

BRITISH PHILATELIC

The ROYAL MAIL magazine *for stamp collectors*

Volume 38 Number 5

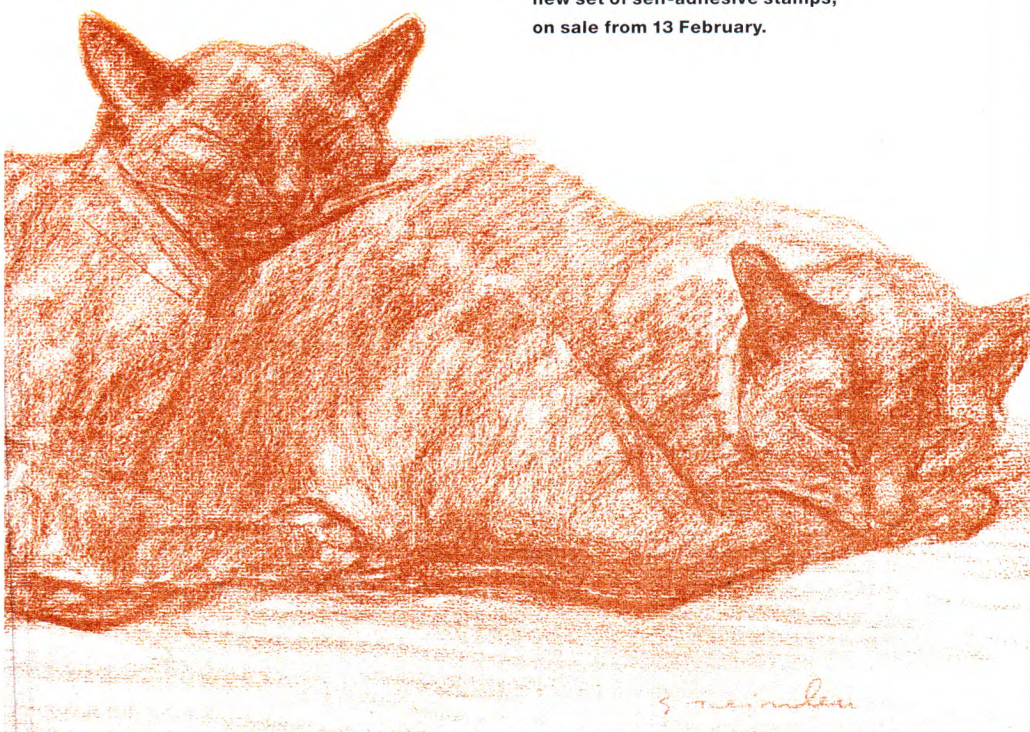
JANUARY 2001 • 85P

Bulletin

A thematic collection • Iona's
post office is 150 years old

‘CATS are rather delicate creatures
and they are subject to a good
many different ailments, but I never
heard of one who suffered from
insomnia.’

**Cats and dogs are featured in a
new set of self-adhesive stamps,
on sale from 13 February.**



Forthcoming issues and withdrawals



Cover The self-adhesive Cats and Dogs issue is previewed on page 138. Illustration by Theophile-Alexandre Steinlen. Quotation by J W Krutch.

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

1 January

Issue The Archers philatelic medallic cover.

1 January

Withdrawal Millennium Moment miniature sheet, commemorative document and coin cover.

9 January

Issue Millennium The Future stamp cards.

16 January

Issue Millennium The Future stamps & presentation pack.

29 January

Issue Retail stamp books: 12 × 1st (Questa/Walsall), 12 × 2nd (Questa); 6 × 1st and 6 × 2nd (Walsall); 10 × 1st and 10 × 2nd (Questa/Walsall). Label stamp book – 6 × 1st and Queen Victoria/Albert Memorial label. All contain self-adhesive stamps.

30 January

Issue Occasions stamp cards.

1 February

Withdrawal All 1999 Millennium stamps, presentation packs and stamp cards; 1999 Yearbook and Yearpack; and 2000 Above & Beyond and Fire & Light stamps, presentation pack and stamp cards.

6 February

Issue Occasions stamps (5 × 1st class).

6 February

Issue Cats and Dogs stamp cards.

13 February

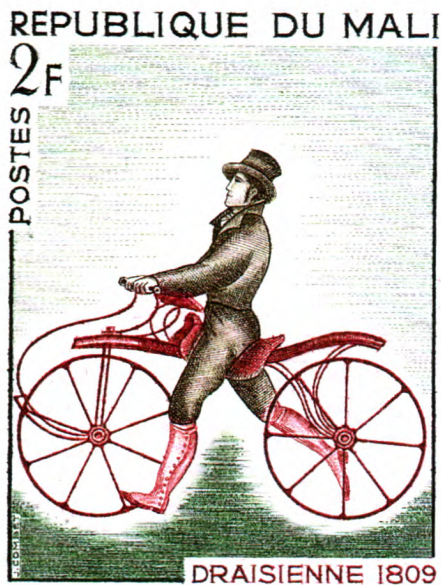
Issue Cats and Dogs stamps sheetlet, presentation pack, and stamp book containing the 10 Cats and Dogs stamps and two 1st class definitives; Occasions stamps presentation pack.

14 February

Withdrawal Stamp Show 2000 prestige books: 1999 Profile on Print and 2000 Special by Design.

Sale of the sheets of 1995 19p and 1997 1st Christmas stamps with Christmas greetings labels has been extended. They will now be available from the Bureau until 31 January 2001.

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A cycling collection Brian Sole recalls how his interest in cycling gradually led him to competition entry and an enjoyable pursuit **140**

The British Philatelic Bulletin is published monthly by Royal Mail, 2-14 Bunhill Row, London EC1Y 8HQ • **Editor** JR Holman • **Price** 85p for single copies, from Post Office Counters philatelic outlets • **Annual subscription** £9.50 in UK and Europe; £13.50 rest of the world. Subscriptions should be sent to: British Philatelic Bureau, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB • **Binders** to hold 24 issues, price £7, are available by post from British Philatelic Bureau (address above) • Royal Mail also publishes the fortnightly *British Postmark Bulletin*, giving details of forthcoming special handstamps. Available on annual subscription from British Philatelic Bureau (address as above) UK and Europe £10, rest of the world £21.75 • **Copyright** Unless copyright is attributed to a specific author, any articles or features may be reproduced without formal permission, but acknowledgement should be given to *British Philatelic Bulletin*. Requests to reproduce copyright articles should be addressed to the Editor, 2-14 Bunhill Row, London EC1Y 8HQ • **Design** by Robert Maude • **Printed** in Great Britain by The White Dove Press • **ISSN** 0953 8119

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Stamp scene Exhibitions • British Library

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Hongkong Post issued four miniature sheets to promote the exhibition (10 February, 15 April, 12 August, 25 November 2000); each includes a \$10 stamp. Four further sheets are to be issued in February. In addition there will be a sheet-let embossed and hot foiled with 22-karat, 24-karat gold and 99.9% pure silver, and other philatelic products.

Astro 2001 enquiries John Hammonds, 31 Wheatsheaf Close, Horsham RH12 5TH.

Orders and enquiries should be addressed to: Isle of Man Philatelic Bureau, P.O. Box 10M, Douglas, Isle of Man IM99 1PB.

Forthcoming exhibitions The first major exhibition this year – Hong Kong 2001 – will be held at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, 1-5 February. It is being co-organised by the Hong Kong Philatelic Society and Hong Kong's other stamp clubs as the 15th Asian International Stamp Exhibition. As Nature forms the main theme of the exhibition, the venue will be divided into three different zones, featuring Animals, Plants, and Landscapes.

Other international exhibitions will be held in Brussels (9-17 June), Tokyo (1-7 August), Yerevan, Armenia (14-23 September), and Copenhagen (16-21 October). Details will be published here nearer the time.

The main UK exhibitions for 2001 will be Spring Stampex, London (28 February-4 March) and Autumn Stampex (19-23 September). There will also be two Thematica exhibitions in London (23-24 June and November), and Midpex in Coventry on 30 June.

Spring Stampex will include invited displays by the King George VI Study Group and the new 'Nations Cup' – a competitive event being held between groups of countries, the winners of each group moving on to compete at Continental and World levels. The trial run of the event will involve the UK, Belgium, Portugal and possibly France. The competition will be run by a joint ABPS/British Philatelic Trust working group; each country will produce exhibits in four compulsory classes – youth, thematic, traditional and postal history plus three others selected from aerophilately, astrophilately, postal stationery, revenues, or maximaphily. It will be very interesting to see the exhibits in this new-style competitive exhibition.

A thematic exhibition 'Astro 2001', organised by John Hammonds for the Astro Space Stamp Club, will be held as part of Autumn Stampex in September. There will be 10 classes plus literature and open. The thematic class is defined as 'Astro related entries based on a theme or subject, developed according to a logical plan, and by the use of appropriate philatelic material.' For the traditional philately class the exhibit should encompass 'a specialised study of one stamp, group, set or series, featuring Rockets, etc as part of the design, actual or symbolic.' ●

Manx stamps for Queen Victoria To mark the centenary of the death of Queen Victoria the Isle of Man Post Office will issue six stamps – 22p, 26p, 29p, 34p, 38p and 44p – on 22 January. Each features a coin or medal showing Queen Victoria together with buildings and transport from her reign. The 22p value depicts the Wyon medal of the young Queen as used on the Penny Black along with a reproduction of the stamp ●

Long service After 30 years as Honorary Secretary of the Brighton & Hove Philatelic Society, Richard West stood down as Secretary and President at the Annual General Meeting in September. The new Secretary is Philip Reallff, 16 Peacock Lane, Brighton BN1 6WA. The new President and Vice President are Graham Childs and Ron Shelley. Parry Goodwin, who was introduced to the Society in 1928, and has given countless displays to Brighton and other societies, was made an Honorary Life Member •

British Library Philatelic Collections An important stamp collection has been given to the Library. Dr Heinz Feldheim of Munich who died in 1997 has bequeathed his collections as a mark of gratitude for having been granted refuge in the UK in the 1930s. The collections, which are virtually complete, have good ranges of shades and some proofs and complement the other important German philatelic material held by the Library. The Bavaria and Thurn and Taxis Collections will be useful aids to philatelic scholarship. Following his retirement to Munich, Dr Feldheim was a regular visitor to the Library.

David Beech, Curator of the Philatelic Collections, gave the sixth Stuart Rossiter Memorial Lecture at the British Library on 4 November. About 100 people attended to hear David describe some of the vast resources of the BL of use to philatelists and postal historians. In all, the Library houses some 160 million items – books, stamps, manuscripts, maps, newspapers, sound recordings, music scores, etc. Every department will include some items of value to philatelic researchers. The Oriental Collections include items in no fewer than 350 languages. Researchers are invited to contact David, giving a clear description of their research; he will then be able to point them in the right direction to get the best from the Library's resources. The lecture was organised by the Stuart Rossiter Trust which has now published 12 books with a further nine in progress. Next year's lecture, on the subject of disinfected mail will be given by Denis Vandervelde (see November *Bulletin*, page 90) •

Northern Ireland stamp book The Portadown & District Philatelic Society held its annual exhibition and fair on 30 September. A souvenir booklet was made available, featuring a Derry & Portadown TPO postmark of 1938 (shown right) on the cover. It contains a Royal Mail £1 book (3 × 1st class and 1 × 2nd class stamps). Price £1.75 postpaid from: J Proctor, 15 Dorchester Park, Portadown BT62 3EA. Some earlier books are still available from Mr Proctor •

Meetings The Society meets on the second and fourth Monday of each month (May to August and December on the second Monday only) at Hove Town Hall. Meetings start at 19.30.

Enquiries British Library Philatelic Collections, 96 Euston Road, London NW1 2DB. Telephone 020 7412 7635.

Selected material from the many philatelic collections is on display Monday–Saturday 09.30–18.00, Sunday 11.00–17.00.

The Researcher's Room for the Philatelic Collections is open Monday 10.00–16.00; Tuesday–Friday 09.30–16.00. Phone for appointment.



Slania signing session Czeslaw Slania, the world's best-known stamp engraver, will be at the Nordia 2001 stamp exhibition in Tucson, Arizona, USA, 19–21 January where he will autograph the special miniature sheet containing his 1000th stamp. The stamp, shown in the *Bulletin* last May (page 287), is now listed in the Guinness Book of Records as the largest engraved stamp in world. Slania has engraved more stamps than any other person, and has engraved for 28 different countries •

GBCC For details of the Great Britain Collectors Club contact the Secretary-Treasurer Janet Gordon, PO Box 42324, Cincinnati, OH 45242-0324.

GB literature The October issue of the GB Collectors Club's *Chronicle* contains a number of interesting features. Larry Roseblum's 'Mostly Machins' feature looks at the displays of these stamps at Stamp Show 2000, and he and David Alderfer interview veteran stamp designer Jeffery Matthews. Many of the questions relate to the Jeffery Matthews colour palette used for Machins, and Matthews tells an interesting story about the way the Jeffery Matthews miniature sheet (issued May 2000) came into being. He also talks about his interests in heraldry and his work in designing the stamps for The Queen's 60th birthday in 1986. For these stamps, he examined 'an enormous amount of photographs', The Queen being 'the most photographed person in the universe'. Many of the photographs included other people who needed to be retouched out for use on the stamps. On one, Princess Margaret was 'looking over her shoulder' and had to be retouched out. Matthews also gives details of some of his non-stamp work – such as signs and symbols, book jackets, brochures, packaging, and much else. He recently designed the reverse of the £5 Millennium coin for the Royal Mint. However it is as a stamp designer, particularly of Royal issues, that he is best-known and greatly respected in the philatelic community. Mark Ebery writes an interesting piece on 'The fun and interest in putting together specialised collections', Viv Sussex records some postal history covers and Bob Ausubel's 'Channel Hopper' column looks at issues from Jersey. A good read •

GBPS For details of the GB Philatelic Society contact: A Lajer, The Old Post Office, Davis Way, Hurst, Reading RG10 0TR.

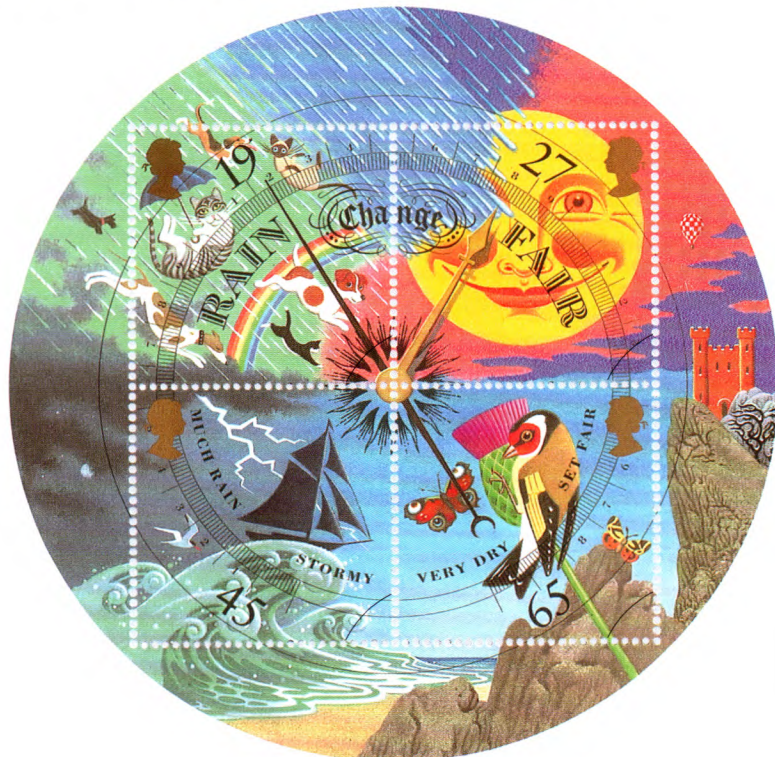
The November/December issue of the GB Philatelic Society's *Journal* includes specialist features on the Plymouth/Norwich Distinctive Maltese Cross enigma; Measuring George V shades using a colorimeter; One Penny Plate 129 Die 2; a survey of the scarcity of surface printed issues on cover; a review of Chares Goodwyn's *Royal Reform: Postal Reform 1837-1841 as reflected in the Royal Philatelic Collection*; and an index to volume 38 of the *Journal*. Despatched with it is the rather more user-friendly GBPS *Newsletter* with information on the Society's activities as well as short articles on dealing with 'foxing' on stamps and Black Plate 8; Repairs to the 1841 1d red-brown; and reports on displays of Specimen and Cancelled stamps from the Marcus Samuel Collection and seldom seen postal markings; and a listing of GB new issues January-June 2000. The President, Chris Harman, reports on a new departure for the Society – meetings in 'workshop' format – instead of a single display, members bring items to show which generate comment and discussion. The *Newsletter* is skilfully edited by Tony Walker •

Welsh Philatelic Society For details contact Mrs M Turner, 2 Coed Y Glyn, Gellilydan, Blaenau Ffestiniog LL41 4EL, Telephone 01766 590203.

Welsh Philatelic Society At its meeting in Bangor in October the WPS approved a change in the constitution of the society to establish a Fellowship. The fellows of the society shall be elected by members for their outstanding service in advancing the interests of the society, including the furtherance of knowledge of the philately and postal history of Wales and the promotion of philately in Wales. The first Fellow will be the Rev Ronnie Hughes, a founder member of the society noted for his depth of knowledge on the philately of the Principality •

Royal Mail news Weather stamp preview •

New country stamps and self-adhesives



Weather stamps Four stamps and a miniature sheet depicting the ever-discussed subject of the British weather will be issued on 13 March. They are shown here; a preview feature will be included in next month's *Bulletin* •

The stamps will be issued in sheets of 100 and in miniature sheet format.

New country stamps on the way New country Stamps for Northern Ireland are scheduled for issue on 6 March, to replace the design in use since 1971. There will be four stamps: 2nd, 1st, £ (European rate) and 65p for airmail. Details in next month's *Bulletin*. The first country stamps for England are in preparation – date of issue to be announced. These issues bring Northern Ireland and England into line with Scotland and Wales, new country stamps for which were issued in June 1999 •

Greetings book quantities Numbers issued were: 1994 Messages 5,414,100; 1995 Art 2,023,125; 1996 Cartoons (all printings) 4,466,250; and 1997 Flowers (all printings) 12,210,350. Regrettably numbers for other Greetings books are not available •

Retail books	Price	Printer
12 × 1st	£3.24	Questa and Walsall
12 × 2nd	£2.28	Questa
6 × 1st	£1.62	Walsall
6 × 1st (Queen Victoria label)	£1.62	Walsall
6 × 2nd	£1.14	Walsall
Vended books		
10 × 1st	£2.70	Questa
10 × 2nd	£1.90	Questa

Self-adhesive stamps Readers are reminded that new books (listed opposite) will go on sale at the Bureau, philatelic outlets and 3000 post offices from 29 January. All will contain self-adhesive stamps printed in gravure; the 1st class are flame (orange) colour. The stamps can be peeled directly from the inside of the book cover, as the first self-adhesive book in 1993. They will be available at other post offices and retail outlets as stocks of gummed stamp books are used up. Any remain-

ing stocks of gummed stamp books will be withdrawn from sale at post offices at close of business on 31 March. The change to self-adhesive books will not affect the £1 and £2 vended books, but new books are being produced for the limited number of vending machines dispensing books of 10 1st and 2nd class XVI stamps. Books of international use self-adhesive stamps will be issued later in the year.

Also on 29 January sheets of 100 1st and 2nd class self-adhesive stamps are being launched nationally after an extensive trial in certain areas. The new format is an easy to store flat 'z-fold' sheet, aimed primarily at small businesses. The new sheet format has been available in the trial areas since September in the trial offices, the Bureau and philatelic outlets. Trials have shown that self-adhesive stamps are very popular compared to gummed stamps. They are quick and easy to use, and sheets of 100 are preferred to higher amounts. Customers tell us that using sheets of 100, they can easily see how many stamps are left and that the sheets are easy to store. As for business customers, self-adhesive stamps are seen by social consumers as easier and quicker to use than gummed stamps, hence the issue in books for use by the general public •

Coming off sale Readers are reminded that all 1999 Millennium stamps, presentation packs and stamp cards will be withdrawn on 1 February, also the 1999 Yearbook and Yearpack, and the first two sets of 2000 Millennium stamps – Above & Beyond and Fire & Light. The third set, Water & Coast, will be withdrawn on 6 March. The Stamp Show prestige books issued in 1999 (*Profile on Print*) and 2000 (*Special by Design*) will be withdrawn on 14 February. (The first Stamp Show prestige book, *The Definitive Portrait*, is now sold out.) Both contain unique stamps – large size 1st class Machin XVI in the 1999 book, and 1st class Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales in 2000. The Northern Ireland stamp in this book is perf 14 as opposed to 15 × 14 on the sheet stamp issued later in the year. The books cost: 1999, £7.83 (Bureau order code SB002); and 2000, £7.73 (SB003) •

New mail centre The Royal Mail's new £40 million mail centre at Mallusk in Northern Ireland was officially opened in October. The 24,000 square metre centre, which houses the very latest letter handling technology, handles some two million items a day. Over the last 10 years the volume of mail handled in Northern Ireland has risen by a phenomenal 75% •

Post Office Heritage Collections King Edward VII designs

KING EDWARD VII came to the throne on 22 January 1901, and for the first time the Post Office was faced with the problem of re-designing stamps on the accession of a new sovereign.

Discussions on the new series of stamps began immediately and a few days later, on 1 February, Messrs De La Rue submitted a statement showing the cost of new dies and plates and their claim for dies and plates rendered obsolete.

The original essay designs were based on those for the Victorian stamps of 1887 (the so-called Jubilee issue). None of these stamps of 1887 showed a crown above the cartouche framing the vignette portrait of Queen Victoria, and essays were prepared of the Jubilee stamps with a crown added above Victoria's head and revised value labels drawn in by hand. Essays of the 2d, 3d, 4d, 5d, 9d and 10d exist in the Phillips Collection in Post Office Heritage. Four of the essays are reproduced on page 263 of Robson Lowe's book on the Phillips Collection – *The British Postage Stamp of the Nineteenth Century*.

The portrait of Queen Victoria plainly had to be replaced by that of the new king and it was originally proposed to show a three-quarter face portrait of King Edward VII in uniform. Paste-ups were prepared using the 1881 1d lilac and the Jubilee series (except 4½d value) substituting heads of Edward for that of his mother. These designs however did not meet with His Majesty's approval and he directed that a new design be prepared based on a portrait medallion made by Emil Fuchs, an Austrian artist then working in London. In the event the King gave Fuchs sittings, during which they conversed in German, for an entirely new drawing which we reproduce here. It was from this that the stamps of the reign were prepared. In the final designs the details of the cartouche framing the portrait of Queen Victoria on the stamps of 1887 were modified so as to include a crown. This had not been necessary on the Victorian stamps as the Queen was shown wearing a diadem. Fuchs also drew the stamp frames for the ½d, 1d, 2½d and 6d values.

Despite the alacrity of De La Rue in producing estimates of the cost of new dies within a few days of the Queen's death, some months elapsed before the first stamps of the new reign were registered at the Stamp Office, Somerset House. The new ½d stamp was registered on 26 September 1901 and the 1d stamp three weeks later. The 2½d, 6d and 2s6d were issued in December. February 1902 saw the production of the new 1½d, 3d, 1s, 5d, 10s and £1 stamps, and in March the 2d and 4d values were registered, followed in April, May and June by the 5d, 9d and 10d denominations •



Fuchs' head of Edward VII, from a 1980 postcard issued by the former National Postal Museum. This was also reproduced on a further NPM postcard in 1987.



One of the 1887 Jubilee issue designs with a portrait of King Edward VII substituted for that of the Queen.

The Edward VII essays may be seen by appointment in Post Office Heritage Collections at Freeling House, Phoenix Place, London WC1X 0DL.

This feature based on *Bulletin* articles published March 1968, December 1980, and Robson Lowe's book on the Phillips Collection. Further articles on the stamps of Victoria and Edward VII will be published in the *Bulletin* this year, marking the centenary of the change in sovereign.

Cats and Dogs A new set of self-adhesives

Technical details

Printer Walsall Security Printers

Process Gravure

Stamp size 37 × 27.2mm

Sheetlet size 213 × 64mm unfolded

Retail book size 240 × 64mm folded out

Perforation 14.5 × 14 die-cut

Phosphor Two bands

Gum Self-adhesive

Ten 1st class stamps featuring unusual and amusing photographs of cats and dogs will go on sale at post offices, the British Philatelic Bureau and philatelic outlets on 13 February. The stamps will be printed on a self-adhesive laminate which incorporates a moisture soluble gum layer between the face paper and adhesive. The stamps can be peeled from the laminate. The stamps are arranged in two rows of five, and the sheetlet rouletted between columns 2/3 and 4/5 for ease of folding by the user. The stamps are aimed at senders of social mail, similarly to the greetings stamp issues of 1989-97.

The stamps will also be available in a special retail book containing the 10 Cats & Dogs stamps and two 1st class definitives, all self-adhesive. This book, printed by Walsall Security Printers, will be available from the Bureau, philatelic outlets and selected retail outlets, price £3.24.

The stamps are designed by Johnson Banks, using photographs by Magnum Photos: three dogs and two cats above, and three cats and two dogs below. The dogs are by Elliott Erwitt; the cats are by (top, from left) Richard Kalvar and Ferdinand Scianna, and (bottom, from left) Martine Franck, Henri Cartier-Bresson and Jean Gaumy. The Queen's silhouette and the 1st indicator are printed in silver ink.

Details of sponsored handstamps for 13 February will be announced in the *British Postmark Bulletin*, available on subscription from the Bureau (£10 UK/Europe; £21.75 elsewhere). For a sample copy, write to The Editor, British Postmark Bulletin, Royal Mail, 2-14 Bunhill Row, London EC1Y 8HQ.



Colours

Black ● light grey ● bluish-grey ● silver

FIRST DAY FACILITIES Unstamped Royal Mail FDC envelopes will be available from main post offices and philatelic outlets about a week before 13 February, price 25p. Orders for FDCs with the stamps cancelled by a pictorial first day postmark of the Bureau or Petts Wood, Orpington must reach the Bureau by the day of issue. Price £3.59 UK (including VAT) or £3.06 overseas (no VAT).

Collectors may send stamped covers on the day of issue to: British Philatelic Bureau, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB, or Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, Wexham Road, Slough SL1 1AA (Petts Wood postmark), marking the outer envelope 'FDO103' (Bureau), or 'FDO104' (Petts Wood). Covers can be posted or handed in at main post offices for the Petts Wood postmark. A non-pictorial Petts Wood postmark is also available from the Special Handstamp Centre, request 'FDO104 NP' ●

celebrates our closest of animal companions



Mrs J Robinson
200 Manorbie Road
Ilkeston
Derbyshire
DE7 4AB



Royal Mail First Day Cover



Although dogs and cats are very different, they share one important feature: they are the only animals on which we have bestowed the full freedom of our homes.

We keep many other companion creatures – birds in aviaries, hamsters in cages, fish in tanks and rabbits in hutches – yet they aren't allowed the free run of our houses or apartments. So why have cats and dogs been elevated to the unique position of our house-mates?

Part of the answer lies in the long history of domestication. Back in the Stone Age, human hunters set about taming the wild wolf – their competitor – into the domestic dog that would become their guardian and hunting companion. The differences between wolf and dog DNA show that it has taken 135,000 years for the wolf to evolve into all modern dog breeds.

Wolves are highly sociable and learn to be subservient to dominant pack members.

Similarly, once a dog is tamed, it transfers all its emotional attachment to its human companions. It treats them as if they are rather strange-looking wolves and is quickly prepared to follow its human 'pack' leader. The behaviour of wolves has not merely been retained in modern dogs, it has been exaggerated in the different breeds. Those that are best suited to being indoor pets are the ones that have been selectively bred to

Dogs come in many shapes and sizes, but cats are far closer to their wild origins – the North African wild cat. The vast grain stores of ancient Egypt were overrun by rats and mice, which attracted the local wild cats. Before long, these valuable pest controllers were cared for and, indeed, protected by humans. To kill a cat was punishable by death.

In personality the cat differs significantly from the dog: it isn't a pack animal. The dog sees its human companions as pseudo-parents and pack leaders to be protected and obeyed. The cat also sees its human companions as pseudo-parents, but beyond that they are merely a useful source of food and shelter. The dog is a slavish follower; the cat is more self-centred. As a result of these



A well-illustrated presentation pack (left, price £3.05) and stamp cards (price 25p each) will be available at main post offices and philatelic outlets. The pack has been written by well-known writer and broadcaster Dr Desmond Morris.

My thematic collection Brian Sole looks at



his cycling collection, and its accidental start

MY BICYCLE COLLECTION started by accident. I had been a keen cyclist and a member of the Cyclists' Touring Club for almost 20 years. During National Service I had taken my bicycle to Singapore and Hong Kong at Her Majesty's expense. On my return to the United Kingdom, many weekends were spent youth hostelling. In addition I toured many parts of the UK and Europe by bicycle during my annual holidays.

My schoolboy collection was resurrected whilst moving into a flat, after I married. This was in the late 1960s and I had become aware of the rush of new commemorative GB stamps being issued. As my cycling activities ran down, I found myself spending time mounting GB stamps into my collection. Whilst browsing around stamp shops (there were a lot more in the 1960s and 1970s than today), I noticed the odd East European stamp showing cyclists and the occasional cover, priced very cheaply. Almost unconsciously I bought these items in addition to other purchases and tucked them away in a drawer or cabinet. This renewed interest in stamp collecting led me to buying the occasional stamp magazine, usually the weekly *Stamp Collecting*, on Waterloo Station and I also joined the Insurance & Banking Philatelic Society.

At competition time I entered nine pages of my modern GB stamps. The judge was not impressed and my entry was very much an 'also ran'. A year later a colleague in the office mentioned that he was putting together a thematic entry. This sort of collecting had never occurred to me before, but it did send me to my drawers and cabinets to search out the various cycle items I had purchased. To my surprise it was possible to put together a nine page entry on cycling. It did mean a lot more research than I had anticipated but it was great fun going through the old copies of cycling magazines, bringing back many happy memories. Looking back now, the entry was overwritten. However I did attempt to tell a story. The opening page was about the history of the bicycle illustrated entirely by stamps. There were a couple of pages on the use of the bicycle for postal delivery,

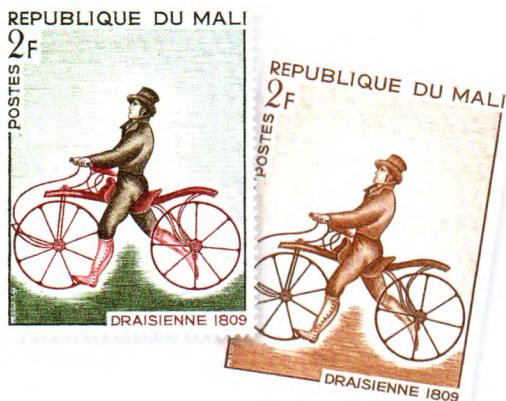
a page or two on leisure including entertainment and the final three pages were on sport. Although I did not win it did persuade me to write up more pages and to begin to extend the collection more actively.

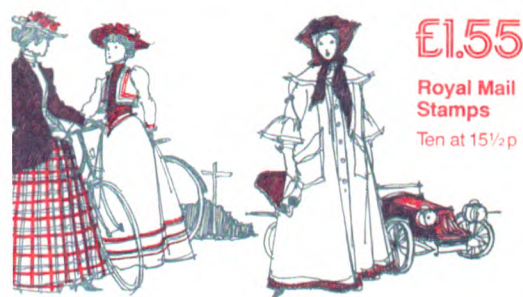
Having won the club thematic trophy the following year, I was asked to be the fourth member in Society visit. This meant a few more pages were hurriedly written up. Very gradually, the collection on cycling took over from my Great Britain and Channel Islands interest and I found myself searching more for cycle material than GB material.

I recommend anybody who collects stamps, and is hesitating about starting a thematic collection, to take the plunge. Provided the subject is of interest to you, you may be surprised at how enjoyable the exercise can become.

Opposite, clockwise from top right: 1982 Southgate Cycling Club's centenary postmark; 1983 French maximum card; 2000 Stone & Soil stamp and postmark; 1988 Oxford Story postmark; and 1978 Cycling stamp with first day of issue postmark.

Below: Mali stamp and colour trial, featuring the 'walking machine' invented in 1817 (not 1809) by Baron Karl von Drais.



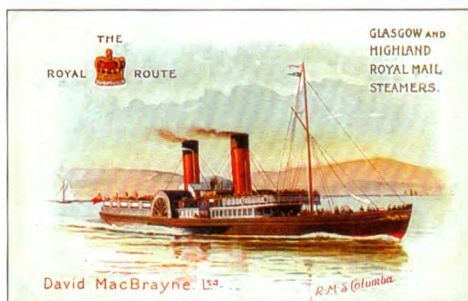


1982 stamp booklet with Eric Stemp's illustrations of 19th century women's costume. The bicycle encouraged the liberation of women.

philatelic material such as stamp booklets, postal stationery, postmarks and meter marks in addition to stamps. I had enjoyed many friendships with fellow cyclist over the years. I have now discovered that stamp collectors are equally helpful and friendly. In addition to exchanging material with fellow collectors I have been offered material frequently by non-collectors of the bicycle theme, who have kindly put items to one side for me.

I recommend anybody who collects stamps and has been hesitating about starting a thematic collection to take the plunge and make a start. Provided the subject is of interest to you, you may be surprised at how enjoyable the exercise can become ●

Glasgow 2000 A success north of the border, by the Editor



AFTER FOUR YEARS of planning, the organisers of the Glasgow 2000 exhibition (17-19 November) can be proud of its success. The attendance was good despite the weather and transport difficulties (rail journeys to Glasgow taking much longer than usual), and visitors enjoyed a good mixture of feature displays, competitive and invited exhibits and stamp fair. The 16-frame Royal Philatelic Collection display, shown north of the border for the first time, was described as 'ancient and

modern(ish)' including items from 1840 Parliamentary envelopes and Mulready covers to West Indian stamps of the present reign. Amongst the many intriguing items was a sketch on rice paper by an interned prisoner in 1944 for the Hong Kong Victory stamp of 1946, and a plate block of four of the unissued Jamaica £1 stamp of 1954 showing tobacco growing and cigar making.

The 10-frame PO Heritage display – 'Scottish Stamps That Never Were' – attracted considerable attention, particularly the 9p and 11p designs prepared in 1978 in case the Scottish football team (Ally's Tartan Army) won the World Cup. The stamps featured in the national and Scottish press, and Douglas Muir, Curator Philately at POH, was interviewed on BBC radio and television. Also shown were the designs for the proposed Scottish Assembly issue of 1979 (see *Bulletin* July 1999), and stamps showing John Knox, the Glasgow Head Post Office, Forth Road Bridge, Bute House Edinburgh, Craigievar Castle, landscapes, etc.

The 25 invited displays provided by the Postal History Society on the theme 'All at Sea', ranged in subject from Trieste sea mail to the last invasion of Britain 1796-8, from the waterways of Egypt to First World War hospital ships, packet markings and thematic subjects such as 'The Life of a Submariner'. The maritime theme tied in with the exhibition souvenir postcard showing the mailship *Columba* which also featured on the exhibition postmark for the first day. The ship's clock and barometer were on display, and mail posted on board the vessel featured in a display from the collection of the late Eric Tawn.

The competitive displays included 21 entries in the Postal History International Class. Gold medals were awarded for Charles Reid's 'Victorian Registered Mail', Norman Hoggarth's 'Maritime Disaster Mail', Hans Smith's 'Austro-Hungarian Military Border', and Saverio Imperato's 'Mail from Old Italian States and Italy to the UK and Ireland'. The last-named – judged Best in Display at Glasgow 2000 and awarded the Association of Scottish Philatelic Societies' Trophy – included a cover from Civitavecchia to Reading, bearing eight Papal States stamps. Posted on 15 July 1858 it reached Paris on the 17th and Reading on the 19th, it was then redirected on to York using two 1d reds, picking up additional London and York datestamps.

Norman Hoggarth's maritime disasters display began with the wreck of the P&O steamer ss *Aura* which hit rocks off Ceylon in 1858. Fortunately there was no loss of life and the mails and most of the cargo were recovered. He showed a letter sent from Calcutta to Cheltenham bearing a 'Saved from the wreck/of the Aura' handstamp in black and 'INDIA/PAID' in red. His display concluded with a card from the ss *Kyprios* a Cypriot steamer which caught fire approaching Haifa in 1966, badly damaging 50 mail bags.

Malcolm Fenning's 'Edinburgh and District Postal History to 1840' included an example of 16th century Merchant Post (Corsini correspondence), a 1641 letter sent by Parliamentary messenger from the House of Commons to Lord Howard of Escrick in Edinburgh, and a letter of October 1745 from Edinburgh to London inter-

cepted by the Jacobites and marked 'Open by the Rebels' – one of only two covers known with this endorsement. His display also included examples of Bishop marks, Peter Williamson's post and semi-official Penny Posts.

Harold S Wilson's 'Early TPOS of GB' included the only recorded use of the boxed 'SHREWSBURY & TAMWORTH T.P.O.' handstamp, issued to the Postmaster of Shrewsbury in 1868, used on a mis-sent letter from Bradford to Darlaston in 1872.

The 36 entries in the Postal History National Class were divided between British, Scottish and Overseas exhibits. It is believed this was the largest display of Scottish postal history material ever mounted. Of particular interest to me were displays of Orkney by Norman Hudson and Inverness by Peter Kay (another fine Orkney exhibit, by Øystein Froiland was in the International Class). Kay's exhibit ranged from Jacobite letters to a cover rescued from the Auroair mail plane which crashed shortly after take-off from Inverness airport in 1984; it was forwarded on with an official letter of explanation.

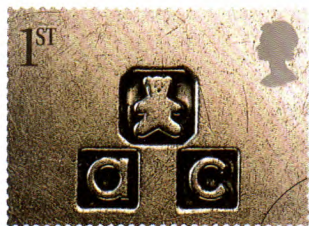
A new departure for British exhibitions was the inclusion of a Social Philately class following its successful launch at Melbourne in 1999. There were 24 entries, subjects covering British Postal Orders, the PO Savings Bank, Mulready caricatures, the Philatelic Sociology of Reading, Images of Industry, the City of Goslar, and a Social History of a Small Perthshire Town, Auchterarder. John Bohn's Mulready caricatures was judged the best in this class, with Richard Solly's 'Promotional Postal Orders' as runner-up.

All-in-all it was a good exhibition and the hard-working team of volunteers that made it all possible can be proud of their efforts. It was a worthy successor to the two earlier ABPS exhibitions at Newcastle and Hove in 1996 and 1998. We now look forward to Chester 2002 (29-30 November). For a prospectus write to: Bill Hogg, Gunnersbury House, 22 Watling Street Road, Fulwood, Preston PR2 8DY.

Next month A further report, including social philately, will follow in next month's *Bulletin* •



Occasions stamps to be issued 6 February



Five new 1st class stamps are to be issued on 6 February for use on social mail such as the sending of letters or greetings cards on the occasion of weddings, new baby, moving house, saying thank you, birthdays and other celebrations. The stamps, printed in separate sheets of 100, will have an extended sales period, unlike other special stamps which are on sale at post offices for a short period. The stamps, designed by Springpoint Design of London, feature fictitious hallmarks similar to those found on silver items such as good luck bracelets, spoons and other gifts. The hallmarks on the five stamps spell 'LOVE', 'THANKS', 'ABC' (Baby stamp), 'WELCOME', and 'CHEERS'. The Queen's silhouette is positioned top right, with the '1st' service indicator in the opposite corner. The Love stamp will be particularly appropriate for mailing cards for St Valentine's Day (14 February).

The stamps are printed in five colours – cyan (blue), magenta, yellow, black, and silver-grey printed over a pearlescent iridion background to give a silver sheen effect.

Technical details

Printer Joh Enschedé stamps

Process Gravure

Stamp size 41 × 30mm

Sheets 100

Perforation 14.5 × 14

Phosphor Two bands

Gum PVA

Gutter pairs Vertical

Four of the five Occasions stamps are shown here. The full set will be shown in the February Bulletin.



First day facilities Unstamped Royal Mail FDC envelopes will be available from main post offices and philatelic outlets about a week before 6 February, price 25p. Orders for FDCs with the stamps cancelled by a pictorial first day postmark of the Bureau or Merry Hill, Wolverhampton must reach Royal Mail by the day of issue. Price £2 UK (including VAT) or £1.71 overseas (no VAT).

Collectors may send stamped covers on the day of issue to: Royal Mail, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB, or Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, St Stephens Street, Birmingham B6 4AA (Merry Hill postmark), marking the outer envelope 'FDO105' (Bureau), or 'FDO106' (Merry Hill). Covers can be posted or handed in at main post offices for the Merry Hill postmark. A non-pictorial Merry Hill postmark is also available from the Special Handstamp Centre, request 'FDO16 NP'.



Details of sponsored handstamps for 6 February will be announced in the *British Postmark Bulletin* – available on subscription from the Bureau (£10 UK/Europe; £21.75 elsewhere). For a sample copy write to: The Editor, *British Postmark Bulletin*, Royal Mail, 2-14 Bunhill Row, London EC1Y 8HQ.

Philatelic products A presentation pack (£1.70) and stamp cards (25p each) will be available as usual but the pack will not go on sale until 13 February ●

Self-adhesive stamps

The cylinder numbers in the new self-adhesive stamp books, to be issued on 29 January are: 6 × 2nd Walsall w1 phosphor w1; 6 × 1st plus Queen Victoria label Walsall w1 flame (orange) w1 gold w1 grey w1 black; 12 × 2nd Questa Q1; 12 × 1st Questa Q1.

The Questa stamps have thicker values (1st and 2nd) as in the £1 and £2 machine books printed by that company. The perforation points are straight-edged whereas those in the Walsall books are more rounded. The phosphor band is wider on the 2nd class Questa than on the Walsall stamp. Further news next month ●

The Czechoslovak Military Field Post in Britain and its regular postal markings 1940-1944 by Richard Beith

IN THE AUGUST 1998 *Bulletin*, I described how the Free Czechoslovak Forces came to Great Britain after the fall of France in June 1940, and illustrated a variety of their commemorative postmarks.¹ From July 1940 until May 1941, these commemorative postmarks could only be found on philatelic souvenirs, as by-favour cancels and as backstamps of receipt on incoming mail. All outgoing mail was handled by the nearest civilian post office without the use of special cancellations to aid recognition of its Czechoslovak origins. It was only on 28 May 1941 that the British Post Office allowed the Czechoslovak military authorities to cancel outgoing mail from their camps. Page has recorded that it was 'Security Order no 100' dealing with leaks of information about the whereabouts of all the Allied Armies in the UK that led to a ban on posting through civilian post offices and the introduction of geographically anonymous regular Field Post cancellations.²

The officer originally in charge of the FPO was Lieutenant, later Lt Colonel, Oldřich Večerek (1906-1987). Večerek himself recorded that he was appointed to command the Czechoslovak Field Post on 6 December 1940; Dr Beneš, the London based President-in-exile, having stated that the position should be given to an employee of the former postal service. He had to improvise the necessary postal equipment, posting boxes, etc.³ Lt Večerek was an experienced postal administrator in Brno and a reserve artillery officer. As 'First Lieut ov, head of the Czechoslovak Field Post in England' his accounts of the field post and its postmarks could be found in contemporary North American philatelic literature, usually edited by Josef Lowey.⁴ Lt Večerek had procured such a regular canceller more than a year previously and he was delighted to bring this into use on 28 May 1941 at Leamington Spa, the then current home of the Czechoslovak Brigade.⁵ When the Field Post was successfully operating, he applied for transfer to active duty and handed over the operation of the Field Post to Captain Josef Sommers on 31 August 1943.

It would appear that the Field Post Office moved with the bulk of the forces from base to base until the return to France in August 1944. Volumes of mail handled were significant. The only known data relates to the year 1942. V J Králíček abstracted the passage

quoted opposite from an article published on 18 February 1943 in the New York Czech language newspaper *Nový Yorský Listy*.⁵

The accommodation and facilities of the Field Post remained at a fairly basic level. Page showed three views of the Field Post Office at Dovercourt in 1943.⁶ The photograph opposite shows the Field Post in operation at Leamington Spa. The original photograph had the rectangular hand-stamp R1 on the reverse dated 23 August 1941.

References

- 1 Beith R, 'The commemorative postmarks of the Czechoslovak forces in Great Britain, 1940-1944', *Bulletin*, vol 35 no 12, August 1998
- 2 Page W A, 'How it all began', *Czechout*, vol 3, no 3, September 1983
- 3 Vostatek M, 'Czechoslovak Field Post in Great Britain - from an interview with Oldřich Večerek', *The Czechoslovak Philatelist*, vol XLIX, nos 4, 5 & 6, April, May & June 1987
- 4 Lowey J W, 'Czecho-slovak Army Field Posts', *Stamps (USA)*, 11 October 1941
- 5 Králíček V A, 'Statistics on Field Post in Great Britain', *The Czechoslovak Philatelist*, vol 55, no 4, July/August 1993
- 6 Page W A, *Czechoslovak Army and Air Force in exile 1939-1945*, Czechoslovak PS of GB, 1994
- 7 Pesak K F, 'Postmarks of the Czechoslovak Field Post in England and their varieties', *The Czechoslovak Philatelist*, vol XXXII, no 3, March 1980
- 8 Králíček V J and Page W A, *The 25th Anniversary of Czechoslovak Independence - the 1943 London Exhibitions*, Czechoslovak PS of GB, 1996

"During 1942 the Czechoslovak Forces' field post in Great Britain has delivered 446,000 pieces of ordinary mail, 13,043 parcels, 10,351 registered letters and 3,811 telegrams. In addition, many thousands of service telegrams, letters, orders, etc, were transmitted. Our soldiers in Great Britain have sent through the field post 618,000 letters, 9,130 money and registered letters, 7,390 parcels, 1,100 telegrams as well as Armed Services mail, announcements and various publications. The field post drivers travelled 37,554 miles in the service of the Czechoslovak field post."

Readers interested in Czechoslovak philately are welcomed by the Czechoslovak Philatelic Society of GB. Contact Mrs D Y Gren, 146 Old Shoreham Rd, Shoreham-by-Sea BN43 5TE.

Readers' comment, additions and corrections are welcome via the Editor.

Field PO postmarks From 28 May 1941 the regular cancellations can be seen on a wide range of correspondence usually on their own but sometimes used in conjunction with a regular British postal cancellation. The Field Post marks were frequently used as postmarks of receipt on incoming mail to the Field Post Office, even on Airgraph envelopes. Such usages are particularly helpful in calculating the time in transit of mail from overseas. Again, they can be found used on philatelic and patriotic souvenirs.

These marks were normally applied in purple or black ink, but coloured inks, red and blue, were used on special occasions such as the anniversary of the birth of President T G Masaryk on 7 March or Czechoslovak National Day on 28 October. Four main types of postmark are known, as follows.

28 May 1941 R1

Rectangular, with bilingual inscription above and below date.

1 August 1942 R2

A circular stamp with bilingual inscription in a double circle and with a central date. This design was adapted from a commemorative stamp issued in the previous month. A small star is found in both upper and lower lunette.

1 March 1943 R3

The previous issue reappeared in a simplified design. The crossed swords symbols were removed from the outer ring and the size of the date was enlarged. On some examples the small star is only found in the upper lunette.

1 September 1943 R4

A bilingual double circle datestamp in the style of the regular British Field Post handstamps was issued. The Czech language inscription at the top was reduced to C SPP, short for Československá Pošta with the English language equivalent below the date: CZECHOSLOVAK FIELD POST.

Code letters A, B and C can be found with these marks and three sub-types were described by Pesak,⁷ as follows.

Type 1 Usually no period following the letter S in C SPP ● The left-hand solid segment can look smaller than the right-hand solid segment ● Segments about 5mm in length on average along their centre line ● Wider spacing between the letters LO in CZECHOSLOVAK.

Type 2 C SPP contains a period after S ● The left-hand solid segment can look larger than the right-hand segment ● Segments about 5mm in length on average along the centre line ● The letters OV in CZECHOSLOVAK are very close.

Type 3 The solid segments are reduced to a near square shape of length 3mm.

When these marks were first issued, type 1 used code A, type 2 used code B and type 3 used code C. In July 1944 (just before the departure for France) codes were changed so that type 2 used code A and type 1 used code B. Pesak notes that the type 3 canceller used code letter C until December 1944 but could be found with code letter A just for the New Year's Day 1945 in France, using blue ink.



Cancellation type R3 used on a newspaper wrapper.

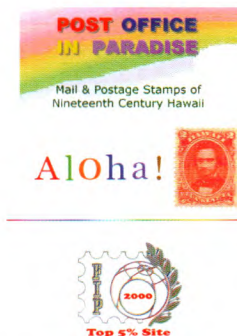
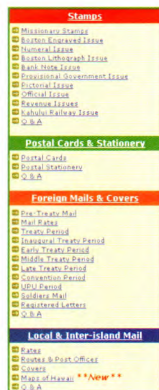
Type	%	First/last usage
1A	25	01.09.43/27.10.44
1B	10	03.09.43/15.03.44
2A	44	21.06.44/28.07.45
2B	8	14.09.43/02.07.45
3A	2	01.01.45 only
3C	11	01.09.43/19.12.44
100		

% = percentage of total covers examined; first/last usage = first and last recorded usage.

These cancellations continued to be used throughout the time of the Czechoslovak Independent Armoured Brigade's sojourn in France from August 1944 until VE Day and in the first weeks after the Brigade's return to Western Bohemia. For the complete period 1 September 1943 to late summer 1945, Pesak examined about 100 examples of mail bearing these marks and combining this information with an examination of another 70 covers known to the author, the approximate relative frequency of appearance can be summarised as shown opposite.

Of course, reference to other collections will no doubt modify the above, but the trends are clear. Type 3c was used at an exhibition of Czechoslovak stamps in London from 8-20 November, 1943, using green ink⁸ ●

Philately on-line Ron Negus views the FIP website winners



You are at a site dedicated to the study and sharing of information about the stamps and postal history of Hawaii in the years before it became a territory of the United States on June 14, 1900.

www.hawaiianstamps.com One of the three runners-up at this year's FIP best website competition. Entries came from 19 countries, including three from the UK. The final evaluation was completed by a team of seven accredited literature jurors from six countries in Europe and North America under the leadership of Francis Kiddle, Vice-President of the FIP Literature Commission. The full results can be found on the FIP official website at www.f-i-p.ch.

AT LAST YEAR'S ESPAÑA International Exhibition in Madrid, the judges awarded prizes within the Literature Class to philatelic websites. This was the second year in which this evaluation had been conducted, and 49 sites submitted entries. The 'Overall Best Web Site' went to the Scouts on Stamps Society International site, which I reviewed in last September's *Bulletin*.

Three sites qualified as runners-up and are permitted to display the 'Top 5% 2000' logo to mark their achievement. They were Francis Chan's Stamps Resource from Singapore, which also merited a 'with felicitations' grading, the DKP Association site from India, and the quaintly-titled Post Office in Paradise site from the USA.

Francis Chan's site (www.stamp2.com/index.html) states its aim is to create an on-line community of collectors who wish to trade, study, exchange information and get the latest news of the happenings in the philatelic world. It is currently being re-designed, and I hope to review it in more detail when these amendments have been completed.

The Indian site, prepared by the Dakshina Kannada Philatelic Association, contains a wide variety of subject matter including stories about Indian stamps, a review of Indian CDs on philately, a currency converter and even some computer games. The site is basically for beginners, and can be viewed at www.geocities.com/dakshina_kan_pa.

The Post Office in Paradise website, in contrast, is a serious philatelic site which discusses the mail and postage stamps of 19th century Hawaii. It states as a mission statement on its opening page that it is intended to operate in the nature of a study group to share information, questions, discoveries and perplexities.

Navigation around the site is simple using a list of 47 headings arranged on the left hand part of each page. These detailed headings are grouped into sections entitled Stamps, Postal Cards and Stationery, Foreign Mails and Covers, Local and Inter-Island Mail, Postal Markings, and News and Notes. There is also a guestbook page which visitors can sign to receive e-mail notifying them when any significant changes are made to the site.

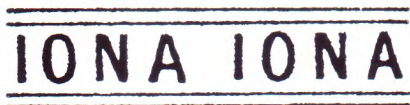
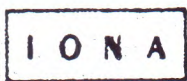
The majority of pages on the site contain very good coloured illustrations of stamps and covers from this period of Hawaiian philately. Attention is also paid to specialist details about flaws, plating, earliest known usage dates etc, which make this particular site very similar to a handbook on the country. Its advantage over a handbook, however, is that it is being regularly updated as the results of new research become available.

It is another excellent example of how the internet can be used to help broaden a collector's understanding of material from a limited area, and richly deserves its high FIP award. Even if you do not collect this country, a visit to the site is recommended •

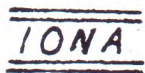
The sesquicentenary of Iona's post office James Mackay



From 1854 the framed name-stamp at right was allowed as a cancellation, though it has not yet been thus recorded.



A 'Scots Local' cancellation, above, was in use from 1857-59 when a third stamp, right, was issued; the use of such undated stamps ceased in 1860, and no example of this mark has yet been recorded.



THE POST OFFICE on the tiny Hebridean island of Iona opened 150 years ago this month. The island is best known as the landing place of St Columba in 563, and so became the cradle of Christianity in Scotland. Columba died on Iona in 597; stamps marking the 1400th anniversary of his death were included in the Missions of Faith set of March 1997.

Iona's former status is reflected in its Gaelic name, simply I, which means the island. It was a place of pilgrimage for many centuries before it became a popular Victorian tourist attraction. At the 1881 census it boasted a population of 713; there are now 85 inhabitants.

Before 1851 there were no mail facilities, and islanders had to collect letters from the nearest receiving office at Bunessan on the island of Mull. In 1851 however, a runner from Bunessan to Fionnphort was appointed to take the mails twice a week; he was paid three shillings (15p) a week, out of which he had to pay sixpence (2½p) to the ferryman. A receiving house was established on Iona and a small framed name-stamp was applied to the back of outgoing mail (see left).

celebrates 150 years of postal services on this historic island



The mail travels to and from Iona aboard the Caledonian MacBrayne ferry. A replica Penfold letter box has been installed at the island's post office, opposite.

Iona was then without postal markings until January 1884 (right). The first of the thick-arc stamps originally used the duty letters A or B but from 1964 this was replaced by an asterisk. The second handstamp has the code letter F; one is used primarily for counter work, the other to postmark the outgoing mail.

A large-diameter Climax rubber datestamp (right) appears in the Post Office proof-book under 12 June 1886. Such daters were normally supplied to sub offices for use on postal orders; no example for Iona has been recorded. In recent times a Parcel Post datestamp has been used.

Telegraph facilities were offered from 1895 and three years later free delivery of letters was established throughout the island. An afternoon delivery was provided during the tourist season and this became an all-year round service three times a week in 1908. The outbreak of the First World War curtailed the steamer services to Iona and thereafter all mails have been transported to and from the island via Fionnphort and Bunessan overland. Today mail is carried to and from Iona on the Caledonian MacBrayne ferry (above).



This numbered circular datestamp was issued in January 1884, inscribed IONA around the top, with numerals 446 at the foot flanked by twin arcs.



The datestamp above was in use until about 1930, when it was succeeded by a double-circle thick-arc stamp with IONA at the top and ISLE OF at the foot. In the 1980s this was joined by a similar stamp with slightly narrower lettering.



This large-diameter Climax rubber datestamp appears in the Post Office proof-book under 12 June 1886.

First Day of Issue postmarks for Iona were used on 20 November 1984 and 11 March 1997 for the Christmas and Missions of Faith stamps. Three special Iona handstamps were sponsored for the 1997 set; these, and one sponsored by the island's Postmaster for use 1 March to 31 August 1997, were all applied at the Special Handstamp Centre in Glasgow.

A further special handstamp was used on 9 June 1997, the anniversary of St Columba's death. A new special handstamp, sponsored by the Postmaster, will be used 12-18 January to mark the 150th anniversary of the island post office.

The current Postmaster, Crawford Morison, took over in 1988 and ran the office from a caravan until a renovated building was ready for use. He has installed a replica Penfold letter box much used for posting cards by the thousands of visitors to the island each summer •



Clockwise from top left: first day postmarks for Christmas and Missions of Faith, and a postmark for use 1 March to 31 August 1997.

To coincide with the Missions of Faith issue, a set of labels was produced by Iona's postmaster. A set showing birds and the neighbouring island of Staffa followed in 1998 (see *Bulletin* October 1998 p44).

A momentous year? A look

THE MOMENTOUS YEAR IS OVER – or was it as momentous as some had predicted? Will the year 2000 be best remembered for the many projects that failed to impress the public, not least the Millennium Dome? At the time I am writing this, I wonder if the year will be remembered for the situation in the rail industry and the freak weather – in other words, the same topics that seemingly appear every year.

The year was to see a spate of international stamp exhibitions. I am trying not to be biased, but in my view without doubt the best was 'The Stamp Show 2000'. True the numbers attending were not quite as high as had been hoped, but those who came, whether as visitors or participants, thoroughly enjoyed themselves. It certainly silenced all those who a few months earlier had been forecasting doom and gloom for the event.

Some may criticise Earls Court as a venue, but at least it meant the exhibition was all on the one level in the one location, with a good juxtaposition of the dealers, exhibits and features; there was plenty of seating, adequate refreshment areas, and easily reached by public transport. The same could not be said of all the other 'international' held during the year.

Soon, very soon, after London came Wipa 2000, the exhibition held in Vienna. When two major exhibitions virtually overlap there is always criticism. Mind you, it need not be entirely bad, for it does allow visitors travelling many miles to kill two birds with one stone. Probably better than having to make two separate journeys – or more likely having to make a choice as to which event to attend. For exhibitors and dealers, the very close proximity of these two shows meant that the majority could not participate at both. An extra couple of days between the two would have been welcome. But at least visitors to both saw different displays, and a different group of dealers with different stock.

The exhibition planned for Indonesia was cancelled at the very last moment. The unease in that country over recent times had always put a question mark over the event, but it was unfortu-

Sources

J Mackay: Islands Postal History Series no9 Mull, Iona, Coll and Tیره (1979)

British Postmark Bulletin, 7 March 1997

British Philatelic Bulletin, May 1991 p215, August 1991 p287, February 1997 pp182-3, April 1997 p238, October 1998 p44, November 1998 p93.

at some highlights in the past eventful year, by Richard West

nate that the shutters did not come down until just a few days before the planned opening.

However, the Far East did manage to host a fine 'international' during the year. In March, Bangkok staged an international youth stamp exhibition, which proved both successful and enjoyable. España 2000 in Madrid in October was less successful, although the exhibits were good.

The 'internationals' this year have provoked various comments about judging. This is not the place to enter into the rights or wrongs of the matter. However, surely we all realise that no one is infallible, and that the judges' decision should be final.

Home front At home, the normal 'nationals' were reduced by one because Stanley Gibbons decided not to hold its usual 'Wembley' event. Once more Spring Stampex and the Spring Philatex were both held in London at the same time. Again I feel this can be viewed with mixed blessings: it allows those having to travel a distance to enjoy both events. However, it does cause some tension among standholders, unsure as to which of the two to support. In 2002 the situation may well be resolved, as Stampex is changing the dates of its Spring event to mid February. The Autumn months saw the second Stampex and Philatex of the year.

As usual, thematic collectors were catered for by the Thematica event in June and November at the Carisbrooke Hall near London's Marble Arch. The summer event provides an excellent opportunity for those who have not previously exhibited a thematic display to do so – and have it assessed by the visiting public.

The year ended with Glasgow 2000. This is written before this exhibition opens its doors, but all are expecting the success of the two previous Association of British Philatelic Societies' exhibitions, held at Newcastle in 1996 and in Hove in 1998, to be repeated. A focus of interest is the fact that Social Philately is being introduced at a British exhibition, and has created a most encouraging level of support.

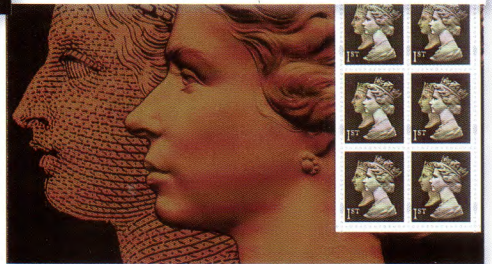
The Philatelic Congress of Great Britain, staged under the aegis of the Association of British Philatelic Societies, was held in London, and was organised by The Revenue Society of Great Britain. Two British collectors were honoured at the event: Professor John West was invited to sign the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists, while Brian Asquith was presented with the Congress Medal.

Millennium and Royal issues The year started with a number of stamp issues to mark the Millennium. Royal Mail has, of course, embarked on a 25-month programme, with four stamps each month, ending this month (January 2001). There may be some who will not be sorry that this special programme has come to an end. There is no denying it has not found favour with all collectors, who will be glad to see a return to more 'conventional' issues (if 'conventional' can truly be used to describe some of the issues in store). However, we are assured that many who have not previously collected British stamps have been attracted by the series: hopefully that interest has been sufficiently aroused and will continue.

The Queen Mother's centenary gave many countries the opportunity they had been waiting and hoping for; many also took the chance to feature Prince William on a stamp. Clearly, the 'Royal' theme retains its attraction. One thing 'Royal' issues do achieve is media coverage of new stamps. With no headline-hitting record prices being achieved during the year, we must be grateful for the publicity that was achieved.

Perhaps then, not a momentous year, but a very satisfying one nevertheless, thanks in no small part to another successful international staged in London •





25 April 8p old gold (DS080); 33p slate blue (DS331); 40p grey blue (DS400); 41p red (DS413); 45p rhododendron (DS450); 65p dark turquoise (DS650), DLR

27 April New stamp books contain existing stamps but by different printers – 40p grey blue and 65p dark turquoise W (£1.60 & £2.60 books, UB190 & UB191). Specialist collectors recognise differences in the gum between the 40p and 65p stamps by DLR and W

22 May 4p, 5p, 6p, 10p, 31p, 39p, 64p and £1.00 stamps phosphorised paper (instead of 2 phosphor bands) from J Matthews miniature sheet (MZ005)

23 May 1st Millennium definitive, phosphorised paper (instead of 2 phosphor bands), DLR. From Her Majesty's Stamps miniature sheet (AA002)

18 September 1st Millennium definitive, W, perf 14 from Treasury of Trees prestige book (YB016). Previous Walsall printings p15 x 14

Country stamps

15 February N Ireland, Scotland, and Wales 1st NVI flame (orange), W, p14 from Special by Design prestige book (SB003) p14. Note, all in 1971 J Matthews country stamp designs; Welsh with bilingual 1AF/ST indicator. For N Ireland stamp p15 x 14 see 25 April

25 April N Ireland 1st NVI, 40p grey blue, 65p dark turquoise, W, p15 x 14 (IS270. IS400. IS650); Scotland new design 65p greenish yellow, bright magenta, new blue, grey-black & silver, W (SS650); Wales new design 65p violet, gold, silver & black, W (WS650)

4 August Scotland 2nd new blue, blue & silver and 65p greenish yellow, bright magenta, new blue, grey-black & silver Q. From Queen Mother prestige book (YB015). Previous printings W; specialist collectors may recognise minor differences between the work of the two printers

18 September Wales 2AIL/ND orange-brown, yellow-orange & black, W, p14, phosphor band right from Treasury of Trees prestige book (YB016). Previous printing also W but p15 x 14 and band centre

Mixed value and pictorial label stamp panes

15 February Pane of eight 1st Millennium stamps with central pictorial label featuring Post Office crest, W. From Special by Design prestige book (SB003)

15 February Pane of nine country stamps: 3 x N Ireland, 3 x Scotland, and 3 x Wales 1st NVI flame (orange) in 1971 Jeffery Matthews design. From Special by Design prestige book (SB003)

15 February Pane of six Machin definitives: 4 x 19p side band right and 2 x 38p, p14, W. From Special by Design prestige book (SB003)

15 February Pane of six 1st class Double Head (Victoria/Elizabeth II) definitives, W. From Special by Design prestige book (SB003)

21 March Pane of four 1st Millennium definitives with pictorial Postman Pat label to right, W. From Label Retail Book (UL009) and unfolded pane (UC014)

4 April Pane of four 1st Millennium definitives with pictorial National Botanic Garden of Wales label to right. From Label Retail Book (UL010) and unfolded pane (UC015)

27 April Pane of 1 x 2nd and 3 x 1st NVI definitives plus four Postcode labels, Q from £1 book (TB066); Pane of 2 x 2nd and 6 x 1st NVI definitives, Q from £2 book (TB067)

22 May Jeffery Matthews miniature sheet containing 2p, 4p, 5p, 6p, 10p, 31p, 39p, & £1.00 definitives and pictorial JM palette label, phosphorised paper, DLR (MZ005)

23 May Her Majesty's Stamps miniature sheet containing four 1st Millennium definitives and £1 special stamp in design of 1953 1s3d commemorative, DLR, phosphorised paper (AA002)

4 August Pane of 6 x 2nd and 2 x 65p Scottish country stamps with central label showing Glamis Castle, Q. From Queen Mother prestige book (YB015)

18 September Pane of 4 × 1st Millennium definitives and 4 × 2 AIL/ND Welsh country stamp and central label showing leaf, W. From Treasury of Trees prestige book (YB016)

Stamp books

6 January 10 × 1st Millennium definitive, p15 × 14, W (UB183); p14, Q (UB184)

15 February Special by Design prestige book containing four panes of 1st Millennium definitives, 1st N Ireland, Scotland, & Wales country stamps, 19p & 38p definitives, and 1st Double Head NVI stamps, W (SB003)

14 March 10 × 1st NVI W (UB185); 10 × 1st NVI Q (UB186); 10 × 2nd NVI Q (UB187); 4 × 1st NVI W (UB188) and 4 × 2nd NVI W (UB189). These books contain existing stamps, changes made to text on inside covers

21 March 4 × 1st Millennium definitive & Postman Pat label (UL009). Also sold as unfolded pane (UC014)

4 April 4 × 1st Millennium definitive & National Botanic Garden of Wales label (UL010). Also sold as unfolded pane (UC015)

27 April £1 and £2 machine books containing 1st & 2nd NVI, Q (TB066, TB067) ● 4 × 40p and 4 × 65p, W (UB190, UB191) ● 4 × E (European rate) stamp, W. Stamp as earlier printing, text change to inside book cover

26 May 8 × 1st Millennium definitive and pane of 2 Millennium special stamps (1st National Space Centre and 1st Web of Life), W (UB192)

4 August Queen Mother prestige book containing four panes: Scotland 2nd and 65p; 1st Millennium stamps; Queen Mother 4 × 27p special stamps; and Queen Mother miniature sheet, Q (YB015)

5 September 8 × 1st Millennium definitive and pane of 2 Millennium special stamps (1st Trans-Pennine Trail and 1st Eden Project), W (UB195)

18 September Treasury of Trees prestige book containing mixed pane of Wales 2nd country stamp and 1st Millennium definitive plus four panes of Millennium special stamps from Stone & Soil and Tree & Leaf issues, W (YB016)

Sheets of self-adhesive stamps

4 September Business sheets of 100 1st and 2nd class NVI stamps, self-adhesive. 1st class Q, 2nd class W. Stamps as previous issue (22 June 1999), but revised sheet markings. Specialist collectors may recognise minor differences in the stamps between these and previous printings. (Sold only in complete sheets – 1st class DP025; 2nd class DP026)

Presentation packs

6 January 1st Millennium definitive, DLR (DP023)

25 April Machin definitives, 8p, 33p, 40p, 41p, 45p, and 65p (DP024)

25 April N Ireland country stamps 1st, 40p, 65p (IP015)

25 April Scotland new design 65p country stamp (SP015)

25 April Wales new design 65p country stamp (WP015)

22 May Jeffery Matthews miniature sheet – wallet, called 'Exhibition Card', containing mint sheet and sheet affixed to card with first day postmark (AD005)

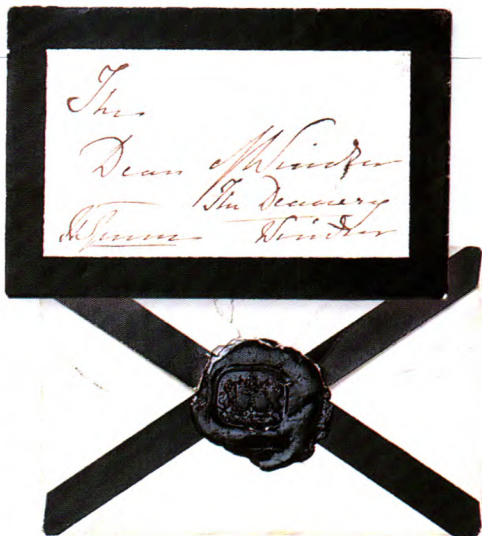
23 May Her Majesty's Stamps miniature sheet (AP185)

23 May Wallet containing three Stamp Show prestige books – 1998 Definitive Portrait (contains Wilding decimal stamps), 1999 Profile on Print (definitives printed by five processes) and 2000 Special by Design (SB004) ●

Royal Mail thanks D G A Myall for his help with this listing. The Editor regrets that neither Mr Myall nor himself is able to engage in correspondence regarding its contents.

Cover corner

BLACK-EDGED Victorian mourning covers are not uncommon; many thousands were sent to announce the passing of loved ones. A fascinating exhibit on mourning stationery was shown at Stamp Show 2000 last May. What makes the cover featured here particularly interesting is that it was written and sent by Queen Victoria to the Dean of Windsor. It bears her signature 'The Queen' in the bottom left corner. On the reverse is a fine black wax seal of the Royal Arms. The envelope was presumably delivered by Royal messenger, hence it did not travel through the post and does not bear any postal markings, and as the letter is no longer enclosed in the envelope it is not possible to date the cover. Nevertheless it is an interesting piece of Victorian postal history. We are obliged to Glenn Morgan, author of *Royal Household Mail*, for allowing us to reproduce this cover from his collection •



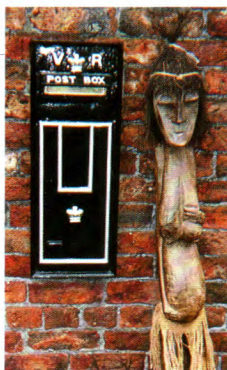
A Victorian mourning cover from Glenn Morgan's collection. A feature on Mr Morgan, the Librarian of the National Philatelic Society, was published in the *Bulletin* of February 1998.

Posting boxes 201

It is appropriate that we feature three Victorian boxes this month, sent in by readers in Carlisle, Manchester and Newton Abbot. We begin with an out-of-use wall box, decorated by the present owner of a building now a workshop/showroom for wooden carvings and carved objects. When the owner saw our correspondent shaping up to take the picture, he introduced Scrawny Annie. The box can be found just off Junction 44 on the M6/A74 on the outskirts of Carlisle.

Next is a Penfold, painted green, at Rochdale Road, Harpurhey, Manchester. According to a *Manchester Evening News* report, this box is a Ministry-listed 'building' of historic or architectural value. It joins city landmarks such as the Church of St Ann, the Apollo Theatre, and the Albert Memorial on an Images of England website.

The final box is a refurbished wall box at Howtown, Ullswater with the crown, Royal cipher and 'POST OFFICE' nicely picked out in gold. The collection plate shows two collections a day Monday to Friday and one on Saturday •



Letter Box Study Group For details, send a SAE or IRC to Membership Secretary Mrs V Scott, 38 Leopold Avenue, Handsworth Wood, Birmingham B20 1ES.

Our thanks to H Bruce, J Gore, and P Fowke for letting us share their photographs.

Postbag Letters to the Editor

Pollution drift card I read James Mackay's article on Social Philately (October) with very great interest. In my Lighthouse thematic exhibit I include an oil pollution drift card number 6634 which appears to have travelled considerably further and taken very much longer than those referred to in the article. It was number 2639 of the 2643 recovered, found at Tranøy lighthouse approximately 200km north of the Arctic Circle on Salten Island in Norway on 5 June 1957. It must therefore have been in the water for at least 2½ years but is still in excellent condition. I would be interested to know when and where card number 6634 began its journey since there is the possibility of it linking with other philatelic material which I have relating to RAF Ballykelly. JON PERROTT, BANGOR, NORTHERN IRELAND ●

OIL POLLUTION INVESTIGATION National Institute of Oceanography		CARD N° 6634
Name and address of finder Nom et adresse du salueur Nombre y dirección de la persona que lo Votre nom et votre adresse (encontró) Naam en adres van de vinder Name und Anschrift des Finders Findersens navn og adresse Finnersens navn og adresse	Jan Sollid, Tranøy, i Salten, Norway.	
Place at which envelope was found Local em que foi achado o sobrescrito Lugar en que foi hallado Lieu où l'enveloppe a été trouvée Plaats waar de enveloppe gevonden werd Wo wurde der Umschlag gefunden? Stedet, hvor kumvelletten blev fundet Stedet, hvor kumvelletten blev fundet	Tranøy fyr, syd for Narvik. ✓	
Date when envelope was found Data em que foi achado o sobrescrito Fecha del hallazgo Date de la trouvaille Datum waarop de enveloppe gevonden werd Wann wurde der Umschlag gefunden? Dato, da kumvelletten blev fundet Dato da kumvelletten blev fundet	Den 5. juni 1957. 68°10'N 15°40'E	

First day covers Mr Martin (September) protests too much! He cannot surely believe that any FDC is other than a collectors' item (gimmick if you like). It is almost entirely irrelevant if it is addressed or not, travels through the post or not, or bears the postmark of a place far from where it is posted. Most FDC collectors (me included) are not philatelists and little concerned about postal niceties. We seek interesting items to add to our collections – with an attractive cover design, and a pleasing postmark cancelling the stamps. Most covers in *Covers Review* fit this requirement; items such as the 1953 Coronation cover shown on page 317 of the June *Bulletin* do not. Such covers may have been acceptable nearly 50 years ago but not now. P E REEVES, BIRMINGHAM ●

First day covers As a collector of FDCs for 30 or more years I was interested in the letters from D Stratton and R Martin in the September *Bulletin*. Mr Martin states 'to be considered genuine, an item has to pass through the postal system...' but in my view to be truly genuine should only bear the correct postage for the item. A cover addressed to the UK, even if posted in the normal way (ie not in a special box for a special first day postmark) is hardly authentic if it bears all four current new special stamps, 19p, 27p, 45p and 65p, totally £1.56! Much better would be separate covers bearing each stamp addressed to the UK and overseas as appropriate. I try to obtain such covers, addressed to myself with 2nd and 1st class stamps and to relatives in Canada with the 45p and 65p values (the relatives return the covers to me in due course). I have to say that I prize these covers far more than the ones bearing all four stamps which I post to myself for the 'alternative' first day cancel. Like Mr Martin I have no problem with hand-addressed covers. MARY STOCKWELL, BARNSLEY ●

Queen Mother What a shame you did not issue a single 1st class stamp for the Queen Mother's birthday – the miniature sheet ensured that Royal Mail's commemoration of the event was restricted to collectors who bought the miniature sheet and prestige book. The public were left out! How sad we could not mark the occasion with a special stamp on our ordinary letters. Three of next year's issues sound of interest to me: Submarines, Buses and Nobel prize winners; I look forward to seeing them. H G RICHARDSON, CARDIFF ●

Looking forward... I am relieved that the Millennium issues are coming to an end and look forward to the usual programme of special stamps commemorating events, anniversaries and the British way of life. I am sure I will love some, dislike others and probably even hate a few of the designs but I am never bored collecting British stamps sent to me by relatives in England. JOAN WELLS, OTTAWA, CANADA ●

Millennium not so bad After looking at other countries' Millennium stamps illustrated in James Mackay's articles in November 1998 and January/October 2000, our Royal Mail issues don't seem so bad after all. Most were fairly wacky designs with little dignity to them. Best of those shown, in my view, were the Isle of Man and Vanuatu miniature sheets, their vibrant colours contrasting markedly to our dismal Millennium Moment black, white and grey sheet – hardly a bright welcome to the new Millennium. My favourite Millennium stamp of 1999, Workers' Tale 26p, came fifth in your 1999 Poll; I will be interested to see where my 2000 favourite, 19p Above & Beyond, is placed in the current poll. L K LASSETT, NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE •

The results of the 2000 poll will be published in the April Bulletin. ED

Good and bad I am raised in wrath and anger to write about the 65p stamp in the Body & Bone set – Centre for Life, Newcastle. It is awful. I have visited the Centre for Life; its contents and the building are magnificent, the stamp is not! Many GB recent stamps convey no message; they are

poorly designed. I have five collections: GB from the Second World War, Maps on Stamps, Buses, and Nasty and Badly Designed Stamps of the World. The 65p stamp will be in the last category. The blue Gateshead Millennium Bridge stamp is beautiful. The bridge is being towed up river and will be erected on 6 November. DOUGLAS MENNEAR, PRUDHOE, NORTHUMBERLAND •

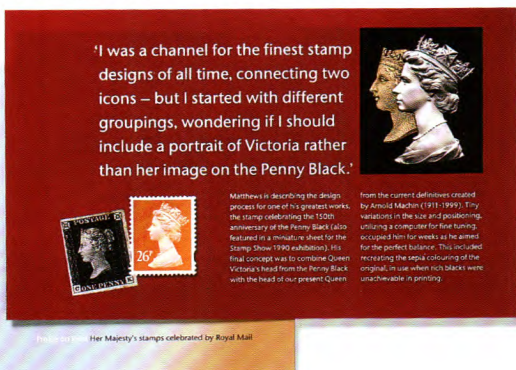
Enough is enough I was dismayed when I learned of the number of stamp issues prepared by Royal Mail in 2001. So much letterbox mail now is pre-paid envelopes without stamps, so I conclude that Royal Mail is producing stamps purely for collectors, particularly the specials/commemoratives. After January 2001 I shall not be seeking further issues. C D PICKSTONE, WREXHAM •

Mr Pickstone is quite correct in stating that the bulk of mail bears a pre-paid impression of some sort, but as Ron Negus pointed out in the Bulletins of January and May 1995 and January 1996 there is philatelic interest in such markings. I hope to include more on printed postage impressions in further issues, and notes on PPIs appear in the excellent Quarterly Bulletin of the British Postmark Society. ED

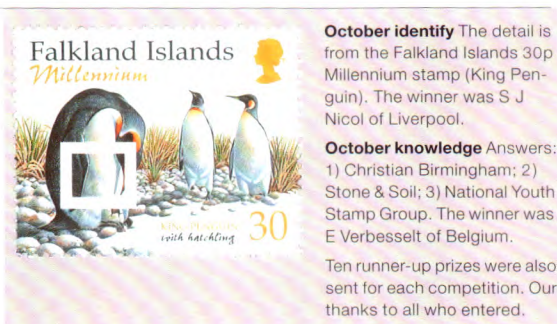
Special prize draw Win Stamp Show 2000 prestige books

WE HAVE 10 of each of the three Stamp Show books (*The Definitive Portrait*, *Profile on Print* and *Special by Design*) to give away to the senders of the first 10 cards drawn on 2 February.

Simply write your name and address on the back of a postcard and send it to: Stamp Show Books Draw, British Philatelic Bulletin, Royal Mail, 2-14 Bunhill Row, London EC1Y 8HQ •



Competitions Win £200 in two easy-to-enter competitions



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

- 1 Who designed the 1970 British Commonwealth Games stamps?
- 2 Which Millennium stamp set features gannets?
- 3 Where is a major stamp exhibition being held, 2-5 February 2001?

Send your answer (addressed to either January *Identify* competition or January *Knowledge* competition), name and address on a postcard or back of a scaled envelope to: British Philatelic Bulletin, Royal Mail, 2-14 Bunhill Row, London EC1Y 3HQ. The senders of the first cards drawn in each competition on 16 February will each receive £100. Ten runner-up prizes of presentation packs or FDCs will be awarded in each competition.

The Competitions are not open to Royal Mail employees •

Events

Until further notice Postal Memorabilia displays at Museum of Lincolnshire Life, Burton Road, Lincoln and Manchester Postal Museum, Wythenshaw Park, Manchester (open 10.00-16.00). **Enquiries** D Harrop, 15 Hawthorn Road, Stockport SK4 3DQ.

20 January GB Philatelic Society meeting – displays by Alan Huggins and Tony Wiseman. British Philatelic Centre, 107 Charterhouse Street, London EC1, 11.00. Dealers. **Enquiries** A Lajer, 0118 934 4151.

26-27 January London Westminster Stamp & Postal History Fair at Central Hall, London SW1. Open Friday 11.00-18.00; Saturday 10.30-16.00, admission free. Dealers in stamps & postal history. **Enquiries** J Auld, 01279 758854.

1-5 February Hong Kong 2001 exhibition at Hong Kong Convention & Exhibition Centre. The exhibition

will be on the theme of Nature; the venue will be divided into special zones featuring, Plants, Animals and Landscapes. **Enquiries** Hong Kong 2001, Hong Kong Post, Fax (852) 2530 2618.

17 February GB Philatelic Society and Cinderella Stamp Club joint meeting at International Students' House, Great Portland Street, London, 11.00. Displays of GB cinderellas, dealers. **Enquiries** A Lajer, 0118 934 4151.

28 February-4 March Spring Stampex at Business Design Centre, London N1. Displays by King George VI Collectors Society, FIP Nations Cup competition, dealers, etc. **Enquiries** 020 7490 1005.

3 March GB Philatelic Society meeting at Stampex 14.30. Scottish Postal History display. **Enquiries** A Lajer, 0118 934 4151 •

Late news



Christmas stamps in Bethlehem Shown here are a group of schoolchildren from Llandeilo, Wales dressed as shepherds at the mobile Handstamp Centre sited at the hamlet of Bethlehem when the Spirit & Faith stamps went on sale on 7 November. A special Bethlehem postmark was used on mail posted there and sent to the Wales & West Special Handstamp Centre in Cardiff. An article on Bethlehem was published in the *Bulletin*, November 1998.

Mauritius stamps at the British Library Singapore philatelist Vikram Chand is loaning his collection of rare classic Mauritius stamps and postal history to the British Library and establishing of a fund to aid research and scholarship in classic (pre-1900) philately. The Chand Collection is on display in the Library's Philatelic Exhibition Gallery until December 2002. Mr Chand said of his stamps: 'I feel it my duty not only to share them with other philatelists, but also to have them in the best possible conditions that will preserve them for posterity... no place better fulfils the criteria than the British Library.'

Chand Research Fund for Classic Philately For information, contact the British Library Philatelic Collections, 96 Euston Road, London NW1 2DB. Telephone 020 7412 7635 ●

GB Decimal Stamp Book Study Circle Jim Ranger and Roger Knights of the Study Circle, gave a presentation to the Friends of the National Postal Museum on 25 November. Jim covered the History of the Circle since its foundation in 1971 and Roger presented an illustrated talk on the devel-

opment of decimal stamp books from the stitched issues of 1971 to the new self-adhesive issues of 2001. This was followed by a display of material from all eras that generated great interest amongst those present. The Circle celebrates its 30th anniversary at a meeting in Langley, Birmingham on 8 April 2001.

GB Decimal Stamp Book Study Circle Details on website: <http://www.gbdsbc.kabsi.at>, or from Roger Knights, 7 Old Farm Close, Needingworth, St Ives PE27 4SG ●

Farewell John Whitaker, Royal Mail's Exhibitions and Events Manager for the past three years, has recently left the Post Office to further his career elsewhere. Ever energetic, he played a major role in the success of Stamp Show 2000, in arranging the Royal Mail presence at Stampex and the Wembley Stamp shows, and in running the Rowland Hill Awards scheme. He was well-liked by those he met in the philatelic community. Like all his colleagues, the *Bulletin* Editor will miss his cheery nature, sense of fun, and help given on this magazine. We wish him well in his new job.

After 68 years as Postmistress at Artafallie near Inverness, Mrs Margaret Hutcheson retired in November at the age of 92. Mrs Hutcheson, known to her regulars as 'Auntie Meg' had run the office on her own since 1951 giving dedicated service to the community. A new office located nearby at Blackwood is run by Pamela Clark ●

Readers old and young



Shown left are Mr A L Ruscoe, aged 92, probably our oldest reader, and baby Hugo, four months, probably the youngest member of the Royal Mail Collector's Club.

AT LAST, A GIFT THAT DOESN'T COME APART, IT COMES TOGETHER

ROYAL MAIL MILLENNIUM FIRST DAY COVER



Hopes for the Future



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Surrey
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renowned double-decker buses will be among the subjects immortalised.

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