

March 1993



British Philatelic Bulletin

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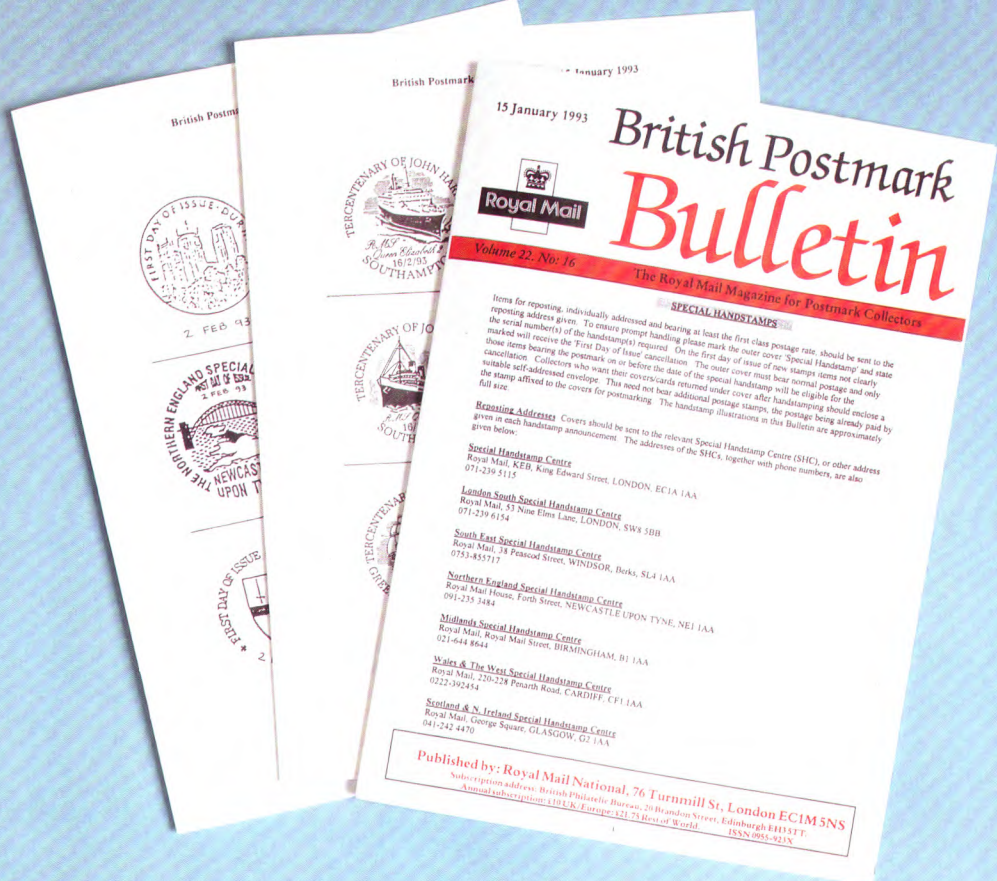


Five beautiful Orchid stamps – issued on 16 March – commemorate the 14th World Orchid Conference, Glasgow, 28 April–2 May 1993.

ORCHIDS

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British Philatelic Bulletin

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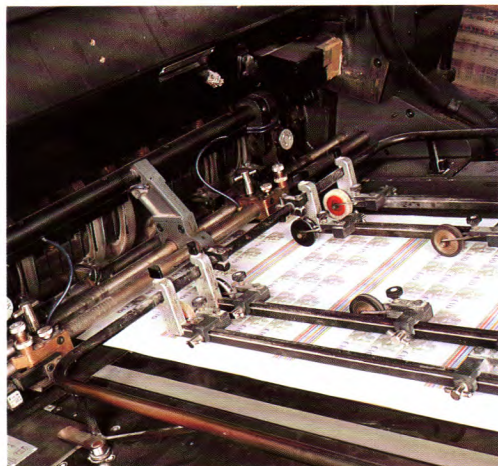
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Main Feature

NPM "Britannia Depicta" Exhibition

156



Printing the £10 Britannia stamp in sheet-fed offset lithography. (Photo: The House of Questa).

An important exhibition, at the National Postal Museum until 28 May, shows the depiction of Britannia on coins, bank notes, stamps and related material.

This Month

This month's *Bulletin* has a distinct Air Mail flavour – appropriate as a major exhibition of air mail material, Eur-Apex '93, is being staged as part of the Spring Stampex national exhibition (2-7 March). I hope many readers will be able to visit what promises to be a memorable exhibition.

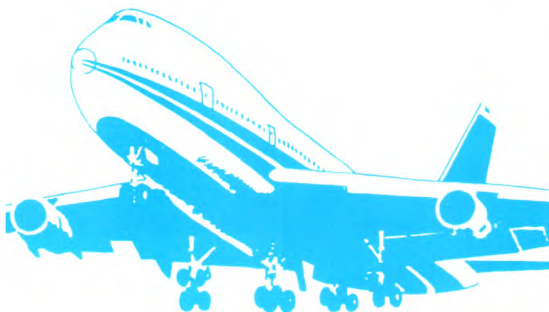
I am pleased to include in this issue an important article by Richard Beith, a leading collector of, and writer about, Air Mails, on British Internal Night mails. Illustrations are given of Air Cards – Royal Mail's new items of postal stationery which go on philatelic sale on 2 March, and of a new Scottish aerogramme which will be available from 23 March. The postmarks to be used at the Eur-Apex exhibition are illustrated. Finally all the questions in this month's competition relate to Air Mails.

Britannia, who features on the new £10 definitive (2 March), is the subject of a fascinating exhibition now on at the National Postal Museum (until 28 May). An article, based on the excellent brochure for this exhibition, appears in this *Bulletin*.

From time to time we are asked about the use of postcodes and I am pleased to include a feature on them, written by a member of staff at the Royal Mail's National Postcode Centre in Portsmouth. I hope to publish further articles on postcodes and postal mechanisation in future issues.

I would like to thank all who took part in the 1992 Special Stamp Poll – results to be published next month, and responded with comments about the future of the *Bulletin*, as requested last month. All letters were carefully read.

JOHN HOLMAN, *Editor*



Royal Mail News

Vended Stamp Books

The second books in a new series' on Postal History and Educational Institutions will be issued on 6 April:

50p – Ship Mail Postmarks

£1 – 100th anniversary of St Hilda's College, Oxford

They will go on sale from philatelic counters and the British Philatelic Bureau from 6 April 1993 and will become gradually available from vending machines as stocks of the existing books are used up.

The contents remain the same as in the 50p and £1 books issued since September 1991, viz 50p – 2 x 1p and 2 x 24p, £1 – 2 x 2p, 4 x 24p and 2 labels.

The 50p book will be printed by Harrison & Sons Limited, in photogravure. The £1 book will be printed by Walsall Security Printers, in offset lithography. In both books the stamps will be printed on paper with PVA Dextrin gum.

These books are not regarded as new issues and no first day of issue facilities will be offered.

NVI Book Varieties

Five new NVI stamp books are to be issued on 6 April. All the books will contain stamps printed on OBA (Optical Brightening Agent) free paper with perforations all round and elliptical perforations in the vertical margins. The stamps in the Walsall 10 x 1st class books will have 2 phosphor bands and all phosphor bands on Walsall and Questa stamps will contain fluorescence. The stamps in the Harrison books have PVA Dextrin gum, those in Questa and Walsall books have PVA gum.

The new books are:

10 x 1st class (Harrison)

10 x 1st class (Walsall)

4 x 1st class (Harrison)

10 x 2nd class (Questa)

4 x 2nd class (Walsall)

The books will be available initially from the British Philatelic Bureau and Collections/Philatelic counters from 6 April and gradually from other counters as stocks of the current books are used up.

The stamp books are not regarded as a new issue and no first day of issue facilities will be offered.

These books will yield five stamp variations, all with elliptical perforations:

2nd class litho, Questa, 1 phosphor band

2nd class litho, Walsall, 1 phosphor band

1st class photo, Harrison, phosphor coated paper
 1st class litho, Walsall, 2 phosphor bands
 1st class litho, Questa, phosphor coated paper

Marine Timekeepers and Orchids – Colours

The plate numbers and colours are the same for each of the four values of Marine Timekeepers stamps, viz: 1A (new blue) 1A (greenish yellow) 1A (magenta) 1A (black) 1A (grey-black) 1A (pale cream).

The cylinder numbers and colours for the Orchids samps are:

18p 1A (emerald) 1B (greenish yellow) 1C (magenta) 1D (new blue) 1E (apple green) 1F (grey) P4 (phosphor)

24p 1A (emerald) 1B (greenish yellow) 1C (bright green) 1D (agate)

28p 1A (emerald) 1B (greenish yellow) 1C (bright rose red) 1D (turquoise blue) 1E (olive brown)

33p 1A (emerald) 1B (greenish yellow) 1C (magenta) 1D (bright violet) 1E (bright green) 1F (brownish black)

39p 1A (emerald) 2B (greenish yellow) 1C (bright red rose) 1D (bright yellow green) 1E (bright green) 1F (bluish violet) 1G (agate).

1994 Special Issues

Further information is now to hand concerning the special issues for 1994. The dates of issue and values are still to be decided.

1. *Railway Mania (January)*

This will be the second in a series of stamps illustrating vintage transport in Britain. Significant anniversaries occurring in 1994 include the 150th anniversaries of the Midland and North British Railways.

2. *HRH The Prince of Wales – Investiture – Silver Jubilee (March)*

3. *Picture Postcards (April)*

Centenary of the granting of authority by the Post Office for the sending of picture postcards through the post.

4. *CEP(T) – European Discoveries (May)*

This is the 'Europa' theme chosen by the Conference of European Posts (and telecommunications) in 1994. The approach is still to be decided.

5. *Liberation (June)*

To be issued on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of D-Day, but intended to celebrate the contributions of all those who played a part in the ending of the War in Europe.

6. *Golf (July)*

Issued to mark the 250th anniversary of The

Honourable Company of Edinburgh Golfers which is claimed to be the oldest golf club in the world.

7. *Summertime (August)*

This will be the third in a series of 'seasons' stamps to be issued between 1992 and 1995, representing various natural aspects of life in Britain.

8. *Sherlock Holmes (September)*

Issued on the occasion of the centenary of 'The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes'.

9. *Christmas (November)*

Approach to be confirmed.

First Day of Issue Postmarks

Pictorial "First Day of Issue" postmarks are provided for each new issue of special and greetings stamps, and prestige stamp books at the British Philatelic Bureau and at an "alternative" location, appropriate to the issue. The alternative offices for 1993 are shown below. Please note that some locations have changed since this list was last published here.

Issue	Date	Postmark
Swans	19 January	Abbotsbury
Greetings	2 February	Greetland
Marine Timekeepers	16 February	Greenwich
High Value (£10)	2 March	Windsor
Orchids	16 March	Glasgow
Europa: Art in the 20th Century	11 May	London SW
Roman Britain	15 June	Caerleon
Inland Waterways	20 July	Gloucester
Beatrix Potter Prestige Book	10 August	Keswick
Autumn	14 September	Taunton
Channel Tunnel	12 October*	Folkestone
Christmas	9 November	City of London Bethlehem
*Subject to change (dependent on Tunnel opening)		

Swans Presentation Pack

The number for this pack is 234, not 233 as stated

in the December *Bulletin* (page 79). Number 233 has been allocated to the 1992 Collectors' Pack. We regret any confusion caused.

Definitive Printing Numbers

Last month we published a listing of printing (warrant) numbers found in the sheet margins of some definitive stamps. The Stamp Production Dept has supplied details of further numbers:

1p – 675; 18p – 671, 956; 28p – 677, 916; 33p – 946; 34p – 678, 947; 35p – 679, 791, 917; 39p – 680, 792, 918.

High Value Plate Numbers

The Stamp Production Dept confirms that the following plate numbers have been used for the new (24 March 1992) high value Castle stamps: £1 Carrickfergus 1A-1M, 1O-1S
£1.50 Caernarfon 2A-2D, 2H-2P
£2 Edinburgh 2A-2E, 2I, 2L-2X
£5 Windsor 2A-2D

Any gaps in the sequence of numbers represent plates which were not used for technical reasons. When the £2 printing plates reach number 2Z the numbering will continue 2AA, 2BB, etc. This will, of course, be the case for the other values should they reach the same stage.

NPM News

Exhibitions

Currently on display at the National Postal Museum are exhibitions entitled "People in the Post" and "Britannia Depicta". The Britannia exhibition is described elsewhere in this *Bulletin*.

From May the "People in the Post" exhibition will be replaced by one specially designed for children, called "Let's Collect Stamps". This will show what stamp collecting is all about and give useful guidance on how to get the most from the hobby. This exhibition will be on show for one year. The Museum, in London's Chief Post Office, King Edward Street, LONDON EC1A 1LP is open Monday-Friday, 9.30am to 4.30pm. Admission free.

Postcards

Five new postcards entitled "Gems of the Museum" will be available from 6 May (National Stamp Day). Price 25p each, the cards will be on sale at the Museum's shop and will be available by mail order from the British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, EDINBURGH EH3 5TT (see below).

Four cards featuring Post Office uniforms, using specially commissioned artwork by stamp designer Clive Abbott, and five cards on the Christmas theme go on sale on 14 September and 9 November, days of issue of the Autumn and Christmas stamps respectively.

Mail Order Service

As from 1 March 1993 the Museum's Mail Order Facility will cease. From that date the British Philatelic Bureau will provide a Mail Order Service for Museum ties, scarves, Douglas Muir's book *Postal Reform & The Penny Black* and, most importantly, new sets of Museum postcards on pre-release terms. They will also supply Museum postcards up to a year after their issue date (stocks providing), as they do with Special Stamp issues.

Consequently, "People in the Post (Modern)" (NPM 93/1-5) was the last set of postcards provided by the Museum's mail order service.



Coding desk operator at London South West Mechanised Letter Office.

All future issues will be provided by the British Philatelic Bureau, and orders to be sent to: British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, EDINBURGH EH3 5TT.

Cheques/Postal Orders should be made payable to: "British Philatelic Bureau."

Collectors who wish to obtain Museum postcards prior to those supplied by the Bureau, can get in touch with Ray Pottle who is the Honorary Secretary & Treasurer of the Association of Friends of the National Postal Museum. He has agreed to provide such a service. A "donation" towards postage would be appreciated in such transactions. Enquiries should be addressed to: Ray Pottle, c/o National Postal Museum, King Edward Street, LONDON EC1A 1LP.

DAVID PATON, *Deputy Manager*

British Internal Night Air Mails: From 'Speke Spokes' to 'Skynet'

RICHARD BEITH

*Richard Beith is the Editor of the Bulletin of the British Aerophilatelic Federation (BAeF). This article is published to coincide with the national air mail exhibition **Eur-Apex '93**, organised by the BAeF and presented in conjunction with Spring Stampex (2-7 March) at the Royal Horticultural Society Halls, London.*

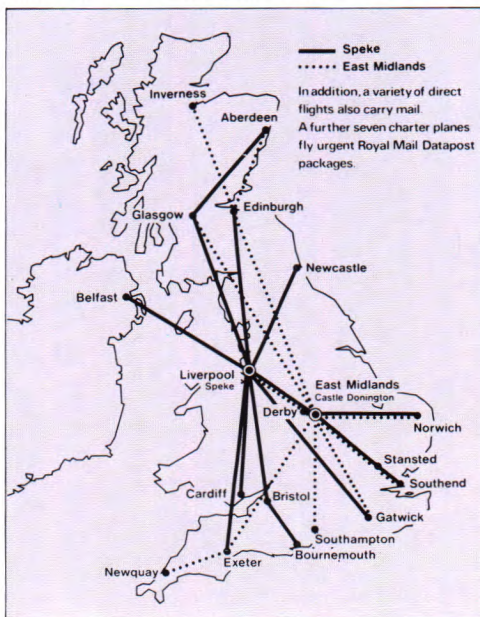
Development of the System

The first civil mails carried by air within the United Kingdom under Post Office or Air Ministry contract date back to the 1911 Coronation Aerial Post and the 1919 Railway Strike mails. However, it was not until 1934 that aeroplanes were regularly used for the carriage of mail within the British Isles. In that year, a PO contract was awarded to *Highland Airways* for the Inverness-Orkney air mails and *Railway Air Services (RAS)* carried the mails on their London-Belfast-Glasgow service and on other routes. As the 1930s passed, other services were operated, particularly to and from the Scottish Islands. However the quantity of mail carried on these day-time services was quite small, even on the London and Glasgow route. The airline services used were primarily operated for the carriage of passengers, but the additional revenue from carrying the mail was always welcome.

Only on 1 November 1961 was a contract placed for the carriage of significant quantities of mail by air – this was the first internal night air mail service operated by *British European Airways*, using turboprop *Vickers Vanduquards* over a network connecting London with Belfast, Edinburgh and Glasgow.

Although it was now a matter of tonnes of mail per night instead of the ounces of mail carried by day on the RAS routes in the 1930s, it was not until 1979 that the foundations were laid for a comprehensive night air mail network. The PO took this action to improve the delivery of first class mail to the more remote parts of the UK, to avoid inefficient cross-London mail handling and to relieve pressure on the Travelling Post Office (TPO) network. A "hub and spoke" service was

therefore introduced based on Liverpool's Speke Airport where mail was carried to Liverpool from a number of airports around the country, Liverpool being the "hub" with the "spokes" leading to the various regional airports involved. The mail planes usually arrived at Liverpool between 11.00pm and midnight. The sealed mail bags (no special cancellations for the philatelist!) were sorted at



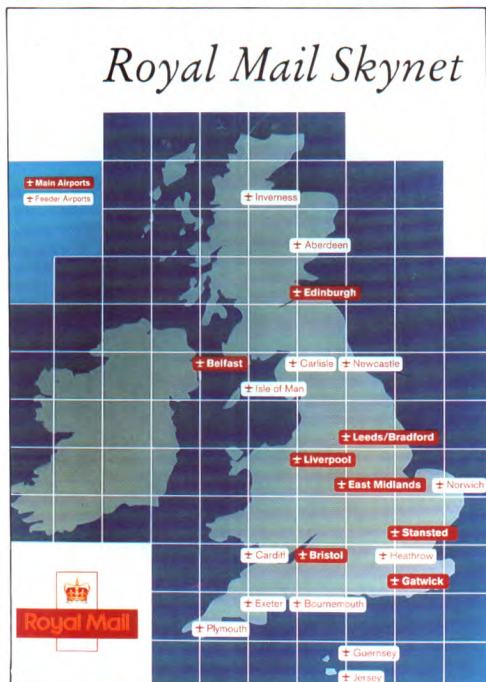
The "Speke Spokes" and East Midlands night air mail networks c.1984.

Liverpool Airport and dispatched on the planes' return flights, their home airports being reached between 1.00 and 2.00am. For example, the plane from say Glasgow would carry mail bags made up in that city and destined for Bournemouth, Exeter, Norwich, etc.

The service, which was soon known by the name "The Speke Spokes", was joined by a second hub and spoke network in 1982 based on East Midlands Airport, Castle Donington. Use of East Midlands Airport gave easy access

to the M1 for PO road transport and a rapid interchange with the TPO network at Derby Station.

In September/October 1992, the night mail network was further expanded and named "Skynet". The system now involves eight main UK airports: Belfast, Bristol, East Midlands, Edinburgh, Gatwick, Leeds/Bradford, Liverpool, and Stansted. The other 13 other subsidiary airports involved are: Aberdeen, Bournemouth, Cardiff, Carlisle, Exeter, Guernsey, Heathrow, Inverness, Isle of Man, Jersey, Newcastle, Norwich, and Plymouth.



The current Skynet night air mail network.

On the Stansted and Edinburgh route, operated by Aberdeen based Business Air using Saab 340s, the mail is fully containerised, this being the first use of containerisation on an internal Royal Mail flight. The northbound flight carries the last collection from postboxes in the City of London and a special 2100 hours collection from the Palace of Westminster giving improved delivery of London mail in Central Scotland.

The new system is worth £23 million to the air charter industry and involves 31 flights per night by 10 different airlines. Skynet planes fly 12,000 miles per night, all within the British Isles. On a typical Monday to Friday night,

18,000 bags of mail will be carried by air, almost 3 million letters, of which 95 per cent are scheduled for delivery by first post the next morning. This extra mail carrying capacity should result in 645 million letters being carried by air in a year.

Aerophilatelic Souvenirs

For the collector of air mails the only problem with Skynet and its predecessors is that there is no way of telling if your morning mail has been carried by road, rail or air to reach you, there are no special postal markings, no "By

Royal Mail Air Service

from Exeter to Liverpool
carrying mail posted in
Cornwall, Devon and Somerset



Carried by Air Escosse Bandeirante
Commemorative Cover



Royal Mail Air Service official souvenir first flight cover flown by Air Escosse from Exeter to Liverpool (Speke) on 9 April 1980, with INAUGURAL FLIGHT cachet and London 1980 50p used on its day of issue.

Air Mail/Par Avion" etiquettes. The only recognisable souvenirs are those created when a particular route was initiated; most of the souvenirs known to the author relate to the various "Speke Spokes" (see Table 1).

No souvenirs have been reported from the opening of the East Midlands network in 1982, and only one souvenir cover has emerged from the recent introduction of Skynet. This is a printed cover franked with the 24p Columbus stamp cancelled with a not very postal looking Redhill datestamp for 28 SEP 1992, about four



Skynet souvenir cover flown Gatwick - East Midlands - Gatwick on 28 September 1992.

Bulletin Supplement

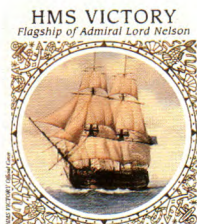
Commemorative Covers

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

Marine Timekeepers. Benham have produced a number of covers for this issue, details as follows:

HMS Victory

The *Victory*, launched at Chatham on 7 May 1765, is most famous for being Nelson's flagship at the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805. Later she was also Howe's flagship at the relief of Gibraltar and of Jervis at St Vincent. The cover, which carries all four stamps, features a painting of this ship in full sail on the high seas, printed on "silk" and framed in gold. The stamps are cancelled Portsmouth where the *Victory* is now in dry dock. Price £4.99 or £7.99 signed by the captain.



Benham (A Buckingham) Ltd, The Great Ship, The Battle of Trafalgar, Kent, CT20 1SD

SS Great Britain

The Great Western Steamship Company of Bristol, inspired by its chief engineer, Isambard Kingdom Brunel, launched the *SS Great Britain* in 1843 to challenge the American domination of transatlantic trade. The 150th anniversary of the launch is an appropriate time to honour this first ocean-going ship built of iron and driven by propeller. Featuring a painting of the ship printed on "silk" and framed in gold, this third cover carries all four stamps cancelled at Bristol. Price £4.99.

The Cutty Sark

The *Cutty Sark* is one of the most famous tea-

clippers. Built at Dumbarton in 1869, she only plied the tea trade for 10 years before abandoning the China route in order to carry wool from Australia. After flying the Portuguese flag for 17 years, she finally returned home to Britain and can now be visited in dry berth at Greenwich. A painting of the *Cutty Sark* in full sail, printed on "silk" and framed in gold, features on the second of Benham's covers, again carrying all four stamps. A special Greenwich postmark was used. Price £4.99.

A set of four "small silk" covers, each carrying a single stamp is available, price £10. These feature four famous British ships: *Great Britain*, *Cutty Sark*, and two great Cunard ships, the *QE2* and the *Queen Mary*. The four ships are shown in full colour, printed on "silk" and framed in gold. Four special pictorial postmarks were used – *Great Britain* at Bristol, *Cutty Sark* at Greenwich, and *QE2* and *Queen Mary* at Southampton.

A set of four "luxury silk" postcards, each carrying a single stamp and featuring another four famous British ships, cost £10. They show printed in full colour on "silk" and framed in gold, Nelson's flagship, *HMS Victory*, *HMS Belfast*, *HMS Warrior* and the *Centurion*, the ship on which John "Longitude" Harrison's marine chronometer was trialled on a voyage to Lisbon



Tercentenary of John Harrison, Inventor of the first accurate marine chronometer

in 1736. Renowned artist Gordon C Davies was commissioned to paint *HMS Belfast* and the *Centurion* specially for these cards. The special pictorial postmarks used were Portsmouth, London SE1 and Plymouth.

Orders/enquiries for all Benham covers/cards to: Benham (A Buckingham) Ltd, The Bayle, FOLKESTONE, Kent, CT20 1SD.

Orchids. A G Bradbury is producing two covers in connection with the Orchid Stamps of 16 March.

Worshipful Company of Gardeners

This cover features four different orchids in full

colour together with the Company's coat of arms. The issue is limited to 1000 numbered copies plus 100 signed by the Master of the Company. Each cover will receive a specially sponsored handstamp in London EC, where the Company's headquarters is located. Covers with the full set of five stamps cost £5.95, or signed version at £9.75.



The Worshipful Company of Gardeners



A. J. Roberts, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100

Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh

The Royal Botanic Garden is one of the supporting organisations for the World Orchid Conference, the reason for the stamp issue. These covers feature an old engraving of a Victorian orchid, together with the Garden's crest in foiled-leaf. This edition is limited to 500 numbered copies plus 100 signed by the Garden's Director. Each cover will receive a special Royal Botanic Garden postmark. Covers with all five stamps cost £6.75, signed version £9.75. Prices include UK P&P – overseas please remit in £ Sterling and add £1. Orders/enquiries A G Bradbury, 3 Link Road, LEICESTER LE2 3RA.

PO Archives Postcards

Post Office Archives will issue their fourth set of postcards on 2 March, opening day of Spring Stampex. The cards feature artwork of John Armstrong (1893-1973) used on a set of four posters, issued to schools in 1935, on the history of communications. The cards feature:



Pheidippides, 490 BC (post runner); The King's Messenger, 1482; Mail Coach, 1784; and Royal Mail Motorcycle, 1935. Each card will be individually numbered and limited to an edition of 2500. Price 25p per card. Cards will be available at the Archives stand at Spring Stampex, or by post from: Post Office Archives, Freeling House, Mount Pleasant (Phoenix Place Entrance), LONDON EC1A 1BB. Orders under £5 are subject to £1.50 postage & packing charge.

A special cachet will be available for cards purchased at the stand at Spring Stampex. The National Postal Museum will also have a cachet which can be applied to NPM cards purchased at its stand. Please note that these cachets cannot be applied to postage stamps affixed to the cards.



Scottish Philatelic Congress. The 64th Annual Congress of the Association of Scottish Philatelic Societies takes place in the Town Hall, Falkirk on 20-21 March 1993. The host society is the Scottish Philatelic Society which celebrates its centenary in 1993. A special handstamp will be used on 20 March. A special cover and postcard have been prepared for this event featuring the Scottish Bishop mark which was first used in 1693. A second postcard showing Edinburgh street scenes at the turn of the century and various early postmarks is also available. Unused cards cost 30p each. Scottish Philatelic Society Centenary labels also available – 50 for 50p. Orders/enquiries: H J Revell, 160 Muirwood Road, CURRIE, Midlothian, EH14 5HQ.



Typical recent night air mail scene with the HS748 G-BEJE in Royal Mail Skynet livery.

Table 1 “Speke Spokes”

Date	From	To	Air & plane	Souvenir
10.09.79	Lydd (Kent)	Liverpool	Skyways FH227 G-SKYB	Printed first flight cover with special handstamp
05.11.79	Cardiff	Liverpool	London Air Taxi Centre Ltd BN islander or Piper Aztec	Printed first flight cover with Cardiff philatelic counter handstamp Only 50 covers flown
04.02.80	Bournemouth	Liverpool	Express Air Services Dart Herald	Royal Mail souvenir first flight covers posted at Bournemouth & Southampton
09.04.80	Exeter	Liverpool	Air Ecosse <i>Bandeirante</i>	Royal Mail souvenir first flight cover special handstamp*
19.05.80	Bournemouth	Liverpool	Express Air services Dart Herald?	Bournemouth Royal Mail Postcard, flown first day of sale, special handstamp
20.07.82	Liverpool	—	Unflown	NWPB card No7, “Speke Spokes”, attractive FDI handstamp featuring ‘spokes’

*Some of these covers were franked with the London 1980 50p stamp on its first day of issue.

weeks before the service was announced to the public. This cover contains a "filler" stating that it was one of a special limited edition produced for people connected with the launch of Skynet. 200 examples were flown from Gatwick to East Midlands and back to Gatwick in the Shorts 360 G-OAAS of Aurigny Air Services.

The aeroplanes and their operators

A wide variety of air charter and third level airlines have been used since the opening of the "Speke Spokes". Ten companies are involved

in the current *Skynet* operation (see Table 2). Our photograph shows a typical scene on the current *Skynet* service, showing the HS748 1A G-BEJE in *Royal Mail Skynet* livery. G-BEJE is operated by Janes Aviation of Blackpool on the Liverpool-Edinburgh service.

Acknowledgement: The author thanks Mr Derek Willson of the PO Public Relations Department for his help in the preparation of this article.

© Richard Beith

Table 2 "Skynet"

Operator	Base	Aircraft type
Aurigny Air Services	Alderney	Short 360
Business Air Centre	London	Short 360, Hawker Siddley 748
Business Air Limited	Aberdeen	Short 360, Saab 340
Celtic Airways	Bristol	Fokker F27
Channel Express	Bournemouth	HP Dart Herald, Lockheed Electra
Gill Air	Newcastle	Short 330/360
Janes Aviation	Blackpool	Hawker Siddley 748
Streamline Aviation	Castle Donnington	Short 330/360
Titan Airways	Stansted	Short 330
Woodgate Aviation	Belfast	Chieftain/Aztec



Artwork of one of Eur-Apex souvenir sheets.

Eur-Apex '93 Exhibition & Souvenirs

Eur-Apex '93, a major exhibition of airmail stamps, covers and related material, will be staged as part of the Spring Stampex exhibition at the Royal Horticultural Society Halls, London SW1 from 2-7 March.

Eur-Apex '93 is organised by the British Aerophilatelic Federation in association with Spring Stampex, and is sponsored by Harmers of London and the British Philatelic Trust. The exhibition has been accredited by the British Philatelic Federation with patronage from Federation of European Philatelic Association (FEPA) and International Federation of Aerophilatelic Societies (FISA).

Harmers of London have donated a

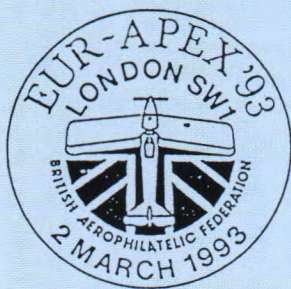
magnificent Grand Prix Trophy as part of their generous support of the exhibition. Other special prizes have been promised including a medal, in keeping with the normal exhibition medals, to be donated by the Philatelic Writers Society. This will be awarded for the best exhibit in the Literature Class.

A display of Air Mail memorabilia will be provided by David Harrop of Stockport, his display of Post Office memorabilia at Spring Stampex 1992 was well received. Six special cancellations will be applied to the mail posted at the exhibition. The cancellations will have different motifs, linked to the main aero-event of each day. Collectors who cannot attend the exhibition can send covers for reposting to the

Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, 53 Nine Elms Lane, LONDON SW8 5BB (state date(s) required).

Souvenirs will include an official Eur-Apex '93 exhibition postcard, and two miniature sheets showing Sopwith, Snipe, Lancaster and Tornado aircraft. Produced by the Crown Agents Stamp Bureau in association with the Joint Services Charity, the sheets mark the 75th anniversary of the RAF and the 50th anniversary of the RAF Association. The sheets will be on sale at the exhibition; 75p from each sheet will go to the Joint Services Charity.

Enquiries about the exhibition should be addressed to: Eur-Apex '93, 21 Lynton Close, Hurstpierpoint, HASOCKS, W Sussex, BN6 9AN.



Eur-Apex '93 Special handstamps.

NPM "Britannia Depicta" Exhibition

To commemorate the issue of the £10 Britannia stamp on 2 March, the National Postal Museum has arranged an exhibition showing the use of Britannia on stamps, coins and bank notes. The exhibition opened on 12 January and will run until 28 May.

Britannia was the Latin name for the Roman province of Britain which, together with Caledonia and Hibernia, made up the British Isles. Originally, the name was one of two applied to the island from about 500BC, the other being Albion.

As an image Britannia first took female form on coins of the Roman emperor Hadrian (AD 117-138), marking his subjugation of southern Britain. She was depicted as a captive of the Roman Empire. Later coins of Antoninus Pius (AD 138-161, builder of the Antonine Wall), portray her as a seated warrior complete with spiked shield.

Subsequent emperors used similar images on some medallions and coins.

As a symbol of the country, and increasingly imperial might, Britannia was used on many items produced in the UK and the British Empire including coins, medals, bank notes, stamps and other associated postal material.

Britannia On Coins

On British coinage Britannia first appeared on the copper half-pence and farthings of 1672 and she remained on those denominations until 1937. In 1797 she was used for the reverse of the first copper pennies and she continued to appear on this denomination until decimalisation in 1971. On occasion she has also been found on silver coins, appearing on some of the groats or four penny pieces of Queen Victoria and on the florins of Edward VII. She still appears, accompanied by a lion, on the reverse of the 50p piece.

In 1672 Britannia faced left and held an olive branch and spear. Later, during the reign of George III, the spear was replaced by a trident and a ship was introduced in the background. In the reign of George IV she was turned to the right and the ship and olive branch were omitted. Pistrucci's 1821 design for the farthing showed Britannia helmeted for the first time. The ship

was reintroduced in 1860 and Britannia is also shown with a lighthouse; both these features disappeared in 1895. The lighthouse was restored in 1937.

On decimalisation, Britannia no longer appeared on copper coinage but a rather slim design by Christopher Ironside, with olive branch in hand and lion at foot, was used for the 50p coin still in circulation.

Britannia on Bank Notes

In 1694 the Court of Directors of the newly founded Bank of England, decided that the device for their Common Seal should represent "Britannia sitting and looking on a Bank of money". It was probably inspired by the current copper coins. This symbol then came to be used on issued bank notes. The earliest surviving bank note dates from 1697 where she is framed between two opulent fronds.

In 1702 a design by John Sturt had an octagonal frame and the figure is looking over her shoulder in the opposite direction from her bank of money, which had come to resemble the "beehive" which was to become closely associated with bank note Britannias over many years.

Daniel Maclise, a leading painter of the day, was invited to draw a new vignette in 1850. The result was shown on every Bank of England note issued between 1855 and 1956. Britannia is sitting full face with a naturalistic olive branch showing both fruit and foliage.

In 1960 Britannia yielded pride of place to the sovereign but she appeared in a medallion on both sides of notes bare-headed and with spear, olive branch and true bank of money.

From 1970 the "series D" bank notes bore an image of Britannia by H N Eccleston.

The £50 note is still current. "Series D" notes, with an image by Roger Withington, have been issued since 1990.

Stamps and Stationery

In 1840, Britannia was considered a suitable subject for postage stamps and postal stationery. She appeared as the central figure in the ill-fated stationery drawn by William Mulready and thus



Design submitted by Rex Whistler for the 1935 Silver Jubilee issue (National Postal Museum, London).

in the multitude of caricatures. As a substitute for the portrait of Queen Victoria she appeared on the stamps of three colonies. It was not until 1913 that Britannia appeared on British stamps, together with seahorses deriving from medal representations.

With the success of the Penny Black, if not the Mulready, other countries began to issue postage labels. For some colonies, British rule was represented by an image of Britannia.

The first, by Edward Henry Corbould, appeared on stamps of Mauritius, Trinidad and Barbados in the early 1850s and showed her seated on bales of sugar with spear in hand.

Late versions were used by Trinidad, and Trinidad and Tobago up to the reign of King George V.

The British high value stamps of George V had a design known as the "Seahorses". This was drawn by Bertram Mackennal with lettering by George Eve.

There are a number of theories about the origin of the design but it seems to have been a combination of the stamp issue of Barbados of 1892 which feature the Carolingian seal of the colony and depictions on various medals. The first depiction of seahorses on a British medal was probably that produced by Thomas Simon in 1665. A medal by Leonard Charles Wyon in 1854 showed Britannia with four seahorses. A combination of these, and other, ideas seems to have been the inspiration for Mackennal.

During the 1920s and 1930s the first

commemorative stamps were issued in Great Britain. Though few in number they attracted a large number of prominent artists such as Rex Whistler and Edmund Dulac. For some of the more imperial subjects Britannia was used as a motif though none of these appeared on issued stamps.

The Festival of Britain, in 1951, celebrated regeneration after the Second World War and the centenary of the Great Exhibition of 1851. The symbol of the Festival, based on Britannia, was designed by Abram Games and he also designed one of the stamps which incorporated this symbol. It was stated "The Symbol of the head of Britannia surmounting the points of the compass expresses the motif of the Festival, the British contribution to Civilisation".

By 1953 imperial might was no longer in fashion and so the image of Britannia was given less prominence. However, she was shown on some designs submitted for the first Elizabeth II high value stamps, though none were issued. However, for the miniature sheet issued in 1990 for the "Stamp World London 90" exhibition, and to mark the 150th anniversary of the Penny Black, a return was made to the Seahorse design used for the George V high values. This sheet combined the original Penny Black, the design of the Seahorses and modern security printing. The new £10 continues this theme.

Savings Stamps

National Savings stamps came into existence in 1918 to replace postage stamps as a means of

saving by instalments. Originally, they were a means by which poorer people could assist the war effort by buying War Savings Certificates. They were sold over post office counters and from official agents.

The first stamp, bearing the word "War", featured Britannia, intended to stimulate patriotism. Britannia was ideal for a savings stamp because of the association with coins and bank notes from 1672.

Imperial Reply Coupons

In 1927 a new type of reply coupon was placed on sale for use within the British Empire only. It cost 2½d and could be exchanged for a stamp representing the postage on a single rate letter to a destination within the Empire. The design featured Britannia in traditional, classical garb and was produced and printed by Waterlow & Sons Ltd.



Artwork for imperial Reply Coupon, Waterlow & Son, 1926 (National Postal Museum, London).

Coins, bank notes, stamps, postal stationery and related items, all bearing a representation of Britannia are shown in the Museum's exhibition; much of the material has not previously been on public display. The exhibition contains items from the Museum's own collections and material kindly loaned by HM The Queen, the British Museum, the Royal Mint Museum, Bank of England Museum, Dr Jean Alexander, Mr Lionel Jones, Mr John Marriott, and Mr Stan Goron.

This feature is based on the text by Douglas Muir in the exhibition brochure which has been sponsored by The House of Questa, printer of the new £10 Britannia stamp. The brochure is available free at the Museum. The NPM is situated in London's Chief Post Office, King Edward Street, LONDON EC1A 1LP, open Monday-Friday 9.30am to 4.30pm, admission free. The Museum is only a few minutes walk from St Pauls Cathedral and underground station.

Gems from the R M Phillips Collection

207. 1d Lilac Bisected

The Phillips Collection contains two interesting usages of the 1881 1d lilac bisected. The first comprises a cover sent from the Great Hampton Street Post Office in Birmingham to Chicago, USA bearing two 1d stamps and one bisected (diagonally lower left). The 2½d paid the rate to the USA. The stamps were cancelled on 18 February 1886, and the cover bears a Chicago datestamp of 3 March. On the reverse are two other Chicago postmarks. Mr Phillips noted: "There is nothing on the envelope to indicate that the bisected stamp was ever challenged", and that "a similar combination is known on a letter from the same office to Detroit 2 days later". Also on the same album sheet (Vol. XXXIX, page 19) is a single 1d and 1d bisect (diagonally upper left), on piece cancelled St Leonards on Sea Station Office, 9 April 1893. Mr Phillips noted this as an "unofficial bisect".



Reginald M Phillips (1888-1977) was a leading collector of British stamps of the Victorian reign. In 1965 he most generously donated his collection to the Post Office in trust for the nation. The collection is on show at the National Postal Museum.

Themes of British Special Stamps

9: Royal Anniversaries

G E DRABBLE

It is perhaps surprising in retrospect that Queen Victoria celebrated several significant birthdays and three Jubilees, none of which were marked by a special stamp issue. Her successor fared no better; not even his coronation was marked. Ninety-five years of issuing of postage stamps were to pass before the Post Office, after considerable reluctance, recognised Royal occasions by marking the Silver Jubilee of King George V in 1935 with a special issue. The succeeding years have seen 14 further Royal issues; indeed, every popular Royal occasion has since been celebrated. For thematic purposes, anniversaries form a convenient sub-set of Royal occasions, and we consider nine such issues here.



In 1948, the Silver Wedding of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth was the second occasion of a special issue, and 24 years later, the Silver Wedding of their daughter, Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh was marked. 1977 saw the Silver Jubilee of The Queen's reign, and the following year, the 25th anniversary of the Coronation itself. There followed three birthday issues: the 80th and 90th birthdays of Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, in 1980 and 1990, with the 60th birthday of The Queen in 1986. In 1992, the "Happy and Glorious" issue marked 40 years of the present reign.

The Jubilee issue of 1935, designed by Barnett Freedman, was awaited eagerly. The four values ($\frac{1}{2}$ d, 1d, $1\frac{1}{2}$ d and $2\frac{1}{2}$ d) were identical in most respects, the colours being those of the current definitive values. A MacKenna head of the sovereign occupied the centre and the left panel bore the crown. The design exploited the photogravure technique by introducing shading to the lettering, resulting in a 'shot silk' look (*Bulletin*, October 1974). The King's head is flanked with columns of foliage, and the right-hand panels contain either a wreath or a spray of foliage or both. Laurel and olive both feature, and the $1\frac{1}{2}$ d spray and the columns on the 1d appear to be oak. A somewhat capricious feature of the design is the underlining of the values: the $2\frac{1}{2}$ d has four lines under; the $1\frac{1}{2}$ d three; the 1d two, and the $\frac{1}{2}$ d two! A concise history of this issue by the late A G Rigo de Righi appeared in the *Bulletin* of June and July 1971. Perhaps in these present liberated days we might consider the designs conservative, but the page still makes a very attractive display in the album.

Silver Weddings

The Royal Silver Wedding of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth was marked by an issue on 26 April 1948. There were just two stamps, a $2\frac{1}{2}$ d and a £1, printed photogravure in ultramarine and blue respectively. The $2\frac{1}{2}$ d, designed by G T Knipe, was simple in design, bearing a Dorothy Wilding portrait in profile of the King and Queen, flanked by bold dates, 1923 1948, sideways, and the crown and value. For the first time, the words "Postage" and/or "Revenue" were omitted. Joan Hassall (1906-88), the first woman to appear on the roll of British stamp designers, designed the £1, earning a warm tribute from *Gibbons Stamp Monthly* which served to dispel the initial anger at what was seen as the commercial exploitation by the Post Office of collectors. The design used the same Wilding portrait, enclosed in a symbolic picture frame, with dates in blue, and the value in a contrasting white with an elegantly-scripted £ sign.

The Silver Wedding of HM Queen Elizabeth II and HRH Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh

was also marked by two stamps, values 3p and 20p. Again, the design, by Jeffery Matthews, was very simple, the two stamps identical in layout, comprising profile photographs by Norman Parkinson, the words "Silver Wedding" and the values only, words and values being in the designer's own hand-produced style. Only three colours were used; black and silver, with respective backgrounds of steel-blue and purple: this at a time when printers were using seven or more colours. The stated aim was to achieve a mix of royal dignity with informality. Jeffery Matthews was to design five further "Royal" issues.



on the 8½p and 9p the rose, thistle and daffodil emblems in this decoration. The colouring of the complete set is particularly satisfying, being subdued, but with pleasing contrasts between the ground of The Queen's head, in an octagonal frame, and the basic background colour, as for example, Royal blue against ochre on the 10p.

The 25th anniversary of the Coronation was commemorated in 1978 by a set of four, designed by Jeffery Matthews. The design was again very simple, each stamp featuring an item of the Coronation regalia, in gold on a plain ground: the State Coach, St. Edward's Crown, the Orb, and the Imperial State Crown. All were shown



Silver Jubilees

The Queen's Silver Jubilee was commemorated by an issue of four stamps in May 1977, designed by Professor Richard Guyatt. Later, in June, a fifth stamp appeared, as a consequence of an increase of postal rates, and a desire to have a first-class stamp at current rates available during the Jubilee tour of The Queen. The set is slightly reminiscent of the Jubilee issue of 1935, with The Queen's head at centre (for which a new drawing was made by the designer), the words "Silver Jubilee" and the dates, 1952, 1977. All stamps bear the letters E.R. in one of the largest characters on any British stamp, and these are decorated with stylised foliage. One can detect



in part only, occupying most of the space. The four backgrounds were Royal blue, carmine lake, deep green and reddish violet. The lettering, white for the title and values, gold for the artifacts, was small, simple and unobtrusive. The combination of rich heavy background and gold makes for a powerful impact, and it is perhaps surprising to realise that each stamp is printed in two colours only. The issue appeared before we had stamp polls, but this would have been a worthy contender for the favourite issue of the year.

Royal Birthdays

HM Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother featured in August 1980 on a single 12p stamp, again designed by Jeffery Matthews, in honour of her 80th birthday on 4 August. This was the first occasion of marking a Royal birthday. She appeared again, 10 years later, on a set of four stamps designed by John Gorham, in honour of her 90th birthday. Mr Matthews based his simple design on a photograph by Norman Parkinson (1913-90). The three-quarters facing portrait occupied the full frame, except for The Queen's head in silver, with the denomination below, also in silver. A wide white margin was used to



display an appropriate legend, running all round the periphery, in 2mm high lettering. The lettering fits neatly around the four margins, with the words ELIZABETH and 80TH BIRTHDAY conveniently along the upper and lower margins. For the 90th birthday in 1990, the issue consisted of four portraits, their silver frames, each with a tiny crown, recalling the layout of the £1 Royal Silver Wedding of 1948. The four pictures move back through Her Majesty's life, beginning with a recent portrait of herself as Queen Mother, one of her role as Queen Consort, one as Duchess of York, with a charming study of the very young Lady Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon completing the set. Birthday greetings occupy the sides of the frame, and the portrait titles in italics are along the base.

Between these two issues, in April 1986, Mr Matthews was again called into service to design stamps marking The Queen's 60th birthday. His solution was to present photographs representing each decade of Her Majesty's life. The six pictures were shared by two stamps, se-tenant, and two pairs, 17p and 34p, were issued, identical in form, but differing in colours. An elegant solution to the problem of representing the sovereign's head was reached by adopting the well-known Wilding portrait for the right-hand picture on the one stamp, and a recent Snowdon photograph on the other. A further problem of rendering monochrome photographs in colour was solved by the use, for the first time in stamp design, of computer technology. In contrast to the Coronation anniversary, seven colours were used here to produce very attractive moderate tones. The standard 41 x 30mm size was used, in horizontal format, and each stamp bore the legends "HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN" in capitals along the upper edge, and "Sixtieth Birthday"

along the lower, together with the value, in elegant script.

We come almost to the present time with the final anniversary; the celebration of 40 years of the reign of HM The Queen. This was an unusual design, by Why Not Associates, of a se-tenant strip of five 24p stamps, illustrating Her Majesty in five of her many roles. Each stamp takes about half the space for a portrait of The Queen, and each bears the words "Fortieth Anniversary of the Accession" and the relevant dates; each also shows a coat of arms, in faint silver. There is ample use of silver and gold. The issue displays some inconsistencies; a silver border begins, ends and varies in depth somewhat randomly; there is continuation across the strip between stamps 1 and 2, and 4 and 5 but not elsewhere; the placing of the inscription is random, and is in black on stamp 3, although gold and silver elsewhere. The backgrounds on four of the stamps are extremely vague, resembling out-of-focus photographs. These details are redeemed by the photographs themselves, and the set may be rated as a worthy celebration of Her Majesty's reign.

It is fitting that a survey of Royal anniversaries should conclude this series of themes of British special stamp issues, which I hope has been of interest to readers. A further article on stamp design is in preparation.

© G E Drabble

Earlier articles in this series by Mr Drabble were published in September 1990 (Aircraft), November 1990 (Literature), January 1991 (Sport), April 1991 (Architecture), October 1991 (Flowers), March 1992 (Paintings), May 1992 (Technology), July 1992 (Ships & Boats, Part 1) and August 1992 (Ships, Part 2). Ed.

Decimal Stamp Books – 6

Specialist Report

D G A MYALL

Perforations

The stamps in the "Gift Giving" Greetings book issued on 2 February 1993 and illustrated in the January *Bulletin* have some unusual perforations. At the left and right of each stamp three normal perforation holes have been merged into an ellipse. This is a security measure, designed to inhibit forgeries and is probably the reason why the new perforations do not exist on the labels.

This perforation change was first seen on the revised Castles high values issued last year. Its use on other stamps has been planned for some time and trials have been carried out by all the printers contracted to Royal Mail. A Nescafé leaflet available at post offices last year showed the 18p Angel Gabriel stamps printed for the 1992 Christmas book with elliptical perfs. No stamps with elliptical perfs were actually produced, the stamps illustrated in the leaflet existed only in artwork form. The Nescafé leaflet offered books of Christmas stamps in exchange for tokens from jars of Nescafé featuring the red mug. Incidentally, the book illustrated in the leaflet was also a "dummy" item – produced only as a piece of artwork.

Offers of stamps in exchange for tokens or

goods in exchange for stamps are an increasingly common feature and most of them involve books of stamps. It pays to keep an eye open when visiting your local post office or supermarket.

Paper and gum

The paper used for the 1992 Christmas and 1993 Greetings stamps is almost free of Optical Brightening Agents (OBA). Consequently, it fluoresces almost black when viewed under an ultra violet lamp. (Fluorescence should not be confused with phosphorescence. The latter appears only after the lamp is switched off and is sometimes called an "afterglow". Fluorescence is what you see while the lamp is still switched on.) Paper with added OBA has been used for Machin stamps since around September 1971 and the two papers are known to collectors as OCP (the original coated paper) and FCP (fluorescent coated paper). Now the signs are that this policy is being reversed (some of these substances are regarded as pollutants) and you may expect paper with hardly any OBA to become the norm. A precursor was the 18p sheet stamp printed by Enschedé and issued in November 1991.

In last November's *Bulletin* I mentioned the reprint of the £1.32 overseas postcard books with

Part of Nescafé leaflet showing "dummy" stamps with elliptical perforations, also "dummy" stamp book cover.



paper supplied by Harrison & Sons Ltd and gummed PVA-dextrin in place of that supplied by Coated Papers Ltd (CPL) and gummed PVA alone. These papers have the phosphor incorporated into the coating and are used for the 1st class values. The Harrison paper has also been used for the new book of 10 x 1st class stamps printed by Walsall Security Printers Ltd (WSP) issued on 9 February to promote the Gift Giving Greetings book. (This was illustrated on page 102 of the January *Bulletin*.) The use of this paper was announced in advance. The plate numbers are W13 W10 W12. However, WSP have used another Harrison paper about which no official announcement has been made.

On 11 December last WSP books of 10 x 2nd class stamps were discovered printed on non-phosphorised paper gummed PVA-dextrin. This paper is used when the phosphor is to be overprinted onto the stamps. The plate combination is W15 W10. It is worth keeping a lookout for other plate combinations and also to see if the paper will be used for the books of four stamps. Meanwhile this book yields two new stamps which will surely have to be catalogued. *(This book will be available from philatelic outlets from 16 March. Ed.)*

New cylinders etc.

The colour cylinders used to print the stamps and labels in the latest Greetings book are: B1A (gold) B1B (greenish yellow) B2C (bright magenta) B1D (cinnamon) B1E (new blue) B1F (black) B92 (phosphor). These appear on the inter-panneau gutter between the stamps and the labels. The stamps and labels are affixed to the



Greetings stamp book – showing cylinder numbers in margin between stamps (left) and labels (right). covers as a unit.

Several new cylinder and plate combinations have appeared in window books since the table published here in January was compiled. Perhaps the most surprising was the use of cylinder B5 on the Harrison books, the first change for several years. This has been seen on books with Olympic as well as post-Olympic covers. Another “landmark” was the appearance of the first WSP book with all the plate numbers in double figures. Those confirmed at the date of writing are listed below. All dates are those when the books were first seen on sale; there was no official first day of issue. © D G A Myall

Notes to Table below

- 1 The post Olympic book was first seen on 19.12.92.
- 2 the unannounced use of paper gummed PVA-dextrin.

Printer	Content	Barcode	Cover design		Date	Notes
			Olympic	Post-Olympic		
Harrison	10 x 1st	100197	B5		18.12.92	
				B5	30.12.92	
Walsall	4 x 1st	100180		W9 W20 W13	11.12.92	
	4 x 2nd	100272		W7 W9	19.12.92	
	10 x 1st	100197	W11 W10 W12		7.11.92	
			W12 W10 W12	W12 W10 W12	5.11.92	1
				W13 W10 W13	22.12.92	
	10 x 2nd	100265		W15 W10	11.12.92	2
Questa	10 x 1st	100197		Q9 Q9	11.12.92	
	10 x 2nd	100265		Q12 Q12/Q1	11.12.92	

The Power of the Postcode

LESLEY CLARKE

Royal Mail National Postcode Centre, Portsmouth

Readers will be very familiar with the important part a stamp plays in getting letters from A to B – but perhaps will be less aware of how important the Postcode is in doing the same job. To the Royal Mail's increasingly hi-tech sorting system, the Postcode isn't just a collection of letters and numbers. It's precise information which shows Royal Mail exactly where a letter's going to, in the blink of an electronic eye!

And if you don't know a Postcode, finding out has never been easier. Simply call 0345 111222 during office hours for the Postcode of any address in the country. Calls are charged at local rates.



OCR (Optical Character Recognition) machine (Royal Mail Artwork Library).

How the Postcode helps you

The Postcode is a summary of an address (or several addresses) which is easily converted into machine readable language by Royal Mail's automated sorting equipment. Using the Postcode means extra peace of mind, because your letter is properly addressed. Whether you're sending or receiving you want your mail to arrive safely and the correct code always helps.

It also means better service, because Royal Mail can sort your mail more quickly, using the latest technology. Less hold-ups. Less delays. Just time saved every step of the way. And in the long term, it means cheaper postage for everyone, because the Postcode helps to keep the cost of stamps at the lowest possible level.

A brief history

The growth of London was so rapid during the early part of the 19th century that the Post Office had to regard the city, for the purposes of sorting mail, not as a single town but as many smaller ones.

The first step towards the Postcode as we know it was the division of London into separate postal districts in 1857-8. This was devised by the postal pioneer Sir Rowland Hill, who was Secretary to the Post Office from 1854-64; he is probably more familiar to *Bulletin* readers as the man who introduced the single rate or penny post to the British Isles and is usually credited with introducing the first stamp.

His system divided London into 10 postal areas which were denoted by the letters on the compass points – for example, Northern (N), Eastern Central (EC) etc.

How it works today

The current Postcode system was launched in 1966, with the aim of introducing a fully automated system for sorting the nation's post. Now every address in the UK – some 25 million of them – has a Postcode. Some buildings which receive a lot of mail have their own Postcode. Most addresses share their Postcode with about 15 others, usually in the same street.

Postcodes were designed by a team of experts to be memorable, which is vital if Royal Mail are to succeed in their aim to get every man, woman and child to use the Postcode. Experience has shown the scientists were right, in that people generally find it easier to remember a combination of letters and numbers, rather than just numbers, and that Postcodes should not be longer than about six or seven characters.

They are even designed to make allowances for people's handwriting! Although Royal Mail prefers people to write clearly and legibly, of course not everybody does. Letters which could be mistaken for each other – like L and C for example – are kept together in the Postcode system, so that even if Royal Mail misread the code, the letter will still go to the right street.

Every Postcode is in two parts – the outward code and the inward code. The outward code

Postcode Area Map of the British Isles



shows which main area of the country the letter is going to. For example, a Postcode which begins with NG shows the letter is bound for the Nottingham area, and one that begins with LS is going to the Leeds area. However, Postcode areas don't always reflect geographical areas exactly, so you might find that you share your outward Postcode with a nearby city, even if you don't live in that city.

The NG or LS Postcode area is then divided into districts, for example NG1, NG2, NG3, etc. The inward code is used once the letter has arrived at the delivery office nearest to its destination. It pinpoints exactly where the letter is going, down to around 15 addresses.



Coding Desk (Royal Mail Artwork Library).

How mail is sorted

Most mail with a Postcode on can be machine sorted, up to 20 times more quickly than sorting by hand. Some Royal Mail machines can sort as many as 20,000 items per hour!

New OCR (Optical Character Recognition) sorting machines are being developed which can read handwriting, but most machines at the moment are only able to read typewritten, printed or word-processed addresses. When the mail first comes into the sorting office, all letters are fed through a machine, and the addresses which cannot be read are rejected. There are now some 45 OCR machines in use.

All the "rejects" go straight onto special coding desks, and are sped round on a conveyor belt. Royal Mail staff sit at the desks, and using a special sort of typewriter, they key-in the Postcodes of the letters passing before them. This process converts the handwritten Postcodes, which the machine can't read, into a set of blue phosphor dots, which it can. The letters are then fed back into the machine and are sent on their way. The remaining letters which have no



Blue postcode dots – these show up clearly on coloured envelopes

Postcode at all are taken to be sorted by hand – a slow and laborious process.

So next time you receive your mail, look out for the little blue dots (or narrow blue vertical lines) on the envelope. And if you tend to recycle your envelopes by using them more than once, do be careful. If you don't cover up the old blue dots, the machines may read them, and could send your letter straight back to its previous destination!

Postcode Areas of Great Britain & N. Ireland

Postcode	Area	Postcode	Area
AB	Aberdeen	LE	Licencester
AL	St. Albans	LL	Llandudno
B	Birmingham	LN	Lincoln
BA	Bath	LS	Leeds
BB	Blackburn	LU	Luton
BD	Bradford	M	Manchester
BH	Bournemouth	ME	Medway
BL	Bolton	MK	Milton Keynes
BN	Brighton	ML	Motherwell
BR	Bromley	NE	Newcastle upon Tyne
BS	Bristol	NG	Nottingham
BT	Belfast	NN	Northampton
CA	Carlisle	NP	Newport
CB	Cambridge	NR	Norwich
CF	Cardiff	OL	Oldham
CH	Chester	OX	Oxford
CM	Chelmsford	PA	Paisley
CO	Colchester	PE	Peterborough
CR	Croydon	PH	Perth
CT	Canterbury	PL	Plymouth
CV	Coventry	PO	Portsmouth
CW	Crewe	PR	Preston
DA	Dartford	RG	Reading
DD	Dundee	RH	Redhill
DE	Derby	RM	Romford
DG	Dumfries	S	Sheffield
DH	Durham	SA	Swansea
DL	Darlington	SC	Stirling
DN	Doncaster	SK	Stockport
DT	Dorchester	SL	Slough
DY	Dudley	SM	Sutton
EH	Edinburgh	SN	Swindon
EN	Enfield	SO	Southampton
EX	Exeter	SP	Salisbury
EK	Falkirk	SR	Sunderland
FY	Blackpool	SS	Southend-on-Sea
G	Glasgow	ST	Stoke-on-Trent
GL	GloUCESTER	SV	Shrewsbury
GU	Guildford	TA	Taunton
HA	Harrow	TD	Galeshields
HD	Huddersfield	TF	Telford
HG	Hatfield	TN	Tunbridge Wells
HP	Hemel Hempstead	TQ	Torquay
HR	Hereford	TR	Truro
HU	Hull	TS	Cleveland
HX	Halifax	TW	Twickenham
IG	Ilford	UB	Southall
IP	Ipswich	WA	Warrington
IV	Inverness	WD	Watford
KA	Kilmarnock	WF	Wakefield
KT	Kingston-upon-Thames	WN	Wigan
KW	Kirkwall	WR	Worcester
KY	Kirkcaldy	WS	Walsall
L	Liverpool	WV	Wolverhampton
LA	Lancaster	YO	York
LID	Llandrindod Wells	ZE	Lerwick

NB London area Postcodes are not included

New Scottish Aerogramme



Designed by Howard Brown
Printed by McConqudale Envelopes Limited
for the British Post Office

TO OPEN, SLIT HERE (GU FOSGLACH GEARR AN SEU)

CURLING



The Grand Match at Loughgowrie (detail), 1848, by Charles Lees.
A composite portrait of all the curling notables of Scotland.



The origins of curling are uncertain but Scotland is recognised as the home of the game and 1993 is the 150th anniversary of Queen Victoria's granting the title of Royal to the Caledonian Curling Club – the mother club of curling throughout the world.

Scots introduced the game overseas, principally in Canada in the late eighteenth century, and Canada is now easily the biggest curling nation. The game is played by teams of four players, each using two curling stones and playing them alternatively with their opponents to circles at each end of a 46 yard sheet of ice.

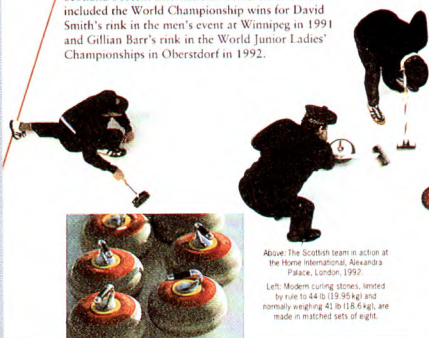


Above: John Carme, first President of the Grand Caledonian Curling Club in 1838, standing on the foot iron which he invented. A first-class curler he also invented artificial pond-making.

Left: The strong-arm era of curling reached its peak with the Jubilee Stone weighing 117 lb (53.07 kg). Below: Five club badges from the fifteen founding members of the Grand Caledonian Curling Club prior to the granting of the Royal Title in 1843.



Scotland's recent International achievements have included the World Championship wins for David Smith's rink in the men's event at Winnipeg in 1991 and Gilhan Barr's rink in the World Junior Ladies' Championships in Oberstdorf in 1992.



Above: The Scottish team in action at the Home International, Alexandra Palace, London, 1992.

Left: Modern curling stones, limited by rule to 44 to 49.95 kg and normally weighing 43 to 48.5 kg, are made in matched sets of eight.

By air mail
Par avion
Aerogramme

Transmit your message in a flash



Great Britain
Postage

SECOND FOLD HERE (AN DARA FILLLEACH AN SEU)

Postcode

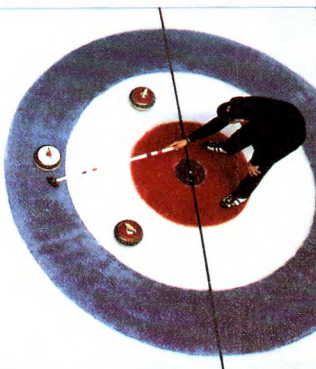
An aerogramme should not contain any enclosure (Na cur rud 'sain bith teach aigh de'n lèir seo).



Printing of The Grand Match by permission of The Royal Caledonian Curling Club.
Illustration of John Carme and Jubilee Stone by John Rogers.
Photograph of the Scottish team by Peter Wood.
Photograph of curling stones by Simon Bruckby/Rapport.

Designed by Howard Brown
Printed by McConqudale Envelopes Limited
for the British Post Office

FIRST FOLD HERE (AN CELD FILLLEACH AN SEU)



Shown here is the new Scottish aerogramme to be issued on 23 March to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the granting of the Royal title to the Royal Caledonian Curling Club. The aerogramme, designed by Howard Brown will be available from post offices in Scotland, the British Philatelic Bureau, Collections, and philatelic counters, price 44p (includes 34p postage). Scottish aerogrammes were introduced in 1974; this is the 37th in the series.

Royal Mail Philatelic Products

BARRY BURKE *Products Manager, Royal Mail*

Air Cards

As promised last month, we feature the new Air Cards (pictorial postcards pre-paid at the all world airmail rate). We also show an example of the reverse of these cards to illustrate how the 1988 34p "Transport" stamp has been adapted for use as a postage paid emblem.

I mentioned that first day of issue facilities would be available as the postage paid emblem would, in effect, constitute a new stamp. However, the British Philatelic Bureau will NOT automatically be providing fully addressed and postmarked Air Cards. Instead, collectors wishing to have Air Cards cancelled with an attractive and appropriate postmark will be interested to know that a pictorial handstamp featuring the logo of the British Aerophilatelic Federation and the words "Eur-Apex '93 London SW1 2 March 1993" will be available. The handstamp, sponsored by the organisers of Eur-Apex '93, is illustrated elsewhere in this *Bulletin*.

Customers wishing to have their Air Cards cancelled with this handstamp should ensure they are individually addressed (pencil or peelable labels are okay) and send them under an outer cover to Eur-Apex '93 Handstamp (Ref. 2774), Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, 53 Nine

Elms Lane, LONDON SW8 5BB. In case any collectors who order Air Cards from the British Philatelic Bureau do not receive them in time to re-post them on the first day of issue, a few days grace will be allowed so nobody is penalised.

For those who may have missed my February article, Air Cards will be available from philatelic counters, Collections and Post Shop Plus outlets priced 75p each or £3 for the four card set. They will be available from the British Philatelic Bureau in sets only, priced £3.

Stamp Pyramids

In December, I said I could think of no reason why we should not announce production quantities of individual varieties of Stamp Pyramids as these come off sale. At time of writing, the Wintertime stamp issue has just come off sale and no further Pyramids using these stamps will be produced. The production quantities below include any Pyramids produced for promotional purposes.

<i>Pyramid No.</i>	<i>Featured Stamp</i>	<i>Number produced</i>
PY001	18p (Fallow Deer)	61
PY002	24p (Hare)	20
PY003	28p (Fox)	92
PY004	33p (Redwing)	51
PY005	39p (Welsh Mountain Sheep)	32



I hope readers find this information of interest.

Orders can now be placed for Stamp Pyramids containing Swans, Marine Timekeepers or Orchids special stamps and Gift Giving greetings stamps. We will not be producing a Pyramid for the new £10 definitive, mainly because the stamp is too big to sit comfortably on the base. Instead, we hope to produce a variation on the theme which will have some additional features to appeal to the discerning collector. I hope to bring you details of this in April.

Questions, Questions...

Thanks to all readers who took the trouble to put pen to paper in response to my plea for feedback in the December *Bulletin*. Many interesting and pertinent comments and suggestions were made and I found myself agreeing with more than I disagreed with. Indeed, one or two of the suggestions made have already been implemented!

I feel I should reassure readers about the future of three products in particular: we have no plans at present to discontinue standard size Royal Mail First Day Cover, Presentation Pack or Postcard Albums. I am sorry if I might have given this impression in my article – it was not my intention to do so.

I said we would award a prize to the sender of the “best” letter. This was no easy task as so many of those the *Bulletin* Editor and I read were so interesting, well thought out, boldly argued and, above all, enthusiastic. However, there had to be a winner and after some deliberation, we decided the sender of the “best” letter was Mr J P Cornthwaite of Middlesex. I am sure Mr Cornthwaite will not mind if we reproduce extracts from his letter (he managed to cover no fewer than 21 different topics in all). He wins a *Royal Mail Stamp Album* with pages up to and including those for 1992.

In fact, most of the letters I received contained something that I am sure would be of interest to other collectors, so over the next few issues, we will publish selected extracts. A kind of “Points of View” for stamp products!

Amongst Mr Cornthwaite’s suggestions were:

Presentation Pack Album

Recent past presentation packs have occasionally included free tickets to relevant exhibitions (the Scientific Achievements pack for example). I suggest that you replace these offers by a discount system aimed specifically at PP albums: for

example, the purchaser of packs could receive a discount off PP albums.

Stamp Card Albums

Yes, I think that there *is* a need for Royal Mail stamp card albums. And this need will become greater from 1993 onwards because of the introduction of stamp cards for Greetings Stamps, which will increase the annual number of stamp cards by up to 25%. But I think that there could be improvements to the format of the pages designed to be inserted in the Royal Mail albums, as follows:

- (a) the vertical lay-out of the sleeves is inappropriate, since the great majority of stamp cards are now issued in horizontal format; and
- (b) having four sleeves per page would be preferable to the current Royal Mail lay-out of eight sleeves per page.

Royal Mail FDCs with stamps already affixed?

I think that this also is an excellent suggestion. I for one find the task of affixing four or five stamps in a perfectly straight line to be a difficult one (especially when balancing cover and stamps on a PO counter!) This however should be an alternative to, not a replacement of, the existing system.

Posters

The A4-size Royal Mail posters advertising special issues would I feel be of interest to many people (not only philatelists) if they were to go on regular sale.

Christmas cards

I would very much like to see the reintroduction of Royal Mail Christmas cards based on the annual Christmas stamps.

Stamp (PHQ) cards

I have never seen stamp cards sold other than at Post Office outlets. Surely there exists a large potential market for stamp cards in the form of retail outlets (for example, newsagents, stationers and souvenir shops) which sell “ordinary” picture postcards?

Yearbooks

You might consider selling Yearbooks *without* stamps included, as an alternative to the current format. Some collectors might well be put off paying double for the “with-stamps” version if they already possess all the stamps for that year.

Plenty of useful ideas there for me to consider!

Book Reviews

Etiquettes: Par Avion – By Air Mail by Frank G Jones. For the uninitiated the title of this book may seem rather confusing, as it might be assumed to be a manual on good manners, but I suppose there must be a link between behaviour that is “just the ticket” and those handy bits of gummed paper with which we adorn airmail. In fact, the French word means literally a ticket, a word which, in turn, is merely the English corruption of the French original. The modern French word, however, is a modification of the medieval version *estiquet* meaning something stuck on or attached to something else – a meaning more neatly conveyed by the English word “sticker”. Why etiquettes rather than stickers is the term preferred for airmail labels probably arose, as with so many other philatelic terms, from the fact that the French were the first to collect and study these labels when they began appearing in the 1920s, and thus (no pun intended) the French word has stuck ever since.

Considering the familiarity of such labels, whose use has been greatly stimulated in recent years by the requirement that even letter mail going to EC countries is supposed to bear them, it is surprising that they have attracted relatively little serious attention and study. The pioneer pre-war catalogue by Muller has been long out of print, so the appearance of this work is very welcome.

Frank Jones has produced a concise introduction to the subject, tracing the origins and development of etiquettes from 1920 to the present day, illustrating his text with both the labels themselves (many in full colour) and airmail envelopes showing actual usage. Successive chapters discuss the early issues, etiquette design and format, printing and production, errors and varieties and airmail stationery with imprinted etiquettes. The adoption of All-up airmail schemes in the Thirties threatened to make the etiquette redundant, but the scrapping of these schemes with the outbreak of the Second World War gave etiquettes a new lease of life, since when they have never looked back. A particularly useful chapter deals with the evolution of the airmail system in the United States, from the pioneer flights to the government flights and contract airmail routes, with special reference to the numerous and often very attractive labels issued by individual airlines.

The final chapter surveys the present-day

expansion of usage into such diverse areas as air parcels, airpost journals, airmail registration and even rocket mail. The author offers a tentative classification of etiquettes by design types, though it is not intended as a definitive catalogue by any stretch of the imagination. It is to be hoped that such a catalogue, even on a national basis, can now be produced using the Jones classification. 54 pages, paper cover, slide binder. Available from: Frank G Jones Associates, 56 Fernleigh Road, Winchmore Hill, LONDON N21 3AH, price £12.50 UK, postage £1.25 (US\$18, postage \$1.80).

James Mackay

Events

until 19 Apr 93. “People in the Post” exhibition at National Postal Museum, LONDON EC1. Open Mon-Fri 9.30–16.30.

until 28 May 93. “Britannia Depicta” exhibition at NPM.

2-7 Mar 93. Spring Stampex at Royal Horticultural Society Halls, LONDON SW1. Enquiries: STAMPEX, 107 Chaterhouse Street, LONDON EC1M 6PT.

Note: Includes Eur-Apex '93 airmails exhibition.

13 Mar 93. Kent Federation of Philatelic Societies Spring Rally at East Malling Village Hall, 10.00–16.30. Displays, raffle, competition, refreshments, car parking. Enquiries: M Thompson, 77 St Marks Avenue, Northfleet, GRAVESEND, Kent, DA11 9LN.

Postal Memorabilia Displays

David Harrop, enthusiastic collector of postal memorabilia, will provide displays of historic items outside the Post Office, High Street, Marlborough, Wilts (3 April 1993) and at Easter Steam Spectacular, Wolseley Garden Park, Rugeley, Staffs (10–12 April), and Victoria Extravaganza, Llandudno, Gwynedd (1–3 May).

During 1993 he will mount new displays, entitled “A look at the History of Royal Mail” at the Manchester Transport Museum, and “The Post Office at Work” at the Crewe Railway Age which re-opens at Easter after its winter closure.

Mr Harrop will be displaying memorabilia at the Eur-Apex exhibition at Spring Stampex (2–7 March) and at the Giant Toy Fair, National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham (28 March).

All enquiries to: David Harrop, 15 Hawthorn Road, Heaton Mersey, STOCKPORT, Cheshire, SK4 3DQ.

Posting Boxes

139. Town Twinning Boxes

Mr Josef Pollmann of Arnsberg, Germany has supplied photographs of British boxes presented, for town twinning purposes, to towns in Germany. The first photograph shows a George V box outside the Town Hall at Neheim Hüsten, presented by the Bexley Town Twinning Association in 1982. A commemorative plaque is now located in place of the posting times plate.

The second illustration shows another George V box in Bad Müntstseifel; this bears the inscription "presented by the British Post Office to our friends in Bad Müntstseifel. The twin-town of Ashford, Kent".



Save Money – Join the BDSSC Now

As a result of many years' successful administration and management of its financial affairs, the British Decimal Stamps Study Circle (BDSSC) – the major specialist society for collectors of the Machin definitives and other British decimal stamps – is able to reduce its rates of subscription to members for the 1993 calendar year.

The annual fee for collectors in the UK has been cut from £9 to only £6, with similar savings for members in the rest of Europe (£11 down to £8) and elsewhere in the world (£14 down to £10). Membership application forms are available from the Hon Secretary: Pete Daniels, 70 Moor Park Close, Rainham, GILLINGHAM, Kent, ME8 8QT.

Competition



Win £75 worth of British stamps

Enter this month's competition and stand a chance of winning £75 worth of current British philatelic products of your choice – stamps, stamp books, postcards, albums, etc. Answer the questions below, the answers will be found in this month's *Bulletin*, and send with your name and address on a postcard to: March Competition, British Philatelic Bulletin, Royal Mail National, 76–86 Turnmill Street, LONDON EC1M 5NS to arrive by 30 April.

The winner will be invited to order £75 of philatelic products; five runners-up will be sent packs of the Europa-Art in 20th Century stamps. Answers and winners' names will be published in June.

1. A new Scottish aerogramme commemorates which organisation?
2. How many Air-Cards are being issued on 2 March?
3. In which year were aeroplanes regularly used for the carriage of mail within the British Isles?
4. Who are the sponsors of Eur-Apex '93?
5. Who is the author of a new book on Airmail Etiquettes?

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

The winners of the December competition were: I D Smith of Hong Kong (£75 worth of Royal Mail products); I Philips of Northampton; J O'Neil of Merseyside; Lydia Gould of Lancashire; D MacDonald of Nova Scotia; and M Crouch of Kent (presentation packs).

The answers were: 1. National Productivity Year; 2. £10; 3. Paris; 4. James Negus.

Our thanks to all who entered.

March Digest

Issued in March/early April

2 March: £10 Definitive – Britannia.

Designer: Roundel Design Group, illustrations by Barry Craddock.

Printing: The House of Questa, offset-lithography, 60 x 41mm, sheets of 25, perf 15 x 14 with elliptical perfs on top and bottom edges, non-phosphor, PVA gum.

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

Presentation Pack: No. 28, price £10.30.

2 March: Orchids stamp cards, Nos 151A-E, price 21p each.

2 March: Air-Cards – 4 postcards showing historic air mail posters, etc. Each card bears imprinted 33p stamp. Price 75p each or £3 set of four. Available from Bureau, Collections, and philatelic counters.

16 March: Orchids stamps – 18p, 24p, 28p, 33p and 39p

Designs: Pandora Sellars.

Printing: Harrison & Sons Ltd, Photogravure, sheets of 100, perf 15 x 14, phosphor coated paper (24p-39p), one band (18p), PVA Dextrin gum.

Pictorial First Day of Issue postmarks: British Philatelic Bureau, and Glasgow.

Presentation Pack: Price £1.75.

16 March: 4 x 1st class and 10 x 2nd class NVI stamp books printed by Walsall. Stamps have PVA Dextrin gum, previous printings PVA gum. On sale from 16 March at Bureau, Collections and philatelic counters, from other outlets as required.

23 March: Scottish aerogramme – 150th anniversary of granting of Royal title to Royal Caledonian Curling Club, Price 44p (includes 34p postage).

Designer: Howard Brown.

Printing: McCorquodale Envelopes Ltd.

6 April: 50p and £1 books containing 2 x 1p and 2 x 24p stamps and 2 x 2p, 4 x 24p stamps and 2 labels respectively. Second in Postal History and Educational Institutions series.

Printing: 50p Harrisons, photogravure; £1 Walsall, lithography. Stamps on ACP. The £1 book has straight edges at left and right sides of pane. Both books have stamps with PVA Dextrin gum.

6 April: 10 x 1st class and 4 x 1st class books printed by Harrison, 10 x 1st class and 4 x 2nd class books by Walsall and 10 x 2nd class book by Questa. All stamps are on OBA free paper, are perforated all round with elliptical perforations on vertical sides. Walsall 1st class stamps now have two phosphor bars instead of being printed on phosphor coated paper.

Note: All 6 April books available initially from the Bureau, Collections, and philatelic counters; they will be available from other outlets as stocks of earlier issues are used up.

Withdrawn in March/early April

9 March: Tennyson stamps, pack, stamp cards, and souvenir cover.

25 March: Greetings stamp book ("Smiles"), issued 26 March 1991.

Note: The March 1992 reprint of this book will remain on sale.

30 March: Questa 10 x 2nd class book, issued 31 March 1992 (cover bears Olympic/Paralympic logos).

6 April: Europa '92 stamps, pack, stamp cards, and souvenir cover.

Late News – Country Stamp Variations

Some Country stamps have been produced in error by Questa with perforation gauge 13½ x 14 instead of the normal 15 x 14. The stamps affected are: Scotland 18p, 24p and 28p; Wales 18p and 24p. Stocks have gone into general distribution and it may be possible to find them at post offices in Scotland and Wales, and on mail.

A supply of the 18p Scottish is now available from the British Philatelic Bureau but we regret supplies of the other values will not be available through the Bureau. Questa have now reverted to the use of the standard 15 x 14 perforator.

