

BRITISH PHILATELIC

The ROYAL MAIL magazine *for stamp collectors*

Volume 35 Number 8

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Bulletin

Results of 1997 stamp poll •
Commemoratives of 1948



Forthcoming issues and withdrawals



Cover photograph Henry VIII tops our 12th annual stamp poll as the favourite stamp of 1997. What the poll reveals: page 234.

Late news

The Queen's Beasts stamps were also printed from plates 2A2B2C2D2E2F2G2H2J as well as those reported in February, page 166.

The Great Britain Collectors Club will be holding its second national convention at the Holiday Inn, Boxborough, Massachusetts, 1-3 May. Enquiries: Gordon Milne, 9384 Hunters Creek Drive, Cincinnati, OH 45242-6658, USA.

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

6 April

Issue 1st and 2nd class NVI stamps, self-adhesive in vertical format. Available in rolls of 200. *Note: Previous stamps (March 1997) were in horizontal format*

16 April

Issue Comedians stamp cards

20 April

Withdrawal 26p and 1st NVI gold definitives; 10 × 1st gold definitives books (Harrison and Walsall)

20 April

Withdrawal NPM Letterboxes and Silver Wedding postcards. *Note: To be withdrawn at the Bureau, will remain on sale at the Museum*

23 April

Issue Comedians stamps and presentation pack

28 April

Withdrawal 10 × 2nd book (Harrison), issued April 1997

5 May

Issue 10 × 1st and 10 × 2nd books with 'D' (De La Rue) imprint on back cover. Books with amended copy relating to postal tariffs – 4 × 2nd, 4 × 1st, 4 × 37p, 4 × 63p and 10 × 1st printed by Walsall; £1, £2 and 10 × 2nd printed by Questa. *Note: all these books go on philatelic sale on 5 May, available from other outlets as stock requires.*

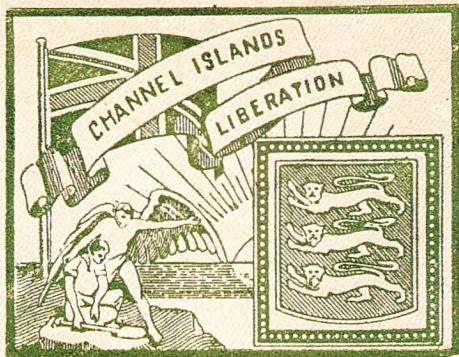
10 May

Withdrawal Tales of Terror stamps, pack and stamp cards

May

Postage rate revision From 6 April a standard rate of 30p will apply to basic weight letters sent to all European countries, both in and without the European Union. A new book of four 30p stamps, printed by Walsall in gravure, is expected to be available during May – details in next month's *Bulletin*.

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Annus mirabilis 1948 was a notable year for collectors of GB stamps: for the first time ever, the British Post Office produced more than one set of commemorative stamps in the same year. Fred Gee looks back to a momentous time **240**

The **British Philatelic Bulletin** is published monthly by Royal Mail, Royal London House, 22 Finsbury Square, London EC2A 1NL • **Editor** JR Holman • **Price** 85p single copies from Collections, philatelic counters, and National Postal Museum • **Annual subscriptions** UK and Europe £9.50, rest of the world £13.50. Subscriptions should be sent to British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, Edinburgh EH3 5TT • **Binders** to hold 24 issues, price £7. Available by post from British Philatelic Bureau (address above) • Royal Mail also publishes the fortnightly *British Postmark Bulletin*, giving details of forthcoming special handstamps and postmark slogans. Available on annual subscription from British Philatelic Bureau (address above) UK & Europe £10, rest of world £21.75 • **Copyright** Unless copyright attributed to specific authors, all articles and features may be reproduced without formal permission, but acknowledgement should be given to *British Philatelic Bulletin*. Requests to reproduce copyright articles should be sent to the Editor, 22 Finsbury Square, London EC2A 1NL • **Design** by Robert Maude • **Printed** in Great Britain by The White Dove Press • **ISSN** 0953 8119

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This month



Themes such as the popular Captain Cook are explored in *An Introduction to Thematic Collecting* by Margaret Morris

THIS MONTH we mark the 50th anniversary of the first of three stamp issues in 1948. What's so very special about that you may ask? As Fred Gee points out in his article, this was the first time the British Post Office had issued more than one set of commemorative stamps in any one year. It was not until 1961 that this was repeated and 1963 before the record was broken. The three sets in 1948 comprised eight stamps – still popular with GB collectors half a century later.

This issue also includes features on Scottish lighthouses – two of which are depicted on a recently issued stamp and aerogramme; a profile of John Tilleard, first Keeper of the Royal Stamp Collection, appointed shortly after the accession of the Philatelist King, George V; and Douglas Myall's latest specialist report on decimal stamp books.

Another Douglas is the subject of a *Bulletin* Interview, marking Douglas Muir's 10 years as Curator Philately at the National Postal Museum. Douglas has been a well-known figure in the philatelic world for nearly 25 years so I hope the interview will be of interest to many readers.

We announce the results of our 1997 stamp poll, also who you voted your favourite *Bulletin* author. As usual we received a good response to the poll.

You will find with this issue a copy of *An Introduction to Thematic Collecting* written by a leading exponent of this branch of philately, Margaret Morris of Glasgow. An interview with the ever-active Mrs Morris was published here in June 1997. The booklet is No 5 in the Bulletin Publications series, additional copies are available from the Bureau, price £2.95. Happy reading! JOHN HOLMAN, EDITOR •

Royal Mail news Winners of the Rowland Hill Awards • Self-adhesives • New stamp books • NPM exhibitions

Rowland Hill Awards In October 1996 Royal Mail announced the setting up of the Rowland Hill Awards for achievements in promoting stamp collecting. The awards are sponsored by Royal Mail, the British Philatelic Trust and the Philatelic Traders' Society. The first awards, for achievements during 1996, were presented at a ceremony at the Victoria & Albert Museum in January 1997. The awards for 1997 were presented at an equally impressive ceremony at the British Academy of Film & Television Arts, Piccadilly, London on 24 February, the day before the opening of Spring Stampex. Guest of honour was Mr Richard Dykes, Managing Director of Royal Mail.

The awards are in three categories: Royal Mail Innovation Awards for contributions that have added a new dimension to stamps and stamp collecting; BPT Initiative Awards, made in conjunction with the Association of British Philatelic Societies, to celebrate personal commitment to devel-

oping and encouraging stamp collecting; and PTS Enterprise Awards celebrating commercial resourcefulness in the philatelic trade.

Each winner received a certificate, printed on special paper, showing the Slania engraving of Sir Rowland Hill as on the 1995 25p Communications stamp, and an award featuring a facsimile of the engraving die on a natural grey slate-effect plinth. Both were designed by Delaney Design Consultants.

Much of the work in arranging the nominations, judging and the awards ceremony was carried out by Julian Mohamed, a marketing student on work experience with Royal Mail •



The winners

ROYAL MAIL INNOVATION AWARDS

Journalistic Excellence W A Wiseman for article 'The Archer Story', *Gibbons Stamp Monthly*, November 1997-January 1998. Runners up: James Mackay and Harry Hawkes.

Stamp Innovation Turner Duckworth for the design of the Architects of the Air stamps and presentation pack. Runners up: Kate Stephens and Joh Enschedé stamps.

Product Innovation Joint winners Stuart Northcote for the Stockbook Stamp Starter Pack and Safe Albums for the Safe Stamp Dryer.

Post Office Excellence Truro Branch Post Office for extensive display and range of products. Runners up: Castle Mail Branch Office, Norwich and Birmingham Branch Office.

A special award was made to Barry Robinson, Royal Mail Design Director, for 20 years of outstanding stamp design. (A feature on Mr Robinson was published in the April 1997 *Bulletin*, marking his 20 years at Royal Mail.)

PTS ENTERPRISE AWARDS

Personal Contribution Trevor Harris for his knowledge of British Edward VII stamps; he advises both the Royal Philatelic Society London and Stanley Gibbons

on this area. His research and writings about the subject for over 30 years have benefitted both collectors and dealers. Runners up: W van der Bijl.

Business Enterprise Malcolm Sprei and Steven Schusman; together they have shown enterprise and faith in the long term future, opening the first new stamp shop in the Strand for many years. The shop makes the hobby more accessible to the new collector. Runners up: Roy V Jones and Paul Dauwalder.

Retail Development Rare Stamps of the World Team – a new idea supported by 14 PTS members to promote philately on a different level with major exhibits from some of the best collections which exist, but without judges. Runners up: Peter Mollett and Paul Dauwalder.

BPT INITIATIVE AWARDS

Youth Work Harry Wright who puts a lot of personal effort in all he does, a tireless worker. Runners up: Christine Finn and Paul and Christine Blakey.

Young Collector Daniel Austin who has clearly shown a great deal of initiative in developing his own collection and encouraging others. Runners up: Scott Ferguson and Daniel & Jason Gallagher.

Authorship Dr James Mackay for presenting a fine factual work of benefit to all who are interested in British stamps

up to 1940, and recognising his vast contribution to philatelic authorship. Runners up: Richard Pollard and Alan Dickie.

Research Peter Baldwin in recognition of a great deal of research presented in a clear, accessible yet 'user-friendly' manner. Runners up: Colin Peachey and Richard Warren.

Community Work Dennis Murphy for unsung endeavours to help youngsters in hospital by using the therapeutic advantage of stamp collecting. Runners up: Pamela Hiscock and John Hobbs.

Teamwork Lincoln Philatelic Society for organising a successful week-long event in a local museum and ensuring the maximum media publicity was achieved. Runners up: Croydon Philatelic Society and National Philatelic Society Library.

New Horizons Christine Finn for tremendous work in extending the interests of many youngsters to include stamp collecting and linking the enthusiasm of young people for computers with the hobby. Runners up: Association of British Philatelic Societies seminars and workshops and Christine Earle.

Above Francis Kiddle with nominees for the Young Collector Award: Daniel Austin, Scott Ferguson, and Daniel and Jason Gallagher



Design for 1953 Coronation stamp by Stanley D Scott in the 'Golden and Glorious' exhibition at the NPM

The NPM, in King Edward Street, London EC1A 1LP, is open Monday-Friday 09.30-16.30, admission free

National Postal Museum The current displays at the NPM will be of interest to collectors of all ages, beginning on the ground floor with a fascinating display of historic postal vehicles and artefacts. The 'Victorian Posts' exhibition, (ground and mezzanine floors), explains the 19th century postal services. In the main gallery (top floor), visitors can see the 'Golden and Glorious' exhibition, commemorating the golden wedding of The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh, the famous

R M Phillips Collection of Victorian stamps, and 'All-World' and thematic displays. A display 30 item of original artwork for British commemorative stamps from 1981 is on show in the temporary exhibitions gallery; this display was shown at the Pentagram Gallery, London last Autumn. The NPM's well-stocked shop offers a wide range of books, postcards, and souvenirs; mail handed in at the shop receives a unique Maltese Cross hand-stamp •

Royal Mail's Internet address
<http://www.royalmail.co.uk>

Philatelic Internet site Royal Mail's Philatelic Internet site was recently launched with 'At Home' pages featuring a wealth of stamp information. This includes the 1998 stamp calendar and a preview of the forthcoming special issues •



Stamp book update Remaining stocks of the April 1997 books of 10 x 1st class gold stamps, printed by Harrison and Walsall, will be withdrawn from philatelic sale on 20 April. The 26p and 1st sheet stamps, printed by Harrison and Walsall, will also be withdrawn. Collectors still requiring these stamps should order now. The September 1997 'Holiday Promotion' book of 10 gold stamps remains on sale until September. The gold definitives marked The Queen's golden wedding.

From 5 May 10 x 1st and 10 x 2nd books will be available with amended cover to show the printer's initial 'D' (for De La Rue) instead of 'H' (Harrison). De La Rue Security Printers took over Harrison & Sons Ltd last year. The books will go into general distribution as required. No new stamps are involved. The De La Rue imprint will appear in the margins of sheets of stamps, starting with the 'Magical World' children's stamps in July.

Changes to the copy relating to postal tariffs is being amended in the following books: 4 x 2nd, 4 x 1st, 4 x 37p, 4 x 63p and 10 x 1st printed by Walsall and £1, £2 and 10 x 2nd books printed by Questa. These re-printed books will be available from the Bureau and philatelic outlets from 5 May and at post offices and retail outlets as earlier stocks are used up. No new stamps are involved. The copy amendment will also be made in the 10 x 1st book printed by De La Rue, mentioned above, also due for philatelic release on 5 May •

Definitive news Rolls of 200 self-adhesive stamps will be available at main post offices in Scotland, Northern Ireland, and the South East, North Thames and East Anglia regions from 6 April. The stamps – 1st and 2nd class – will now be in normal upright format as other definitive stamps. The backing paper of the last 10 stamps in each roll bears a red line as a ‘running out’ indicator. The stamps, printed in gravure by Joh Enschedé Stamps, will have elliptical perfs on vertical sides, the 1st class stamp will have two phosphor bands, the 2nd class one band. Single stamps and strips will be available from the British Philatelic Bureau; all other outlets will sell the stamps only in complete rolls. No first day facilities will be available.

Sheets of 100 self-adhesive stamps are in preparation and will be available from post offices in Scotland and Northern Ireland from a date to be announced. They will be printed by Walsall Security Printers in gravure. No first day facilities will be available.

Collectors will be able to obtain singles or sheets from the Bureau, all other outlets will sell complete sheets only •



Lighthouses aerogrammes Three ‘country’ aerogrammes – for England, Scotland, and Wales – were issued on 24 March in conjunction with the Lighthouses stamps. These are on sale at post offices in the respective countries and from the British Philatelic Bureau and at Post Office Counters philatelic outlets. Price 45p each.

A feature on Scottish lighthouses is published in this Bulletin •

1998 Special stamps Readers are reminded of the dates for the remaining special issues: Health (23 June), Magical Worlds (21 July), Carnival (25 August), Speed (29 September), and Christmas (2 November). Please note that the July issue has been renamed from Children’s Fantasy as originally announced. The provisional date for the Speed prestige book is now 13 October, brought forward from November •

Comedians stamps The plate numbers and colours are: 20p w1 (vermilion) w1 (black) w1 (rose-pink) w1 (new blue) w1 (greenish yellow) • 26p w1 (vermilion) w1 (black) w1 (rose-pink) w1 (new blue) • 37p w1 (vermilion) w1 (black) w1 (rose-pink) w1 (new blue) w1 (greenish yellow) • 43p w1 (vermilion) w1 (black) w1 (rose-pink) w1 (new blue) w1 (pale orange) • 63p w1 (vermilion) w1 (black) w1 (deep rose-pink) w1 (new blue) w1 (greenish yellow) •

New Post Office Chairman

Mr Neville Bain has been appointed Chairman of the Post Office to succeed Sir Michael Heron, Chairman since 1993. Mr Bain, born in New Zealand in 1940, is currently Chairman of the travel group Hogg Robinson, and a non-executive director of Safeway, Scottish & Newcastle, and Gartmore Scotland Investment Trust.

Stamp scene Stamp '98, Wembley • New railway letter stamps • Philatelic weekend



Stamp '98 opening hours

23 April	11.00-18.00
24th and 25th	10.00-18.00
26th	10.00-17.00

Admission is free

Further information from

Sylvia Cook, International
Stamp Exhibitions
Telephone 01425 461353

Stamp '98 Over 20,000 visitors are expected at the fourth 'Stamp' exhibition which opens at Wembley on 23 April, day of issue of the Comedians stamps. The show – supported by Stanley Gibbons and Royal Mail – aims to attract new collectors and new recruits to the hobby. Present will be over 120 standholders – postal administrations, stamp and postal history dealers, coin and card dealers, auction houses, album and accessory suppliers, associations and societies, philatelic publishers, and stamp printers.

BIRDPEX Amongst the many attractions will be an exhibition of bird stamps – 'Birdpex' – the world's largest international competition for this most popular of collecting themes. This is being held for the first time in the UK following successful Birdpex exhibitions in Germany and New Zealand in 1990 and 1994. Birdpex will be opened by Bill Oddie, one of Britain's best-known bird-watchers and one of the stars of *The Goodies* television show. Oddie has written several bird books including *Bill Oddie's Little Black Bird Book*, illustrated with his own drawings. He is currently filming a second series of *Birdwatching with Bill Oddie*.

Saturday 25 April has been designated 'Bird Day'. There will be an awards luncheon and a static display of about 15 birds of prey from the New Forest Owl Sanctuary which has the largest collection of owls in Europe. Staff from the Sanctuary will be on hand to answer questions.

ROYAL MAIL SERVICES Royal Mail's stand will offer the full range of stamps and philatelic products. The Comedians stamps will be issued on the opening day, 23 April. A special commemorative envelope will be available for the exhibition postmark and up to four souvenir cachets will be offered at the stamp printers' stands. Visitors will also have the chance of getting their covers autographed by a celebrity guest on the opening day. Collectors unable to visit the exhibition may submit covers for the Stamp '98 postmark to: Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, Mount Pleasant, London EC1A 1BB. Please state that Stamp '98 postmark is required and the date required. Covers must be submitted not later than the date of the handstamp requested.

FUN Comedy will play an important role in Stamp '98. Royal Mail will launch the five Comedians stamps during the show. There will be a design-a-comedy-stamp competition and a Children's World with interactive fun-fair-type games. 'Boots' the tall clown – he's eight feet high! – will be walking around entertaining children (and adults) with his antics and tricks.

TRANSPORT The Exhibition Centre is close to the North Circular Road (A406). A free shuttle coach will ferry visitors between Wembley Park underground station and the exhibition •

Railway letter stamps The North Yorkshire Moors Railway will issue two new 25p stamps, in se-tenant pair, on 2 May to mark the 25th anniversary of the reopening of the Railway by HRH The Duchess of Kent. The stamps will be in sheets of eight (four pairs), available mint at face value plus postage (30p UK, 50p overseas) from the address opposite •

Association of Lighthouse Keepers In this final year of manned UK lighthouses, the Association welcomes those interested in the history and operation of lighthouses and lightvessels. Having substantial archives, the Association can also help those who carry out research on these subjects. Their quarterly journal *Lamp* combines information on the latest developments with reminiscences of the past. Those interested can obtain a free copy of the journal and details of membership from the Editor, Tony Lane, at the address opposite.

Royal Mail's Lighthouses stamps and aerogrammes, issued on 24 March, were previewed in the February *Bulletin*. One of the aerogrammes is shown on page 239 of this issue •

1998 Northeast Philatelic Weekend The 22nd Weekend, at the Swallow Hotel, Gateshead, 15-17 May, is designed to cater for both new and advanced collectors. There will be three guest speakers, all specialists in their field. A limited edition souvenir booklet will include the British Hong Kong pane and appropriate Isle of Man miniature sheet. Please note that the booklet is not produced by Royal Mail. Price £2.50 from address opposite; some earlier booklets are still available •

Summer Isles New local stamps (local carriage labels) featuring the Mountains of Assynt-Coigach, will be issued by the Summer Isles, Scotland, on 30 April. The four values – 20, 25 and 50sg (pence) and 1ps (£1) – were printed by Questa in sheets of 20. The designs are by John Coleman who designed the Maps issue shown here in August 1996. One of the designs features Suilven ('Pillar Mountain'). Mr Coleman first sketched the mountains from the island of Tanera Mor, then moved to the mainland to seek the most dramatic aspects, travelling over difficult and wild countryside •

Robson Lowe St James's Church, Piccadilly was full on 16 February for the memorial service for Robson Lowe who died last August. Tributes were paid by his grandson, Colin Forrest, philatelists Gerald Davis, Alberto Bolaffi, John Taylor and Mr A N G Annesley, Deputy Chairman of Christie's International. The service was conducted by the Rev Donald Reeves. Lowe, we were told, disputed the accolade 'the Father of Postal History', but conceded that he was 'perhaps the midwife'. His grandson recalled the many attributes of this remarkable man, including an early musical career on the radio. After the service the many philatelists, dealers and friends were entertained to tea in the Great Room at Christie's. An appreciation of Robson Lowe, by James Negus, was published here in November •

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addressed envelope.

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nuisk, Edradynate, Aberfeldy,
Perthshire PH15 2JU.

A useful catalogue of Summer
Isles stamps, issued since
1970, was reviewed here in
October.

Robson Lowe's magazine
The Philatelist and PJGB has
been re-launched by Spink,
under the editorship of John
Michael. The annual subscrip-
tion is £20 UK, £24 Europe,
£26 elsewhere (\$40 USA).

Enquiries to Spink and Son
Ltd, 5 King Street, London
SW1Y 6QS.



1997 *Bulletin* prize draws

The Editor reviews your favourite 1997 stamps

IN DECEMBER we invited you to vote for your favourite set of special/greetings stamps of 1997, also your favourite individual stamp and *Bulletin* author. This was our 12th annual stamp poll and as in previous years we received a good response from collectors in all parts of the world.

The Great Tudor (Henry VIII)	1915
Architects of the Air	1823
Greetings (Flowers)	1268
Christmas	1106
All the Queen's Horses	1043
Enid Blyton Famous Five	926
Royal Golden Wedding	768
Missions of Faith	611
Post Offices	595
Tales of Terror	64

Favourite set As always points were allocated for each vote for the set: three points for the first choice, two points second, and one point third. This enabled us to get a clear picture of the relative popularity of each issue. The voting was as shown opposite.

I was a little surprised by the winner and expected the Queen's Horses set to have been higher up the list. I was disappointed to see the Post Offices set – my personal favourite of the year – so low down.

For interest past winners were: 1986 Nature Conservation; 1987 Flowers; 1988 Linnean Society; 1989 Birds; 1990 Queen Mother's 90th birthday; 1991 Maps; 1992 Wintertime; 1993 Autumn; 1994 Age of Steam; 1995 Christmas; and 1996 Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust.

This voting for the Great Tudor stamps is somewhat curious. Although the set and Henry VIII stamp came out best, there were low votes for all six stamps showing portraits of his wives. The

Favourite individual stamp Voting as follows (stamp numbers as per December *Bulletin* in light type)

Henry VIII 1	329	Greetings 49	25	Anne of Cleves 5	7
Christmas 1st 39	132	Post Offices 63p 28	22	Missions of Faith 37p 9	7
Architects of the Air 43p 19	84	Greetings 48	21	Greetings 51	7
Golden Wedding 26p 35	80	Greetings 47	20	Golden Wedding 43p 36	6
Architects of the Air 20p 16	78	Architects of the Air 37p 18	19	Catherine Howard, formerly 6	5
Greetings 52	61	Christmas 43p 41	18	Tales of Terror 43p 15	5
Enid Blyton 26p 30	56	Greetings 43	18	Queen's Horses 63p 24	5
Christmas 63p 42	54	Missions of Faith 43p 10	17	Enid Blyton 63p 33	5
Architects of the Air 63p 20	50	Post Offices 20p 25	17	Greetings 50	5
Golden Wedding 63p 37	49	Golden Wedding 20p 34	16	Missions of Faith 63p 11	4
Enid Blyton 20p 29	47	Queen's Horses 43p 23	12	Jane Seymour 4	3
Queen's Horses 26p 22	46	Enid Blyton 43p 32	12	Greetings 36	3
Post Offices 26p 26	43	Greetings 44	12	Catherine of Aragon 2	2
Christmas 2nd 38	39	Greetings 45	12	Catherine Parr 7	2
Architects of the Air 26p 17	32	Anne Boleyn 3	10	Tales of Terror 26p 12	1
Enid Blyton 37p 31	27	Queen's Horses 20p 21	10	Tales of Terror 37p 14	1
Missions of Faith 26p 8	25	Post Offices 43p 27	10	Tales of Terror 31p 13	0

individual stamps in the Architects of the Air stamps (second most popular set) fared rather better. The Greetings set was third favourite but only one stamp from this issue made the top 20 individual stamps. Conversely the Post Offices as a set were not too popular but two values (26p and 43p) were amongst the top 20 favourite individual stamps.

Favourite individual stamps in 1996 were the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust 19p and 41p and the Christmas 2nd class. The wwt 19p achieved less than half the number of votes of the Henry VIII stamp but even his 329 was low compared to the 532 votes cast for the Christmas 19p (robin in letterbox) in the 1995 poll. It will be interesting to see which set and individual stamp heads the 1998 poll.

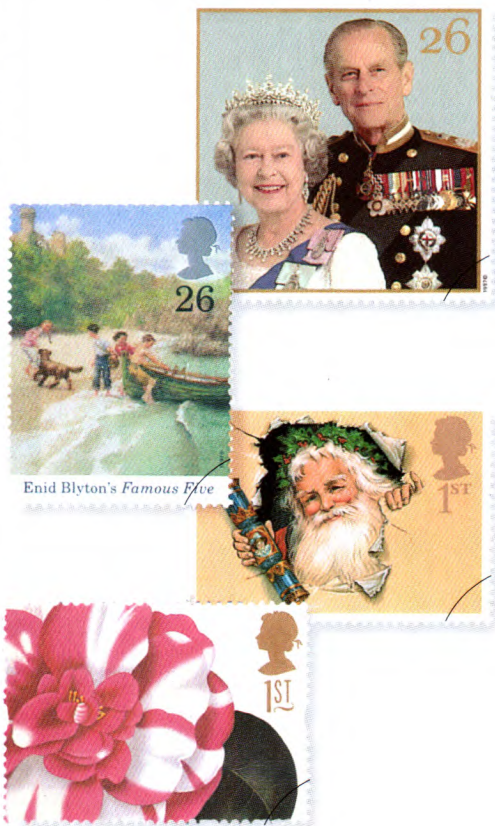
Favourite Bulletin author This was the second year we had conducted this poll and perhaps not surprisingly you voted Douglas Myall as your favourite author for his much-admired series of articles on Decimal Stamp Books. Running Mr Myall a very close second was James Mackay, with Dorothy Martin and Don Staddon in third and fourth places. Over 1700 of you cast your vote and a number wrote appreciative comments about your nominations. It is good to know that you carefully read and enjoy the *Bulletin* articles.

Draw winners All the voting forms went into the proverbial hat for the two draws.

The first drawn in the FAVOURITE STAMPS draw was Michael Giuliano of Kent who wins £250. Runner up prizes of £50 each were sent to E Gibson of Scotland, R Horwill of Worcestershire, and D Leak of Norfolk.

Winner of the FAVOURITE BULLETIN AUTHOR draw was Howard Norris of Lexington, USA who receives £100. Douglas Myall also receives £100 as favourite author.

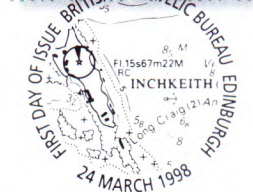
Our thanks to all of you who cast your votes. My thanks also to Barbara Best of Royal Mail's Design Division who, for the third year, counted up all the votes and made the prize draw at the end of her labours. The 1998 poll will be announced in the December *Bulletin*.



Views of the general public Royal Mail also undertakes market research with panels, made up of non-philatelists, as to the attractiveness and interest ratings of our special stamp issues. In terms of the attractiveness of design, the panels voted for the Christmas stamps, followed by Great Tudor, Royal Golden Wedding and Queen's Horses (equal), Enid Blyton, Architects of the Air, Post Offices, Missions of Faith, and Tales of Terror. In terms of interest in the subject matter of the stamps, the panels were again most impressed by the Christmas issue, followed by Golden Wedding, Great Tudor and Enid Blyton (equal), Aircraft, Horses, Post Offices, Tales of Terror, and Missions of Faith. The Flowers greetings stamps were not included in this survey as they are not part of the special stamps programme ●

Lighthouses of Scotland

described by James Mackay



The Bell Rock lighthouse on the recent 43p stamp and, opposite, as painted by J M W Turner.

The Bureau's first day of issue handstamp for this set shows a map of the tiny island of Inchkeith in the Firth of Forth – the island has the nearest lighthouse to the Bureau. It takes its name from the family of Keith, who held the office of Hereditary Grand Marischal of Scotland. As well as a lighthouse, Inchkeith boasts modern gun emplacements and radio equipment.

SCOTLAND LAGGED FAR BEHIND England in the provision of lighthouses, and it was not until 1 May 1635 that the first light to assist navigation was lit on the Isle of May in the Firth of Forth. This project was undertaken by a crown patent issued to James Maxwell of Innerwick and John and Alexander Cunningham of Barns who paid King Charles I £1000 Scots per annum. They covered their costs by a levy of 2 shillings Scots (2d sterling) per ton on Scottish ships passing in either direction through an imaginary line between Dunottar Castle and St Abb's Head. English and foreign ships were charged twice that amount. This light consisted of an iron brazier fuelled by coal, but it was expensive to run and emitted a poor light.

In 1687 the merchants of the growing town of Dundee erected two lighthouses on Buddon Ness at the entrance to the Firth of Tay, while the magistrates of Dumfries established the lighthouse at Southerness on the Solway Firth in 1748 (now a museum of local history).

Thus the earliest Scottish lights owed much to private enterprise, and it was not until 1786 that a Board of Commissioners for Northern Lights was established, largely at the instigation of George Dempster of Dunnichen (1732-1818). The Board, comprising the lords provosts of Edinburgh and Glasgow, the provosts and senior bailies of the leading burghs, county sheriffs and leading industrialists, met for the first time at Edinburgh on 1 August 1786 and resolved to erect four lighthouses: at Kinnaird Head, North Ronaldshay, Eilean Glas on Scalpay, Harris and at the Mull of Kintyre.

The Board was given limited borrowing powers by the government, which further decreed that the Board could not levy a tax on shipping in Scottish waters until all four lights were in operation. This proved a daunting – and far more expensive – task than originally envisaged, and in the end the government compromised: as soon as two lights were in operation a levy of a penny a ton on British shipping and 2d on foreign vessels could be instituted.

The board had no practical experience of building or operating lighthouses, but they were extremely fortunate to secure the services of Thomas Smith, an engineer who had submitted an Argand lamp fitted with a parabolic reflector which was duly installed on Inchkeith in the Firth of Forth. Smith was sent to King's Lynn to receive a few week's tuition from the lighthouse expert Ezekiel Walker and then appointed Engineer to the



The Bell Rock Lighthouse, opposite and detail on p227, by J M W Turner, courtesy National Gallery of Scotland

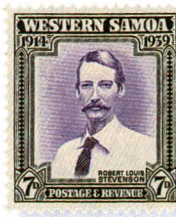


Board. Not only was Smith expected to design lighthouses and lighting equipment, but he had to supervise their construction, maintenance and operation as well as hire staff to run them.

The first light to come into operation was Kinnaird Head, located in the tower of a ruined castle (arguably the most picturesque of Scotland's lighthouses to this day). Smith lit the lamp (cast at the Carron Ironworks) for the first time in November 1787. The first keeper was James Park, a retired sea captain, who was paid a shilling a night, plus board and lodging, but out of his modest salary he had to pay the wages of an assistant. It was not till 1815 that the rank of Assistant Keeper was officially recognised.

The tower of the lighthouse at the Mull of Kintyre was completed in April 1788 and lit six months later. Matthew Hardie, a local crofter, was paid £50 per annum to tend the light.

In 1791 Thomas Smith acquired as assistant 19 year old Robert Stevenson. The following year young Stevenson's widowed mother married the widower Smith and in due course Robert sealed the family tie by marrying Smith's daughter Jane. Thus began the connection of the Stevenson family with the Northern Lighthouse Board, which lasted through several generations almost till the outbreak of the Second World War. Robert Stevenson (1772-1850) succeeded his stepfather in 1807 and continued as Engineer till 1843. In turn he was succeeded by his sons Alan (1843-53) and



Robert Louis Stevenson was a lighthouse engineer before turning to law and literature. In *Kidnapped*, the hero David Balfour was shipwrecked on Earraid, where Stevenson himself worked on the construction of the lighthouse.

He has been portrayed on many stamps and 1989 and 1994 Scottish aerogrammes.



Robert Stevenson's son Thomas was the inventor of the Stevenson screen, used by meteorologists (on stamps of Sweden 1973, above, and Namibia 1991).

David (1853-78). David's sons David Alan (1854-1938) and Charles Alexander (1855-1950) continued the family tradition, the latter being the inventor of the 'talking' beacon and the radio-controlled acetylene fog gun.

Another of Robert's sons was Thomas (1818-87), inventor of the Stevenson screen used by meteorologists. Apart from his inventions he was Co-Engineer of Northern Lights with his brother Alan and played a prominent role in the construction of many 19th century lighthouses round the coasts of Scotland and the Isle of Man. He is, however, best known to posterity as the father of Robert Louis Stevenson (portrayed on many stamps and 1989 and 1994 Scottish aerogrammes). At the age of 18 Robert entered the family profession, working at Anstruther and Wick as his father's assistant and in 1871 winning the silver medal of the Edinburgh Society of Arts for a paper suggesting improvements in lighthouse apparatus. Indifferent health, however, forced him to give up the strenuous life of a lighthouse engineer, and he turned to law and literature instead.

Philatelic commemoration Of all the engineering achievements of this talented family, the Bell Rock Lighthouse, shown on the recent 43p stamp, is the most notable. For centuries the Bell Rock was the most dangerous hazard to shipping on the east coast of Scotland. In 1793 Admiral Cochrane urged the Commissioners to erect a tower light on the rock but it was not till 1811 that the seemingly impossible task was completed. Robert Stevenson managed to land on the rock in October 1800 and at considerable risk to his life succeeded in making a survey. His report to the Commissioners dated 22 December 1800 is a literary masterpiece. The 10-year saga of the construction is one of the great epics in the annals of the world's lighthouses, a testament to the perseverance of Robert Stevenson and the heroism of the stonemasons who built it. In Edwardian times the steamer *Marchioness of Bute* made regular excursions to the Bell Rock and souvenir postcards were marked with a circular cachet giving the name of the ship as well as the Rock over the date. This cachet is very scarce.

Between 1787 and 1886 the Commissioners of Northern Lights built 68 manned lighthouses; during their second century they erected a further 25, the last being the lighthouse at the Calf of Man in 1969. Isle of Man stamps feature many of the lighthouses erected by the Commissioners: at Port Erin (1p 1973, 21p 1991) Langness (½p 1978, 18p 1983), Point of Ayre (14p 1978, 2p 1983), Douglas Head (16p 1978, 12p 1983), Maughold Head (8p 1983), Calf of Man (25p 1983), Port St Mary's (£1 1983, 37p 1992).

The bicentenary of the Board of Commissioners of Northern Lights was celebrated by a Scottish aerogramme, issued on 8 April 1986. Designed by Forth Studios using illustrations by James Proudfoot, it featured a helicopter circling the tower of Skerryvore on the front and back panels, while the inner flap showed pictures of the ancient Isle of May beacon, the most westerly, Flannan lighthouse, Muckle Flugga, most northerly of the British lighthouses, the lightship *Pharos* and the Sgeir Buidhe, one of the new generation of automatic lights. The lighthouse emblem of the Board, with the motto *In salutem omnium* (for the safety of all) was also incorporated. By 1986



In 1996 a set of six stamps devoted to lighthouses featured those at Langness, Point of Ayre, the Chicken Rock, Calf of Man, Douglas Head and Maughold Head

The only Scottish lighthouse previously depicted on a stamp is that just north of Turnberry, on the 41p in the 1994 series devoted to Scottish golf courses

A stylised view of this lighthouse was used for the first day cancellation at Turnberry to coincide with the British Open golf tournament, and on special handstamps for the 106th, 115th and 123rd Open Golf Championships in 1977, 1986 and 1994.



there were 39 manned lights, 45 automatic lights and 102 minor automatic lights and beacons; but by the end of 1998 all lights will be automatic.

The Scottish aerogramme – one of three released in conjunction with the lighthouse stamps – is devoted entirely to the Flannan Lighthouse, built by David and Charles Stevenson, the cousins of RLS. Designed by Trickett & Webb, the aerogramme tells the strange tale of the mysterious disappearance of all three keepers in December 1900. It also features an outline map of Scotland and the Isle of Man showing the location of the lights under control of the Commissioners.

Other Scottish island lighthouses have featured on local stamps (local carriage labels) from Davaar and Sanda off the Kintyre Peninsula, and Stroma in the Pentland Firth off the north coast ●

MYSTERY AT THE FLANNAN LIGHTHOUSE



On Boxing Day 1900, a ship visited the Lighthouse Eilean Mor, largest of the Flannan Islands, on a routine visit. Despite an extensive search, no trace of the three lightkeepers could be found.

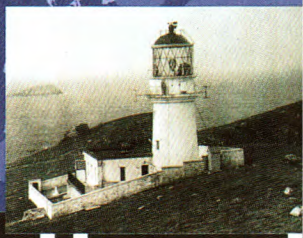
Otherwise, everything was in order: the lamp was ready to be lit, the thermometer and wind readings had been taken dated 15 December. It could only be concluded that while they were outside, perhaps securing some machinery during a storm, the men were caught by a freak wave that swept them into the depths.

Flannan Isles



The Flannan Islands lighthouse cost £6914 to build, including the two landing places. Work commenced in 1895: building materials had to be hauled up a 50m cliff straight out of the boats. With no radio communications, a game-keeper on Lewis was paid £18 a year to keep the light under observation.

Supplies and were brought until 1970 when automated. The other



Annus mirabilis Fred Gee looks back 50 years to the commemoratives of 1948



Two stamps commemorated the Silver Wedding of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth: £1 designed by Joan Hassall, and 2½d (opposite, top) designed by G T Knipe. Both were printed by Harrison & Sons in photogravure.

IT IS HARD TO BELIEVE that half a century has gone by since that annus mirabilis of 1948. Why 'annus mirabilis'? Well, to the schoolboy collector of GB stamps (as I was then) it certainly seemed a momentous year. Not only was there the chance to add to one's collection some commemorative stamps (as special stamps were then called) but there was to be not just one issue, but three. 1948 was, in fact, the first time ever that the British Post Office had produced more than one commemorative issue in the same year.

In those days, GB commemorative issues were a rare occurrence. For instance, in the 11 years since George VI had succeeded to the throne – the years when I first became aware of, and interested in, postage stamps – there had been only three commemorative issues. In 1937 there had been a single stamp, 1½d value, for the Coronation, but no commemoratives at all in 1938 or 1939. Then, despite all the problems resulting from the outbreak of the Second World War, the Post Office decided to go ahead, in May 1940, with a set of six stamps to mark the centenary of the first-ever adhesive postage stamp, the Penny Black.

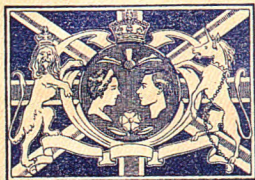
During the remaining years of the war, there were some changes in the shades of the definitives – which helped to keep alive the young philatelist's interest – but no further commemoratives appeared. Then at last, in 1946, there were two stamps – 2½d and 3d – on the theme of Peace through Victory, an issue eagerly welcomed by collectors long starved of special stamps. 1947 turned out to be yet another year without commemoratives, but there was great excitement amongst philatelists when the word got around that 1948 could see perhaps two issues: in the event it turned out to be three.

The first of these issues, on 26 April 1948, comprised two stamps commemorating the Silver Wedding of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth. The main elements of both designs were similar – a Dorothy Wilding portrait of the Royal Couple associated with the dates 1923-1948 – yet somehow the two stamps just did not make a pair. Whereas the 2½d was of horizontal format (double the normal stamp size), the £1 value – the more pleasing of the two – presented the portrait in an upright frame of quite different proportions.

The problem of how best to display two stamps of such disparate dimensions was, for many schoolboy collectors like myself, an academic question: For how could one save enough of one's pocket money to be able to afford a £1 stamp? After all, in 1948 £1 was a lot of money.

Limited availability The interest engendered by the appearance of the Silver Wedding stamps was intensified when it was realised that another set of commemoratives was to become available on 10 May 1948: only one commemorative issue in seven years, and then two sets within a fortnight! This second pair was issued, three years after the event, to commemorate

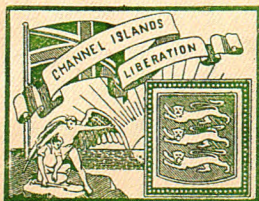
SOUVENIR FIRST DAY COVER



Commemorating the
SILVER WEDDING ANNIVERSARY OF
THEIR MAJESTIES KING GEORGE VI
AND QUEEN ELIZABETH
26-4-1923 — 26-4-1948



FIRST DAY OF ISSUE
MAY 10th, 1948



RENOWN STAMP Co., Ltd.

10, High Street,

Chatham.

the liberation of the Channel Islands from German occupation. At least, this time there was not going to be a £1 stamp – the two values were 1d and 2½d – but there was a difficulty of a different kind facing the collector wishing to acquire this pair. The stamps were intended primarily for use in the Channel Islands, and while they were valid for postage throughout Great Britain and Northern Ireland, they were to be on sale in the UK at only eight Head Post Offices. And, of course, there was no Philatelic Bureau in those days to help out the frustrated collector!

The 1d stamp (in red) was the work of J R R Stobie, but for the inspiration behind the 2½d value (in blue) one had to look back to the wartime issues of Jersey (see Sidney Amery's article in the September 1997 *Bulletin*). Being prevented, during the German occupation, from obtaining supplies of GB stamps, both Guernsey and Jersey had to produce their own stamps, and amongst these was a set of six stamps for Jersey depicting scenes on the island. These stamps were designed by Edmund Blampied and it was his drawing on the 3d Jersey stamp which was so charmingly adapted for the 2½d stamp of May 1948. Ironically, this drawing had been selected for the 1943 Jersey stamp by the Kommandant of the occupying German garrison.

The two stamps issued to commemorate the liberation of the Channel Islands (lower cover above) really did make a beautiful pair, each having an evocative scene depicting Islanders gathering seaweed. Like the Silver Wedding stamps, they were printed in photogravure by Harrison & Sons.

Olympic Games stamps

Issued on 29 July, these were, like all the other George VI commemoratives, printed in photogravure by Harrison & Sons, and were the work of four distinguished designers: Percy Metcalfe (2½d blue); Abram Games (an appropriate surname for the designer of the 3d violet!); Stanley D Scott (6d purple); and Edmund Dulac (1s brown). Right, Harrison presentation card bearing the stamps.



Olympic Games air letter

This was not only the first ever commemorative air letter, but also the first to be printed in photogravure. It was actually issued one day before the four adhesives, that is, on 28 July 1948. Above, the registration copy of the air letter in the National Postal Museum.

Exciting times But the philatelic excitement of 1948 was not over. Before the summer was out, there was to be yet another commemorative issue – this time, a set of four stamps to mark the resumption of the Olympic Games (because of the war no Games had taken place in 1940 or 1944) and to celebrate the fact that the venue for these first post-war Games was to be London.

If one writes that each stamp carried the words ‘Olympic Games’, the year ‘1948’, the five Olympic Rings, and the same Dulac head of the King, it might easily give the impression that this was a cohesive set of stamps. But a glance at the stamps shows that this was not the case. Each of the four designers had adopted a quite different approach

to the challenge of depicting the spirit of the Olympic Games, and the result was that these stamps, however successful individually, did not complement each other. Even the five Olympic Rings (representing the five continents), which one could have expected to have been a key element uniting the designs, were not treated in a consistent manner.

There was, though, a bonus for those interested in postal stationery – a branch of the hobby which, at that time, was still regarded by many philatelists as a ‘Cinderella’ backwater – because Scott’s design was also used for the pre-printed 6d stamp on an Olympic Games air letter sheet.

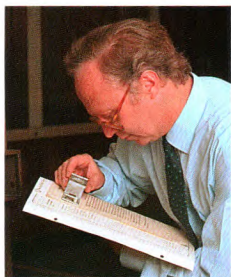
When compared with the present-day output of GB special stamps, an offering of eight commemorative stamps and one air letter does not seem very dramatic – but in 1948 it represented a quiet revolution in Post Office policy, and a real treat for the young collector of 50 years ago! ●

The Bulletin interview The Editor talks to Douglas N Muir, Curator Philately at the National Postal Museum

I FIRST MET Douglas Muir 20 years ago when I was writing articles for the weekly magazine *Stamp Collecting*; Douglas was its Assistant Editor. Ten years later I became *Bulletin* Editor, taking over from Douglas on his promotion to Curator Philately at the National Postal Museum. The *Bulletin* was then based at the NPM so I worked alongside him for four years until the *Bulletin* moved to Royal Mail National's offices in Turnmill Street, and later to Finsbury Square. Douglas and I have worked well, despite differing opinions on matters philatelic – stamp design, the ways of collectors and Royal Mail's involvement with the hobby. I always enjoy discussions with Douglas who, as anyone who has met him knows, holds strong views, clearly and cogently argued. Discussions can get quite heated, but we always end agreeing to disagree and part amicably. Different opinions as to what is important is one of the strengths of philately; healthy debate is good for the hobby.

In January I went back to the Museum to talk to Douglas about his philatelic career and his 10 years in charge of the philatelic collections. As always his views were forthright and stimulating.

We began by talking about how he started stamp collecting, age six, in the mid-1950s: 'I was interested in collecting lots of things – bubble-gum wrappers, cards especially of aeroplanes and famous people, even birds eggs as I lived in the country. I would not approve of egg collecting now.' Douglas exchanged items with school-friends, and although there was no stamp club at his school, he recalls collectors in other schools operating as embryonic dealers. One of the chief sources of stamps for his collection was his mother who worked at an accountant's office in Glasgow and obtained stamps from many countries, particularly Nigeria. One stamp design made a particular impression on young Douglas – the Lion design on the 20c, 40c and 1s stamps of



Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika (SG 170, 172, 173). 'It was', he says, 'the foreignness of it that attracted me... it told me that Kenya was in Africa, lions lived in Kenya, and that Kenya was part of the (then) British Empire.' The touch of the exotic that such stamps imparted was 'the real reason' why Douglas and so many schoolchildren collected stamps. He

was a largely self-taught collector, having no access to stamp catalogues or magazines, relying on his 'little album with illustrations of some of the more common stamps...one filled as many spaces as possible'. He was eager to learn about countries, 'you must remember that geography was very important in Scottish schools – information was drummed into us'. Like other *Bulletin* interviewees, he accepts that today children are much less awe-inspired by far-away places, and so less likely to be interested in stamps.

'Adults', says Douglas, 'are interested in stamps for two main reasons – the monetary aspect and intellectual interest'. Collecting is seen as 'a means of saving...and can be so if done properly but it takes knowledge in order to acquire the right material'. Just because a stamp is old or beautiful does not make it valuable. Through an intellectual interest in stamps 'one can gain a great deal of information on printing, design and social history – reflected in microcosm in stamps of all ages and places.'

Specialised collecting Douglas moved on from general to specialised collecting in his teens, concentrating on current GB and postmarks. He was particularly keen on Scottish island postmarks following a holiday on Mull in 1966 when he visited many of the post offices. By now he was reading stamp magazines and 'like everyone else influenced by what was published.' He came to appreciate that philately is not just about stamp collecting, but encompasses the more fascinating

area of postal history. Like most teenagers with limited funds, he mostly obtained modern material. 'I have', he says, 'always been fascinated by what's happening now, even in areas which I do not actively collect'. In 1968 stamp collecting took a back-seat when Douglas went to university to study archaeology, but he kept up an interest by developing an archaeology thematic collection. He still has it and still enjoys seeing stamps and related items on this theme.

In the early 1970s, after graduation, Douglas worked in Germany and holidayed in India partly because he was attracted to its postal history, especially Indian stamps used in Nepal and Tibet, and Indian Native States postal stationery. He obtained material from local dealers, and developed a collection; he still has the postal stationery section. He remains fond of the stamps of the Indian Feudatory State of Jaipur (see illustration opposite). The 'India period' of his philatelic career lasted some five or six years, he joined the India Study Circle and wrote a few articles on the subject.

Postal mechanisation However Douglas is best-known for his studies into British postal mechanisation. Interest began in the early 1960s with the introduction of phosphor stamps and sorting machinery in Glasgow near his home in Stirlingshire. He was interested in what was happening on his doorstep but did not then realise that this was just a tiny part of what was to become a vast area for specialist collectors. Interest was further stimulated by an article by R F Allen on the code markings used at Luton and Norwich.

Soon after Douglas moved to London and joined the staff of *Stamp Collecting* magazine in 1975, he was invited to see the new 'easy view coding desks' at Redhill sorting office. He 'jumped at the chance', went along and wrote up his findings in his magazine. Shortly after he suggested the setting up of a Postal Mechanisation Study Group which now has over 160 members worldwide and is amongst the most active of all study groups in the UK. Douglas, now President of the Group, has written extensively on 'postal mech' and displayed part of his collection at BPE.



Postal Mech is not just about blue phosphor dots on covers, it encompasses machine-printed stamps or labels, popularly referred to as 'frama stamps'. These began, without warning, in Switzerland in 1976 and were reported to *Stamp Collecting* by Michael Rutherford. Douglas visited the Frama factory and took a very keen interest in the British framas issued from five trial machines in 1984-5. On the day of issue, he despatched his secretary to Windsor to obtain labels from the machine there. The machine proved troublesome and broke down. She phoned in to tell him and was ordered to go back and wait until it was fixed. Much to Douglas's delight when she returned to the office she brought labels printed on white test paper left in the machine by one of the engineers! 'Interest in framas was', says Douglas, 'whipped up by continental dealers' and has declined of late. Later he was pleased to get the British machines and the three printers used at the Bureau for the National Postal Museum. Although no longer in working order, for about 18 months from May 1988 visitors to the NPM were able to print souvenir 'specimen' labels from one of the machines. This ceased when the electronics wore out; the specimen labels are now collectors' items in their own right. Douglas stresses the importance of



Opposite Stamps of the Indian Feudatory State of Jaipur, bearing the symbol of the sun god and chariot, printed locally at the Jail Press from 1911 (SG 16 et seq). 'The images and crudeness of the printing attracted me', Douglas says, 'also the basic printing techniques and flaws which illustrate the techniques'. **Above** Swiss etiquettes used on returned or refused mail since the late 19th century.

having fun with philately and fondly remembers the frame episode providing him with 'a great deal of cheap fun'.

Although he is no longer a very active collector, his current specialist interest is in Swiss etiquettes used on returned or refused mail since the late 19th century. He started collecting them a couple of years ago, attracted by 'their basic printing and postal history status. They are used on real mail to which something has happened – items that have gone back and forth in the post'. Added attractions include the inscription in three languages (Douglas was once a language teacher), and the fact that they are from Switzerland – his favourite country. There are basic listings of these etiquettes but no proper catalogue; 'if I can acquire enough material,' he says, 'I should like to compile one.'

Douglas describes his collecting policy as 'starting on a general basis and moving on to the particular'. He explains: 'Most collectors start with too few items, then get too much and need to cut back, to concentrate on a small area. However it is important to obtain large quantities of mail in order to see normal usage of stamps and postal markings. There is no need to mount hundreds of items, choose the two or three that best illustrate the point you want to make'.

Literature Philatelic books and journals are important to Douglas both as an Editor and as Curator Philately at the NPM. He started his editorial career working for Ken Chapman and later George Beal and 'learned a lot from both about writing, editing and publishing'. At *Stamp Collecting*, especially in 1979-80, Douglas was often at the office quite late but mostly enjoyed the work. He later edited *Stamp Collecting* and its companion *Philatelic Magazine*, and was doing sterling work on the two titles when, in 1984, the publishers went out of business and Douglas found himself out of work. Happily his talents were soon put to good use at the NPM. Two years later he took over from Charles Gowan as Editor of this *Bulletin* – a task he much enjoyed, creating a magazine each month, and working in colour. It was very different from the two previous magazines, being a 'house magazine rather than a commercial publication, smaller, in colour and with no adverts'. Another notable difference was that he was sole member of staff. However he didn't find the change frustrating, in fact found it required a more active approach to finding information and the concentration on just British stamps was 'exhilarating'. He enjoyed researching new issues 'and marketing them in my way on behalf of Royal Mail was very rewarding'.

After two years Douglas was promoted to his present job and handed over the *Bulletin* to me. That was 10 years ago, but Douglas is still interested in the fortunes of the magazine and its changes over the years. Although he and I have quite similar backgrounds, we have very different views on editing magazines. Unlike Douglas, I do not find working on the *Bulletin* exhilarating, and rather less satisfying than my previous editorship. However we respect each other's opinions even though we disagree.

Douglas is still involved in philatelic editing, principally the much-acclaimed *Philatelic Review* published each year by the NPM since 1988. This is a team effort with contributions from many of his colleagues, friends and designers; he believes it has got better each year. He still enjoys reading philatelic magazines, especially 'good research articles, written in clear English'. I suspect he has

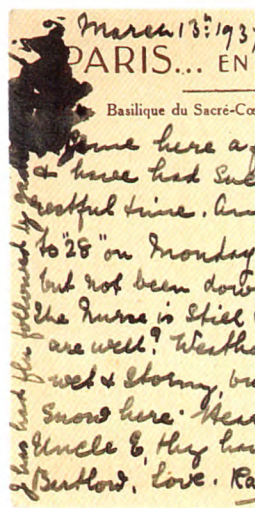
favourite authors although he wasn't prepared to name any.

Douglas has been a member of several philatelic societies, principally the India Study Circle and the Postal Mechanisation Group. His recent election as a Fellow of the Royal Philatelic Society London gave him great pleasure as did the display he gave to the Royal on behalf of the NPM in 1996. This particular display 'involved quite a lot of preparation by myself and my team at the museum but was worthwhile for the added pleasure of giving a display to my peers'. It was well-received by that august body.

At the time of this interview Douglas was involved in research on the 1927 pictorial issue of Palestine, having found artwork and sheets of stamps in the Royal Mint and at Harrisons (now De La Rue) which have been transferred to the NPM. These discoveries are being prepared for display at the international exhibition in Israel in May and Douglas hopes to write a feature on them for *The London Philatelist*, journal of the RPSL (and also I hope for the *Bulletin*.)

Exhibitions Douglas recalls the Scotex exhibitions in Glasgow in the early 1960s. He was taken by the stand of the Polish Association where special covers and cachets were available. Stamping and sending covers was 'active philately' and he thinks exhibition souvenirs are an important branch of the hobby. He attended exhibitions in Munich and Basel in the early 1970s when he was working in Germany and remembers looking in awe at some of the material on display and touring the dealers in search of items for his own collections. Again he recalls the souvenirs – 'the Germans were way in advance of the British in the production of interesting souvenirs'. He admits to having a 'soft spot' for such material if of a high quality. Returning to Britain he started going to Stampex in 1975 and attended the internationals at Earl's Court and Alexandra Palace in 1980 and 1990. He hopes that the 2000 exhibition will see more done to appeal to general collectors. He enjoys visiting the printers' stands, seeing artists and engravers at work and particularly talking to them about their skills.

Card bearing '13' Transorma mark sent from France in 1937. Research by Douglas Muir proved that this took a particular route from France to Brighton via Newhaven during a certain period prior to the Second World War.



NPM He first visited the Museum when Editor of *Philatelic Magazine*. 'The Museum was then', he says, 'very small, with a library aspect about it – all album pages, very much aimed at stamp collectors.' He joined the Museum as a consultant researcher in 1984, becoming *Bulletin* Editor two years later. When in 1987 it was decided to create the new post of Curator Philately he thought he 'could do it well although hadn't considered it before. It was a new job, a demanding one which I have had to create myself'. Douglas took up the post in February 1988, 'looking at the collections afresh, seeing what was required and planning the way forward in dealing with them and ways of showing them to the public'. His first priority was the R M Phillips collection of Victorian stamps – 'little had been done on its conservation and it was essential to remount it on archival paper and to take it off open display where it was exposed to light. Some material had deteriorated'. Now none of the collection is on open display for long periods of time and light levels and environmental conditions are strictly controlled. Most of the Phillips collection is still available but in pull-out frames rather than open display.

Of special interest to Douglas are the Museum's special exhibitions and he has changed



these from merely displays of selected album pages to exhibitions that tell a story through graphics, the items window mounted illustrating a particular point. One of the last of the older style exhibitions was the Genesis of the Machins, in 1987. Although mostly album pages, these had been prepared after a vast amount of research. Arnold Machin came to the Museum, the only time Douglas has met him and was greatly interested in his comments. The Addressing Postcodes exhibition (1994) was 'graphically pleasing and the machinery displayed made technical matters more interesting and clear'. Visitors were intrigued by the UV lights flashing on and off, and postal mechanisation specialists were delighted by the exhibition. The comments in the NPM visitor book show that the public enjoys such displays.

Douglas would like more collectors to undertake research at the Museum and is determined that it should collect material now with a view to the future. The NPM, he says, is about the 'Post Office past, present and future, not just a repository for stamps and postal bric-a-brac'.

Of his decade in charge of the Philatelic Department, he is proud of the vast amount of research carried out in lots of areas, but especially the special stamp issues from 1924. This research has involved remounting and rewriting

the collection of special stamps, also some of the definitives. The Machin collection is a 'working collection', being created by outside expert Don Staddon. Douglas himself created the seven-volume Genesis of the Machin collection, telling the story of how the design was created. The Wilding series has also been extensively researched. Douglas points out that the collections are 'chiefly concerned with the concept and production of issues and stop with the issued stamps'. The NPM collections (with the exception of the Phillips) are not concerned with the study of flaws and varieties – this is left to collectors'. They contain artists' drawings, essays, proofs as well as the basic issued stamps and, of course, the Post Office registration sheets of every stamp in a separate collection. These sheets can be studied by collectors for varieties, sheet markings and other matters of philatelic interest.

The collections are not only being researched and remounted but also properly catalogued – an important aspect of museum work. The standard of work has improved in recent years – now 'more on a museum basis rather than a stock room'. The collections are ever expanding, particularly in the field of postal history with new collections on Penny Posts, Postal Reform, railway postal markings, etc. Progress made on these collections is published in the annual *Review*, with illustrations of some of the gems acquired. Like most museum curators, Douglas would like more staff and money although resources are better now than 10 years ago. 'We have struggled too much in the past', he says, and looks forward to more staff and funds when the museum moves at the end of next year. As yet they do not know where it will be sited when it leaves King Edward Street, but it is hoped will be in central London. Douglas hopes that at least part of the new museum will be open by the time of Stamp Show 2000 in May 2000 – the 160th anniversary of the Penny Black. 'My aim in a new museum', he commented, 'is to entertain, to tell stories and to educate through that. A museum should not be typological as in the past – sterile cases of row upon row of badly described material. That approach should now be long past'.

His position enables him a certain influence on Royal Mail's stamps and philatelic policy and he enjoys this *eminence grise* role, especially in matters relating to stamp design. Although he no longer collects them personally, he takes a keen interest in all new British stamps.

Stamp collecting as a hobby I asked Douglas who he regarded as great philatelists. He gave me a quizzical look and responded that 'most philatelists have not approached their studies from an historical point of view, rather they simply study the stamps in their own collections'. He has been attempting by example to change this, using philatelic material to illustrate history rather than the other way about. He is encouraged by some signs that this is happening.

He would like to see more exposure of the hobby in the press and on TV but such features 'require a peg to hang on – 2000 is one ideal – and an imaginative approach to presentation that will interest collectors and non-collectors alike'.

Before philately became his full-time employment he regarded himself as 'quite an active collector' but this has largely tailed off for two reasons – to avoid any conflict of interest with his NPM duties, and because 'working with wonderful stamps makes for an extremely interesting job but ruins it as a hobby as it becomes simply an extension of work'. His current collecting interests are mostly confined to Swiss etiquettes. He added that he would find it difficult and time-consuming now to arrange his own material to the high standards of the NPM collections.

I asked about the favourite items in his collection; he chose some Swiss etiquettes and a postcard bearing a Brighton Transorma marking. Research proved that this took a particular route from France to Brighton via Newhaven.

If cast away on the proverbial desert island Douglas would like to take Sir Edward Bacon's books on the Penny Black – 'beautiful books in themselves, examples of early real research into important matters in printing.' When asked which stamp would he like to take, his answer reflected his approach to the Museum – 'easy', he replied, 'simply the best Penny Black' ●

Eminent early collectors 7

John A Tilleard by Ron Negus

'PHILATELIST TO THE KING' was the title accorded to John Alexander Tilleard in May 1910, when King George V created this brand new position within the Royal Household. The King was an active collector, but realised he could not spend as much time as he wished with his collection after his accession to the throne, and so the need for a curator became apparent.

Tilleard was an obvious choice. He was the current secretary of the Royal Philatelic Society, London and had been advising the King for many years. His association with the Royal family had begun in the latter years of the 19th century and in 1893, through Tilleard's personal intervention, the then Duke of York (later, King George V) joined the Philatelic Society of London and was appointed an Hon Vice-President immediately.

John Tilleard was born in 1850. After completing his education at Marlborough, he went to University to study law and passed his articles as a solicitor. He practiced in the City of London, under his own name, but with changes of partners from time to time. After his death, his practice was carried on by his son, Frederick, and his brother, Arthur.

Tuscan treasure He only collected in his own right for a short period until the demands of his busy legal practice forced him to sell his collection. Many of the better items were purchased by M P Castle, another very eminent collector of the day. Amongst the treasures in this sale was a cover from Tuscany bearing a specimen of the 1860 3-lire issue that Tilleard had found amongst the correspondence files in his own office some years earlier. This particular stamp is now one of the rarest items produced in the Italian States.

But his legal training was turned to good use during his association with organised philately. This began when he was 37 years old and he joined the Philatelic Society of London. Within 18 months of his election, in January 1889, he

was appointed as Assistant Hon Secretary. In May 1894, when the Hon Secretary, Douglas Garth, was forced to resign through ill-health, Tilleard took over the post.

Garth and Tilleard had been responsible, in 1892, for purchasing the original dies and electrotypes from which the early stamps of Prince Edward Island had been printed. These artefacts had come up for auction as part of a bankruptcy sale held by Charles Whiting, whose printing business had failed. They bought them to prevent their being used to flood the market with reprints. After the dies and plates had been defaced to ensure no unauthorised copies could be made, Tilleard generously presented them to the Philatelic Society, and they are still displayed in the Society's museum today. He wrote a paper on these at the time that remains the definitive work on the subject.

His written contributions were always carefully crafted. Tilleard was responsible for making significant discoveries regarding the early De La Rue printings of Indian stamps, and published his findings extensively in the *London Philatelist* at the turn of the century.

During his term as Secretary, he was noted for producing extremely informative annual reports, which not only recorded the activities of the Society, but gave a broad overview of significant events in the philatelic year that had just ended. He was always the most meticulous of men, and his listeners were somewhat surprised when giving his report at the 1912-13 Annual General Meeting he was ill-prepared and often had to rearrange his notes. It was a sign of ill-health, although few in the audience guessed the reason.

Soon after that meeting, Tilleard's health gave way through overwork and he suffered a nervous breakdown. He was ordered by his doctor to the seaside to recover and recuperate. Despite signs that he was improving, he had a relapse, and died in his sleep on 22 September 1913, shortly after returning to his home in Hampstead.

In 1906, King Edward VII granted the Philatelic Society permission to use the prefix 'Royal', and, before the change of name could be implemented, new Statutes had to be prepared. This very burdensome legal task was undertaken by Tilleard in addition to running his own solicitor's practice, and a contemporary report stated that it was 'impossible to value too highly the services he then rendered'.

Man of taste When appointed to his duties in the Royal Household, Tilleard found he had little time to devote to organising the Collection, which

had grown from a series of acquisitions over the years. His expertise was used

in advising the King on which specimens to buy, and he always stressed the importance of condition. Sir John Wilson, a subsequent Curator and author of *The Royal Philatelic Collection*, speaking of Tilleard's period of stewardship, wrote: 'He signed his name or wrote his initials on the backs of certain stamps which he obtained, and, judging from the specimens so marked, particularly those

of New South Wales, he must have been a man of considerable taste in his choice'. For his services, he was installed, in 1911, as a member of the Royal Victorian Order, an honour in the personal gift of the Sovereign.

Tilleard's private funeral at Golder's Green was attended by the Gentleman Usher to the King, representing George V. The King also sent a letter of condolence to Mr Castle, as President of the Royal Philatelic Society, which concluded with the words 'His Majesty mourns his death, not only as one of our leading Philatelists, but as a personal friend for whose advice on the question of stamps, His Majesty always entertained the highest respect'.

In his memory, the Royal Philatelic Society instituted a medal in 1914. The Tilleard Medal is presented to the person who has given the best display before the Society in the previous two years. A fitting tribute to this eminent collector ●



Decimal stamp books 38 Specialist report by D G A Myall

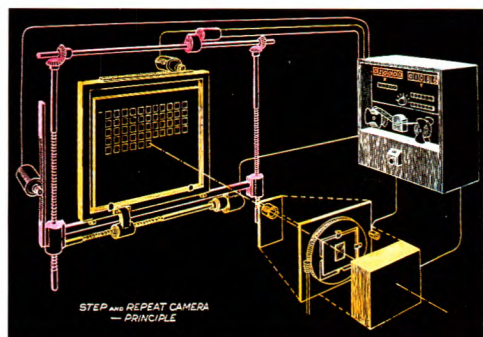


Change of production at Walsall A book of 4 × 1st by Walsall with panes from a new cylinder number, w2, was first noticed in December last year. This was surprising at first since panes from cylinder w1 had been issued less than three months earlier and gravure cylinders, unlike lithographic plates, have a long life. Close examination showed, however, that there had been a change of production methods. Previously, Walsall panes had been burst from the sheets and all three non-binding edges appeared torn, ie, under moderate magnification the perforations appeared frayed. The new pane had guillotined (cut) edges at top and bottom and only the right-hand side was torn. It is convenient to describe the three edges in clockwise sequence as CTC. Earlier panes were TTT. It seems that bookmaking on the Bickel machine, described here last year, has begun. This requires a new cylinder layout hence the new cylinder number and the changed appearance of the pane edges. It is likely that future books of 10 and the overseas books of four will also be made by the new method and the first sign would be new cylinder numbers.

Lucky finds My report of the BBC book with an extra pane of stamps has prompted readers to tell me of some of their lucky finds. Among these is a Flowers Greetings book with the pane stuck in inverted, reported by reader R Legg. Instead of the pane being affixed by the interpane gut-

ter, part of the first two stamps are stuck to the cover. It is a plain book so the plate combination is not known. It was the first issue of this book, ie, not one of the promotional issues. Reader G K Carter sent me colour photographs of a 1994 Rupert Bear Greetings book the cover of which had some of the red missing yet other red parts of the design printed correctly. Rupert's jersey and Paddington's hat were there but the red letterbox, the red in the numeral 10 and in the crown were absent. How could this have occurred? Booklet covers are printed by lithography and before the new 6-unit Roland machine was installed at Walsall the presses in use had four colour units. It seems clear that the covers affected employed two plates to print the red colour and that they were printed either in two passes or, more likely, in sequential passes on two different machines. One of the two red plates was either omitted, ran out of ink or failed to print for some other reason.

The Disney animal kingdom books are proving popular and members of the public have been busily scratching the panels to see if they have won anything. Collectors, of course, do not commit such vandalism; they keep their books in mint condition. In fact, if you obtain your books from the Bureau you would waste your time as well as despoiling them if you scratched the panels. The Bureau, and all other philatelic outlets, had to obtain their supplies from a stock of non-



Opposite page Partial missing red on 1994 Greetings book front cover, right, and the correct printing.

Above Principle of a step-and-repeat camera.

winning books that was set aside for sale to collectors by using a special requisition code. This separation of non-winning books was undoubtedly done with the best of motives but I do not think that collectors would want to be pampered in this way. If you keep a mint copy it is because you do not care whether it is a winning one or not for you are never going to try and find out. Someone who, on the other hand, wishes to try his luck ought not to be denied the chance just because he bought his book from Edinburgh. Some overseas collectors rely on the Bureau to supply all their needs but they are not eligible to participate in the offer. Ironically, one can try one's luck without buying a stamp book at all. Under the lottery laws, no purchase is necessary and the instructions on the inside cover state that the promoters will open a book on your behalf if you apply on a postcard and you can even make an application every day the offer is valid. I only hope that their supply was not obtained under the special code!

Terminology A term which is queried in some quarters is 'electromechanical engraving' for which the acronym EME has been coined. The objection is that, while it is a term used by De La Rue, formerly Harrison, it is not known or used by the other gravure printers. I do not think that that is sufficient. There are many terms used by philatelists which the printers do not use, such as primary sheet and cut lines.

The term 'electromechanical engraving' was coined by Harrison to distinguish the new method of cylinder making from the former chemical etching method, also known in the printing trade as 'photomechanical engraving'. Both methods multiply the image by mechanical means. The 'photo' in 'photomechanical' refers to the fact that a step-and-repeat camera is used. The movements and exposure time are controlled by computer. The 'electro' in 'electromechanical' refers to the fact that the engraving tool, a diamond stylus, is controlled by electronic means, also using a computer.

Those who are persuaded that EME should not be used have to supply an alternative and, in my opinion, no satisfactory one has been suggested. For example my objection to CE, said to stand for 'computer engraved' is that it could also apply to the computer-controlled camera used in the traditional photogravure process. It could also stand for 'chemically etched', the opposite of the meaning contended for it by those who do not wish to use EME. For myself, I consider that the new acronym is accurate, in use by one of the most experienced stamp printers in the world, favoured by Royal Mail, and clear in its meaning. I shall continue to use it in my articles.

Wilding book I have now examined the Wilding book issued on 10 March. The phosphor layouts are essentially as shown in the preview feature in January (p135) but specialists will note that the bands (or bars) are 3.25mm wide; all are short at top and bottom and all are well inset from the side margins, being co-terminous with the edges of the designs. I will report in detail on this book next month.

How to contact me I am always pleased to help readers with any queries they may have on book-let collecting. Please write to me care of the *Bulletin* Editor but do not enclose any stamps. A photocopy of anything unusual will normally suffice and I will ask to see any item if I think it necessary. You can also contact me by e-mail; my address is: deegam@dial.pipex.com •

Competition Win 1847 1s green embossed pair cat £850+



1st prize QV 1847 Embossed 1s pale green good used horizontal 3-4 margins pair, right hand stamp split silk thread, good colour SG 54 catalogued £850 + GB Select-Direct selling price £190.

2nd prize George V 1913 Seahorses rose-carmine fresh mint full og hinge remnant example SG 401, cat £225, tiny imperfection, lovely colour. GB Select-Direct price £75.

3rd prize QV 1840 1d black, lovely even intensity deeper black shade, four clear to good margins example, lettered G-H, cancelled by fine light red brown Maltese Cross. SG cat £150, GB Select-Direct price £65.

The winners of January's competition were R Milner of Cornwall, T Galsworthy of Essex, I Smithson of Notts, J Kenney of Leics, J Volles of Oxon, and J Taylor of South Africa

The answers 1) 4½d; 2) Dr Werner Kissling; 3) 25 February-1 March 4) Jeffery Matthews; 5) D



Free GB 1841 2d Blue cat £40 plus £140 space-filler QV cat value offer, sponsored by Omniphil, GB Select-Direct Does your stamp dealer break every set? Do you sometimes want to buy individual stamps only to find that your local dealer wants to sell you complete sets or charge you a premium for breaking his sets? Frustrating isn't it? But not when you take Omniphil's Home Approval Service. You see with 40 years' experience of supplying quality stamps Omniphil's Home Service is 'big' enough to break every set – which means you can find stamps you want individually priced at significant savings off catalogue price.

Plus, if you can select stamps to a sales value of just £12 Omniphil are now offering all *Bulletin* subscribers, who have not applied before, the opportunity to pick a further 33% worth of stamps free of charge via their £200 loyalty bonus program. Effectively double discounts for spending just £12.

Unlike some other 'loyalty programs' you can start and stop whenever you wish, without obligation, unused bonus, or other penalties. Omniphil have wide stocks available, not just of GB, but from Channel Islands, Commonwealth and foreign countries too, priced from as little as 5p up to £40 or more per stamp.

So if your collection is missing stamps from 1840 to the 1980s write now telling them all the countries/areas that you collect and whether you collect mint and used and there's an 1841 2d blue catalogued £40 plus space-filler quality QV stamp(s) catalogued an extra £140 waiting for you free of charge, yours to keep whatever you decide.

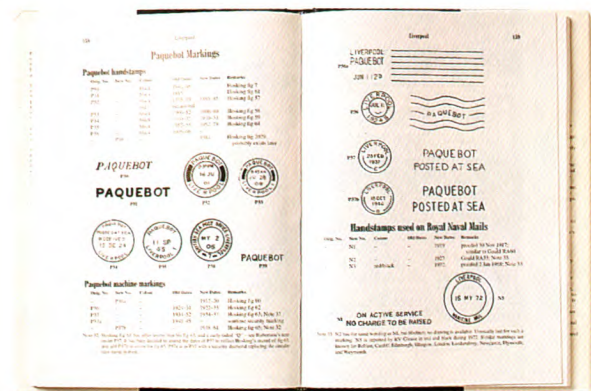
Write now to: **Omniphil Home Service, Bulletin Bonus QV 180 Offer, PO Box 29 Stroud GL6 6RW.**

To enter the competition answer the questions below and send, with your name and address, on a postcard or back of an envelope to: April Bulletin Competition, Royal Mail, 22 Finsbury Square, London EC2A 1NL to arrive by 22 May. Entries must be posted separately; multiple entries in one envelope will be disregarded.

- 1 Who was guest of honour at the Rowland Hill Awards in February?
- 2 What is the date of issue of the forthcoming Health stamps?
- 3 Which magazine did Douglas Muir join in 1975?
- 4 Which celebrity will open the Birdpex exhibition at Wembley?
- 5 Who landed on the Bell Rock in October 1800?

Answers will be found in this *Bulletin*. The competition is not open to employees, families or agents of Royal Mail or Omniphil/GB Select Direct ●

Book review *Robertson Revisited* by Colin Tabcart



Robertson Revisited

330 pages, casebound.

Available from James Bendon Ltd, PO Box 6484, 3307 Limassol, Cyprus.

Price £40, postage £1.

TO BRITISH postal historians the name Robertson is synonymous with maritime postal history. The late Alan W Robertson, MBE was an ardent collector of ship mail and packetbot covers for many years and eventually distilled his vast knowledge and experience into a handsome handbook, which he published himself in an edition limited to 600 copies. Publication began in 1955 and continued in serial parts till 1964. Original subscribers were faced with the daunting task of peg-fitting all the pages into a single binder, but later subscribers had the option of two or three volumes which certainly made this magnum opus much easier to handle.

Robertson always referred to this monumental labour of love as 'my folly', but it earned him his RDP and worldwide respect. Harry Hayes produced a re-print of 100 copies in 1973 and James Bendon a reduced-format edition in 1995 (see *Bulletin*, June 1995), but on neither occasion was the opportunity taken to revise and up-date the text.

That task has now fallen to Colin Tabcart who published *United Kingdom Letter Rates 1657-1900* in 1989. During the course of his research for that work, Tabcart realised that very little of what Robertson had to say about ship letter rates was accurate. This, in turn, led him into the current project.

Essentially, the new work has concentrated on Section E of the original, providing a catalogue

of postal markings used at British and Irish seaports in alphabetical order, from Aberdeen to Youghal (mis-spelled Yougall on page 304 and in the index). This is the core of the book, with over 1400 illustrations of postmarks and details of periods of use. Preliminary chapters discuss concisely the knotty problem of maritime letter rates and provide an interesting survey of the pioneer steamships, while the book is nicely rounded off with a select bibliography.

No attempt has been made to provide values or even relative degrees of scarcity, although this is often noted in the remarks column. There are cross-references to Roger Hosking's book on packetbots, published in 1987, and copious footnotes to articles and monographs on aspects of maritime mail in recent years.

In particular, this volume includes the first detailed study of the CENTS accountancy marks used in London and Liverpool on mails exchanged under the Anglo-American Postal Convention of 1849. Postal markings associated with naval mail, hardly touched by Robertson, are now fully covered, with due acknowledgement to Dr Michael Gould's work on the subject.

This book provides an indispensable update to Robertson's original work, but should stand on its own merits as the most complete record of British maritime postmarks to date. *Review by James Mackay* •

Postbag

Queen's Beasts May I say how much I like the Queen's Beasts stamps illustrated in the February *Bulletin* – another fine set by Jeffery Matthews and I look forward to adding these beautiful stamps to my collection and using and receiving them on my mail. Unless there are some even better designs during 1998 (difficult, but possible) I shall be voting for these in the 1998 stamp poll. They are a rather better 'Royal' issue than last year's Queen's Horses or Golden Wedding sets which appeared rather 'samey'. Both the Queen's Beasts pack and FDC also look good in the *Bulletin* illustrations. B GARTLEY, COLCHESTER •

Diana stamps Whilst I welcome Royal Mail's decision to commemorate the life of Princess Diana and I think the portraits used were well chosen, I believe the impact of the issue was lost by issuing five stamps. This, together with the production of a cover and pack made it rather like any other special stamp issue, although we were spared stamp cards. A single stamp would have had greater impact. I would have chosen the fourth stamp in the strip for this. Hopefully when it comes to honouring The Queen Mother you will issue just a single stamp, no cover, pack or cards. However before this happens let's all look forward to a set of stamps commemorating Her Majesty's 100th birthday. MRS PAT MORTON, PORTSMOUTH •

Machin shades In his article in December Don Staddon rightly refers to the difference in shade between the 1p, 10p and 31p stamps printed by Enschedé and De La Rue (formerly Harrison). Noticeable shade differences also exist between the 2p and 43p values by the two printers and lesser shade differences on all other values. Back in December 1991, Mr John Donald drew our attention to different shades on the 18p stamp printed in green. Similar shade differences exist on the current 20p – ranging from pale green with a very white Queen's head to a deep green overall, reducing the detail seen on the portrait. I have also noted interesting shades on the new

gravure printings of the 2nd class stamp by Walsall, again the head appears quite 'white' or 'blue'. As these stamps are printed in the millions it is inevitable there will be shade differences. I think it is worth examining stamps bought for postage or arriving on the mail. K L COATES, BRADFORD •

Bulletin back issues For disposal copies of the *Bulletin* from January 1968 to December 1987 (except April 1974). Offers to B A Corps, 17a Maplewell Road, Woodhouse Eaves, Loughborough LE12 8RG. Telephone 01509 891120 •

Cover corner

SHOWN THIS MONTH is another cover submitted by Geoff Isherwood of Cheshire. This is one of the special covers produced by the Dover Philatelic Society for its exhibition to commemorate the tercentenary of Dover Post Office. It coincided with the issue of the Paris Postal Conference commemorative stamp on 7 May 1963. The cover bears the 6d stamp cancelled by a special steel handstamp inscribed POST OFFICE TERCENTENARY/DOVER PACKET SERVICE 1633-1963/DOVER 7 MAY 1963 with the representation of a steamship in the centre. This particular cover shows an old print of Dover Castle. Such covers are now valued at £25 in first day cover catalogues. Interestingly this was the first commemorative stamp issued after the setting up of the Philatelic Bureau in May 1963 and the first time 'first day of issue' postmarks were available •



Mr Clifford Quick,
2, Holmwood Gardens,
WALLINGTON,
Surrey.

Dover Philatelic Society Exhibition Cover

Posting boxes 175

THIS MONTH's photographs were submitted by N S Atherden of Hampshire; both were taken in 1995. The first shows a double aperture EIIR box at Cornfield Road, Eastbourne. The box was manufactured by McDonald Stevens & Co of Falkirk, Scotland. Other double aperture boxes were illustrated here in February 1980 and July 1994.

The second photograph shows an EIIR pillar box with protruding rectangular aperture at Basset Green Road, Southampton. This box was also manufactured in Scotland, by Carron.

For details of the Letter Box Study Group send a SAE or IRC to the Membership Secretary: Mrs V Scott, 383 Leopold Avenue, Handsworth Wood, Birmingham B20 1ES. The Group publishes an interesting Newsletter, postcards and lists of significant boxes •



Double aperture EIIR box at Cornfield Road, Eastbourne



EIIR pillar box, Basset Green Road, Southampton

Events

Now showing Golden and Glorious (Royal stamp issues), Post Hastel! (vehicles and artefacts), A Taste of Stamps (GB stamp design) and Victorian Posts exhibitions at National Postal Museum, King Edward Street, London EC1A 1LP. Open Mon-Fri 09.30-16.30. **Enquiries** 0171 776 3636

Now showing Postal Memorabilia displays at Museum of Lincolnshire Life, Burton Road, Lincoln. **Enquiries** D Harrop, 15 Hawthorn Road, Stockport SK4 3DQ

4 April East Midlands Federation Convention, King's Lynn

4 April Exeter and District Phil Soc Stamp Exhibition & Fair at Priory High School, Topsham Road, Exeter, 10.30-16.30. Children's Corner, displays, dealers, refreshments. **Enquiries** A Pavey, 01392 366044

8 April GB Overprinted display by Dr N Coutts to Paisley Phil Soc, Ralston Community Centre, Allanton Avenue, Paisley, 19.30

11 April Maidstone and Mid Kent Phil Soc Stamp Fair at Grove Green Community Centre, Maidstone (near junction 7, M25), 10.00-16.00. **Enquiries** B Stone-street, 01622 675784

13-18 April Stamp Lincs '98 at Museum of Lincolnshire Life, Burton Road, Lincoln, 10.00-17.30. **Enquiries** Rev T Nowell, 1 Ancaster Avenue. Lincoln LN2 4AY

18 April North East Phil Assn Convention, Durham Johnson School, Nevilles Cross, Durham. **Enquiries** C J Garside, 0191 3845468

18 April Home Counties Stamp Day, Basildon

18 April West of England Thematic Day, Ashburton

23-26 April Stamp '98 at Wembley Exhibition Centre. **Enquiries** Sylvia Cook 01425 461353

26 April British Aerophilatelic Federation (Midland Group) meeting, Grantham. **Enquiries** 01476 403601

A YEAR IN STAMPS



The lavishly-illustrated **Royal Mail Year Books**, first published in 1984, are collectors' items in their own right. They provide authoritative background stories on each issue of special stamps, based on interviews with the stamp designers. Stamps are supplied on stock cards ready for mounting in the book. Each book supplied in a matching slip-case.

The **1997 Year Book** including the 39 special stamps from the Great Tudor (Henry VIII) to Golden Wedding costs £23.50 (£75 leather-bound).

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