

BRITISH PHILATELIC

The ROYAL MAIL magazine *for stamp collectors*

Bulletin

Volume 41 Number 10

JUNE 2004 £1.10

Mobile Post Offices • Court
Post • Royal Society of Arts



1st

Sir Rowland Hill

was awarded the first RSA Albert Medal
in 1864 for his postal reforms and the
introduction of the Penny Post.

The Royal Society of Arts 1754–2004

**Royal Mail celebrates 250 years
of enterprise and education at the
Royal Society of Arts: a new issue
of stamps previewed this month.**



Forthcoming issues and withdrawals



Cover Royal Society of Arts founder William Shipley, by Richard Cosway. Royal Mail's RSA issue is previewed this month. Photograph: Jeremy Butler, © RSA London.

Issues Note some items are available only from Royal Mail Tallents House Edinburgh and Post Office Limited philatelic outlets at main post offices in Bath, Belfast, Birmingham, Brighton, Bristol, Cambridge, Canterbury, Cardiff, Chester, Coventry, Croydon, Durham, Edinburgh, Exeter, Gatwick Airport, Glasgow, Grimsby, Guildford, Harrogate, Leeds, Leicester, London (Eastcheap and Trafalgar Sq), Manchester, Newcastle upon Tyne, Norwich, Nottingham, Plymouth, Portsmouth, Southampton, Southend-on-Sea, Stevenage, Stratford-on-Avon, Stroud, Truro, Windsor and York.

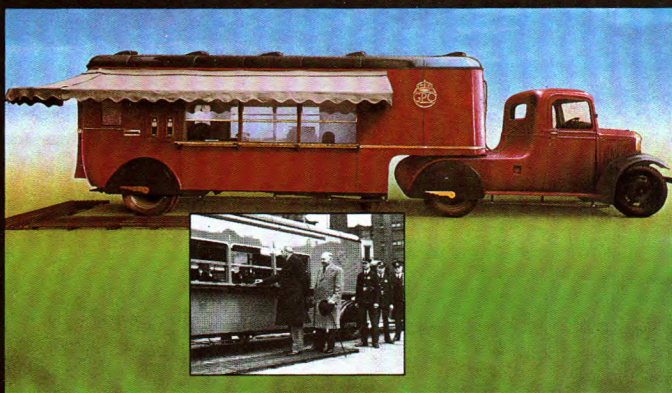
Royal Mail Tallents House
21 South Gyle Crescent,
Edinburgh EH12 9PB, UK.
Telephone order line (08.30-
17.00 Monday-Friday): 08457
641 641; from overseas +44
131 316 7483

27 May	Withdrawal Wales 2nd class Country stamp printed by Walsall (issued June 1999).
1 June	Withdrawal Coronation anniversary stamps, presentation pack and stamp cards (prestige book sold out).
8 June	Issue British Journey: Wales stamp cards.
15 June	Issue British Journey: Wales stamps, presentation pack, and self-adhesive stamp book.
15 June	Issue Stamp books (12 x 2nd, 4 x Universal Letter Rate Europe and Worldwide) and Business sheets of 100 x 1st and 2nd class stamps with revised Royal Mail logo, without 'The Real Network' strapline below the logo • 6 x 1st retail book with Olympic bid front cover.
15 June	Issue Edward VII/George V Ingot Series: No 1 Edward VII 1d stamp.
16 June	Withdrawal Prince William of Wales stamps, presentation pack, and stamp cards.
14 July	Withdrawal British Journey: Scotland stamps, presentation pack, stamp cards and self-adhesive book.
27 July	Issue Smilers sheet: 20 x 1st class Union Flag stamps and labels.
28 July	Withdrawal Smilers sheet: 20 x 1st class Cartoons stamps and labels.

Royal Mail at Paris exhibition Following on from the recent joint stamp issue between Royal Mail and La Poste to celebrate the centenary of the Entente Cordiale, Royal Mail will attend Le Salon Du Timbre in Paris, 26 June - 4 July. The exhibition, hosted by La Poste, will be at the Floral Park near Bois de Vincennes. Other events include the Paris philatelic forum (1-2 July) which is supported by postal administrations in Europe and beyond. Visitors to the Salon are invited to visit us on stand 70 to see our impressive range of philatelic products.

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ROYAL MAIL POSTCARD



GPO 1 MOBILE POST OFFICE, INAUGURATED SEPT 1936

The Mobile Post Office's 50th anniversary was marked in 1986 by this postcard showing GPO1

The Mobile Post Office In the past, a philatelist might have marked a summertime event with a souvenir from a Mobile Post Office. Martin Robinson looks at a service now rarely seen **311**

The British Philatelic Bulletin is published monthly by Royal Mail, 148 Old Street, London EC1V 9HQ. ● **Editor** J R Holman ● **Price** £1.10 single copies from Post Office Ltd philatelic outlets ● **Annual subscription** £11.75 UK & Europe; £16.75 elsewhere. Send subscriptions to Royal Mail Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB ● **Binders** (to hold 24 issues) £8.50, storage boxes (about 30 copies) £9.95 available by post from Royal Mail (Edinburgh address, above) ● Royal Mail also publishes the fortnightly *British Postmark Bulletin*, giving details of forthcoming special handstamps. Available on annual subscription from Edinburgh address above: £12.25 UK and Europe, £24.95 rest of the world ● **Copyright** Design & text Royal Mail Group plc, unless attributed to a specified author. All requests to reproduce any article should be addressed to the Editor, *British Philatelic Bulletin*, Royal Mail, 148 Old Street, London EC1V 9HQ ● **Design** Robert Maude ● **Printed** in Great Britain by White Productions Ltd ● **ISSN** 0953 8119 ● Royal Mail is a trading name of Royal Mail Group plc. Registered in England and Wales no 4138203, registered office 148 Old Street, London EC1V 9HQ

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Thematica enquiries Thematic Exhibitions, telephone 020 8343 2434. E-mail migale@btconnect.com

Rail Mail 2004 Nene Valley Railway, Wansford Station, Stibbington, Peterborough PE8 6LR. Website: www.tpo.org.uk

For further details Contact Comune Di Riccione, Palazzo del Turismo, I-47838 Riccione, Italy. Telephone +39 0541 692194.

Harmers No11, 111 Power Road, London W4 5PY. Telephone 020 8747 6100, or see website www.harmers.com

Spink 69 Southampton Row, London WC1B 4ET. Telephone 020 7563 4000. Website www.spink.com

Events Thematica will be held at the Carisbrooke Hall, Seymour Street, London W2 (near Marble Arch) on 26-27 June. Opening hours are Saturday 10.30-17.30, Sunday 10.30-17.00, admission free. In addition to the many UK and overseas dealers, there will be displays and competitive exhibits, representatives from many of the UK's thematic societies, and the usual 'activity' area for young visitors. An attractive souvenir sheet (shown in May *Bulletin*, page 263) will be available; it reproduces unused designs by Jeffery Matthews for the College of Arms set of 1984 •

The Nene Valley Railway will host the Rail Mail event on 19 and 20 June. Three ex Great Western, Southern, and London Midland Railways TPO coaches will be operating or on display. Other attractions will include the railway letter service, philatelic collections on display, vintage postal vehicles, steam and diesel locomotives in operation, and a real ale beer festival •

The 56th International Stamp Fair, 43rd Europa International Philatelic Exhibition and 20th Postcard Show will be held at the Palace of Tourism, Riccione, Italy, 27-29 August. (A Europa telephone card show will be held at the same time, and a National Numismatic Show on 4-5 September.) The only philatelic events in Italy to have official international status, the exhibitions have assumed a major role for collectors in Europe and throughout the world, attracting 16,000 visitors last year. Riccione is the most fashionable town on the Adriatic Riviera with some 446 hotels, 90 restaurants, 216 bars, nine night clubs, and good transport facilities •

Auctions The expansion of Harmers auction programme achieved another success on 30 March with their first sale consisting entirely of stamp cases, boxes, pens and pencils, making £73,195. The sale included the impressive 'Leicester Collection' of boxes and cases which attracted collectors from across the country. A fine silver Chester inkwell of 1900 with two glazed stamp compartments with lids with George V stamps went for £764 (estimate £400) and a fine and rare 1890 London silver sprung case with enamelled lid lilac lid achieved £1292 (£800). Items with unusual features also proved popular within the novelty section. A 1907 Birmingham silver box shaped as a wheelbarrow with hinged lid by Saunders and Shepherd achieved £646 (£400) and a 1909 Chester silver box shaped as a kennel with two hinged stamp compartments to the roof went for £1116 (£550). A specialised Jammu and Kashmir auction is scheduled for 8 June and an All-World auction for the end of June •

Spink's British Africa sale, featuring the estate of the late William Frazier, on 25-26 March was a huge success with over 90% of all lots sold for a total of £925,000. A unique mint example of the Natal 1869 is green overprinted 'Postage' type 7d (SG 49) realised £10,000 plus premium (estimate £5000-6000), and a unique used example of the Rhodesia 1913-22 8d vio-

let and green die 1 perf 15 (SG 217a) went for £15,000 (£11,000-12,000). An extremely rare South African 2s6d stamp book of 1913 (SG SB1) made £3500 (£2000-2500) and a used collection of Southern Nigeria, 1901-12 realised £1200 (£600-700). Forthcoming Spink auctions to be held in London include: Stamps and Covers of the World (8 July and 9 December), Australian States (22 September), Cape of Good Hope (23 September), GB (20 October) and British Empire featuring West Indies (21 October). Auctions will also be held in Singapore and Hong Kong on 19 June and 20 November •

Cavendish's auction of the Richard Chan Hong Kong Collection attracted telephone bids from all over the world. A mint block of 36 of the 1891 Jubilee made £10,925 and plate/requisition blocks of four of the George V 1921-37 set went for £32,000 – the top price of the sale. The auction on 17-18 June will be of Worldwide material, featuring Uganda and GB, followed by a General auction on 24 July •

Bonham will be holding auctions of Stamps & Covers of the World on 15 June and 20 July. Enquiries: Bonhams, Montpelier Street, London SW7 1HH. Telephone 020 7393 3900 or see website www.bonhams.com •

Cavendish Philatelic Auctions

153-7 London Rd, Derby DE1 2SY. Telephone 01332 250970 or website www.Cavendish-Auctions.com

Self-adhesive stamps anniversary The first self-adhesive postage stamps were issued by Sierra Leone in February 1964; the innovative technology required for this major step forward was developed by Walsall Security Printers. To mark the 40th anniversary, Sierra Leone has issued a commemorative sheet of 10 stamps, again printed by Walsall. The stamps are a reproduction of the original stamps (which commemorated the World's Fair in New York) with present day values and produced using techniques which were not available in 1964. Britain's first self-adhesive stamp, printed by Walsall, was issued in October 1993. Today the majority of stamps for everyday use are now self-adhesive •



Enquiries Stanley Gibbons Publications, Parkside, Ringwood BH24 3SH. Telephone UK order line 0800 611622.

Orders Space Unit, PO Box 780241, Maspeth, NY 11378, USA, or for further information see www.stargate.1usa.com/stamps/

Editions Yvert & Tellier 37 rue des Jacobins, 800036 Amiens, Cedex 1, France. www.yvert.com



ABPS c/o British Philatelic Centre, 107 Charterhouse Street, London EC1M 6PT. www.ukphilately.org.uk

Postal Heritage Trust For details contact Freeling House, Phoenix Place, London WC1X 0DL, telephone 020 7239 2570, or the Friends of Postal Heritage: Mrs A Harms, 13 Amethyst Avenue, Davis Estate, Chatham ME5 9TX.

New publications The 2004 edition of the popular *Great Britain Concise Catalogue* was published by Stanley Gibbons at the end of April, priced at £19.95. Postage is £3.50 on UK orders under £50; overseas postage rates on request – telephone +44 1425 472363 from overseas •

The Space Unit of the American Topical Association and American Philatelic Association has released a CD entitled *Project Apollo Space Cover Catalog* which holds the entire 272-page book fully illustrated in colour. The work is divided into six sections with four appendices. The author, Paul Bulver, has previously produced the *Suspect Space Cover Handbook* on CD. Both CDs costs \$14 each in USA and Canada, \$17 each elsewhere (\$2 reduction for Space Unit members) •

Catalogue publishers Yvert & Tellier announce publication this month of the 2005 edition of *Classiques du monde: Les Timbres de 1840 a 1940*, the only European work listing all stamps issued throughout the world in the first century of adhesive postage stamps. 1400 pages, hardback •

ABPS *news*, the quarterly magazine of the Association of British Philatelic Societies, always contains interesting and useful information on what is going on in UK philately. The April issue is no exception, with details of Thematica (June), Naposta 2005 (Hanover, June 2005), and the Philatelic Congress of GB at Winchester (30 September - 3 October), the MBE for stamp designer Jeffery Matthews, the ABPS small grants scheme, an appreciation of David Jefferies, and the 2003 Rowland Hill Awards (the winners are shown on the front cover). The ABPS has introduced a competition for Society Journal of the Year and the results, judged by Douglas Muir, are announced. The winner was *The Petersfield Philatelist*, published by the Petersfield & District Philatelic Society, with the Newsletter of the City of Preston Philatelic Society highly commended. There is a worthy diary of forthcoming local events and reports of recent meetings of national, local and specialist societies and stamp clubs. 'Post Office update' covers recent Royal Mail issues and those of Jersey and the Isle of Man. 48 pages including covers, profusely illustrated and printed on quality paper •

The Spring issue of *Cross Post*, journal of the Friends of Postal Heritage, includes articles on the records of stamp printers Perkins, Bacon; Henry Fawcett and postal reform; the design of British commemorative stamps; a report of a visit to De La Rue at Byfleet; and the 1951 Postage Due provisionals. Perhaps of greatest interest to *Bulletin* readers is Peter Worsfold's article on stamp design in which he reviews the designs of special stamps. The numbers issued in each decade are given: 1920s – nine; 1930s – five; 1940s – 20; 1950s – 13; 1960s – 164; 1970s – 234; 1980s – 350; 1990s – 559; and 2000-2002 – 179. He lists a number of sets under different headings – Technical Drawings, Bits and Pieces, Primitive (Naïve) Paintings, Garish Colours, and Good, Bad, and Ugly Designs, and invites readers to add others or make up their own classifications. He makes some interesting points concerning the selection of stamp subjects and the size of stamps. The back cover of *Cross Post* gives information from the Postal Heritage Trust which took over Heritage Royal Mail (the former Post Office Archives and National Postal Museum) from 1 April. The search room at Freeling

House has been renovated, with new philatelic exhibition, computer and microfilm, and refreshment areas, a re-shelved library, increased toilet facilities, and more space for research. The new opening hours are 10.00-17.00 Monday-Friday with late opening until 19.00 on Thursday. Trial opening on Saturdays (10.00-17.00) will be on 10 July, 18 September and 13 November 2004 and 8 January and 26 February 2005 to test the demand. Material from the Phillips Collection of Victorian stamps will be on show in the new philatelic exhibition area and in September the Artefact Store at Debden will be open for booked tours. A series of lectures will be held on 7 September, 5 October, 9 November and 7 December, including one by Tony Benn on his time as Postmaster General (1964-66) •

The April issue of *Stamp Lover*, journal of the National Philatelic Society, includes interesting articles on the Golden West Stamp Exhibition (USA stamps) held at Earls Court in 1909, and buying and selling stamps online, a thematic feature 'Doctor Jenner's Vaccination' inspired by the Patients' Tale stamps of 1999, and an account by John Wildgoose on how he took the photographs for the recent Classic Locomotives stamps. There are the usual letters to the Editor, auction reports, and reports of NPS activities – all making for an interesting read. The Society's next meeting, on 12 June, will comprise a display of Cinderella stamps by Dr Conrad Graham, President of the Cinderella Stamp Club •

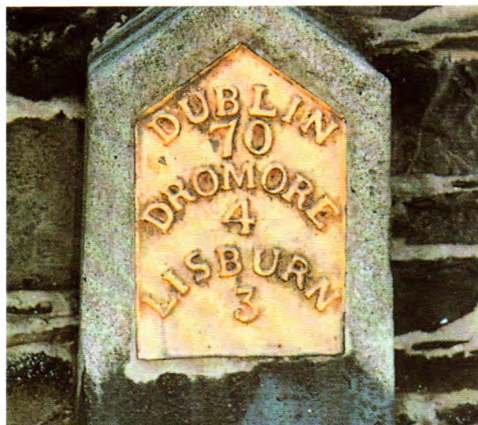
National Philatelic Society

107 Charterhouse Street,
London EC1M 6PT. Telephone
020 7490 9610, or website
www.ukphilately.org.uk

AIEP anniversary The International Association of Philatelic Experts (AIEP) celebrates its 50th anniversary this year. Some 300 of the world's leading experts have been members, including illustrious names such as Robson Lowe, R A G Lee, Ronald Butler, Herbert Bloch, Edwin Mueller, Alberto Diena, and Giulio Bolaffi. Today's 117 members represent 36 countries. Recognised authorities in their special fields, many are well-known as collectors, students, and authors. The history of the AIEP will be published in November in a special Handbook. Anniversary celebrations – to be held in Merano-Meran, Italy where the Association was founded in October 1954 – will include an International Congress on Philatelic Expertising and all interested philatelists are invited to participate. The Congress will be held 12-14 November •

AIEP Congress Details are available from Dr Wolfgang C Hellrigl, PO Box 349, I-39100 Bozen, Italy or from the AIEP website: www.aiep.net

Northern Ireland postcard The North of Ireland Philatelic Society has published its 18th postcard which features a 'milestone' in Hillsborough, Co Down which was on the Old Mail-Coach Road between Belfast and Dublin. The mileage of 70 refers to 'Irish miles' to Dublin (100 Irish miles = 127 English). The card costs 35p or 80p with first day postmark, postage and packing 40p extra; remittances payable to N Scott. Another 11 cards, produced between 1989 and 2002, are still available. All orders/enquiries to: N Scott, 49 Kingsdale Park, Belfast BT5 7BZ •





David Springbett RDP.

New RDPs Since 1921 over 320 philatelists from 45 countries have been elected to sign the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists and add the coveted initials RDP after their name. There are at present 70 signatories from 26 countries, including 14 from Great Britain. The three new signatories for 2004 are David Springbett (GB), Harry von Hofmann (Germany), and Kurt Kimmel (Switzerland).

Mr Springbett, born 1938, is well-known on the international scene. His particular interest is in the Large Key Plate issues of Nyasaland on which he has written extensively, his researches being incorporated into the SG catalogue. He was Grand Prix winner for Straits Settlements at Bangkok in 1993 and Grand Prix candidate at exhibitions in Istanbul and Australia in 1996 and 1999. He was Chairman of the Stamp Show 2000 board and served on the Council of the Royal Philatelic Society 1986-99 (member of the Expert Committee 1991-9), and has chaired the Revenue Society of Great Britain. A profile of Mr Springbett, by Richard West, was published in the *Bulletin*, January 2002.

Harry von Hofmann, born 1931, has been one of the stalwarts of German philately for many years. A specialist in the philately and postal history of the Baltic states, he has written on and exhibited Latvia and Estonia on many occasions. He was awarded Large Gold medals at Istanbul and Philexfrance and his studies have been published in the Latvia handbook. He has also written a definitive monograph on the Recommandirt: the Imperial Russian Registered Post. He has served as German Commissioner at many FIP exhibitions and was General Commissioner at IBRA '99. He has taken every opportunity to promote Balkan philately, is President of the Latvia Study Circle and a member of the Association Internationale des Experts Philateliques and the Association Internationale des Journalistes Philateliques.

Kurt Kimmel, born 1941, started as a young collector and was awarded the Grand Prix International for Youth in Hamburg in 1959. Over the last 15 years he has put together an amazingly wide range of collections, including Austria-Italy, classic Ceylon, Ceylon postal stationery, classic Venezuela, and the postal history of Vietnam and Lombardy-Venetia. He has researched and published papers on these subjects and was awarded the RPS's Tapling Medal for his paper on the One Penny Ceylon, Plate 1 and 2 1857-67. In 1994 he gave the Sir Daniel Cooper lecture on the Postal Forgeries of Milan. He has served as a Swiss national juror and Swiss Commissioner to FIP exhibitions, and has led seminars on jury training and the work of expert teams. He is a member of the AIEP. ●

BCSA competition entries

Send to BCSA Prize Administrator, 24 Ferndale, Tunbridge Wells TN2 3NS, by 30 June.

BCSA writing competition The British Czech and Slovak Association offers prizes of £300 and £100 for the best pieces of original writing relating to the links between the UK and the Czech and Slovak Republics, or describing society in transition in the Republics since the Velvet Revolution in 1989. Entries should be in English, of 1500-2000 words. Articles on philatelic subjects are welcome. Details from the address given at left, phone 01892 543206, or see website www.bcsa.co.uk ●

Royal Mail news New books and business sheets • Special issues • Smilers • Ingots

Stamp books and business sheets New printings of the 12 × 2nd class and the two Universal letter rate books (Europe and Worldwide) will go on philatelic sale from 15 June, price £2.52, £2.28, and £4.48 respectively. The stamps will be unchanged but on the front cover the Royal Mail logo will appear without the 'The Real Network' strapline. The reprinted books will go on sale at post offices and retail outlets as stocks of earlier books are used up. Also available from 15 June will be a new printing of the 6 × 1st class book (£1.68), also without the 'The Real Network', but with 'Supporting/London 2012' on the front cover. On the inside front cover is the wording 'Royal Mail is proud to support London's bid to host the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games in 2012.' All of these new books were printed by Walsall Security Printers. Business sheets of 100 1st and 2nd class stamps (£28 and £21) will also be available from 15 June with the Royal Mail logo without strapline. The business sheets were printed by Walsall •

Special issues This month's issue of special stamps, on 15 June, is the third in the 'British Journey' series, depicting Welsh scenery. The stamps were previewed last month. There will be no special issue in July; the 2004 programme then continues Royal Society of Arts (10 August) previewed this month, followed by Woodland Animals (16 September), Crimean War (12 October), and Christmas (2 November). The Woodland Animals stamps are being printed in gravure by Enschedé. The Pine Marten and Badger stamps will also be available in self-adhesive versions in a retail book along with four 1st class definitives, printed in gravure by Walsall.

The Crimean War stamps feature six men who fought in the War, from a photographic archive at the National Army Museum. The Christmas stamps reproduce specially commissioned paintings of Father Christmas by children's book illustrator Raymond Briggs.

A miniature sheet is to be issued when the new Scottish Parliament building is opened. The sheet will include 2nd class, 1st class and 40p Scottish country stamps and a view of the new building. At time of writing, the likely date of issue is October.

The programme for 2005 will be: Farm Animals (January); Magic Circle (February); British Journey: South West England and The Brontës (March); World Heritage Sites (April); Trooping the Colour (June); Motorcycles and British Journey (July, region to be announced); Gastronomy (August); Independent Television (September); Battle of Trafalgar (October); and Christmas (November). The dates of issue and numbers of stamps per set to be announced. Miniature sheets will be issued with the Magic Circle, Trooping the Colour, Motorcycles, Battle of Trafalgar, and Christmas issues. Prestige books for The Brontës and Trafalgar will be issued in March and October, and miniature sheets containing definitive stamps in March and September. A Smilers sheet will be issued for the Farm Animals set •



Woodland Animals The issue will feature: Pine marten, Red deer, Badger, Yellow-necked mouse, Wild cat, Red Squirrel, Stoat, Natterers bat, Mole, and a Fox. The proof above is shown at 87% actual size.



RHS generic Smilers sheet

Available from Talents House, price £6.15.

To order personalised sheets of any Smilers issue, phone 0845 074 2000 or visit www.royalmail.com/smilers

Smilers sheets A new Smilers generic sheet containing 20 1st class Union Flag ("Union Jack") stamps, from the 2001 Flags & Ensigns miniature sheet, will be available from 27 July, just before the Olympic Games start in Athens, price £6.15. The colour labels feature typically British images. The sheet is being printed in litho by Walsall, yielding a new variety – the original stamp was printed in gravure by Questa. Also available will be sheets of 20 with your personalised image printed on the labels, priced £14.95 for one sheet of 20 stamps, £13.95 each for 2-4 sheets, and £11.95 each for 5-9 sheets; enquire for prices for larger quantities.

Shown above is the generic Smilers sheet for the Royal Horticultural Society stamps (25 May). Personalised sheets prices/availability as for Union Flag sheet, see above. The Cartoon Smilers sheet (see *Bulletin* July 2003, page 329) will be withdrawn from sale on 28 July 2004 •

Withdrawals Any remaining stock of the Coronation Anniversary stamps, pack and cards will be withdrawn from sale at Tallents House on 1 June. The *Perfect Coronation* prestige stamp book is now sold out. The Prince William stamps, packs, and cards will come off sale on 16 June •

Coronation FDC draw The winner of the 1953 Coronation FDC draw in the March *Bulletin* was Mrs A Allison of Suffolk. Runner-up prizes were sent to: D Chadwick, London; C Reich, Queensland, Australia; J Philpott, Middlesex; A Loppinet, France; and B Seery, Kent •

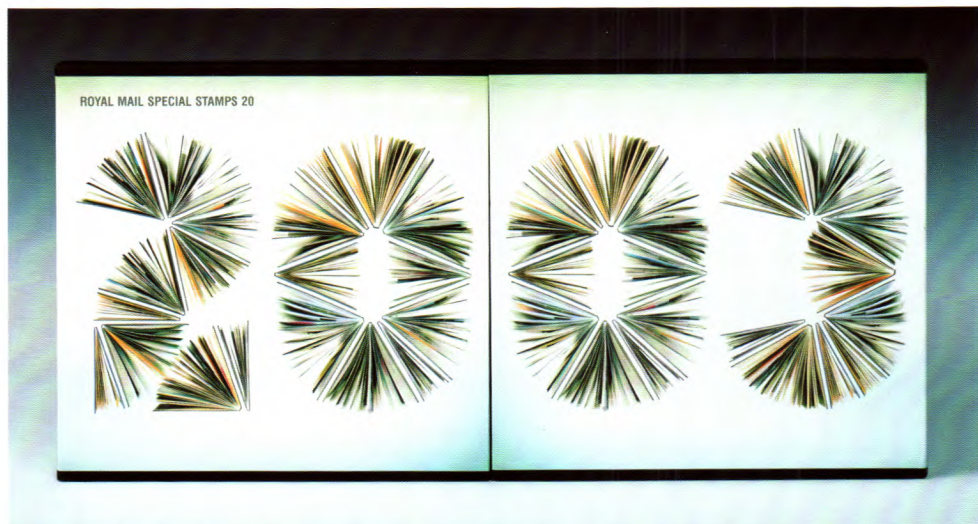
New stamp ingots series The first in a new series of six ingots, featuring stamps of the reigns of Edward VII and George V, will be available from 15 June. The first is on the subject of the Edward VII 1d stamp issued in 1902 and the first stamp in a British stamp book in March 1904. The series will continue in September with the Edward VII £1 stamp, and in December with George V 1d Mackennal profile definitive. Ingots for the George V 10s Seahorse high value, 1d 1924 British Empire Exhibition, and 1929 £1 PUC commemoratives will be available next year. Price £26.95 each from Tallents House. The Victorian stamp ingot series is still available, price £26.95 each – see the back cover of last September's *Bulletin* for full details •

The first of the new stamp ingots is available at half price to collectors placing an order for the full set of six.

Rowland Hill Awards draw winner All nomination forms for the Rowland Hill Award for Post Office Excellence were entered in a draw for £100 worth of Royal Mail philatelic products. The winner was Mr G Evans who nominated Windsor Main Post Office. Mr Evans commented: 'Their knowledge and help is invaluable, nothing is too much trouble and everyone receives courteous service.' •

Stamp and coin publications Tallents House stocks two useful Stanley Gibbons publications – *Collect British Stamps* and the new *Collect British Coins*. They are available at £9.95 each (order codes PB378 and PB379) •

Special prize draw Win the 2003 Yearbook



WE HAVE four Yearbooks for this month's prize draw. For a chance to win one, simply write your name and address on the back of a postcard and send it to: Yearbook Draw, British Philatelic Bulletin, Royal Mail, 148 Old Street, London EC1V 9HQ to arrive by 30 June •

The Court Post Office 1990-2004 Part 3:

by Glenn Morgan FRPSL

BALMORAL CASTLE, Ballater, Aberdeenshire, has been the Scottish home of the Royal Family since it was purchased for Queen Victoria by Prince Albert in 1852. The original castle was considered too small, and under the supervision of Prince Albert a new building was designed. When Queen Victoria died in 1901 Balmoral Estates passed, under the terms of her will, to King Edward VII, and from him to each of his successors. Following the removal of counter services which had been provided for times when the Royal Family was in residence, Royal Household mail is now cancelled with a Balmoral Castle postage paid handstamp – either an inland or overseas version. Mail from the Estate Office is cancelled with a Pitney Bowes commercial franking machine marking numbered PB237976.

BIRKHALL AND THE CASTLE OF MEY Birkhall, Glen Muick was built in 1715, and bought by Queen Victoria, who was a great lover of Balmoral. In the 1930s, King George V lent Birkhall to The Yorks. Princess Elizabeth, now The Queen, used it in the last years of her father's reign, but it passed back to The Queen Mother after her daughter's accession.

The Castle of Mey, Wick, Caithness, had been the property of Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother since 1952. It overlooks the Pentland Firth and Orkney Islands, and she spent the last three weeks of August there, returning for about 10 days in October each year. Both these residences passed to Prince Charles on her death. A postage paid handstamp may be introduced for use on mail from the Prince when at either of these residences; at the time of publication this had not been clarified.

Previously, mail from The Queen Mother bore postage stamps and was cancelled by the local postmaster, although there are rare instances when this practice was not followed. Prince Charles had been a private guest of the Queen Mother when he had been in residence and so would not have been entitled to his own special posting privileges at that time.



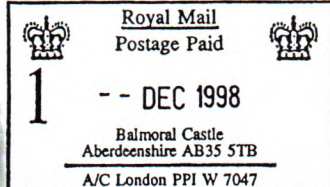
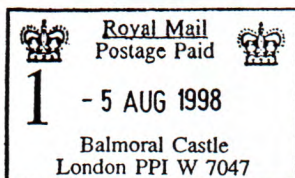
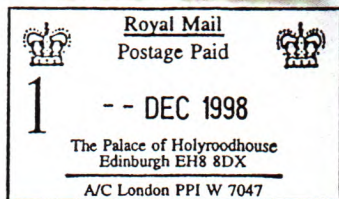
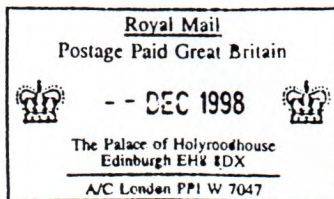
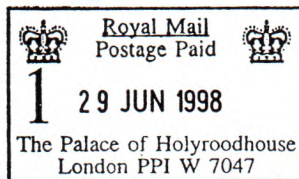
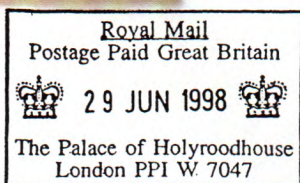
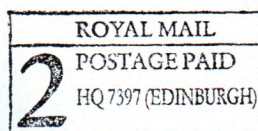
10^p

PALACE OF HOLYROODHOUSE Founded as a monastery in 1128, the Palace of Holyroodhouse in Edinburgh is The Queen's official residence in Scotland. Successive sovereigns have made the Palace the premier Royal residence in Scotland, and today it is used for state ceremonies and official entertaining. Following the removal of counter services, Royal Household mail is now cancelled with a Palace of Holyroodhouse postage paid handstamp, either an inland or overseas version. Mail from Royal Collection

Enterprises offices in the Palace is cancelled with an Edinburgh postage paid impression numbered HQ7397 in either first or second class versions, with a circular certifying cachet comprising a lion on crown, normally in blue. A 'lifebelt' style paid Edinburgh postmark in red is known used with an EHR Royal monogram certifying stamp in 1999 and again in 2002, but this time cancelling a postage stamp. This marking is not one supplied by the Court Postmaster to the Palace and was probably sourced locally.



Scottish Royal residences and mail screening



Above: postmarks used at the Palace of Holyroodhouse and Balmoral. Opposite page: the certifying cachet used at Holyroodhouse.

Travelling Post Office Services Travelling Post Offices (TPOs) were sorting offices on wheels speeding mail by rail, invariably overnight, to its destination. This mode of transport is now deemed unsuitable and the final Royal Mail TPO service ended in January 2004. Royal Household mail had been carried by this means of transport for many years, but the final Royal uses were to the Palace of Holyroodhouse on 26 June 1992, to Balmoral Castle on 8 October 1992 and to Sandringham House on 6 February 1996. These dates all coincide with Royal attendance at the residences.

Air services to the residences Following the abolition of TPOs, scheduled aircraft have been used. These were first used to carry mail destined for the Palace of Holyroodhouse on 26 June 1993 (exactly a year after TPOs ceased), using a Skyinet British Midland service from Heathrow to Edinburgh. This route only flies Monday to Friday, so at weekends when The Queen is in residence, a British Airways scheduled service is used.

Mail destined for Balmoral Castle was carried by air for the first time on 14 August 1993, via British European Airways (now renamed FlyBE) services. Sandringham House mail has gone by road service since 20 December 1996, as no flight arrangements are suitable.

A postal official, who is then escorted by a waiting van to the residence, accompanies all flights carrying Royal Household mail, regardless of destination. Invariably government boxes are part of the daily consignment, and these flights only occur when The Queen is in residence. At other times, mail is delivered to a residence by normal Royal Mail delivery channels.

Security screening An unfortunate sign of the times is the need to screen all mail entering Royal residences. From around October 2001, following the 11 September tragedies, everything destined for Royal residences is now screened at the appropriate Mail Office by Royal Mail staff, adhering to a consistent national policy. Previously, mail had been checked upon receipt by the Flag Sergeant, with the potential risk of explosion at the residence.

Mail addressed to Windsor Castle, Holyroodhouse, Buckingham Palace and St James's Palace is screened all year round. Mails for Balmoral Castle, Sandringham House and Kensington Palace are screened when members of the Royal Family are in residence. Mails for London residences are examined at Victoria Mail Office, while Holyroodhouse and Balmoral Castle mails are examined at Edinburgh Mail Office. Courier mail sent by organisations other than Royal Mail is similarly checked all year round.

It is hoped that this survey will assist collectors to identify items that they may be unaware of, and therefore are probably missing from their collections. However, it must be stated that the Royal Mail and Royal Household members employed at the Royal residences are extremely busy and cannot, therefore, respond to specific requests for copies of any of the postal cachets or markings recorded here. As a refusal to comply with your request could offend, please approach one of the many dealers in British postal history or ephemera if you wish to own this type of material ●

In his next article, Mr Morgan provides an account of postal arrangements for Royal Travel.

Text © Glenn H Morgan 2004

Philately on-line A GB favourite, examined by Ron Negus

KING GEORGE SIXTH COLLECTORS SOCIETY

The King George VI Collectors Society

The Society was formed in 1960 by the late Frank R. Saunders. There are currently about 400 members living in 27 countries.

The main aim of the Society is to bring together all those interested in the stamps of the reign of King George VI.

The Society holds regular meetings where KGV material is displayed and discussed. An auction for members, open to postal bidding, coincides with the Annual General Meeting in April.

The Society issues a quarterly magazine - 'GEOSIX'. It contains research, queries and answers, news of discoveries, auction realisations and other information about the Society. Since 1960 members have produced many erudite papers and articles covering such topics as stamp design, printings, shades and varieties. Please see the [GEOSIX](#) page.

If you are interested in philately during the KGV period and wish to become a member then please contact the Secretary of the Society. Details on the [contact](#) page.

You are the **9933** visitor to our website. Come back soon!

If there are any problems please contact the [webmaster](#).

www.kg6.info Details of the Society described here can be obtained by post from the Secretary, F R Lockyer OBE, at 98 Albany, Manor Road, Bournemouth BH1 3EW.

COLLECTORS OF GB and Colonial stamps often confine themselves to particular time periods that are traditionally identified by the name of the appropriate reigning sovereign. Amongst these, the stamps produced during the reign of King George VI are very popular. During his 16 years on the throne many dramatic historical events occurred, including the Second World War, Indian independence and the granting of self-rule to a number of British colonies. These events all had philatelic repercussions.

For those collectors interested in this period, the King George Sixth Collectors Society was formed in 1960 and now has over 400 members living in 27 countries. Its website (address given above) provides all the information needed to assess if membership would be helpful. The Society holds regular meetings and has an auction for members, open to postal bidding, to coincide with its AGM each year. The site gives a listing of forthcoming meetings.

Amongst the many useful facilities offered to members is a quarterly magazine, *GEOSIX*, that has now appeared for over 200 issues. It contains research, queries and answers, news of discoveries, auction realisations and general Society news. A number of the earlier editions of this magazine were devoted to single countries. They contained research articles covering topics such as stamp design, printings, shades and varieties. These have been reprinted for general sale as Society handbooks and details of their content, and of other similar publications, are given on the website.

The *GEOSIX* page on the site gives a summary of the contents of the last three issues. Of special interest to students is the cumulative index to all magazine articles published from 1960 to 2001 inclusive. This is arranged by country and provides a quick reference point to see if any specific issue or topic has been the subject of an article.

Another interesting aspect of the website is the Members' Wants page. This gives the expected requests for particular stamps or postal history items. But it also contains enquiries for help with research papers or articles, which is a good indication of the level of expertise available to members. The enquirer's name is given and, in most cases, an e-mail address for reply. A 'Wants Form' blank is on the site for use with new enquiries.

The remainder of the site contains the usual general pages covering news, a contact page and details of the Society's current officers. A 'Links' section gives direct access to websites of other societies covering similar interests. On the same page, some dealers' websites are linked, where they are known to have KGV material for sale.

Under a 'Subscriptions and Orders' heading, the site gives full information about current subscription rates. It also details prices and availability for both back issues of the *GEOSIX* magazine and the various Study Papers and handbooks referred to above. A final 'Guestbook' section encourages visitors to comment on the site. Recent entries can be read and these give a quick overview of how the site is perceived by other collectors. If you have an interest in material from this reign, a visit to this site is recommended •

Royal Society of Arts An anniversary issue



The stamps were designed by Derek Birdsall, RDI.

Technical details

Printer Walsall Security Printers

Process Lithography

Stamp size 41 x 30mm

Sheets 25 and 50

Perforation 14

Phosphor Two bands

Gum PVA

Gutter pairs Vertical

Plate numbers and colours

1st & 47p W1 silver ● W1 red
● W1 deep brown ● W1 black

40p W1 silver ● W1 red ● W1
grey-black ● W1 deep brown
● W1 black

43p W1 silver ● W1 light blue
● W1 red ● W1 black

57p & 68p W1 silver ● W1 red
● W1 black

Phosphor W1 all values

SIX STAMPS marking the 250th anniversary of the Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce, more usually referred to simply as the Royal Society of Arts (RSA) will be available from Post Office branches and philatelic outlets and from Royal Mail Tallents House Edinburgh from 10 August. They feature: 1st Penny Black (Sir Rowland Hill was awarded the RSA Albert Medal); 40p William Shipley, founder of the RSA; 43p RSA Commercial Examinations; 47p Apparatus for sweeping chimneys; 57p Eric Gill's famous typeface (he was the RSA's first Royal Designer for Industry); and 68p ZeroWaste, the Society's campaign for policies and lifestyles that eliminate waste.

Stamps will be issued to post offices in sheets of 25; sheets of 50, with gutter margin, will be supplied to Royal Mail Tallents House and Post Office philatelic outlets.

FIRST DAY FACILITIES Unstamped Royal Mail FDC envelopes will be available from main Post Office branches and philatelic outlets about a week before 10 August, price 25p. Orders for serviced FDCs with the stamps cancelled by a pictorial first day postmark of Royal Mail Tallents House Edinburgh or London WC2 must reach Tallents House (address below) by the day of issue. Price £3.74 UK or £3.19 overseas. London WC2 was chosen for the alternative postmark as it is location of the RSA's headquarters, in John Adam Street.

Collectors may send stamped covers on the day of issue to: Royal Mail, Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB (Tallents House postmark), or Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, Mount Pleasant, London EC1A 1BB (London postmark), marking the outer envelope 'FDO423' (Tallents House), or 'FDO424' (London). Covers can be posted or handed in at main Post Office branches for the London postmark.

The **RSA** is

a registered charity with over 22,000 Fellows which encourages sustainable economic development and the release of human potential through a programme of projects and lectures. To celebrate its 250th year, the RSA has focused on key initiatives for the future

developing
a capable
society

The RSA pioneered public examinations in the UK in the mid-1800s, and lobbied for a minister for education. Its Opening Minds project encourages schools to build competence-based curriculum materials that support life skills for schoolchildren

moving
towards
a zero
waste
society

Early in its history, the RSA planted 50 million trees as a reaction to mass deforestation and later in the 1850s, investigated the problem of smoke emissions. This year it continues the fight against waste with Environment Awards.net, a searchable online database of over 300 environmental awards and grants

encourage
enterprise

The RSA has long recognized that the creation and protection of good ideas are crucial to our society. The aim of this challenge is to find fresh ways to stimulate enterprise, entrepreneurship and the development of accountable wealth-creating organizations

fostering
resilient
communities

In the 18th and 19th centuries, the RSA championed new methods of cultivation in agriculture. Today the Society is examining the role of the countryside from social, economic and environmental perspectives, and creating welcome places that become resilient communities because of the vibrant

The RSA has always worked on a global scale. For example Captain Bligh was awarded gold medal by the Society for transferring breadfruit from the East to the West Indies. Today the RSA is exploring economic migration and working with multinational companies to develop the policy of best practice



THE ROYAL SOCIETY FOR
THE ENCOURAGEMENT
OF ARTS,
MANUFACTURES
& COMMERCE

celebrating

ROYAL SOCIETY OF ARTS

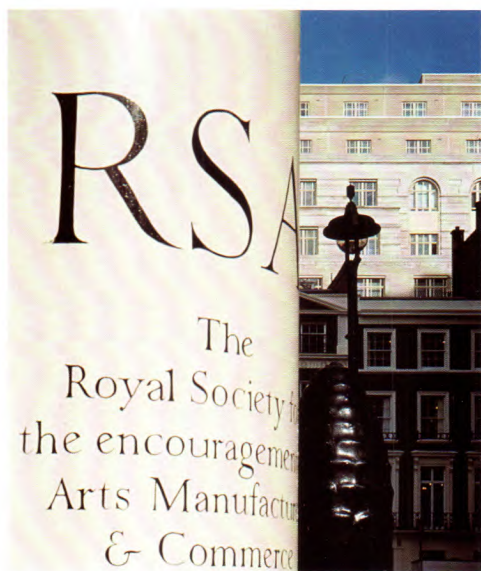
First Day of Issue • Royal Mail • Talents House • Edinburgh
the
RSA
is celebrating
250 years

10.8.2004



Details of other handstamps for 10 August will be given in the *British Postmark Bulletin* – available on subscription from Talents House (£12.25 in UK & Europe; £24.95 elsewhere). For a free sample copy write to the Editor, *British Postmark Bulletin*, Royal Mail, 148 Old Street, London EC1Y 8HQ.

PHILATELIC PRODUCTS A well-illustrated pack containing the six stamps (price £3.35) and stamp cards (30p each) will be available from Talents House, main Post Office branches and philatelic outlets. The pack, designed by Kate Stephens, includes an interesting outline history of the RSA and its work by Jane Austin. Illustrations include William Shipley, the Albert Medal, the Festival of Britain programme, and the 1998 Focus on Food campaign. The inside of the pack is shown above, with the first day cover.



Royal Society of Arts The Society was founded in 1754 by William Shipley, a Northampton drawing master, as the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce. Its first meetings were held over a circulating library in Crane Court, Fleet Street, later at Craig's Court, Charing Cross, and Castle Court and Beaufort Buildings in the Strand. In 1760 the Society held the first organised art exhibition in the country when Reynolds, Wilson, Cosway, Morland, Roubiliac and 64 other artists exhibited. In 1774 the Society moved to its present house, which was built for it as part of the Adam brothers' Adelphi development. The impressive lecture hall was decorated with six large murals by James Barry in 1777-83. The Society was granted a royal charter in 1847, during the Presidency of Prince Albert (1843-61).

The Society has played a major role in organising major exhibitions, some of which have philatelic significance as stamps were issued or special postmarks used. These include the Great and International Exhibitions of 1851 and 1862, the South Kensington exhibitions on Fisheries, Health and Education, Inventions and Music, and British Colonies and India (1883-86), and the Festival of Britain of 1951. It arranged the first photographic and educational exhibitions in 1852 and 1854, and in 1856 introduced examinations in 16 subjects for the benefit of the working classes. In 1864 its first Albert Medal was awarded to Rowland Hill; recipients include Faraday (1866), Pasteur (1882), Lister (1894), Bell (1902), Madame Curie (1910), Rutherford (1928), Nuffield (1927) and Fleming (1946). In 1867 the Society put up the first memorial plaque on a London house – Byron's birthplace at 24 Holles Street (this function was assumed by the London County Council in 1901), and in 1876 was instrumental in setting up the National Training School of Music, predecessor of the Royal College of Music. In 1908 Edward VII granted the Society its Royal title, and in 1924 the RSA held its first industrial design awards which paved the way for the student design awards. In 1992, in conjunction with the Royal Shakespeare Company, it launched the Shakespeare in Schools Project. In 1999 Nelson Mandela and Professor Stephen Hawking were made Honorary Fellows.

The Society grants the coveted initials RDI (Royal Designer for Industry) to those of sufficient distinction. These have included a number of noted stamp designers including Abram Games, David Gentleman and Reynolds Stone, and the designer of the RSA 250th Anniversary stamps, Derek Birdsall, who is noted for his Penguin book covers and for the re-design of the Book of Common Prayer. This is his first set of issued stamps although he submitted designs for the Post Office Tower issue of 1965 – his unadopted designs were shown in the *Bulletin* of February 1966.



From top left: two of Sarah Godwin's winning designs in the 1984 RSA Stamp Design Competition, used for the Isaac Newton stamps of 1987; two of Stewart Cameron's winning designs in the 1971 competition, and 1971 submissions by Kasia Charko, Frank Malinowski and Ian Settle. Left: the Victorian Britain issue of 1987 featured the Crystal Palace of the 1851 Great Exhibition and Prince Albert, RSA President 1843-61.

RSA stamp design competition Each year the RSA holds a Design Bursaries Competition for students at art colleges, sponsored by leading companies including Royal Mail. The competition covers some 15 different areas of design and its aims are to identify and encourage young designers of outstanding promise and to bring them to the attention of industry. Awards take the form of travel bursaries or attachment awards – work experience with a host company. The Postage Stamp section, sponsored by Royal Mail since 1971, has resulted in some good designs, some of which have featured in this *Bulletin*. The first winning designs, depicting industrial archaeology, were shown here in June 1971. More recently students have designed stamps featuring Museums, Sport, Shakespeare, and the Millennium – see *Bulletin* August, October and December 1989, May, July and November 1990, February, August, September and December 1991, and May 1997.

The winning designs from the 1984 competition were later used for the Isaac Newton stamps; the artist, Sarah Godwin, wrote about her work in the *Bulletin* of March 1987. Philippa Shaw, a runner-up in one of the recent competitions to design the RSA 250th Anniversary stamps, undertook work experience in Royal Mail's Stamp Design team as part of her award •

'Inclusive design' stamp books Glenn H Morgan FRPSL



IMAGINE having limited or no vision. It is unlikely that you would be enjoying this *Bulletin*, indeed you would probably not be collecting stamps. Now imagine suffering with arthritis in the fingers. Manual dexterity would be impaired, possibly to the point where turning these pages may be difficult, frustrating and painful.

Of the 60 million people in Britain, 20 million are aged over 50 and 10 million have a disability, according to the Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB). As most people use postal services, a large percentage of consumers would find improvements to the construction of stamp books beneficial. It is against this backdrop that Royal Mail decided to improve this aspect of its service. The introduction of self-adhesive paper and the withdrawal of £1 and £2 books following vending rationalisation assisted the revamp process.

The new books were introduced in 2002 and many readers may have bought copies for their collections or for use on mail. It is difficult not to be impressed by them, as the detail that went into the design and production helped guarantee success for an increasingly popular item sold in vast quantities every year. It is a sad fact, though, that many customers will not even have noticed the changes, although perhaps that is a part of their success. So, dig out one of your books now before reading on, and note the improvements made.

The Matrix No, not the film, but the surplus self-adhesive paper around the stamps in early books. Some countries have never used a matrix, as their stamps had a wavy-edge separation linking each without a gap, or had straight edges without perforations. However, Royal Mail wanted its self-adhesives to resemble perforated stamps, and this requires leaving a space between each stamp.

As the matrix made it difficult to remove the stamps, this was the first priority. Also, some customers had the anti-social habit of sticking the matrix to post office counters. There remains a thin strip of the matrix on each pane at the far right, providing a space for cylinder numbers. An added benefit of removing the matrix is that it enables people with visual impairments to feel more easily how many stamps are left.

Books of six stamps carry an unprinted label occupying the inside front cover. Books for overseas use include airmail stickers, making use of the wasted paper and avoiding the need for users to search for a sticker – or worse still, not use one.

Cover colour Covers are the colour of the stamps within: blue for 2nd class and gold for 1st. This aids recognition of the contents without the need to open the book. However, as 7% of British males are red-green colour blind, it was important that colour alone was not used to identify contents.

describes changes in the design of 1st and 2nd class books



From far left: the 2nd and 1st class 'inclusive design' stamp books introduced in 2002. The changes in their design and production are detailed below. Below: the trial design tested at the RNIB and Arthritis Care. The 1st class version of this design is shown on the following page.



Inset covers The front cover is shorter in width than the back cover. This enables easier access to the contents for people with arthritis.

Notches One for 1st class and two for 2nd class, notches allow visually impaired users to 'feel' the value. They are located in the right-hand vertical edge of the back cover, near the top. Braille would have been inappropriate, as most blind people do not read this language. Notches also assist visually impaired people with diabetes, for they often suffer from a loss of sensitivity in their fingertips and so may be unable to read Braille.

Perforations In accordance with Royal Mail's stamp security policy, the stamps bear an elliptical perforation on both vertical edges. This also helps the visually impaired to orientate the stamp correctly. Posting a letter with The Queen's head upside down may not seem to be of importance, but when did you last receive a letter from a sighted person showing disrespect to Her Majesty?

Font size The number of stamps in a book is set in 60 point light, and the value in 60 point bold.

Contacts The outside back covers bear helpline details for telephone, web and textphone, so that all customers can pursue enquiries with ease.

Stamps that never were There is one further development that had been proposed at the time of the revamp that never came to fruition. It was clearly the most radical feature, and would have resulted in a new definitive design for the first time in almost 40 years. Trial books containing a new design for the 1st and 2nd class values were prepared. These dummy stamps comprised a very large 1 or 2, with the portrait of The Queen reduced to silhouette size in the top left-hand corner, in the normal flame or blue colours of the time. The stamps and the book covers were designed for Royal Mail by CDT Design, a leader in brand, corporate and environmental identities. Books of these new design definitives were never issued, but were shown at a number of focus groups at the London premises of the RNIB and Arthritis Care. A range of people with various levels of visual impairment and arthritis were invited to offer their observations on all the features proposed for the stamp books. The RNIB forum comprised part of a nationwide volunteer evaluation network of 250 persons and included young and old, those in and out of work, blind and sighted people: ie a good cross-section of the British public. Their feedback was to prove invaluable to Royal Mail when deciding the final format. There were no user trials undertaken, and the new designs were not proceeded with.



Caring image The less charitable observer could argue that Royal Mail was merely carrying out its obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act of 1995, as introduced in 1998. However, it is clear that the organisation is determined to exceed what it must do. Aside from the provision of larger print, Braille, CD-ROM and audio versions of key items of literature, Royal Mail has also worked to improve access to its premises and introduced new, clearer, letterbox collection plates. Other enhancements relate to, for example, the introduction of induction-loop hearing devices, low level counters, and the provision of 'helping hands' packs of supportive equipment to all Post Office directly-managed branches and agents. These include pen grips, signature guides, clipboards and hand-held magnifiers, as well as improvements to queuing systems in Post Office branches. All of these enhancements help in projecting the caring image of one of Britain's largest retailers.

Avril Hart, Head of Disability Policy at Royal Mail, and Barry Robinson, former Design Director, Royal Mail Stamps and Collectibles, together with Paul Snee from RNIB's Sensory Design Services (SDS), who had been seconded to work with Royal Mail, championed the project in liaison with Mike Dempsey, a founding partner of CDT (Carroll, Dempsey & Thirkell) Design. Avril and Paul are both passionate about their roles and can be justifiably proud of these major design improvements. In view of the benefits that the unadopted stamp designs would have brought to so many consumers, I consider it disappointing that they were not adopted.

Special thanks are due to Paul for the considerable background information which he provided during the course of preparing this article. SDS is an RNIB 'inclusive design' consultancy based outside Peterborough. They offer their design services to manufacturers and service providers across a variety of sectors, helping them to make reasonable adjustments towards compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act.

SDS's influence on the design of a product is crucial if it is to be accessible to all, ie not just to those visually impaired or disabled, but to older people and the non-disabled alike. The BT 'Big Button' telephone (whose target of selling 64,000 units in 18 months was achieved in a mere three months) is another commercial example of why RNIB hopes that Royal Mail will continue to apply inclusive design principles to other areas of its business.

Thanks also go to Avril for her valuable comments on the first draft of this article, especially with regard to the design aspects and the use of the prototype books. Without her major contribution to this article, the accuracy and extent of detail would have been much less.

There is visual evidence with this stamp book project that with a little thought and effort, millions of customers can benefit – and it's difficult to disagree with that viewpoint, isn't it? ●

Glenn Morgan is Librarian of the National Philatelic Society and a specialist on stamp printers, stamp production and Royal Household mail. A profile of Mr Morgan was published here in February 1998.

The Mobile Post Offices Martin Robinson

relates the story of travelling postal facilities

FOR PHILATELISTS and postmark collectors, the pleasure of attendance at summer events used to be enhanced by being able to mark one's visit at a Mobile Post Office, usually a large articulated vehicle offering basic post office counter services.

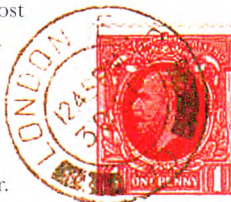
By using registered post or another priority service (or simply a certificate of posting) one could obtain strikes of the unique postmarks, inscribed, for example, MOBILE POST OFFICE NO.3 /A.

The first Mobile Post Office was introduced in 1936 and the first event served was the Marden and District Commercial Fruit Growers' Show in Kent on 7 and 8 October. Previously the MPO had been inaugurated at a ceremony in the yard of the King Edward Building, London EC, on 30 September. Major Tryon, the Postmaster General, attended, as did the doyen of postmark collectors, the ubiquitous George J King, thanks to whom postmarks of the occasion survive. A full programme of some 40 events followed in 1937, half of which were race meetings, but also including the Little Aston Golf Competition at Sutton Coldfield, the Bath and West Show, the Richmond Horse Show, a Test Match in Manchester, the Henley Royal Regatta, the Great Yorkshire Agricultural Show at York, the Shrewsbury Musical and Floral Fete and the Cowal Games at Dunoon.

The 50th anniversary of GPO1, the first Mobile Post Office, was marked by a South East Postal Region postcard issued on 30 September 1986 (see p291). The accompanying special postmark was used at Tonbridge although, as explained above, the date of the MPO's London inauguration was 30 September; it didn't appear at Marden until a week later.

Wartime MPOs The first Mobile Post Office was considered to be a great success, and a second articulated vehicle, GPO2, was delivered in April 1938. However the coming of war disrupted national life and the two MPOs were transferred to the Radio Branch for war service, being used as mobile radio stations. Not surprisingly, there are few records of Mobile Post Office activity during the war years, but it is known that there were provisions for Mobiles to replace bombed offices. On 6 August 1941 a Mobile Post Office was erected in Aldersgate, City of London, to demonstrate what services could be offered. The accommodation was made of canvas over a framework of steel tubing with wooden boards for counters. A posting box was provided and a rubber 'skeleton' postmark used on registered mail on that afternoon only. A series of numbered MPO handstamps was issued, each with three digits, but apparently not many were used, although by the end of 1941 a number of Mobile Post Offices were operating in several Scottish towns and cities, each with one of these handstamps.

One of the pleasures of a British summer is attending events like the Royal Show at Stoneleigh, which also hosts a Town and Country festival later in the year, and many seasonal events held the length and breadth of the land such as agricultural and flower shows, and other social and sporting events.



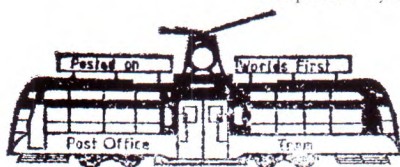
Above: from a 1936 MPO first day cover. Below: the rubber skeleton handstamp used at the London Mobile PO, 1941.



It wasn't until 1947 that the usual round of events and shows resumed, with a third MPO, GPO3, joining the fleet later. These earlier vehicles were all articulated and offered counter and telegraphic services from side windows, protected by awnings, and telephone cabins accessed via a rear door.

Sadly, the original GPO1 trailer was destroyed in a road accident, but GPO2 was retrieved from a breaker's yard and restored in 1984 at the Post Office's Corby Motor Transport Workshops. A Midlands Postal Board postcard was issued with a special handstamp at Corby on 27 September 1986. GPO3 featured on a promotional North West Postal Board postcard NWPB PRI in May 1983. This unit with a Morris tractor was used from 1955 to 1980 and returned to service in 1983 after refurbishment at Bamber Bridge Central Workshops. Some self-adhesive Postcode labels of the same era also showed GPO3. Later MPOs allowed the public to enter the vehicle to reach the counters, like the one photographed in May 1990 at Stamp World London 90, Alexandra Palace. A massive trailer called the MegaUnit was intended as a mobile exhibition unit, for corporate entertaining or as a medical centre, and was 12.2 metres long with double extending sides. As well as being used by the PO itself, it was offered, designed and fitted to the specifications of any organisation, which could include a kitchen and marquee or grandstand extensions. A smaller Mobile Exhibition Unit was featured on Wales and the Marches picture card WMPB 26, at the National Eisteddfod, Lampeter in August 1984.

MPO postmarks The postmarks used in the three Mobile Post Offices were originally MOBILE POST OFFICE / A, B and C, but later the three Mobiles had handstamps inscribed for example MOBILE POST OFFICE 1 / A, with numbers 1 to 3 and letters A to F. Some events like Wimbledon had special handstamps, which were used on covers at the Mobile, whilst the MPO handstamp was used on the certificate of posting. The Mobile at the Royal Show used to have datestamps inscribed ROYAL SHOW, STONELEIGH / COVENTRY with indices 1, 2 and 3. Visitors to the Mobile at Stamp World London 90 were disappointed to find that their certificates of posting were cancelled with a WOOD GREEN B.O. / N.22 handstamp as the MPO handstamps had by then been taken out of use.



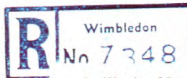
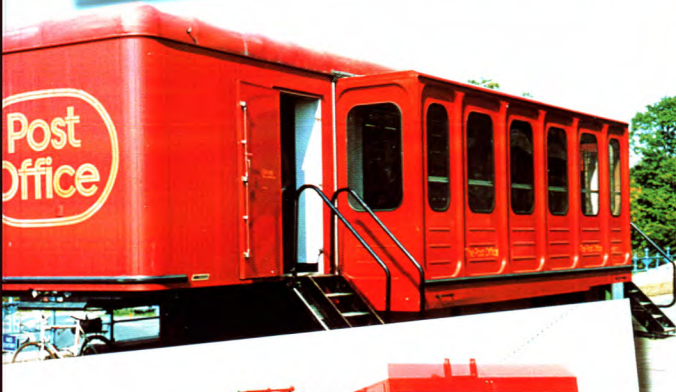
Post Office tram An unusual vehicle which can be included under the heading of Mobile Post Offices was the Post Office Tram which ran on Blackpool's famous promenade during the period of the Illuminations from 11 September to 31 October 1981, and also July to October 1982, August to September 1983 and July to September 1984. The tram was hired from Blackpool Transport Department to promote the use of holiday postcards and was adapted to accommodate a philatelic sales point. A NWPB postcard was issued on 27 July 1982 (shown opposite), and a special handstamp and cachet were available (shown left).

TRAVELLING TRAM
POST OFFICE

17 AUG 1983

IN
BLACKPOOL





Certificate of Posting

The undermentioned postal packet has been registered and posted here this day. (Ordinary postage p if parcel)

Regn. No. 7348	Regn. fee paid	MINIMUM LETTER 20p
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Accepting Official's Initials

Mr. M. Robertson
17 TUCKER
STOCKTON
RUGBY
SARUM

FOR REGULATIONS SEE OVER

Date Stamp

1980s economies The Mobile Post Office programme was cut back in the 1980s because of their high cost, and the MPO postmarks were last used in 1988. In summer 1999 there were six temporary post offices: the Chelsea Flower Show; the Royal Bath & West Show at Shepton Mallet; the Wimbledon Tennis Championships; the Llangollen International Eisteddfod; the Royal Welsh Show, Builth Wells; and the Royal National Eisteddfod at Llanbedrog, Anglesey. Previously these would have had MPOs, but they now operate from temporarily-occupied permanent buildings. There are still occasionally temporary offices with counter facilities, eg The Stamp Show 2000 at Earls Court and the Athletes' Village at the 2002 Commonwealth Games in Manchester, but the MPO vehicles have made only rare appearances since 1988 and it is believed that only one remains in service. The Royal Show at Stoneleigh, Warwicks, used to have a Mobile Post Office, then a permanent building from 1980 to 1996, but now there is no postal provision apart from a few post boxes. In the days of mobile phones and e-mails, the service the MPOs provided is evidently no longer needed.

New service New needs have arisen and are beginning to be met. It is well known that village post offices have a hard time to survive these days and many have closed over the last 20 years, leaving communities without postal provision. It's not just post offices that have closed, of course, but also schools, pubs, banks, etc. One way to provide a basic post office counter service is by using mobiles, as some banks and library services do. A Mobile Post Office based at Carlisle, thought to be the first of its kind serving villages rather than county shows etc, started operating on 8 July 1996. Its original timetable was: Monday – Mawbray, Bassenthwaite, Torpenhow; Tuesday – Glenridding; Thursday – Oulton, Kirkbampton, Kirkandrews upon Eden; and Friday – Hackthorpe, Great Salkeld, Cargo, operating at various times between 10:00 and 16:00, and allowing time to arrive from and return to base. From August 1997 the schedule was extended to include six more villages: Welton on Tuesday; Cumwhitton on Wednesday; and Thurstonfield, Grinsdale, Beaumont and Monkhill on Friday.

Another MPO has run from a base at Bere Alston Post Office, Devon, since May 1999. The self-inking datestamp originally read BERE ALSTON YELVERTON DEVON with index letter M (presumably for Mobile), but a replacement is inscribed CORNWALL & DEVON MOBILE. The MPO serves villages in West Devon and East and North Cornwall, as follows: Monday – Commonmoor, Merrymeet, Quethiock, St Ive, St Mellion and Trevelmond; Tuesday – Cargreen, Coad's Green, Lawhitton, North Petherwin, Warbstow and Yeolmbridge; Wednesday – Egloskerry; Thursday – Clearbrook, Lamerton, Lee Moor, Milton Combe and Peter Tavy. A handsome Christmas card showing the MPO crossing the Tamar bridge at Gunnislake, from a watercolour dated 10/99 by Rosemary Hudson, was on sale at Bere Alston at Christmas 2000.

I believe there are or have been other services in Hampshire and Cambridgeshire, but have no further information on them. One can only hope there will be more ●

Acknowledgements

British Postmark Society Quarterly Bulletin
Collect British Postmarks, Dr T J Whitney, edited by Colin Peachey and Brian Crookes, 6th edition 1993
Mobile Post Offices 1936-1986 Cyril H Parsons, *Crosspost* vol 1, no 3
Skeleton Postmarks of England and Wales, James A Mackay; second edition compiled by Colin Peachey, 1996
Royal Mail Trucks in Britain, PO Vehicle Club, 1995
 Regus Publications, Stockport
 W T Pipe (Magpie Auctions)

Right: The Mobile Post Office based at Carlisle. The service uses a Leyland Daf 8-13 with a rear door for customers to enter the vehicle. A self-inking MOBILE CARLISLE date-stamp is used, and a MOBILE/POST OFFICE/CARLISLE/CUMBRIA parcel datestamp.



Left: The Mobile Post Office from Bere Alston. Unlike the Carlisle MPO, customers stay outside the vehicle and are served through a side hatch.

Local produce Don Staddon prefers to go to the source for his hobbies, as Richard West discovers

WHERE do you obtain the key items for your collection? In the case of Don Staddon, it is from his local post office: his best 'bargain' has come over a post office counter. Don started collecting in a typical schoolboy manner, collecting whatever came his way. The fact that his aunt received much correspondence from the USA and Transvaal did not persuade him to specialise. When the sea entered his veins and he became a Master Mariner, serving his apprenticeship during the Second World War, still he would haphazardly acquire mint stamps from places visited, until the fateful day when the collection ended up at the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean.

After being a Master Mariner, Don still had to have the sea close by, and moved to a house in Northumberland. He took up shore angling, joining the Tynemouth Angling Club in the early 1960s, where he met Dave Higgins, a keen collector who persuaded Don to take up the Wilding definitives. Another major influence in Don's collecting was the late Len Newbery, famed for his work on Great Britain stamp booklets, with whom Don kept in close contact over the years. In fact, Don would number Len among Britain's greatest philatelists, along with Doug Myall who has produced what must be the most authoritative work on the Machins.

There are others whom Don admires, such as Dr Brian Austen, a member of Don's now local philatelic society at Haywards Heath in Sussex. He has contacts with collectors, at Royal Mail, and with designers and printers, which have helped him in both his researches and writings. When *Stamp Collecting* magazine ceased publication in 1984 he continued to contribute a similar monthly column for *Stamp Magazine*.

Don likes the fact that he is able to acquire much of the material for his collection over the post office counter, although sadly a sub office where he established a particular rapport has now closed. His greatest bargain came over the counter, from the Philatelic Counter that was at Trafalgar Square, in 1975, namely a cylinder block of the Wales 5½p definitive from cylinder 2. To 'top up' his 'over the counter' purchases, Don uses a West Country GB dealer, particularly to fill the gaps in the Country definitives.

Don regards his as very much a reference collection, so it is housed in stock books, albeit fully referenced, and he will frequently consult not only the Stanley Gibbons *Specialised Great Britain* catalogue, but also Douglas Myall's work. His greatest satisfaction has come from those he has met mainly as a result of his writing in the philatelic press, who have been only too pleased and helpful in sharing their knowledge. There have also been a few perks, such as being invited on a Travelling Post Office hauled by the steam locomotive *Mallard*, while his greatest accolade has been to be nominated for a Rowland Hill Award for Journalistic Excellence in the philatelic press.

As well as being a member of Haywards Heath Philatelic Society, Don was a founder member of the Postal Mechanisation Study Circle, and of the then-called Friends of the National Postal Museum. In fact, he was a member of the Museum's board, and still spends a day a week at Heritage Royal Mail working on the modern Great Britain collection.

He does have a 'pet hate', namely those who dismiss modern philately, and in particular the Machins, especially as many who sneer at such collections 'secretly' buy the material themselves. He is also concerned that the cost and time need-

ed to maintain a collection means that increasingly it is a hobby for the more mature.

Don has no inclination to produce a 'gold medal' collection, perfectly content to continue to enjoy what he is doing, and hopefully be a positive influence to others through the words he writes.

Don has written quite a few articles for this *Bulletin*, most importantly two series 'The Genesis of the Machin Design' (1986-87), and 'The Machin Head on Stamps' (1988-89). His review of Douglas Myall's latest *Complete Deegam Machin Handbook* was published here in October 2003. ●

DON STADDON FACT FILE

Born North-west County Durham, but frequent visits to grandparents in South Shields developed his love of the sea.

Career Don spent twelve years at sea, before a complete career change to marketing and advertising in the consumer goods industry. Then, following retirement, he took up writing for the philatelic press.

Holidays He and his wife like each holiday to be different, whether it be far or near – but never with any connection with philately.

Family He has a son and daughter, and both have given him and his wife grandchildren. While Don sends his eldest grandson a first day cover of each new British release, none have shown any interest in the hobby.

Interests As mentioned, Don loves sea fishing, particularly from the shore, beach or rocks. He fondly remembers many happy hours spent on the Northumberland coast. Today he fishes at Dungeness, from October to the end of February, to be assured of the best catches. He also maintains a large (nearly one acre) garden. As is evident, he loves the fresh air.

Sport Golf, playing three times a week. Not surprisingly, when it comes to football, he supports Newcastle.

Food Don is a lover of good, plain English cooking. He is never happier than with roast beef, or steak and kidney pie or pud. His wife is happy to oblige.



Cover corner A 'Delayed by Enemy Action' 'Bomb' cachet



A June 1941 'DELAYED BY ENEMY ACTION' 'Bomb' cachet, applied in violet.

An article on the 'Delayed by Enemy Action' mail and markings, by Douglas Muir, was published in the March 1986 *Bulletin*.

THIS COVER was sent by printed paper rate from London to Douglas, Isle of Man. As it took two days to arrive, some explanation was required for the delay! The cachet explains the tardiness in its delivery – there were several air-raids on London in the last few days of June 1941. But whether this

cover was posted on 28 June as per the London w1 postmark is another matter, because the stamp is cancelled by an undated triangular postmark rather than a dated one. This probably means it was posted before 28 June and could account for the need to explain the delay. *Robert Phillifent* ●

Posting boxes 220

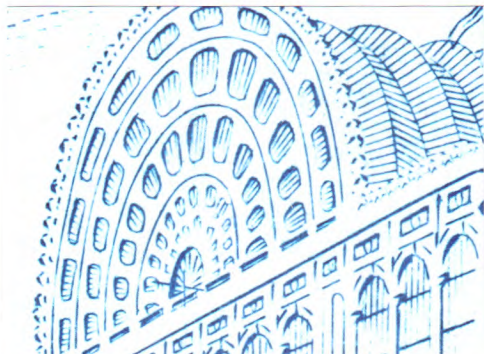


For details of the Letter Box Study Group send a SAE or IRC to the Membership Secretary, Mrs V Scott, 38 Leopold Avenue, Handsworth Wood, Birmingham B20 1ES. The Group produces interesting publications and postcards.

THIS MONTH'S box was photographed in the gardens of Ugbrooke House, Chudleigh, Newton Abbot, Devon, the home of Lord Clifford and

his family. The Edward VII box is now used as a water feature. The photograph was submitted by Peter Fowke of Newton Abbot ●

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



March identify The detail is from the 28p Entente Cordiale stamp. The winner was K Bowler of Canada.

March knowledge Answers: 1) 1795; 2) red; 3) Captain James Cook. The winner was R Clarke of Essex.

Ten runner-up prizes were also sent for each competition. Our thanks to all who entered.

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

- 1 Who designed the 1989 Greetings stamps?
- 2 In which year did Charles Sturt feature on a stamp?
- 3 Where is the Philatelic Congress of Great Britain being held this year?

Send your answer (addressed to either the June *Identify* competition or June *Knowledge* competition), name and address on a postcard or back of a sealed envelope to: British Philatelic Bulletin, Royal Mail, 148 Old Street, London EC1V 9HQ. The senders of the first cards drawn in each competition on 9 July 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

22-30 May España 2004 general world international at City of Arts and Science, Valencia, Spain. Organised by Spanish Post Office and Spanish Philatelic Federation. **Enquiries** e-mail espana2004@correos.es or to the UK Commissioner K Fitton, 50 Firlands, Weybridge KT13 0HR.

29 May Yorkshire Philatelic Association Annual Convention at Pudsey Civic Hall, Dawson's Corner (junction of A6120 and A647), 09.30-16.30. 30 dealers, competition and invited displays, signing of Roll of Distinguished Yorkshire Philatelists, car parking and refreshments. **Enquiries** A Peel, 01924 505724.

5 June Ringpex stamp fair at Greyfriars (community centre), Christchurch Road, Ringwood, 10.00-16.00. Admission free, 12 dealers. **Enquiries** Ringpex hotline, 01425 474310.

12 June Swinpex at St Joseph's Lower School, Queen's Drive, Swindon, from 10.00-16.30. Dealers, societies. **Enquiries** D Gibbon, 10793 813484.

13 June Great Britain Decimal Stamp Book Study Circle meeting at Rhodia Social Club, Station Road, Langley. **Enquiries** Roy Webster, 01948 664946 or see website www.gbdsbsc.kabsi.at

17-20 June Welsh Philatelic Society Annual Event at Plas Tan y Bwlch near Porthmadog. **Enquiries** P Gaywood, 2 Fairways, Fulwood, Preston PR2 8FX.

19-20 June Rail Mail 2004 at Nene Valley Railway. See page 292 for details.

26-27 June Thematica at Carisbrooke Hall, Seymour Street, London W2. See page 292 for details ●

Late news



Post Office Ltd leaflet for new automated postal service.

Automated Postal Service Post Office Ltd has introduced new Automated Postal Service kiosks at three offices. These can be used to weigh and pay when sending UK and overseas mail including Special Delivery and Signed for International. The machines print labels similar (although somewhat wider) to those produced on 'Horizon' machines at Post Office counters. The kiosks are sited in Post Office branches at Alfreton, Derbyshire; Arndale, Luton, Bedfordshire, and Broadgate, London EC2 •

New postmark listing The British Postmark Society has published Volume 4 of *Special Event Postmarks of the United Kingdom*, covering the years 1994-2003. This lists over 5700 special postmarks (mostly handstamps but a few machine cancels) in chronological order. Each postmark is numbered; the total reaches 14578 by 31 December 2003. Subsequent postmarks will be listed in the Society's Quarterly Bulletin. For collectors interested primarily in handstamps used on the first day of issue of new stamps, the listings of these are clearly indicated within the main listings. Separately listed are the special handstamps for Guernsey, Jersey and the Isle of Man. A further section deals with Philatelic Handstamps – the permanent philatelic handstamps announced in the *Postmark Bulletin*, 'Meet The Royal Mail' types used on sorting office visit covers, and special House of Commons and House of Lords date-stamps used on souvenir covers. Alan Finch and Colin Peachey are to be congratulated on another

useful reference work. 318 pages, card covers, spiral binding. Price £9.50, UK postage £2, overseas £2.50. Earlier volumes covering 1851-1962, 1963-83, and 1984-93 cost £6 each Vols 1 & 2 and £9.50 Vol 3 (Postage £1 UK / £1.50 overseas on each volume). Orders to Colin Peachey, 19 Moorland Rd, Hemel Hempstead HP1 1NH. Details of the British Postmark Society from John Strachan, 12 Dunavon Park, Strathaven ML10 6LP •

Isle of Man RHS stamps Well-known gardener, Alan Titchmarsh, helped with new stamps from the Isle of Man. The set 'A Journey through the Manx Countryside' was issued on 3 May to mark the bicentenary of the Royal Horticultural Society. Mr Titchmarsh selected Manx wild flowers from photographs by Manx born photographer Victoria Harrop. The stamps are available in the usual presentation pack and in a special gift pack including Manx wildflower seeds. Enquiries: Isle of Man Philatelic Bureau, PO Box 10M, Douglas, Isle of Man IM99 1PB. Telephone 01624 698435 or see website www.iompost.com •

GBPS anniversary The Great Britain Philatelic Society marks its 50th anniversary next year with major displays at Spring Stampex (23-28 February) and to the Royal Philatelic Society (December). For details of the Society contact Debbie Harman, Greylands, Melton, Woodbridge IP12 1QE. E-mail gbpsmemsec@aol.com •

Information for young competitors The National Youth Stamp Committee has prepared a leaflet to help youngsters who would like to enter a competition for the first time. For copies of the leaflet send a c5-size stamped addressed envelope to: Mrs Erene Grieve, The Dees, Neyland Vale, Neyland, Milford Haven SA73 1QP •

Bulletin back issues Free to good home: *Bulletins* from 1996 to 2003 (just June 1998 and September 2000 missing), to be collected or postage paid. Contact Esther Rank, 40 Northchurch Rd, London N1 4EJ. Telephone 020 7254 8168 •

Beautiful blooms, in all their glory



RHS Medal Cover An evergreen reminder, in a limited edition of 25,000. Officially produced to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the RHS, this nickel brass medal, produced by Royal Mint, has been designed by Danuta Solowiej-Wedderburn. The insert card takes a brief look at the history of the RHS flower shows and, in a fascinating touch, includes information on medals awarded by the Society. The envelope bears all six RHS stamps and is cancelled with a London postmark in silver ink. Price £13.95 Code AM013.

RHS Prestige Stamp Book Entitled *The Glory of the Garden – a Celebration of the RHS*, this fitting tribute to 200 years of gardening history contains four stamp panes, in unique combinations unavailable elsewhere, including two featuring the new Special Stamps. The book, written by the gardening writer Geoff Hodge, is lavishly illustrated with colour photographs of RHS gardens and reflects the contemporary work of the Society. Price £7.23 Code YB024.

Royal Mail

Talents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB
Telephone orders: UK 08457 641 641; overseas +44 131 316 7483

