its inaugural run in 1829, not 1929 as stated.

Perusing this attractively got-up book is a depressing business. The idea was good, and while it is untrue to say that there has never been a comprehensive book about the Post Office before, it is getting on for half a century since Howard Robinson's book *The British Post Office* was published. Martin Daunt's *Royal Mail: The Post Office Since 1840* was much more restrictive not only chronologically but in its treatment of the subject. A complete history of the Post Office from 1635 to the present day, in all its complexities and ramifications, is greatly to be wished. Sadly, this is not it.

201 pages, casebound. Price £14.99. Available from bookshops, or the publisher: Alan Sutton Publishing Ltd, Phoenix Mill, Far Thrupp, STROUD, Glos, GL5 2BX.

James Mackay

Martin Robinson's **Old Letter Boxes** has been the main popular guide to the subject since it was first published in 1987. In his introduction the author explains that Britain's first roadside letter boxes appeared in 1852 and since that time there have been hundreds of different varieties: pillar boxes, wall boxes of various kinds and lamp boxes, each in different sizes and bearing the ciphers of different sovereigns from Victoria to Elizabeth II. Improvements and changes in style continue to be made up to the present

Today many enthusiasts travel the country to see rare and unusual letter boxes in situ, and many boxes have been preserved in museums or private collections. Over 100 museums have at least one old letter box. The largest collection is housed in the National Postal Museum, London and can be seen by appointment (a few boxes are on display in the main hall of the London Chief Post Office).

The book is printed on good quality paper and contains over 50 well-chosen photographs including one of an old box uncovered in 1925 at the "Craven Arms" an old coaching inn at Southam, Warwickshire, which may have been an early receiving house. The box, when discovered, contained a number of old coins, dating back to 1689 in the reign of James II (VII). A worthwhile guide to take when travelling around the country to enable you to look out for interesting boxes. 32 pages, card

covers. Price £2.25. Available from bookshops or from the publisher: Shire Publication Ltd, Cromwell House, Church Street, PRINCES RISBOROUGH, Bucks, HP27 9AJ (Shire Album No 188, ISBN 0-7478-846-9).

The 1994 (22nd) edition of the popular **Collect GB First Day Covers** is now available, providing a well-illustrated and easy to use guide to first day covers from the Uniform 4d Post (5 December 1839) to the 1993 Autumn stamps. There are separate sections dealing with Queen Victoria, Edward VII, George V, Edward VIII, George VI, Channel Islands (1940-48), Queen Elizabeth II Pre-Decimal issues and Decimal issues. These latter are sub-divided into Commemorative, Definitive, Regional and Booklet and Coil listings. There are in addition sections on "Collectors Philatelic Gems" (illustrations of some fine and rare covers) and "selected GB Overprints (1893-1963)" – GB issues overprinted for Bahrain, Kuwait, Tangier, etc.

The listings include "First Day of Issue" and sponsored handstamps and relevant circular datestamps and slogans. Some of these are noticeably scarce, for example a 1965 Commonwealth Arts Festival FDC with Bath Festival slogan cancel is valued at £450, and a 1973 Inigo Jones cover with Inigo Jones Banqueting House slogan £400! In recent years the number of sponsored handstamps has increased considerably and dealers and collectors have searched for appropriate operational postmarks. In all some 28 covers/postmarks are listed for the 1992 Happy & Glorious issue, and 30 for the 1992 Green Issue. The catalogue has been compiled by Jeffrey H Booth and includes useful introductory notes, especially on the subject of the valuations of covers. Prices are given for both plain and illustrated early covers, but from 1937 onwards all commemoratives are priced as illustrated (picture plus text) or display (printed text only) covers. The same applies for definitives, starting with the May 1951 KGVI issues and for Regionals from their beginning in 1958. As far as booklet panes, etc are concerned cacheted covers (usually text only, applied by rubber stamp) are acceptable for the earlier issues.

248 pages, card covers. Available from stamp and book shops and from the publishers: First Day Publishing Company, PO Box 947, LEWES, E Sussex, BN8 6ZS. Price £4.99, postage £1 UK. ISBN 0-9519608-0-6.

Stamp Scene

StampMaster

Collectors who visited Autumn Stampex were able to see and use a new computer stamp catalogue – “StampMaster”. Those who used it were impressed by its comprehensive listing of British stamps and the functions it could perform.

“StampMaster GB” is an easy to use database and cataloguing system enabling the stamp collector to keep an accurate record of his or her collection. Sophisticated technology allows you to search, sort, print, amend and explore your collection in many different ways. It eliminates repetitive and time-consuming tasks, and provides many hours of enjoyment in conjunction with your hobby.

The programme can be used alongside a catalogue or on its own. Background historical and philatelic information is provided for each country on the database, together with detailed explanations of many philatelic terms. Updates of the programme for values and future issues will be available as necessary.

Each stamp is recorded in great detail including description, denomination, perforation, colour, date of issue, title of issue, watermark, printing method, name of printer, paper type. This information is based on the official record of British stamps compiled at the National Postal Museum.

All GB definitive and commemorative (special) stamps from 1840 are listed, also Officials, Postal Fiscals, Postage Due, Telegraph Stamps, Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish Regional (Country) stamps, and Guernsey, Jersey and Isle of Man stamps issued under British Postal Administration.

With “StampMaster” you can:

1. record your own stamps alongside the on-line database and complement it with your individual distinctive information eg quality of stamp, user reference, price paid.
2. customise your database by inputting any of your other stamps that are not recorded in the database and enjoy the same advanced facilities,.
3. sort your collection by user-reference, catalogue number and value.
4. search the database with sophisticated search facilities.
5. add additional variations.
6. find details of forthcoming issues.

The StampMaster GB programme requires an IBM compatible personal computer. Ideally it

should have at least a 286 processor, although it will normally work with older machines as well. It requires a minimum of 512 KB of main memory, 3.5 MB of free hard disc space and a 3.5" or 5.25" diskette drive.

The programme will shortly be available, retail price is expected to be about £50. For further details and order form write to: Philatelic Software Ltd, Valley View, Coleman's Lane, NAZEING, Essex, EN9 2EA. Tel. 0992 893086.

Railway Letter Stamps

The North Yorkshire Moors Railway will issue four new 25p stamps on 18 January, day of issue of the Royal Mail “Age of Steam” stamps. The four NYMR stamps show steam hauled trains: ex-S R loco No. 30841 at Grosmont; ex-GWR loco No. 6619, B.R. loco No. 44767 George Stephenson; and ex-NER Class Q7 loco No. 901. The stamps are printed with two blocks of four to a sheet, separated by a central horizontal gutter. The stamps are NYMR reference numbers 55-58. Price £1 block of four or £2 full sheet.

The stamps will also be available on a First Day Cover. A block of four stamps, complete with the title at the top of the sheet, will be affixed to a plain white envelope and cancelled with a “Goathland First Day of Issue” datestamp. The cover will also carry a single Royal Mail Age of Steam stamp cancelled with the pictorial “York First Day of Issue” handstamp. The reference number is cover 94, price £2.75. A small number of covers will bear a full set of Royal Mail stamps – cover 94A, price £4.

Complementing the covers are four NYMR postcards, one for each of the locomotives shown on the stamps. Each card carries the relevant stamp plus a Royal Mail Age of Steam stamp. The cancellations will be the same as for the covers. These cards will be sold in sets of eight – four serviced and four mint for £6 (reference card set 11). Limited edition of 200 sets.

Further stamp issues planned for 1994 are:

22 April: 21st anniversary of first public train (5 stamps)

3 May: Restoration of locomotive “Eric Treacy” (1 stamp)

6 June: 60th and 50th anniversary of locomotives “Repton” and “Dame Vera Lynn”, and 50th anniversary of D-Day (1 stamp)

4 July: 150th anniversary of York to Pickering

Railway Act (2 stamps)

September: 75th anniversary of NER locomotive No. 901 (1 stamp)

2 October: 21st anniversary of the First NYMR Steam Gala (1 stamp)

All orders/enquiries concerning NYMR stamps should be sent to: Mrs M Atkins, 5 Tiber View, Brinsworth, ROTHERHAM, S Yorkshire, S60 5EA.

Cover Corner

John Fletcher of Norfolk submits the cover illustrated here. He hopes "it will be of interest to other collectors as it serves to prove that the Post Office went to great lengths to deliver mail even in wartime".

With his mother and sister he left Birmingham during 1940 because of the heavy bombing of the city. His father, an ARP warden, stayed behind, but soon after joined the 8th Army, saw all the great desert battles and returned home safely in 1945.

Mr Fletcher and his family stayed with friends on the outskirts of Crewe, in a district named Sydney on the road to Sandbach. The letter was



sent at the height of the blitz in December 1940. Mr Fletcher imagines that the stress and lack of sleep caused his father to forget to write Crewe at the end of the address. The letter did not arrive and obviously went to Australia, travelled around for several months (25 February 1941 Cremona, NSW). Despite the war, U-boats and heavy losses at sea, the letter arrived in Birmingham some time in April, having travelled round the world on a 2½d stamp – no extra postage was requested!

It is possible that the name Crewe is at the bottom left hand of the envelope, partly obscured by the repair paper.

Enschedé Cylinders and Warrant Numbers

The cylinders and warrants for the 14 December definitives are as follows:

Value	Cylinder	Warrant
4p	1	020
20p	1	021
50p	1	022



Caption confusion

We regret inaccurate captioning of some illustrations in the November *Bulletin*. The captions to figures 1 and 3 (pages 60-61) were transposed and the wrong caption used at the foot of page 71. The illustration shows British Painters stamps of 1973 and one of the 1975 Turner issue. We apologise for any confusion caused.

January Digest

Issued in January/early February

11 January: Age of Steam stamp cards. Nos. 158a-e. Price 25p each.

11 January: National Postal Museum postcards for Valentines exhibition. Four cards, price 25p each from Museum shop or £1 per set by mail order from British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, EDINBURGH EH3 5TT.

18 January: Age of Steam stamps – 19p, 25p, 30p, 35p, 41p.

Designer: Colin T Gifford (photographer).

Printing: Harrison & Sons Ltd, photogravure, sheets of 100, perf 14, one phosphor band 19p, phosphor coated paper plus 2 bands 25p-41p. OBA free paper, phosphor contain fluor. PVA Dextrin gum.

Pictorial First Day of Issue Postmarks: British Philatelic Bureau and York.

Presentation Pack: No. 244, price £1.85

25 January: 1994 Greetings stamp cards, 10 designs. Nos GS2a-j. Price 25p each.

27 January: 50p and £1 stamp books – first in “Coaching Inns” and “Prime Ministers” series. Contents two 25p stamps and two Postcode labels (50p), four 25p stamps (£1).

Printing: Harrison, photogravure, advanced coated paper (OBA free) 50p book, Walsall lithography, 2 phosphor bands, PVA gum, OBA free paper £1 book. Both perf. 15 x 14 with elliptical perfs on vertical sides.

Note: Available initially from Bureau and philatelic outlets, on sale from machines at post offices as stocks of earlier (November 1993) books are used up.

1 February: 1994 “Messages” Greetings stamps Book containing 10 x 1st class stamps featuring characters from childrens’ literature, and 20 greetings labels. Price £2.50.

Designer: Newell & Sorrell Ltd.

Printing: Harrison & Sons Ltd, photogravure, non-phosphor paper (OBA free) with 2 phosphor bands (with fluor). PVA Dextrin gum, Perf 15 x 14 with elliptical perfs on vertical sides.

Pictorial First Day of Issue Postmarks: British Philatelic Bureau and Penn (Wolverhampton).

Presentation Pack: No. G3. Price £2.80.

Withdrawn in January

18 January: Swans stamps, presentation pack, and stamp cards.

Stop Press – To Pay Labels

In response to requests from dealers and collectors, Royal Mail has decided to provide limited first day facilities for the new To Pay labels to be issued on 15 February 1994. The labels will be available from that day from the British Philatelic Bureau in Edinburgh and from Collections, Post Shops Plus and Philatelic Counters at main post offices in: Bath, Belfast, Birmingham, Brighton, Bristol, Cambridge, Canterbury, Cardiff, Chester, Colchester, Coventry, Croydon, Durham, Edinburgh, Exeter, Glasgow, Gloucester, Guildford, Leeds, Leicester, Liverpool, London (Chief Office & Trafalgar Square), Manchester, Newcastle upon Tyne, Nottingham, Oxford, Portsmouth, Romford, Southampton, Southend-on-Sea, Stratford-upon-Avon, Truro, Windsor, and York.

Collectors may send the covers bearing at least 25p worth of To Pay labels to receive a pictorial “First Day of Issue” datestamp to: Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, KEB, LONDON EC1A 1AA. To allow collectors at home and overseas time to acquire the labels, covers will be accepted for this “First Day” cancel until 15 March. Collectors should submit with their first day covers a large, addressed envelope for the return of their covers; this addressed envelope need not bear postage stamps (postage will be paid by Royal Mail). Due to the extra attention that these labels will require in handling, please note that they may take a few extra days to be returned to you.

The usual first day posting boxes will not be provided on this occasion but non-pictorial “First Day of Issue” datestamps will be available for the offices listed above. First day covers to receive these cancels should be sent to the Postmark Duty at these offices, enclosing an addressed envelope for return of the covers. First day covers will not automatically be supplied by the British Philatelic Bureau.



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