

British Philatelic Bulletin

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Late News

News is in from the Scottish Post Office Board that their planned set of six postcards marking great Scottish innovators in communications – James Watt, Thomas Telford, James Clark Maxwell, Alexander Graham Bell, John Logie Baird and Sir Robert Watson-Watt – will not now be issued this calendar year. Instead the set will be timed to coincide with the new Edinburgh Science Festival, the theme of which is “intelligent communication”, next April.

The Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council inform us of an exhibition “Coaching Days – Posting Ways” dealing with mail coaches and letter boxes on show at the Museum & Art Gallery, Riversley Park, Nuneaton until 5 December. The Museum is open Monday to Friday from Noon to 5pm; 10am to 5pm Saturday & Sunday.

This Month

With the Christmas stamps on 15 November we complete this year's programme of special issues and can begin to look forward to 1989. The subjects of the 1989 issues were detailed in the February *Bulletin* (page 141) and the intended dates of issue were announced last month (page 62). In this issue we preview the first of the nine sets – Birds – to be issued on 17 January. The four stamps feature well-known birds of the seashore including the colourful and comic puffin and the rare avocet. The stamps commemorate the centenary of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

In addition to the special (commemorative) issues, there will be a new departure in definitive stamps – the issue of Greetings stamps. The date of issue of these will be announced shortly, the stamps will be issued in book form, and will be suitable for use on birthday, anniversary, Valentine and other greetings mail. The books will be on sale for an indefinite period. David Dale, Manager Definitive Stamps – Royal Mail Stamps & Philately – will be writing about the background to these stamps in a future issue of the *Bulletin*.

Details are to be found in this issue of the new Country stamps due on 8 November, completing the issues resulting from the postal rate increases in September. Illustrations and further information are provided about the window books issued on 11 October. The development of these books is proving of great interest to specialist collectors but the more general collector should be aware that they contain a number of individual stamps that will be listed in the standard catalogues and thus be needed for a “one of everything” collection of Machin stamps.

Front Cover

Our front cover this month shows the design of the first Christmas card, published by Henry Cole in 1843. The design shows members of a comfortably off family group raising their glasses, with side panels showing how the poor depended on Christian charity.

Birds

17 January 1989



Four stamps will be issued on 17 January to commemorate the centenary of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. The problems that stimulated the establishment of the RSPB, especially the killing of wild birds for their decorative plumes, have been replaced by ever greater, very real threats: from river pollution and destruction of heathlands, moorlands, hedgerows and estuaries to illegal shooting, trapping and poisoning of wildlife. The Society's officials and members are busy ensuring the protection of birds and their environment. The Society, with a membership of some 380,000, is based at Sandy in Bedfordshire.



The Puffin

The 27p stamp (airmail postcards & aerogrammes) depicts the Avocet (*Recurvirostra avosetta*), the bird used as the RSPB symbol. This is one of Britain's rarest birds, a summer visitor which breeds on Havergate Island near Orford in Suffolk. The bird is a graceful white wader with a thin black, up-curved bill and very long pale bluish legs. A group of these beautiful birds is featured on the front of the presentation pack.



The 19p stamp (first class inland letter basic rate) features one of Britain's favourite sea-birds, the puffin (*Fratercula arctica*) sometimes referred to as the sea-parrot. This bird, best-known for its brightly coloured summer bill, is to be found mainly along the west coast; it builds its nest in a burrow or tunnel on islands or cliffs. One egg is usually laid in June. The puffin feeds mostly on fish, for which it dives and swims under water. The puffin is a comic bird and frequently features in nature programmes on television. Large colonies are to be found in the Shetlands and the puffin features on tourist publicity material for the Islands, including, some years ago, a slogan postmark. The bird is indisputably associated with the island of Lundy in the Bristol Channel, the name Lundy deriving from the Norse for puffin island.



The 32p stamp (airmail Zone B), features the Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*), another bird in the Plover family (*Charadriidae*). This bird is chiefly to be found along the rocky and sandy shore, more common on the west than the east. Like the puffin and the avocet, the

oystercatcher has a distinctive bill, in this case a long orange-scarlet one. The nest is built of a few pieces of broken shell in shingle or rocks; three or four eggs are laid in May. The bird feeds on sandworms, shellfish, small fish and shrimps.



The 35p stamp (airmail Zone C) features the Gannet (*Sula bassana*), one of the largest seabirds, an adult measuring about 36 inches in length and with a wing-span of about six feet. The bird feeds on fish which it can see swimming in the sea from a great height; gannets drop at great speed to catch their prey. The main haunts of the gannet are the rocky isles and stacks of the north and west; large colonies are to be found on St Kilda – at one time the bird was an important part of the islanders' diet.



Gannets build nests of seaweed and grass on rocky ledges, one egg is laid in March or April.

The RSPB runs a number of bird reserves and works closely with landowners and decision-makers in creating a better countryside for birds, and other wildlife. The Society fights damaging developments. To safeguard eggs of rare breed-

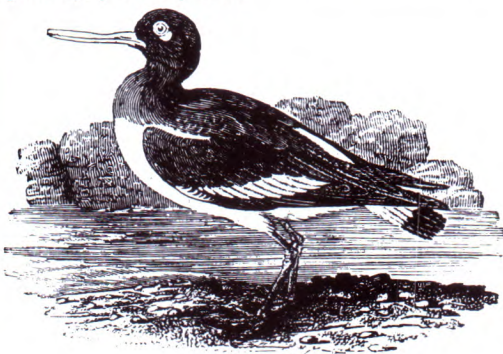
ing birds, such as the osprey, the Society employs wardens to mount round-the-clock guard on individual nests.

Technical Details

The four stamps were designed by Don Cordery, his first set of stamps for the British Post Office and printed in photogravure by Harrison & Sons Limited. They are of vertical format, measuring 30 x 41mm, printed in sheets of 100 on phosphor-coated paper with PVA dextrin gum. Perforation is 14 x 15.

PHQ Cards

PHQ postcards (Nos. 115A-D) featuring each of the four stamps will be available from 2 January, price 16p each.



The Oyster-Catcher

Presentation Pack

The presentation pack (No. 196) will cost £1.35 and was designed by John Gibbs. It gives background information about the work of the Society and includes photographs of cliffs and seashore, ideal habitats respectively for puffins and gannets and avocets and oystercatchers. The pack also includes some fine drawings of the four birds featured on the stamps.

First Day Cover

The FDC envelope will be available approximately two weeks before issue, price 17p. Two pictorial postmarks will be used for the first day cover service, one at the British Philatelic Bureau in Edinburgh and one at Sandy, Bedfordshire (RSPB headquarters).

A first day cover service will be provided by the Bureau with the official Royal Mail cover addressed to the destination required with the four stamps cancelled with either postmark. Application forms, available from the Bureau and main post offices, should be returned not



BIRDS

THE ROYAL SOCIETY
FOR THE PROTECTION
OF BIRDS

ROYAL MAIL
MINT STAMPS



Mrs J Robinson
200 Manorbier Road
ILKESTON
Derbyshire
DE7 4AB

Learning about wildlife
for the preservation and
environment. This note



ROYAL MAIL MINT STAMPS - THE ROYAL SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF BIRDS

BIRDS



later than 17 January.

Customers requiring only the special pictorial postmarks may obtain them under the reposting facility by sending on the first day of issue a stamped addressed envelope under an outer cover endorsed "Special First Day of Issue handstamp" to:

British Philatelic Bureau	20 Brandon Street EDINBURGH EH3 5TT
Sandy, Beds	Special Postmark Duty Letter District Office 197 East Road CAMBRIDGE CB1 1AA

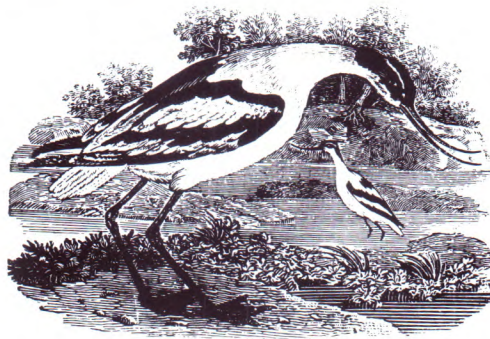
First Day posting boxes will be provided at all main post offices for collectors to post their own covers to receive the standard (non-pictorial) First Day of Issue handstamp. A number of special handstamps, sponsored by stamp dealers and others, will be used on 17 January – full details will be found in the *British Postmark Bulletin*.

Souvenir Cover

A souvenir cover, of similar design to the first day cover, will be available from all philatelic counters from 18 January, price 17p. This can be used to obtain relevant Bird postmarks after the first day of issue and will be on sale for one year.

Earlier Issues

This is the third set of Bird stamps issued by the British Post Office, the first set was issued in August 1966, the second in January 1980. The Barn Owl was featured on the 17p stamp in the Nature Conservation set of May 1986 and the Bewick's Swan on the 31p value of this year's Linnean Society issue.



The Avocet

National Postal Museum News

Three new NPM cards will be issued on 7 November with the theme of "Monarchs' heads" and this will complete the series of portraits of monarchs as used on stamps up to the present day.

Card 88/10 features Stage 3 of J A C Harrison's Downey head die of King George V, 1911; card 88/11 shows a photograph of King George VI by Bertram Park, the source of Dulac's drawn portrait used on definitives and card 88/12 reproduces a photograph of George VI and Queen Elizabeth by Dorothy Wilding, the source of Dulac's drawn portraits used on the 1937 Coronation stamp.



The cards will be available from the Museum shop priced 20p each, sets of three will be available by mail order from the Museum, priced 60p per set plus 19p handing charge for orders up to £18. For mail orders in excess of £18 a handling charge of £1.59 will apply; these orders will be despatched by registered mail.

The previous Monarchs' head cards featuring Edward VII, George V and Edward VIII (issued May 1987) are still available, price 60p per set.

Three cards reproducing artwork for GPO posters in Post Office Archives are available; they feature "Country Postman" and "Postman in the Potteries", both by Jesse Collins, c.1959 and "The Counter Clerk" by J. Ramsey Wherrett, c.1949. These cards are priced 15p each.

Two cards reproducing postmarks of Hemel Hempstead, recently published by the Hemel Hempstead Philatelic Society, are available from the Museum, price 20p each.

All orders should be addressed to: National Postal Museum, King Edward Street, LONDON EC1A 1LP.

The Olympic Games London 1948

BOB WILCOCK

For the 1908 Olympic Games in London the Olympic philatelist has purely postal history to collect. By 1948, when London again hosted the Olympic Games, Post Office policy had developed and commemorative (special) stamps were considered for events of major national or international significance. The Olympic Games had grown in stature also since 1908, and their staging in London, after a 12 year pause because of war, was considered a fitting occasion by the PO for an issue of four commemorative stamps, and, even more significantly, the first commemorative air letter (aerogramme).

The stamps and the air letter were issued on 29 July 1948, the opening day of the Games. The stamps were printed in photogravure by Harrison & Sons Ltd on multiple crown GVR water-marked paper, in sheets of 120, comb perforated $14\frac{3}{4} \times 14$. They were printed and sold in enormous quantities by current standards; it seems they replaced definitive stamps in the post offices, rather than briefly supplementing them as commemoratives do today, so they were the

stamps in general use until the end of 1948 when any unsold stamps were withdrawn.

Symbolic Designs

The designs were symbolic and allegorical, and the stamps were approved by the Royal Fine Arts Commission prior to production being authorised. Whether the International Olympic Committee was consulted is not known, but only one of the four artists faithfully reproduced the Olympic Rings, and then only in outline (Edmund Dulac on the 1s value).

The 2½d value was designed by Percy Metcalfe, CVO, RDI and he placed the five rings horizontally at the foot of the stamp, the principal design being a globe within a victor's laurel wreath, a symbol of the ancient Olympic Games. In ultramarine, this value was the basic inland letter rate and some 155,350,000 were sold. Cylinders used for this large quantity were 2I, 2.I, 2B, 3I, 3.I and 3B (I indicates bottom selvaige imperf, top selvaige perf; B indicates both selvages perforated). Inevitably there are a



BY APPOINTMENT
PRINTERS TO HIS MAJESTY THE KING

HARRISON AND SONS, LTD.



OLYMPIC GAMES COMMEMORATIVE STAMPS

PRINTED IN PHOTOGRAVURE FOR THE POSTMASTER GENERAL
BY HARRISON & SONS LTD., LONDON: HAYES: HIGH WYCOMBE

29TH JULY, 1948

large number of constant printing flaws and varieties.

Abram Games, FSIA designed the 3d value. This shows an athlete's head thrusting out of a globe from which flows lines of speed, a symbolic idea perhaps now more familiar in the "Stars in Motion" logo used for the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics. In front of the globe are the rather elongated Olympic rings. The stamp was printed in violet, and the value represented the registration fee. Some 32,554,000 were sold, by no means all for registration, and two cylinders were used, 1I and 1.I.

The 6d value, the air letter rate, was designed by Stanley Scott, then employed by rival printers Waterlow & Sons, but later to transfer to Harrison's design team. His design, in purple, places Edmund Dulac's profile of the head of King George VI prominently in the centre, in front of the five Olympic rings, and flanked by upright fronds of laurel. Although the rings appear to be in the correct Olympic configuration they do not in fact interlock in the proper way. The printing was from cylinders 9I and 9.I, and 24,397,000 were sold.



This value gave rise to the most interesting printing variety, not on the stamps themselves but on the coloured bars beneath the stamps in the bottom selvage. On a few sheets from the early printings from cylinder 9 stop, the letters "H L P" appear uncoloured towards the right of the lines beneath stamps 20/4, 20/5 and 20/6. On later printings the letters were retouched out but traces can still be seen. The best explanation seems to be that the letters stand for "Harrison, London, Printers".

Edmund Dulac's 1s design completed the set. In brown, it depicts winged Victory holding a laurel wreath and crossing the globe, with the Olympic rings fitted into the centre of the

stamp. One shilling was the minimum parcel rate, and 32,187,000 were sold. The cylinders used were 3I, 3.I and 3.B.

Items for Specialist Collectors

There were no Post Office presentation packs in 1948, but Harrisons produced a presentation card to which the stamps were stuck (uncancelled), and a presentation folder in a limited edition of 110, each hand numbered on the reverse in ink. Pasted inside the folder was a four



row stock card with buff paper pockets containing unmounted mint copies of the four stamps and of the stamps overprinted for use in the British Post Offices in Bahrain, Kuwait, Muscat, Morocco and Tangiers.

The overprints were in black. Those for Bahrain, Kuwait and Morocco Agencies showed the respective names and revised currency, for Tangiers only the name was overprinted, while for Muscat, no name, just values as for Bahrain. The values and numbers printed are:

	<i>Bahrain</i>	<i>Kuwait</i>	<i>Muscat</i>
2½ annas on 2½d	99,304	89,264	73,998
3 annas on 3d	112,515	91,203	72,226
6 annas on 6d	112,919	83,677	68,904
1 rupee on 1s	87,858	83,395	66,867
<i>Morocco Agencies</i>			
25 centimos on 2½d			107,309
30 centimos on 3d			100,020
60 centimos on 6d			94,278
1 peseta 20c on 1s			93,304
<i>Tangier</i>			
surcharged 2½d			101,965
surcharged 3d			101,638
surcharged 6d			101,175
surcharged 1s			96,190

Olympic Air Letter

The Olympic air letter (the term *aerogramme* did not become official until 1952), was not only a British first, it was also an Olympic first. Four million were printed by McCorquodale & Co Ltd on grey-azure paper, using an American reel-fed letterpress printer. The forms were then sent, in uncut sheets of eight, to Harrisons who added the 6d stamp in photogravure. For part of the printing aniline ink was used, probably by



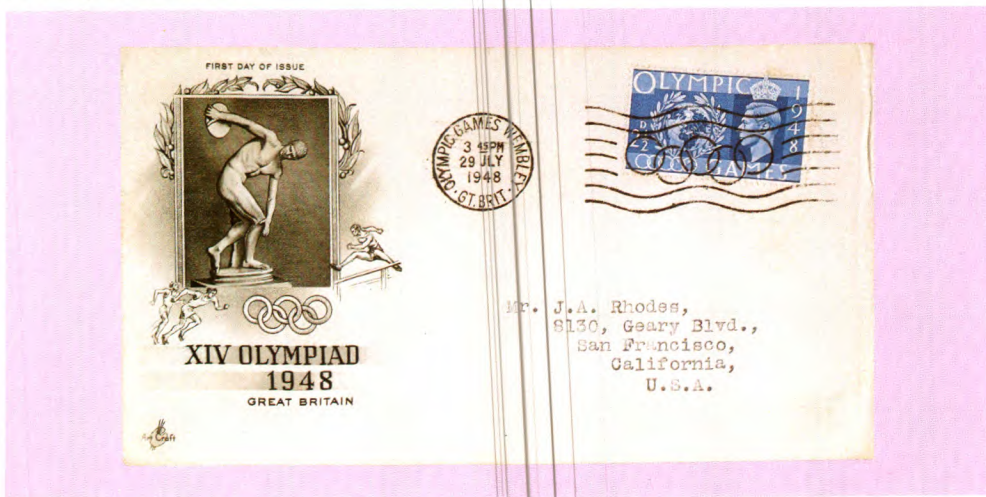
accident, and this produces a much bolder, more intense colour and impression.

The production sequence resulted in inevitable errors. The value tablet is known misplaced downwards to varying degrees, ultimately falling completely below the box. A few examples have been recorded with the 'stamp' missing altogether, and others with the 'stamp' in its correct position in relation to the gummed flaps, but the dark blue general text printed by McCorquodale inverted.

Postmarks

A special machine postmark OLYMPIC GAMES WEMBLEY GT.BRIT, with the Olympic Rings between wavy lines, was in use for the period of the Games, from 29 July to 14 August. There were two dies, one of which was held in reserve for busy periods. On 29 July the cancellation served to mark the first day of issue of the stamps and air letter, and some 66,475 items were serviced. This was far fewer than the ¼ million the Post Office estimated would be sent, and many were damaged because the machine was badly set and cut into the stamps. The total for the whole period of the Games was about 182,500. Frequently the stamps were placed so that not all values could be cancelled by the machine, and the other values were cancelled by one of two single ring packet datestamps, or a double ring handstamp, or a skeleton, which for a time read WEMBLEY, WIDDLESEX instead of MIDDLESEX.

Foreign visitors and collectors were as perplexed by Post Office regulations as they are now. Items to receive the Olympic machine mark had to be posted in one of six special posting boxes, one of which was outside the special Olympic post office in the Civic Hall. Registered and other mail handed over the counter received only the appropriate ordinary Wembley handstamp, and there was certainly no "hand back" service. Regulations were "bent" however to allow maximum cards, and sets of continental style first day covers bearing single values but addressed overseas and therefore with insufficient postage for the low value covers.



The Olympic Post Office in the Civic Hall was open from 27 July, two days before the start of the Games, to 14 August. There were no special "Olympic" postal markings. Registered mail posted from the office can only be identified from the consecutive number on the ordinary "Wembley" registration label and the fact that single ring handstamps numbered 11-16 were allocated to the office for the period it was open. There was an interpreter to assist foreign visitors (and the labels on the special posting boxes had explanatory text in French and Spanish as well as English). Any one of the single ring handstamps as was convenient was borrowed for use in the Telegraph Annexe in the Stadium itself (open when the Stadium was open, principally for the press to be able to send telegrams, but also selling stamps). The Olympic office had a multi-value franking machine solely for use in franking telegraph forms, and a parcel post label issuing machine (which frequently broke down).

Temporary Olympic Post Offices were also opened at the three Olympic Villages at Richmond Park, Uxbridge, and West Drayton (no public access), Torquay where the yachting took place, and Bisley (shooting), with mobile post offices at Henley (rowing) and Aldershot (modern pentathlon and equestrian events). None of the handstamps was specifically "Olympic", and Olympic mail can only be recognised from registered mail posted in the Olympic period. The Games Post Office sold some £7,465 worth of stamps, accepted 966 parcels and 3,012 registered letters and handled 10,280 telegrams.

Meters & Vignettes

Traditional stamp collectors abhor the postage meter, and understandably so. Postage meter impressions are amongst the most sought after items for Olympic collectors however, and the key British item is the meter used by the Stadium booking office from early December 1947, a Neopost machine. Impressions from the machine used at the Olympic Post Office for franking telegraph forms should not in theory be available since the forms were retained by the Post Office.

No British vignettes are known, although Waterlow & Sons Ltd produced a vignette for Iceland (presumably for their Olympic Committee). There are a number of overseas vignettes recorded, the most common being for the US Olympic Committee. The most interesting, only recently came to light, is a vignette pro-

duced by Omega to advertise their role as official timekeepers. Their first such vignette was issued in 1932, and the most recent in 1984.



The 1948 Olympics reflect interesting developments in British philately, but are significant in Olympic philately for reasons probably not appreciated at the time. Until 1948 only host countries had issued stamps to commemorate the Olympic Games, with the notable exception of a pair of stamps issued by Portugal in 1928 (SG C741, D741). Uruguay had issued stamps after the Games in 1924 and 1928 (SG 450/2, 581/3) to commemorate the victories of their soccer teams, but it was the 1948 Olympics that saw the first purely philatelic issues, a set from Monaco (SG 343/51). There were also stamps from South Korea (SG 100/1) and Peru (712/17) and postmarks from Finland. Since then the floodgates have opened. The British Post Office has mercifully declined to follow the trend, although there were sports issues in 1980 and this year, 1988, both Olympic years. There will however be a legitimate reason for the British PO to issue an Olympic stamp in 1991 when Birmingham are hosts for the 97th Session of the International Olympic Committee. Perhaps we Olympic collectors will be lucky.

References

- The Official Report of the Organising Committee for the XIV Olympiad, London (1951)*
- The 1948 Olympics at Wembley* by W G Stitt Dibden (1959)
- Philatelic Bulletin*, May 1975 & June 1976

Acknowledgements. The author is grateful to Ken Cook, Franceska Rapkin and Alan Sabey of the Society of Olympic Collectors for loan of material to illustrate this article.



H Wilson Parker



Harold Nicholson



W S Matthews



A C King



Harrison & Sons



George Bellew



John Armstrong (essay)



G Knipe (essay)

Shown here are eight unadopted designs for the 1948 Olympic Games issue, some of many pieces of artwork on display in the "British Philately at the Olympic Games" exhibition at the National Postal Museum until the end of the year. Only those by Armstrong and Knipe got as far as essay stage. The design submitted by Harrisons is inscribed in Esperanto, a similar version was inscribed in English.

Engraving the High Values

CHRIS MATTHEWS

I think it important to establish from the outset that I am not a designer and have never thought of myself as such. Coming as I do from a background in Backnote Engraving, I am only too aware of the need to duplicate an artists design in every detail, as that is what the customer has put his signature to. It was curious, therefore, to be in a position where the appearance of the final stamps would owe much to the contribution my engraving would make. To be able to exercise total flexibility in my interpretation was a great pleasure if not a little daunting. My challenge was to translate the photographs into a medium more appropriate to printing documents of high representative, if not intrinsic, value. Unlike any recent issues, each stamp would have to stand alone, solely printed in single colour intaglio.

Chris Matthews with The Duke of York at the press preview for the Castles stamps at London's Hyde Park Hotel on 12 August 1988

My Brief

After initial contact with Barry Robinson (Post Office Design Adviser), I was provided with conceptual designs depicting the chosen view of each castle in situ with a silhouette of the "Machin head", along with the appropriate value and title. I was also to receive high quality prints from the original photographs taken by HRH The Duke of York.

This then was the brief. To present a series of four engraved dies depicting four castles, The Queen's portrait on each, using the materials supplied. As stamps are high value definitives they would obviously be permanently in print for an indefinite period.

The engraving of the dies had two distinct phases: (1) the portraits. (2) the castle vignettes.



The Portraits

Each of the stamp values would need to have an identical portrait. This was further complicated by the fact that two stamps (£1 and £2) would have The Queen's portrait facing to the left while the other two (£1.50 and £5) show Her Majesty facing to the right. Therefore, to reduce the possibility of making them all different, it was decided to engrave two master portraits, one for each direction, both from the same original drawing. These in turn would be hardened and then molletted into four other slip dies ready for the addition of the castle vignettes.

I worked from a photograph of the "Machin head" about eight times up. This made it possible to put in just the right amount of detailed line work to best describe the form and structure. I wanted the head to look like the original relief sculpture, and not to take on the guise of a photographic portrait. Because of the size of the eventual head it was important to carefully adjust the line work so as not to lose the correct likeness. I then reduced this drawing to stamp size and made tracing films. After tracing over every line by hand with a steel point, I dusted it with an orange powder so as to make the image visible.

This was then laid face down on a wax covered steel die and burnished leaving an impression of the line structure in reverse on the surface. To make this a permanent image for engraving, I traced around the orange line again with a steel point, thus duplicating the image in "dry point" on the die. The thought that I had put into the portrait now began to pay off. I cut each line individually with a graver, increasing the depth and, therefore, its capacity to hold ink. There is no instant method to reduce the tone of something, hence it is a process of gradually working areas up until one is satisfied that they are at the correct level. This process was repeated for the second portrait.

The Castles

All four castle vignettes were approached in roughly the same way. First I obtained reductions in film and on paper of the Duke's photographs. They had not all been taken in ideal lighting and weather conditions (ie, at dawn for obvious security reasons). I, therefore, made tonal pencil sketches using the photographs as a base, enhancing aspects of light and shade, so as to pick out detail and create greater interest.

In the case of Carrickfergus and Edinburgh I



had no time to go and make sketches on site, whereas for both Windsor and Caernarfon, this proved most useful, primarily to ensure I achieved a plausible shadow configuration. There is nothing more fundamentally wrong than putting something in the wrong hemisphere!

The next process was to lay the tracings I had made in position on the die with the appropriate portrait. The vignette was then constructed by drawing through an acid resistant wax ground with a steel point. I used lines of various divisions and shapes to recreate the correct structure, tone, detail and texture of the castle. When this stage was completed, I etched it with acid. I etched the whole vignette, leaving the acid longer on areas where I wanted a darker tone and stronger colour. Finally, each castle and portrait was "tickled up" with a graver to enhance the darker tones and balance one against the other. Only at this stage was I able to take proofs to see the result of my work.

Colours

My original brief stated that although the final colours were not defined they could all be of the same tonal value. This was important to bear in mind when considering the depth of engraving and the relationship of one engraving to another. We had in mind the sort of colours we wished to use and these were blended and proofed at Harrisons until we were satisfied.

New Window Books

11 October 1988



Type 2 size window books containing panes of 14p and 19p stamps litho-printed by Questa. The panes do not have selvage



Type 3 size window books printed by Questa. The stamps are perforated on all sides



Type 3 window books printed by Harrison, panes with straight edges at top and bottom

New Country Stamps

Illustrated here are the new 14p, 19p, 23p and 32p Country stamps for Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, to be issued on 8 November. The 14p stamps have one phosphor band right of centre and PVA gum; the other values are on ACP with PVA Dextrin gum.



Front cover of one of the new Type 3 size books

Illustrated here are some of the new window books issued on 11 October. Seven of these books are of the new Type 3 size (75 x 49mm including yellow tab) which will now become the standard size for these issues – books containing panes of four and ten stamps.

Several new stamps result from these books:

1. 14p litho centre band
2. 14p photo straight edge at top
3. 14p photo straight edge at bottom
4. 19p litho ACP
5. 19p photo straight edge at top
6. 19p photo straight edge at bottom
7. 27p straight edge at top
8. 27p straight edge at bottom

The 14p litho stamps have short phosphor bars with a break between stamps as previously seen on some of the second class Country stamps printed by Questa.

Changes were made to the bar codes on the Type 3 Harrison books after the October *Bulletin* went to press. The bar codes as issued are:

56p	200095
76p	200071
£1.08	200118
£1.40	200101
£1.90	200088

These Type 3 Harrison books do have cylinder numbers although no plate numbers are to be found on the litho panes. Cylinder numbers so far reported are: 56p Type 3 – B26 phosphorB82; £1.40 Type 3 – B27 phosphor B81; 76p Type 2 – B10 and £1.90 Type 3 – B12.



New Railway Letter Stamps

The North Yorkshire Moors Railway has issued two new 20p definitive railway letter stamps, both similar in design to the Railway's first definitive, issued in 1981. These new stamps show K1 class LNER locomotive No. 2005 (built in 1949 and now operated by the North Eastern Locomotive Preservation Group) and British Railways Class J72 locomotive No. 69023 "Joem" and train. Both stamps have been printed by Walsall Security Printers in sheets of six.

To commemorate the completion of a feasibility study on the running of NYMR services into Whitby, the sheets of four 1982 20p stamps commemorating the 150th anniversary of George Stephenson's report on the railway have been surcharged 10p and two of the four stamps additionally overprinted FEASIBILITY STUDY 1988. These stamps were issued on 8 October.

The NYMR has produced a number of interesting covers relating to local history anniversaries; details can be obtained by sending a SAE to: Mrs M Atkins, 5 Tiber View, Brinsworth, ROTHERHAM, S. Yorkshire, S60 5EA, from whom the stamps can be ordered.

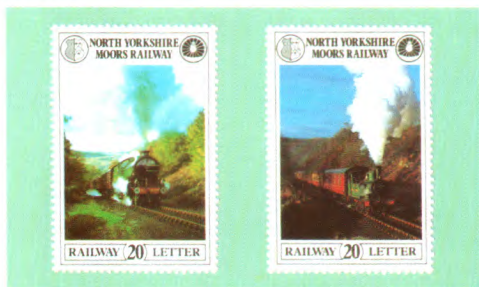


Postcards

British Telecom. A reprint of a Victorian Christmas postcard will go on sale on 15 November, No. 19 in the Ephemera series. Unused cards cost 12p each, cards bearing 19p Christmas stamp with special postmark and first day of sale cachet cost £1.20. Five thousand cards have been printed. Post & packing 40p. Orders/enquiries to: Miss J Ely, Telecom Technology Showcase, 135 Queen Victoria Street, LONDON EC4V 4AT.

Hemel Hempstead Philatelic Society. The Society will be holding a stamp exhibition and fair at St Johns Hall, Boxmoor, Hemel Hempstead on 3 December to commemorate its 25th anniversary. Two postcards are being produced to commemorate the occasion (1) 25th anniversary overprint on 1984 card and (2) card showing postmarks of Hemel Hempstead (including some unusual ones in Post Office Archives). The cards will be available on 15 November, price 20p each or 75p each with Christmas stamp cancelled with Hemel Hempstead First Day of Issue handstamp. Postage 30p extra. Remittances payable to the Society. Orders/enquiries to: Colin Peachey, 19 Moorland Road, HEMEL HEMPSTEAD, Herts, HP1 1NH.

Liverpool Postmarks. To commemorate the 26th Philatelic Congress of GB in Liverpool in 1939 eight cards were produced depicting Liverpool postmarks from the Bishop Mark to the 19th century. Amongst those featured are Liverpool Ship Letter handstamps. The cards have now been reprinted, with suitable inscription, by the Philatelic History Society, price £1.25 per set including postage. Orders for the cards and enquiries about the PHS to: Victor Short, Hunters Lodge, Cottesmore Road, Ashwell, OAKHAM, Leics, LE15 7LJ.



Mention was made in the May *Bulletin* of a new Talyllyn Railway issue. This was delayed from 10 May to 3 July to coincide with the 50th anniversary of the record run of the "Mallard". The new 20p stamps, sixth in the current definitive series, feature the locomotive "Douglas", built in Kilmarnock in 1918. The stamps are printed in sheets of 10, in set-tenant pairs, one inscribed in Welsh, the other in English.

A number of souvenir covers as well as first day covers of the new stamps have been prepared; orders/enquiries to: Talyllyn Railway, Wharf Station, TYWYN, Gwynedd, LL36 9EY.

Philatelic Terms Explained

KENNETH F CHAPMAN

No.26 Railway Letter Stamps

Although considered by many collectors to be "cinderella" material, Railway Letter stamps played an essential part in the postal history of Great Britain and deserved recognition by standard catalogue publishers. The trouble was that although issued under Post Office insistence and authority, Railway Letter stamps were *not* governmental issues but were printed for, and sold by, the many private railway companies of the period and, therefore, did not qualify for listing in the British philatelic "Bible" (according to Stanley Gibbons!).

Railway Letter stamps were created following agreements between the individual railway companies and the GPO, permitting the former to accept single letters of up to one ounce in weight for transmission by rail between two railway stations. Such letters had to bear the normal 1d British postage stamp (to ensure that the PO did not lose any revenue through the private letter-carrying operator) and the sender was also obliged to pay the railway company 2d per letter for the special quick delivery to the station serving the destination address. There, the letter could be called for at that station, the alternative being that the railway authorities posted the letter in the normal way for the completion of its journey.

Prior to 1891 it had been illegal for any railway company to carry letters for any member of the public. Only Royal Mail despatched by the PO under contract could be handled by the railways. From 1 February 1891, railways could accept urgent letters handed in at a station for delivery to the addressee's nearest station or to the final address, as outlined above. The new arrangement eliminated the absurdity that the railways previously could only accept letters disguised as parcels, suitably tied up with string!

The Post Office controlled the design of the Railway Letter stamps which were required to carry the "2D" figure of denomination printed boldly within a shield, in turn encircled by the inscription FEE FOR CONVEYANCE OF SINGLE POST LETTERS BY RAILWAY. The name of the railway involved (usually taking a line at the top

and bottom of the stamp) completed the design. Some of the stamps varied in detail from the standard design, and at least once concern, the Londonderry & Lough Swilly Railway Company, flouted convention, first with a 1d stamp (which the PO only allowed to be used in pairs to pay the appropriate 2d fee) and then with a larger stamp with an elaborate coat-of-arms placed centrally and "2D" repeated, in small characters, in each corner.

The 2d Railway Letter rate applied until 15 January 1920. The PO letter rate had become 1½d at the end of 1918 and the Railway Letter fee went to 3d in January 1920, only a matter of months before a further increase on 1 September to 4d became necessary because the PO letter



rate had advanced to 2d on 1 June 1920. A reversion to 1½d (PO) and 3d (Railway Letter) took place in 1928. The system died a natural death about 1930 when Railway *Parcel* stamps were approved for use on the dwindling number of letters sent by rail.

The railway companies' policy on selling their stamps mint for collectors varied from company to company, some being adamant about *not* selling to the public at all. Covers with the normal government stamps *and* those of railway companies are very collectable examples of an interesting phase in Britain's postal history.

Although British Rail no longer operates the Railway Letter Service (except on its narrow-gauge Vale of Rheidol Railway in Wales), a number of privately-owned lines continue to provide the service and use stamps of their own designing, largely to satisfy collectors and tourists; the commercial use of these services being very limited.

The standard reference volume on Railway Letter stamps is that by H L' Estrange Ewen, a specialist GB dealer who flourished around 1890-1910. There is also a helpful article and history included in Robson Lowe's *Encyclopaedia*, Vol 1.

Posting Boxes

No.94. From time to time we feature overseas boxes and this month show two interesting boxes noticed by *Bulletin* readers in the Caribbean.



The first is in the La Toc Hotel on St Lucia, the illustration was submitted by Professor Henry Maddicks of Cornwall. It is believed this box originated in Canada. The two holes which can be seen quite clearly on the side of the box originally carried a curved plate on which would have been the word CANADA. The metal strip above the posting aperture originally held a metal flap over the aperture and which was lifted to post a letter. The ornate 'knob' on the front of the box is in fact covering a padlock which secured the door to the box.

The second box is situated in St George's, the main town of Grenada and was reported by



Andrew Hearn who writes: as can be seen, the box has been well used and is still in service, despite the changes of security system on the front opening. This only goes to show that despite the ravages of time, sunshine, and the occasional hurricane, it is still possible to post letters in the full knowledge that they are secure until collection time comes by.

We are grateful to Mr Ron Hall of the Letter Box Study Circle for supplying the information on the St Lucia box. Details of the LBSC can be obtained from the Secretary: Sally Jones, 43 Miall Road, Hall Green, BIRMINGHAM B28 9BS.

Autumn Stampex

Shown here is the special Edward Lear hand-stamp used on mail posted at Autumn Stampex/BPE (27 September-2 October). A good number of visitors were to be seen enjoying themselves in the Stamp Bug area and staff at the Post Office's sales counter were kept busy – particularly on opening day which coincided with the issue of the Edward Lear miniature sheet.

There were many fine displays of British stamps and congratulations go to Mr H Shaida for his display "The Embossed Stamps of Great Britain", awarded the Post Office Trophy, and Mr A J Walker for "Pre-Decimal Machins", awarded the National Postal Museum medal.

Next year's national exhibitions at the Royal Horticultural Halls, Westminster will be held from 28 February to 5 March (Spring Stampex) and 17-22 October (Autumn Stampex/BPE).



Machin Event

Andrew Watton, a leading collector of Machin stamps, will be giving a display of these issues to the National Philatelic Society at 3pm on 12 November. Venue - British Philatelic Centre, 107 Charterhouse Street, LONDON EC1M 6PT; visitors welcome. Details of the NPS are available from the Secretary, address above.

Gems of the R M Phillips Collection

158. Jubilee Issue Colour Trials



Pre-issue colour trials of the 4½d include six in different colours: (1) green frame, mauve centre; (2) lilac frame, green centre; (3) red frame, green centre; (4) brown frame, mauve centre; (5) orange frame, mauve centre and (6) blue frame, green centre. Examples of these are to be seen on page 28 of Volume 41 of the Phillips Collection, both unused and

trial cancelled STRAND 369 B.O. W.C. JY 7 92 in black. Shown here are examples in the issued colours – red and green and the unissued lilac and green.

The colour trials can be seen at the National Postal Museum during normal hours: 9.30am to 4.30pm Monday to Thursday and 9.30am to 4pm Friday.

Changes in TPO operations

Details were given in the May *Bulletin* (page 209) of changes in the Travelling Post Office service. Further changes have recently been introduced.

1. The Great Western TPO Down will depart from Paddington at 23.12 and be routed from Reading direct to Taunton, avoiding Bristol and will terminate at Plymouth.

2. A new South Wales TPO will depart from Paddington at 22.58, routed via Bristol, and picking up the timings of the present South Wales TPO from Bristol as far as Carmarthen.

3. The GW TPO Up will start from Plymouth later than the present TPO and run on the direct route from Taunton to Reading, avoiding Bristol, and arriving Paddington at 02.15.

4. A new South Wales Up TPO will start from Swansea (or possibly Carmarthen) routed via Bristol to Paddington, arriving at 02.35.

5. The Derby-Bristol TPO will depart later and be extended to Penzance in the timings of the old GW TPO Down.

6. The Bristol-Derby TPO will start back from Penzance in the timings of the GW TPO Up but departing from Bristol earlier.

7. The present 22.25 North Eastern TPO Down from St Pancras to Newcastle-upon-

Tyne will cease.

8. The Mid North TPO will be extended through to Newcastle in the timings of the North Eastern TPO Down beyond Derby.

9. The 22.30 Postal from King's Cross to Newcastle will be retimed to depart at 23.00, calling additionally at Stevenage, and will link with the new Mid North TPO at York.

10. The present 22.55 parcels train from St Pancras to Leeds will have an additional portion to York and Newcastle and will become the Yorkshire TPO. Sorting beyond York will be for the NE for traffic from the Cardiff-York TPO.

11. The Up Special will continue to run from Glasgow, albeit with a limited sorting function, and be joined at Carstairs by the Edinburgh section. The Aberdeen section will cease to operate as a TPO.

12. The Caledonian Day Down will cease to run as a TPO.

13. The Glasgow section of the Caledonian Up TPO will cease to run as a TPO but as a bag tender departing at 22.50.

14. The Perth section of the Caledonian Up TPO will cease to run

15. The Edinburgh section of the Caledonian Up TPO will continue to run and join with the Glasgow bag tender at Carstairs and be staffed as far as Carlisle.

More Letter Boxes on Cigarette Cards

IAN WILKINSON

In the March issue of the *Bulletin*, your Editor kindly allowed me to tell you about my collection of letter boxes on cigarette cards and I finished this by asking "Do you know of any others?"

Well both Ron Kearly of Oxford and Ron Wedgerfield of Watford knew of some others and since then I have managed to obtain the other one that I said I knew existed but could not find. Details of the additions are as follows:

The earliest of these (Fig 1) comes from a set of "Celebrated Gateways" issued by John Player in 1909. This is card No. 29 from the set of 50 and shows West Gate, Warwick with the 1856 fluted pillar box just visible to the side of the arch. I have not yet been able to find out if East Gate is also shown in the same set and, if so, does the other one of these boxes at Warwick appear in the picture?

In 1926 The Spinner House (R & J Hill Ltd and Henry Archer & Co) issued another set of 50 cards, these being under the title "Historic Scenes from Dickens Classics". This set was in fact issued in two sizes of card – large format to suit packets of 20 cigarettes and small format for packets of 10. No. 39 (Fig 2) in both these sets shows Eastgate House, Rochester and on the large size card only, there is a pillar box on the pavement outside the building. However on the smaller size card the top and bottom of the picture have been cut-off, including the pillar box, to suit the shape. Another card in these two sets, No. 9, shows The Old Curiosity Shop, Portsmouth Street, London WC and to the right of the shop there is a red rectangle on the wall. It has been suggested that this could be a wall box but I think you need a fairly good imagination to believe this (Fig 3).

The next card (Fig 4) was also issued by two cigarette firms – Nicholas Sarony & Co who published it in both the large and small formats as above and by Major Drapkin who issued it in the small size only. While the latter called this set "Limericks", Nicholas Sarony changed this to "Saronicks" and the card is No. 25 in all three sets of 50 cards published in 1929. On the reverse of the cards is the limerick that the



Fig 2



Fig 3



Fig 1



Fig 4



Fig 5

postman is laughing at. This reads:

*A right-handed fellow named Wright
In writing 'write' always wrote 'rite'*

Where he meant to write 'right'

If he had written 'Write' right

Wright would not have wrought rot writing 'rite'

The last card (Fig 5) is No. 44 in a set of 48 depicting "Transport Then & Now" and this card is titled on the reverse "Postman (Present)" with the text reading:

From the time of the humble runner, shown on card No. 43 of the series, the growth of the business of delivering written messages has followed the steady evolution of transport methods, and London's population alone is now served by an army of over 16,000 postmen, delivering an average total of sixteen million letters and packets a day. Both in town and country a day's work means many miles on foot to the postman, and it is not generally known that the regulations permit him to take a taxi when his burden exceeds a certain weight

Things were obviously different back in 1939 when this set was issued as I don't think this last part holds good these days! There is no supplier's name on the back of the card and the various cigarette card catalogues seem to differ as to who did publish the set. One says it was Teofani & Co Ltd while another says it was the British American Tobacco Co Ltd (BAT) which issued many sets without a name on them so they could be inserted into the packets of various brands of cigarette they marketed.

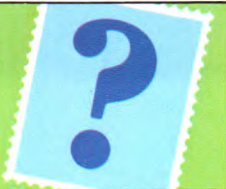
Well that's all that have come to light since March – but I'm sure there must be some others!

The author of this article is the Publications Officer of The Letter Box Study Group who, besides recording details of all the known types of real letter boxes, cover all aspects of collecting any items that relate to this subject. Further details of the Group may be obtained by sending a stamped self-addressed envelope to The Secretary, LBSG, 43 Miall Road, Hall Green, BIRMINGHAM B28 9BS.

Scotex Exhibition

Scotland's National Stamp Fair and Exhibition will be held at the McLellan Galleries, Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow on 12 and 13 November. Opening hours 11am to 5.30pm Saturday, 11am to 5pm Sunday; admission 50p, children and senior citizens 25p. A number of major dealers will be present and refreshment facilities provided.

Competition



Enter this month's competition and stand a chance of winning the new Castle High Values. Answer the six questions below, the answers to which will be found in this month's *Bulletin*, and send with your name and address on a postcard to: November Bulletin Competition, National Postal Museum, King Edward Street, LONDON EC1A 1LP to arrive by 30 December.

The sender of the first all-correct entry drawn will be sent blocks of four of the £1, £1.50, £2 and £5 Castle stamps. The senders of the next five correct entries drawn will receive presentation packs of the stamps. Answers and winners' names will be published in the February *Bulletin*.

1. Which bird is sometimes referred to as the sea-parrot?
2. Who drew portraits for the 1937 Coronation stamp?
3. Which company designed a 1948 Olympic stamp inscribed in Esperanto?
4. Who engraved the new Castles High Values?
5. When are the 14p, 19p, 23p and 32p Country stamps being issued?
6. In what year were Railway Letter stamps introduced?

The competition is not open to staff of Royal Mail Stamps & Philately, the National Postal Museum, their agents and their families. No correspondence will be entered into; the Editor's decision will be final.

Cylinder News

Further cylinders have been reported for the 23 August window books: 56p B23 and 76p B8. The 14p sideways roll (SD), issued on 5 September, was printed by cylinder R1, *phosphor* R13.

The Castle High Values have been printed from the following plates: £1 1B, 1C and 1D; £1.50 1A and 2A; £2 1A, 1C, 1D and 1E and £5 1A, 1C and 1D.

The new 14p, 19p, 23p and 32p Country stamps (8 November) are from the following plates: *Northern Ireland* Q1Q1 and Q2Q2 all values; *Scotland and Wales* 14p Q1Q1, Q2Q2, Q3Q3 and Q4Q4, 19p, 23p & 32p Q1Q1 and Q2Q2.

Commemorative Covers

Christmas Card Mailcoach. On 15 November Benham, in conjunction with the Bath Postal Museum, are running a special Christmas Card Mailcoach from Bath to Box; special pictorial postmarks will be in use at Bath and Box. Two different covers are available, both featuring mailcoaches and bearing carried cachets. Each has the five Christmas stamps and cost £3.99 each, £7.98 the pair. Signed versions are available at £5.99 each. Postage 35p extra. Orders/enquiries to: Benham (A Buckingham) Ltd, Westcliff House, FOLKESTONE, Kent, CT20 1SZ.



Doctor Who Anniversary. To celebrate the 25th anniversary of the first broadcast of "Dr Who", the longest-running science-fiction series in the world, CoverCraft, in conjunction with the BBC, have produced a commemorative cover featuring the Tardis and the Doctor Who logo. The cover, bearing the obsolete 22p Newton stamp depicting the planets in orbit around the sun, cancelled with a special handstamp on 23 November costs £2.50 postpaid (overseas add £1). Orders/enquiries to: CoverCraft, PO Box 713, LONDON SE19 2HH.

Grimsby Model Engineers Society. To mark their first exhibition at Grimsby Town Hall, the Society produced a commemorative cover showing the "Mallard" locomotive. The covers were carried on a recent excursion train hauled by Mallard and given a "Carried by Mallard July 1988" cachet. The Mallard stamp on the covers has been cancelled by the Grimsby Philatelic Counter handstamp. Only 500 covers have been produced, price £1.50. Order/enquiries to: J V Starkey, 23 David Street, GRIMSBY, South Humberside, DN32 9NL.

St Dunstan Millenium. To coincide with the issue of the Christmas stamps, a first day cover will be available to mark the 1,000th anniversary of St Dunstan, Archbishop of Canterbury. The cover features a full colour reproduction of a manuscript depicting St Dunstan, by kind permission of the British Library. A special Millenium handstamp will be used at Canterbury on 15 November. Price, with five Christmas stamps, £4.75; signed by the Dean of Canterbury, £7.50. Covers with single stamp, £2.50. Prices include inland postage, overseas add 50p. Orders/enquiries to: A G Bradbury, 3 Link Road, LEICESTER LE2 3RA.

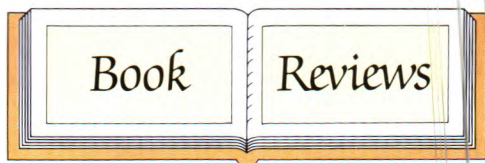
Great Ormond Street Hospital. In connection with the Wishing Well Appeal of the Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital, G Eldridge of Southampton is offering a selection of special pictorial Christmas first day covers with appropriate Christmas postmarks, five different covers for £6, ten different for £11.50 postpaid UK (overseas add 75p). Donations from the sale of these covers will be made to the Wishing Well fund. Orders/enquiries to: G Eldridge, 177 Mousehole Lane, Bitterne, SOUTHAMPTON SO2 4TD.

145th anniversary of Christmas card. A special cover has been produced to mark the 145th anniversary of the publication of the first commercial Christmas card by Henry Cole in November 1843. The covers will have a special 15 November pictorial London anniversary handstamp. Covers with single Christmas stamp cost £1.60, £3.75 with full set. Sets with three different handstamps will cost £10.75. All prices include UK postage, overseas add 50p. Orders/enquiries to: G Eldridge, 177 Mousehole Lane, Bitterne, SOUTHAMPTON SO2 4TD.

Christmas. A first day cover showing the Priory ruins on Lindisfarne will be available bearing the five Christmas stamps cancelled at Holy Island (Lindisfarne), price £4.25. Orders/enquiries to: Stan Muscroft, 43 Farn-dale Drive, GUISBOROUGH, Cleveland, TS14 8JJ.

For the Record

The illustration of the Edward Lear miniature sheet first day cover in the August *Bulletin* shows the sheet cancelled with a single Philatelic Bureau postmark. The covers as supplied by the Bureau also had the postmark applied to the bottom left corner of the sheet, thus tying it to the cover.



The Post in Liverpool by O W Newport & John Sussex. 66pp, limp binding. Available from the Liverpool Museum, William Brown Street, LIVERPOOL L3 8EN. Price £7.95.

This lavish book has been produced to complement the Stampway to the World exhibition at the Liverpool Museum (22 September-20 November). The book opens with a section on "Early Writing" reminding us that the earliest form of writing came to us from Sumer, a small part of southern Mesopotamia within what is now Iraq. Colour illustration feature a legal document of the reign of Ramesses X (1123-1114 BC), a wooden tablet of the first century AD and a 15th century illuminated book. The section on "The Early Post" covers the period from Roman times to the 18th century; illustrated here are letters from medieval times and letters bearing Bishop and Dockwra marks.

The third chapter – "The Post in Liverpool" – provides an interesting account of postal markings up to the end of the 19th century. Sadly Liverpool postmarks of the present century are summed up in just three lines; it would have made for a better book had the survey continued to the present.

Chapter 4 on "Liverpool's Maritime Postal History" is particularly well illustrated with many fine examples of trans-Atlantic covers. Amongst those featured is a cover rescued by divers from the wreck of the *SS Empress of India* in 1914.

The book concludes with chapters on "Postal Reform and the Coming of the Penny Post" and "Rare Stamps from the British Library".

Collect First Day Covers. 1989 Edition. 164pp, limp binding. £3.75, postage 35p. Available from Benham, Westcliff House, FOLKESTONE, Kent, CT20 1SZ.

New edition of a popular catalogue, listing covers from 5 December 1839 (introduction of Uniform 4d post) to 26 July 1988 (Harrison definitives). Prices quoted for covers with relevant "First Day of Issue" and other handstamps, also, where appropriate with slogan postmarks. Each cover is numbered and many

of the handstamps are illustrated. It is obvious that the covers worth seeking are those with operational rather than philatelic postmarks, for example a cover of the 1967 Wild Flowers issue with Kew Gardens circular datestamp is catalogued at £75. A cover with the 1965 Commonwealth Arts Festival slogan is priced at £300! PHQ cards are also listed and priced.

Check List of Postage Stamps About Music by A H R Grimsey. 1988 edition. 196pp in ring binder. £9 (US \$18) from A H R Grimsey, c/o British Philatelic Centre, 107 Charterhouse Street, LONDON EC1M 6PT.

"This publication", says its compiler, "is intended as a Check List and Guide to all the postage stamps ever issued which have some reference to music, whether from composers, instruments, performers, or other connections". The first edition was published in 1974 and over the years Mr Grimsey's book has been accepted as one of the standard works of reference for collectors of music stamps. Listings are arranged chronologically by country, quoting the year of issue, SG or Scott catalogue numbers (or others if not SG or Scott listed). A brief description of the design is given. For GB, over 70 stamps are listed, beginning with the 1887 5d "Jubilee" stamp (SG 207a) which included a harp in the design to the 34p Australian Bicentenary stamp of 1988 showing John Lennon (1399).

A Guide to Rare British Letter Boxes by Martin Robinson. Second Edition. 32pp, A5 size. Available from the author: 31 Tuckwell Close, Stockton, RUGBY, Warwickshire, CV23 8UP.

Bulletin readers who follow the long-running series on posting boxes may remember Martin Robinson's booklet *A Guide to Rare British Letter Boxes*, published in 1985. This has been out of print for a couple of years, and a new edition is now available. As before, the booklet is based on the records of the Letter Box Study Group and consists of an introduction, a chronological list of rare letter boxes with a brief commentary and description, and details of the locations of all known surviving examples. There are four pages of illustrations to aid identification, an alphabetical list of post towns with rare letter boxes, and eight pages of maps showing the locations in the whole of the British Isles including Ireland, together with an appendix mentioning other uncommon types of letter boxes.

November Digest

Issued in November

- 7 November **NPM cards (3) – Monarchs' Heads – George V, George VI and George VI & Queen Elizabeth (88/10-12)** 20p each
- 8 November **Country definitives: Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales** 14p, 19p, 23p, 32p
printing: House of Questa, litho, sheets of 200, 14p one phosphor band, 19p-32p Advanced Coated Paper
presentation pack: £2.85
Bureau f.d. service alternative handstamps: Belfast, Cardiff, Edinburgh
- 15 November **Christmas** 14p, 19p, 27p, 32p, 35p
designer: Lynn Trickett
printing: Harrisons, photo-gravure, 41 x 30mm, printed on phosphor-coated paper, except for 14p which has one phosphor band, in sheets of 100 on PVA Dextrin gum
Bureau f.d. service alternative handstamp: Bethlehem, Llandeilo, Dyfed
presentation pack: £1.50
- 15 November **Christmas aerogramme:** 32p
printing: McCorquodale Envelopes Limited, offset-litho
- 15 November **1988 Yearbook:** £16.95
- 15 November **1988 Collectors Pack:** £9.50

Withdrawn in November

- 16 November **1987 Christmas issue** – all items

New Philatelic Society

Stratford-upon-Avon now has its own philatelic society, the inaugural meeting was held on 28 September, attended by the Mayor and Mayoress who have kindly consented to be the Society's patrons. A display of GB Queen Victoria stamps by R S Hanson will be given on 23 November; venue Committee Room, Sheep Street, time 19.30. Enquiries about the Society should be addressed to the Chairman: K Mann-berg, Flat 17 Reading Court, Tiddington Road, STRATFORD UPON AVON, Warwickshire, CV37 7SA. We wish the new Society well.

A Blank Look from the Royal Mail?!

The popularity of the Royal Mail Stamp Album, has encouraged the Royal Mail Stamps Division to produce two new album products which will be put on sale from 15 November 1988. The attractive Album binder (and slip-case) will be supplied on its own (without pages) for the first time and packs of blank pages will also be issued. These new items will give customers greater choice as to what to collect and where to mount and display their collections.

The Album binder (and slip-case), will be priced at £23.95 and the pack of blank pages (20 pages per pack) will be £5.50. The blank pages are printed with a border and headed "Great Britain" and are supplied in a sturdy envelope.

Both items will be available from philatelic counters and the British Philatelic Bureau.

The introduction of these items follows the "Philatelic Points of View" series which sought views and suggestions on Royal Mail products from *Bulletin* readers. Requests for blank Album pages were received from a number of people and it is pleasing that their suggestions have met with a positive response.

British Philatelic Bulletin

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