

BRITISH PHILATELIC

The ROYAL MAIL magazine for stamp collectors

Volume 34 Number 12

AUGUST 1997 • 85P

Bulletin

BBC prestige stamp book •
Enid Blyton stamps



Forthcoming issues and withdrawals



Cover photograph The series of books featured on Royal Mail's Enid Blyton stamps. The stamps are introduced on page 356 of this issue.

Photograph by Geoff Dann. Books provided courtesy of Enid Blyton Limited.

Late news: £2 and £3 Castles

The Enschedé printings (29 July) are from plate numbers 1A (gold) 1A (blue) and 1A (gold) 1A (purple). Specialists will note a marked shade difference on the £2, and variations in the two boats at left on the £3 and in the lettering (especially G and S) on both values, compared to the Harrison printings. Colour dots ('traffic lights') appear in the right sheet margin opposite R2/10.

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, Stratford-on-Avon, Truro, Windsor and York.

5 August

Issue Sub-Post Offices stamp cards

5 August

Withdrawals Women of Achievement stamps, pack and stamp cards • Stamp books – 10 × 1st Harrison & Walsall and 10 × 2nd Harrison & Questa (issued 6 August 1996)

12 August

Issues Sub-Post Offices stamps and presentation pack • National Postal Museum Post Offices post-cards *Note: available only from Museum and Bureau*

23 August

Issue 'Flights of Genius' Philatelic Numismatic Cover. *Note: Available only from British Philatelic Bureau*

26 August

Issues 31p, 37p and 63p definitives printed by Harrisons by Electro Mechanical Engraving (EME) cylinders • 4 × 1st, 4 × 2nd, 4 × 37p and 4 × 63p books printed by Walsall in gravure (EME) • Stamp rolls (coils) 500 × 37p and 500 × 43p printed by Harrisons in gravure (EME)

1 September

Withdrawal Stamp rolls – 1st and 2nd NVI (issued 8 July 1996)

2 September

Issue Enid Blyton stamp cards

2 September

Withdrawal Children's TV (Big Stars from the Small Screen) stamps, pack and stamp cards

8 September

Withdrawal 10 × 1st book, Cake promotion

9 September

Issue Enid Blyton stamps and pack

15 September

Issue 10 × 1st book (gold stamps) with holiday promotion cover

23 September

Issue BBC prestige stamp book (£6.15)

30 September

Withdrawals National Postal Museum Post Office Vehicles postcards. *Note to be withdrawn at the Bureau, will remain on sale at NPM shop* • 1996 Christmas aerogramme

Contents



This month's souvenir sheet free gift, provided courtesy of The House of Questa

Included with this Bulletin is a souvenir sheet produced by The House of Questa, showing the winning entries in the Horror stamp design competition held at Stamp '97. See Stamp scene for details. **364**

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

Issues and withdrawals August and September **354**

Royal Mail news Enid Blyton stamps; BBC prestige stamp book; NPM news; Definitives update; Stamp books; Philatelic numismatic cover **356**

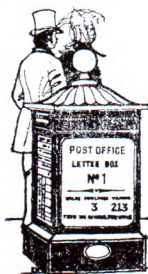


Stamp scene Stamp '97; ABPS awards 1997; Picture Postcard Show; Northeast Philatelic Weekend; Enid Blyton competition **364**

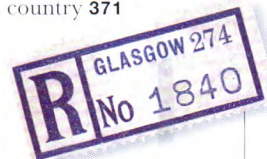
Posting boxes **366**

Royal opening HRH The Princess Royal opens new Royal Mail sorting centre **367**

Decimal stamp books Part 34 by DGA Myall **368**



Sub post offices James Mackay takes a look at neighbourhood sub post offices around the country **371**



The Wilding definitives Part 2: Pre-decimal Castles, by Matthew Hinton **374**

New TPO finds Tom Norgate describes a further discovery at the NPM **376**



Books *National Postal Museum Review of 1996*; *The Collectors' Guide to Postal Stationery* **377**

Competition Win an original work of art **379**

Postbag The Machin debate continues **380**

Events for August and September **381**

Index to volume 34, by Dr Jean Alexander **382**

Royal Mail news

New Enid Blyton stamps

- BBC prestige stamp book • Stamp books •
- NPM news • Definitives update



Enid Blyton Stamps featuring characters from five of Enid Blyton's best-loved childrens' books go on sale at post offices and philatelic outlets on 9 September 1997. The issue commemorates the centenary of the birth of Enid Blyton.

The 20p stamp features a child looking at an illustration of Noddy and Big Ears. The 26p, 37p, 43p and 63p values depict scenes from *The Famous Five*, *Secret Seven*, *Faraway Tree*, and *Malory Towers*.

The stamps are concerned with famous series of books rather than individual titles, eg there are 21 Famous Five books and three books about the Faraway Tree. The five stamps cover the following postal rates: 20p inland 2nd class basic rate, 26p inland 1st class and EU basic rates, 37p air-mail postcard rate, 43p basic airmail letter rate, and 63p airmail letters, second weight step.

ENID BLYTON Enid Mary Blyton was born in a small, two-bedroom apartment above a shop in East Dulwich on 11 August 1897. She first started writing stories as a teenager and later as a teacher, wrote short plays and verse for teacher's magazines. Her first book, *Child Whispers*, a collection of poems, was published in 1922. Over 40 years she wrote some 700 books

Presentation pack and stamp cards

A presentation pack (price £2.25) and stamp cards (25p each) will be available from the Bureau, Post Office Counters philatelic outlets, and main post offices.



15.6 x 98.2

Enid Blyton

Royal Mail Mini Stamp



CHAPTER ONE

The Imagination of Enid Blyton

ENID BLYTON manages to enter the mind of the child. The themes and storylines are instantly appealing and are combined with a strong narrative drive. Her characters are larger than life and her use of 'heightened reality' reveals a dramatic (sometimes melodramatic) motif. She once wrote, 'The story is enacted in my mind's eye almost as if I had a private cinema screen.' This is true for her readers too, giving an immediacy and, even in her most fantastic stories, a believability which involves them. The reader cares passionately about her characters and their predicaments. Blyton offers honour, magic and adventure. She appeals to her readers' natural sense of fairness, making them indignant when an injustice is done, and inspiring a burning desire to see a wrong righted. She intrigues her readers with puzzles and mysteries to solve: she doesn't simply hold their attention, she grabs it, then dares them not to turn the page to see what happens next.



which have delighted children around the world; her works have been translated into no fewer than 27 languages. Using a manual typewriter (before the days of word processors!), placed on a board over her knees, her output was an astonishing 6000-10,000 words a day!

For some years her work was considered politically incorrect and schools and libraries did not encourage children to read her stories. In recent times her reputation as a children's storyteller has been restored and some 8 million of her books are sold each year. The National Conference for Research into Children's Literature has described her books as 'a thumping good read'.

Some of the inspiration for Enid Blyton's characters came from her family. Her daughter's rag doll, for instance, gave rise to Naughty Amelia Jane. Many of her books were written at her home, Green Hedges, near Beaconsfield where she lived for 30 years. The house was demolished in 1973, but a scale replica can be seen at a nearby model village. Although she pretended to have an idyllic family life, Enid Blyton's personal life was far from happy as a TV documentary earlier this year showed. Like many people whose craft has brought laughter and happiness to millions, she hid her sadness in her writings. Enid Blyton died in a nursing home on 28 November 1968.

The designer The stamps are the work of Christian Birmingham, who designed the 1995 Rugby League stamps. Born in 1970, he graduated from Exeter College of Art and Design in 1991 and the following year joined Startworks, a group of young artists. He has worked for several design groups, and has illustrated children's books *The Dancing Bear*, *The Magical Bicycle* and *Butterfly Lion* as well as books on the scientists Marie Curie and Pasteur.

Technical details

Printers Joh Enschedé
Stamps

Process Gravure

Size 30 x 41 mm

Sheets 100

Perforation 14 x 15

Phosphor One band 20p ●
two bands others

Paper OBA (Optical Brightening Agent) free

Gum PVA

Enid Blyton's *Secret Seven*Enid Blyton's *Faraway Tree*Enid Blyton's *Malory Towers***Enid Blyton competition**

Stamp Active and the Benham Group have created a competition for young people to promote stamp collecting and interest in design. **See Stamp Scene** for details.

The Faraway Tree stories were written for young children. 'In an enchanted wood', writes children's dramatist David Wood, 'ordinary children meet extraordinary characters like Moon-Face, Silky the elf and the Saucepan Man...' Older children identified with *The Famous Five* or *The Secret Seven* stories. 'These', writes Mr Wood, 'are ordinary children inhabiting a world more like the readers' own – albeit somewhat idealised – sharing adventures and solving mysteries.' *The Malory Towers* books are archetypal school stories with 'themes to which every schoolchild can relate – hero-worship, bullying, the best friend...'

Perhaps her most famous creation was Noddy, a sweet-natured boy in a blue hat. Earlier this year, Trocadero plc, owners of Enid Blyton Ltd, decided to give Noddy an American accent to star in a cartoon series in Canada and the USA. Big Ears, the little yellow car and most of the figures from the British books, videos, and TV episodes will feature in the £5 million, 40-part series which will be screened in Spring 1998.

These are the first British stamps to feature Enid Blyton's work. Noddy and Big Ears, in a floral 'Tribute to Enid Blyton', featured on Jersey's 4d Battle of Flowers stamp in 1970 (SG 38).

FIRST DAY FACILITIES Unstamped Royal Mail first day cover envelopes will be available from main post offices, the British Philatelic Bureau and Post Office Counters philatelic outlets around a week before 9 September, price 25p.

Orders for the Royal Mail cover bearing the stamps, cancelled with a pictorial 'first day of issue' postmark of the Bureau or Beaconsfield, price £2.64 (including VAT) to UK addresses, £2.25 overseas (no VAT), must be received at the Bureau by 9 September. Alternatively, collectors may send stamped covers, on the day of issue, to: British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, Edinburgh EH3 5TT, or Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, Wexham Road, Slough SL1 1AA (Beaconsfield postmark). The outer envelope should be marked 'FD9715' (Bureau), or 'FD9716' (Beaconsfield).

First Day Posting Boxes will be provided at most main post offices for collectors to post covers to receive local (mostly non-pictorial) 'first day of issue' handstamps. Sponsored special handstamps will be announced in the *British Postmark Bulletin* – available on subscription from the Bureau (£10 UK/Europe; £21.75 rest of world).

Collectors may submit covers bearing just the 20p Enid Blyton stamp for all first day, philatelic and sponsored handstamps in use on 9 September, the 1st class rule for special handstamps being waived for the day ●

NPM news To mark the golden wedding anniversary of HM The Queen and HRH The Duke of Edinburgh, the National Postal Museum is staging a 'Golden and Glorious' exhibition showing some of the Royal stamp issues since 1947. The exhibition opens on 5 August and will run for one year. The displays will concentrate on the 1953 Coronation and 1972 Royal Silver Wedding issues.

No British stamps were issued in 1947 for the wedding itself but it was

marked by a slogan postmark. A proposed stamp a year later for the birth of the first grandchild to King George VI never materialised but did reach artwork stage. However, all subsequent, major Royal occasions have been commemorated on stamps. Often special portraits are commissioned and even more attention is paid by the Post Office, artists and printers alike to such issues. Hence the wealth of artwork for the Coronation stamps and the number of variations in the Royal Silver Wedding essays.

The Museum has, over the years, issued a number of postcards reproducing unadopted designs for Royal stamps, for example the proposed Edward VIII Coronation stamps, and the 1953 Coronation issue. Still available is a set of four, issued in April 1997, showing essays for the 1972 Silver Wedding issue. The four cards are available to callers at the NPM shop, or by post from the British Philatelic Bureau, price £1 per set.

NPM POST OFFICE CARDS The Museum will issue four new cards relating to the Post Offices stamps on 12 August 1997. The cards feature the interiors of sub-offices at Shipbourne, 1935; Rosehill, 1947; Shorne, 1939; and Cobham, 1939. The photographs are from Post Office Archives; the cards bear reference numbers NPM97/14-17. They will be available to visitors to the NPM shop, or by post from the British Philatelic Bureau, price £1 per set. A special handstamp will be used on 12 August; items for reposting should be sent to: Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, Mount Pleasant, London EC1A 1LP requesting 'Museum special 12 August'. The Museum's regular Maltese Cross postmark will also be available, request handstamp No 1985.

An exhibition of the work of Terence Millington, designer of the Post Offices stamps, will be on show in the Museum's ground floor temporary exhibition gallery from 12 August for several months.

ROYAL STAMPS ON SHOW The Museum is delighted that HM The Queen has agreed that stamps from the Royal Collection will be on show at the NPM from late September until the end of the year. The display will show stamps from the Mediterranean area, including issues from Gibraltar, Cyprus, Malta, Crete, Long Island and the Ionian Islands. This follows the earlier display of Mauritius at the NPM last Autumn (see *Bulletin* October and December 1996). Sadly that display was curtailed when the Museum closed for repairs last November. It is hoped that collectors who were disappointed not to see the Mauritius display will enjoy the new Mediterranean exhibition •

Aerogramme quantities The numbers sold of some 1996 aerogrammes were: Scottish Football 47,250; Scottish Edinburgh Festival 49,225; and Olympics 110,850 •

The National Postal Museum in King Edward Street, London EC1A 1LP, is a short walk from St Paul's Cathedral and underground station. Open Monday to Friday 09.30-16.30. Closed public holidays. Admission is free.

Enquiries 0171 600 8914



Post Offices card 97/16 The interior of Shorne Sub-Post Office, 1939



BBC prestige stamp book The 1997 prestige stamp book, to be issued on 23 September, commemorates the 75th anniversary of the BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation). This is the 20th in a series of prestige books dating back to the 'Stamps for Cooks' book of December 1969.

This new book will cost £6.15 and contains stamps of that amount. The well-illustrated pages tell the story of BBC radio and television.



Front cover (above), and a spread including pane 2. Opposite below, pane 1.

The book contains four panes as follows Pane 1: top row Scotland 26p & 37p; middle row Wales 26p & 37p; bottom row N Ireland 26p & 37p ● Pane 2: top and bottom rows 1st NVI, 26p definitive, 1st NVI; middle row 26p, label, 26p ● Pane 3: three rows of 20p definitive and 26p definitive (rust colour) ● Pane 4: 4 x 20p Children's TV (Muffin the Mule), two rows of two stamps

The definitive and country stamps have two phosphor bands, except 20p which has one band at right. The 20p Children's TV stamp has one centre phosphor band.

Once in a while, a significant national occasion will bring the country to a virtual standstill – state occasions such as coronations and royal weddings, the general election, Remembrance Sunday or major charity events such as Live Aid or BBC Children in Need. The BBC provides the mechanism which allows us to share in these national moments, having the structure, the technology and the

skills to bring memorable events into our homes, as they happen. The first state occasion to see the new commonplace television outside broadcast van was the coronation of George VI in 1937. A decade later the wedding of Princess Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh was covered the scale and complexity of more recent events puts this on the shade. The VI and VI Day commemorations in 1993

United nation
 ● First outside broadcast ● Adoration broadcast of Edward VIII ● Churchill's This was their finest hour' broadcast ● First radio Party Political broadcast by Asquith ● Election results first reported on TV ● 20 million watch the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II ● First televised Queen's Christmas broadcast ● Our World ● Prince of Wales' Investiture ● First experimental radio broadcasts from



The book has been produced by Harrison & Sons Ltd, the stamp panes in gravure (using EME produced cylinders), the text pages are printed in offset lithography.

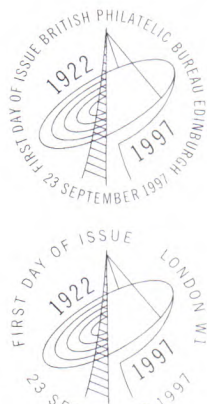
All the above-listed stamps have elliptical perfs on the vertical sides. Specialist collectors may note minor differences between the stamps in this book and the same basic stamps from sheets and other books. Such differences will be reported by

Douglas Myall in his Decimal Stamp Books column in this magazine later in the year. The original sheet printing of the 20p Children's TV stamp, issued 3 September 1996, was by Joh Enschedé Stamps.

Each stamp pane is divided into three sections by two vertical rows of rouletting, approx 10mm from the left-hand edge of the pane and 5mm from the left-hand stamps in the pane. This will make for easy separation by collectors who want just the stamps from the pane or the stamps plus printed matter. The panes measure 162mm across by 96mm deep.

The book has been designed by Howard Brown, who designed the 1991 Maps, 1993 Marine Timekeepers and 1996 Football Legends stamps. Mr Brown was awarded the Reginald M Phillips medal for his contribution to stamp design for the years 1990-94.

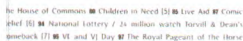
FIRST DAY FACILITIES Unstamped Royal Mail first day cover envelopes will be available from the Bureau, PO Counters philatelic outlets and main post offices about a week before 23 September, price 25p. The Bureau will provide a first day cover service – collectors may order the Royal Mail





ROYAL MAIL FIRST DAY COVER
BBC 75
CELEBRATING 75 YEARS OF THE BBC

are watched by millions on the BBC which provided an unrivalled 24 hours of live coverage. As well as uniting the nation, BBC broadcasting can unite the globe. The phenomenon of live Aid in 1985 with its sophisticated satellite link ups was preceded by Our World in 1967, the first worldwide TV programme bringing live pictures from countries around the globe.



cover bearing the mixed pane of 26p and 1st class
NVI gold stamps with pictorial label cancelled by
a Bureau or London w/1 'first day of issue' pictorial
postmark, price £2.87 (inc VAT) to UK address-
es, £2.44 (no VAT) overseas. Orders for serviced
covers must reach the Bureau by 23 September.

Collectors may send their own stamped covers, on the day of issue, for the Bureau or London postmarks to: British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, Edinburgh EH3 5TT, or Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, Mount Pleasant, London EC1A 1BB (London w1 cancel). The outer envelope should be marked 'FD PSB9701' (Bureau), or 'FD PSB9702' (London w1).

First Day Posting boxes will be provided at most main post offices for collectors who wish to post covers to receive local (mostly non-pictorial) 'first day of issue' handstamps. Details of other sponsored special handstamps will be announced in the *British Postmark Bulletin*.

Any of the stamps in the prestige book can be used, singly or in combination (subject to minimum 20p postage) on first day covers to qualify for 'first day of issue' and other philatelic handstamps in use on 23 September. The minimum 1st class rule will be waived for this day, ie 20p stamps from the book can be used on their own.

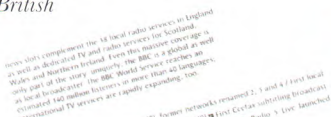
The book yields the following definitive and Country stamps – some new to this book, others exist elsewhere

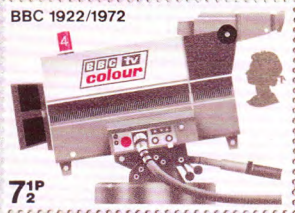
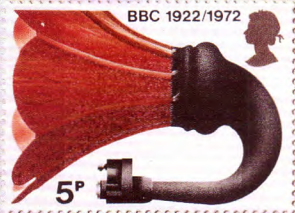
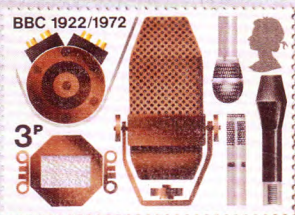
Stamp	New/other source
20p phos band right	New
26p rust 2 bands	New ¹
26p gold 2 bands	Sheets
1st NVI gold 2 bands	Sheets ² , 10 x 1st books
N Ireland 26p and 37p 2 bands	Sheets ³
Scotland 26p and 37p 2 bands	Sheets ³
Wales 26p and 37p 2 bands	Sheets ³

1 Previous sheet stamp (issued 25 June 1996) from acid-etched cylinders, sheet stamp from EME cylinder scheduled for issue November 1997

2 Previous sheet stamp (21 April 1997) printed by Walsall

3 Previous sheet stamps (1 July 1997) printed by Walsall





A BBC STAMP COLLECTION Somewhat surprisingly, the BBC and its programmes have featured on few British stamps. The first comprised the 199d stamp in the 1967 Discovery & Invention set, featuring Baird's primitive TV scanner with modern TV equipment. The BBC's 50th anniversary was commemorated by three stamps in a Broadcasting Anniversaries set in September 1972. These featured microphones, a horn loudspeaker, and a BBC TV camera. The 25th anniversary, in 1961, was commemorated simply by a slogan postmark. The 50th anniversary of childrens' television set last year featured Muffin the Mule and Sooty, two of the most popular characters on BBC children's programmes.

One of the 1990 Europa stamps featured Alexandra Palace in north London, from where the first television programmes were broadcast in 1936. John Logie Baird (1888-1946), inventor of television, was commemorated in the Scottish Post Office Board's 'Communicating Genius' postcard series of February 1989. A slogan postmark commemorating the centenary of Baird's birth was used at Glasgow, 1-29 August 1988 •

Post Offices stamps The cylinder numbers and colours are: 1A (greenish-yellow) 1B (bright magenta) 1C (new blue) 1D (grey-black) 1E (rosine) 1F (blue green) – all four values •

New PO Chairman for Northern Ireland Mr Bryan Johnston has been appointed Chairman of the Northern Ireland Post Office Board in succession to Mr Danny Carty who retired in March. Mr Johnston, a former Chief Executive of the TSB, had a long and distinguished career in all aspects of banking and management. He is a member of the council of the CBI in Northern Ireland and a board member of City West Action Limited •

Definitives update Readers are reminded that new printings of the 31p, 37p and 63p definitives printed in sheets of 200 in gravure (electro-mechanical engraved cylinders) by Harrison & Sons Ltd will be available from the Bureau and philatelic outlets from 26 August.

Also going on philatelic sale the same day will be rolls (coils) of 500 of the 37p and 43p printed by Harrisons using EME cylinders (the sheet version of the 43p was released in April), and books of 4 × 37p and 4 × 63p printed in gravure (EME cylinders) by Walsall. The book of 4 × 37p will have a new tourist design cover and include the new design Royal Mail airmail label (see May *Bulletin* page 266). Cylinders used: w1, both values.

All these are regarded by Royal Mail as variants and there will be no first day of issue facilities. The stamps, rolls and books will go on general sale at post offices (and other outlets where applicable) as stocks of earlier issues are used up •

New stamp books A book of 10 × 1st class NVT stamps (gold) with a holiday promotion cover will be available from the Bureau and philatelic outlets from 15 September and from post offices and other outlets as stocks require. The book, printed by Harrisons, shows a tropical beach scene on the cover. Details of the promotion are given on the inside back cover. Purchasers who book a holiday with Travelworld Direct can send the back covers from two promotional books of 10 1st class stamps when making their final holiday payment. They will receive, with their tickets, a voucher worth up to £100 in exchange for foreign currency or traveller's cheques at participating post offices •



Bulletin binders and back issues Binders are available for this and the *British Postmark Bulletin*, designed to hold two and one years' issues respectively. The maroon-coloured Philatelic Bulletin binder costs £7, the green Postmark Bulletin binder £6.50. Order codes PB001 (Philatelic), PB322 (Postmark). Orders should be sent to British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, Edinburgh EH3 5TT.

The *Postmark Bulletin*, published fortnightly, gives information on forthcoming special handstamps and postmark slogans, and includes feature articles by top postmark collectors James Mackay and Colin Peachey. For a free sample copy, write to the Bureau or The Editor Postmark Bulletin, Royal Mail, 22 Finsbury Square, London EC2A 1NL.

Back issues of the *Philatelic Bulletin* are available for one year from the Bureau, price 75p a copy (August 1996), 85p each (September 1996 onwards). For earlier issues contact Mr Maynard Davies who offers bound reprints of vols 1 and 2, photocopies of issues from vols 3-6 and original copies of most issues from vol 7 onwards, also a limited stock of used binders. Mr Davies wishes to purchase issues from vols 3-6 but has adequate stocks of later issues. He regrets he cannot search for or provide copies of specific articles •

Maynard Davies enquiries
(with stamped addressed envelope or international reply coupon) to: Casula,
3 Romans Way, Pyrford,
Woking, GU22 8TP.

Philatelic numismatic cover A PNC entitled 'Flights of Genius' will be available from 23 August – the 50th anniversary of the death of Roy Chadwick, designer of the Lancaster. The cover bears the Architects of the Air stamps, cancelled by a special postmark, and a Royal Mint £2 coin. Price £12.95 from British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, Edinburgh EH3 5TT. Please note that PNCs are not sold at Post Office Counters Ltd philatelic outlets. Limited edition of 40,000 so early ordering advised •

Stamp scene News, exhibitions and events



Stamp competition winners
(from top) Samantha Walker, age 13 of Surrey, Kelly Ballet, age six of London and Kristian Kimonides, age 9½ of Victoria, Australia.

Children enjoy Stamp '97 Some 2000 children attended the Stamp '97 exhibition at Wembley in April. Many found their way to the House of Horrors where they were able to design a horror stamp, aided and abetted by staff from stamp printers The House of Questa. Over 1000 entries were judged by Paul Singleton of Questa, John Ryan and Lauretta Morris of Royal Mail. The winners (left) each receive a Penny Black from Stanley Gibbons and see their designs reproduced on a souvenir sheet, printed by Questa. Once again we are grateful to Questa for making available this sheet for inclusion as a free gift in this *Bulletin*. This makes a worthy addition to any stamp exhibition souvenirs collection; similar sheets reproducing the winning entries in previous competitions were included in the August 1995 and August 1996 issues of this magazine.

Over 800 children also entered Questa's 'Find the Q Competition' and more than 1150 also successfully completed the stamp treasure hunt. The supervised weekend crèche, children's entertainers and face painting were all popular with both children and their parents.

Stamp '97 was described by Francis Kiddle, Chairman of the British Philatelic Trust and former President of the Royal Philatelic Society, London as 'a vibrant show which went with a real buzz. There was a lot of enthusiasm. Visitors, attracted to the show by the significant amount of coverage in the national, regional and philatelic press, showed great interest in the displays. The perception, importance and significance of stamp collecting in the last 12 months has changed dramatically from something

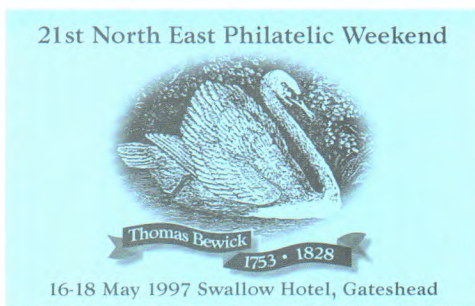
people don't want to admit doing, to a hobby which now receives extensive media attention.'

Plans are now in hand for an even more successful Stamp '98 at Wembley, 23-26 April 1998 •

ABPS Awards 1997 The Association of British Philatelic Societies has announced its 1997 awards. The Congress Medal goes to Allan Berry who has been active in organised philately at local, regional, specialist and national levels for many years. He is currently President of the Guildford & District Philatelic Society, Chairman of the Philatelic Writers Society and has held high offices in the New Zealand Society of Great Britain. A leading collector of NZ stamps, he has served Stampex and BPE and international exhibitions in London, written philatelic articles, co-ordinated the production of books, and edited the *Kiwi* magazine for 22 years.

Awards of Merit for voluntary service at regional, specialist and local society level go to: Leslie G Berry, Carol Bullock, John B Child, Alan Gardiner, Charles Haines, Leslie Y Johnson, and Jo B Mullard. Our congratulations to all on this recognition of their philatelic work •

Northeast Philatelic Weekend As always the atmosphere at this annual event (Newcastle upon Tyne, 16-18 May) was friendly and happy. After dinner on the Friday evening, displays of 10 pages from their collections were presented by over 30 participants; these ranged from GB Twopence Blues to modern Hong Kong, from erudite postal history to wrappers bearing £50-£60 worth of high value stamps. Guest speakers included Colin Gibson, of The House of Questa, on stamp production, and Jennifer Toombs on Pitcairn Islands. Her display included original artwork for many stamps and photographs taken during her visit to Pitcairn. Delegates were entertained with a beautifully presented display on Roses by Sheila Foster who also presented a teach-in on the use of computers for writing-up a collection. John Jeffery gave, in his own inimitable manner, an award winning acrophilatelic display of the Pioneer Years of KLM, 1924-30. Other attractions included a stamp quest, a stamp fair, and entertainment by two young members of the Gateshead Youth Orchestra. The organisers, Dorothy Martin, and Desmond Graham, are congratulated on a fine event. EB ●



A **souvenir book** was prepared for the weekend, described in the May *Bulletin*, page 265. A limited quantity is still available, price £2 or £3 signed by Thomas Bewick a descendant of Thomas Bewick (1753-1828). A Bewick Swan is shown on the front cover of the book. Orders and enquiries to Mrs Martin, address below.

The 1998 weekend will be held 15-17 May. Send a stamped addressed envelope to Mrs Martin, 46 Briardene Crescent, Kenton Park, Newcastle upon Tyne NE3 4RY for details.

The Picture Postcard Show 1997 Every year the Postcard Traders Association organises a major four-day international exhibition and collectors' fair at the New Royal Horticultural Hall, London SW1. This year's event takes place 27-30 August. With over 100 top dealers, mainly from the UK, but with visiting dealers from Europe, USA and Australasia, there will be a combined total of over 2 million cards, covering every topic in the postcard catalogues, on sale at this prestigious event. The large and colourful exhibition of postcards includes a competition judged by the visitors. Top experts will be on hand at an information stand to give advice and valuations.

The nearest underground stations are St James's Park, Pimlico, and Victoria. Bus routes 2, 2B, 36, 36B, 185, and 507 serve the area ●

Opening hours

27 August	12.00-20.00
28 & 29 August	11.00-20.00
30 August	11.00-18.00

Admission is £3 on opening day, £1.50 other days. Season ticket £5. Accompanied children free.

Enquiries Dave Davis, 01702 587603

Walsall trial stamps In April we offered 25 sets of the trial stamps designed by students at the Royal College of Art and printed by Walsall Security Printers to test their new gravure presses. These stamps were described by Douglas Myall in his article on Walsall in the March *Bulletin*. The 25 lucky winners are: J Scammell (Essex), K Littlewood (Yorkshire), J Grau (Germany), H List (Northants), W Murphy (Ireland), W Glassey (Dorset), J Brookfield (Germany), D Bradley (Yorks), S Challis (Cambs), I Chandler (Teesside), J Beard (Glos), H Rocke (Co Durham), J Hardy (Essex), F Godden (Yorks), A Protonotarios (South Africa), Miss M Chandler (Yorks), E Lee (Philippines), J Hobbs (Sussex), K Yale (Surrey), D Jefferies (Scotland), G Parker (Staffs), J James (W Midlands), J Paulson (Derbys), J Childs (Notts), and Miss E MacDonell (Kent) ●



All entries should be sent to Anne Broadhurst, Benham, Folkestone CT20 1SD by 22 August 1997.

The winners will be announced in the Autumn; the winning designs will be stamped and postmarked on 9 September 1997 and returned after that date.

Entrants who want their covers returned should enclose an appropriate size stamped addressed envelope.

For details of Stamp Active send a stamped addressed envelope to: Stamp Active, 3 Longfellow Road, Banbury OX16 9LB.

Enid Blyton competition Stamp Active and the Benham Group have combined to create an exciting new competition for young people to promote stamp collecting and interest in design. This involves designing a first day cover based on the stories featured on the forthcoming Royal Mail Enid Blyton stamps: *Noddy*, *The Famous Five*, *The Secret Seven*, *The Faraway Tree* or *Malory Towers*. The design should be drawn or painted on a good quality blank envelope (any size). Entrants should state which stories their design is based on and should leave space on the cover for a stamp, postmark and write their name and address on the envelope. The winner and 50 runners-up will have their design made into a unique FDC by Benham. The winner will also receive a special package of Benham children's FDCs.

The Stamp Active programme of the National Youth Stamp Group and British Philatelic Trust, helps promote youth philately. In particular it provides activity guides and information packs for adults involved in starting and running junior stamp clubs; since 1990 it has helped over 500 clubs get established •

Posting boxes 168



OUR FIRST TWO PHOTOGRAPHS this month show boxes north of the border with the distinctive crown used on Elizabeth II posting boxes throughout Scotland. The double aperture box is outside the post office at Cramond near Edinburgh, the bright new design fibre glass box on the railway station at Aberdeen. Both were photographed by the Editor last summer.

The third photograph shows a George V phone box with stamp machines and posting aperture at Kidderminster station on the Severn Valley Railway. It was photographed by Lionel Jones of the National Postal Museum earlier this year. A similar box, at Frodsham was shown last month, and other boxes of this type at Whitley Bay station, Northumberland and on the East Somerset Railway were featured here in March 1980, September 1986 and August 1992.

Finally we show one of the new business posting boxes, for franked mail only, situated on an industrial estate at Newhaven, East Sussex. The photograph was submitted by Paul Moulton of Eastbourne. These boxes allow businesses to post metered mail after post offices have closed, collections from these boxes being at 6.30 or 7pm. Metered mail is not supposed to be posted in ordinary street letter boxes •

Readers interested in letter boxes should consider joining the Letter Box Study Group which has some 700 members. For details send a stamped addressed envelope to the Secretary: Sally Jones, 43 Miall Road, Hall Green, Birmingham B28 9BS.

Royal opening for Royal Mail sorting centre in London



Left The rail platforms at the Princess Royal distribution Centre, Willesden

Below The restored TPO coach on the Severn Valley Railway

A report on the new Royal Mail sorting office in Aberdeen, also recently opened by The Princess Royal, will be published next month.

HRH THE PRINCESS ROYAL recently officially opened Royal Mail's Princess Royal Distribution Centre at Willesden, north London. This is the hub of Royal Mail's £150 million 'Railnet' project for distribution and exchange of mail from over 60 main sorting offices. The £30 million building incorporates seven rail platforms and 40 vehicle loading bays. It opened for road and rail operations in May and September 1996 respectively, replacing rail operations at five central London stations and two depots. Railnet uses traditional TPOs and specially built trains, costing £48 million, in which mail is handled in 'York' containers rather than in loose mail bags. Containerisation means less strenuous physical work and improved working conditions for staff and the reduction in the number of times mail is handled means fewer mistakes for customers and mail arriving in better condition. Each York container can carry up to 20 mail bags or 28 plastic trays of mail.

Eventually some 70% of Royal Mail's rail-borne traffic will be dealt with at special terminals in strategic locations. Doncaster, Newcastle and Tonbridge are already in operation; others are expected at Glasgow, Stafford, and Warrington, and Bristol and Peterborough may be added later. In other towns and cities, from Edinburgh in the north to Penzance in the west and Dover and Norwich in the east, mail will be handled at main railway stations. The special trains can



each carry up to 180 York containers and run at speeds of up to 100 mph. The London centre, which handles over 100 million letters a week, comprises two huge halls. The sorting hall (11,000 square metres) houses computer controlled mail processing machinery and automated equipment to carry mail on and off vehicles at the loading docks. The railway hall (17,000 sq m) houses the specially designed platforms for the easy transfer of the York containers on and off the mail trains

The Willesden centre was shown to the press in March and after a tour of the site, journalists were taken by train to Kidderminster where Mr Richard Dykes, Managing Director of Royal Mail, presented a TPO coach to the Severn Valley Railway. The coach, the first of the current fleet of TPOs, built at Wolverton in 1959, carried mail for 34 years on various routes including London-Penzance, Whitehaven-Huddersfield and Crewe-Holyhead. It has been expertly restored •

Decimal stamp books 34 Specialist report by D G A Myall

New book covers I sometimes wonder if collectors appreciate how much time, effort and money is expended in providing them with their free material. Free? Yes, stamp books are always sold at the face value of the contents. (A decision to charge £6 for the 1993 Beatrix Potter prestige book, the price printed on the cover, was rescinded at a late stage and it was sold at £5.64, the value of the stamps inside.) Apart from the aptly named prestige books, with their glossy interleaves containing photographs and researched text, decimal stamp book covers contained themed illustrations from their inception until 1989 for the now extinct counter books, and 1996 for the machine-vended books, now replaced by the ubiquitous red covers. These themes were very popular and many regret their passing. Part of the attraction of the very first decimal stamp books for me were the notes about the subject of the illustrations which appeared on the inside covers. It was through these that I learnt many little items of postal lore, such as that London's first pillar boxes were green, not red. But enough of nostalgia; there are developments coming to fruition which are just as interesting in their way and which will have consequences for collectors of today's booklets.

Chief among these is probably the installation of a new bookmaking machine at Walsall. This is made by Bickel, a firm hitherto known to collectors chiefly for its perforating machines. Walsall propose to make all their GB books on the new machine and this will involve much more than printing the covers on their also new Man Roland eight-unit lithographic press and marrying them to the booklet panes. New cylinder and perforator layouts are also involved. Why should these be necessary?

In my last column I revealed the meaning of the word Landor, whose presence on some box labels had puzzled so many. It was this firm of design consultants which was responsible for the appearance of the block design on the front covers of current retail books. If you butt two covers one above the other, you will see that this

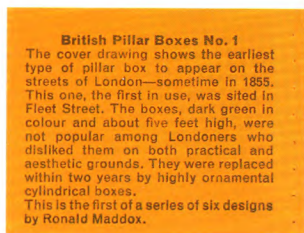
Right Cover of the first decimal stamp books, with notes on the subject of illustrations.

Far right Cover incorrectly trimmed (above) with correct trimming below.



multiple design is self-contained and is not continuous. This means that each cover has to be cut very precisely as otherwise part of The Queen's head is deformed. Just such an outcome can be seen at the bottom of the Harrison book above. In anticipation of this problem Walsall have completely changed their methods to avoid it.

Their former practice was to lay down 'columns' of 10 booklets on the printing plates; the number of columns across the plate varied depending on whether the panes were of four or ten stamps. Their gravure cylinders have a circumference of 21 stamp rows, the extra row being blank. The new cylinders will have only nine books per column; referred to by printers as 'nine up'. The spare three rows are distributed evenly between the double rows of stamps, giving 10 blank strips across the cylinder, each one a third of the height of a single stamp. A new perforator will have the same circumference as the cylinder and the pin layout will match these blank strips. The reason for this elaborate set-up is a change in the design of the covers. These, too, will be printed nine up, the equivalent of the blank strips being filled with solid colour; this will be Post Office red for the books of four 1st-class stamps and for the books of 10 when the flame stamps are resumed later this year. The self-contained design of the block of stamp images will thus be bounded top and bottom by these coloured strips. These will be chopped out by the new Bickel machine. However, they provide a safety margin in the case of any slight miscutting. If that should occur, The Queen's head will be



unmarred but there might be a sliver of a coloured line at either the top or bottom of the cover.

So you see to what lengths Royal Mail and the printers go to ensure that your free covers are as perfect as they can be, even to the extent of sacrificing 10% of the production (or, rather, increasing costs to maintain the same output as before).

Another firm to install a Bickel bookmaking machine is Enschedé of Haarlem, although they do not, as yet, produce stamp books for Royal Mail. Should they secure a share in this in the future, it will be interesting to see whether they also change cylinder and perforator layouts to avoid *lèse majesté*.

Gravure and EME A correspondent points out that the advent of Electro-mechanical Engraving, or EME, means that the term photogravure is now technically incorrect, since photography no longer plays any part in the production of the printing cylinder. He suggests that the word gravure alone is sufficient to embrace all forms of gravure printing, including photogravure and rotogravure, and that the only accurate way of referring to the new cylinders is gravure from EME cylinders. I mostly agree with him and will try to remember to use gravure when referring to EME, but use photogravure when referring to the traditional acid-etch or chemical process.

The new technique was developed by the Hell organisation in Germany. In fact, they produce a range of Helio-Klischograph machines, of which some are used for postage stamp cylinder making. Enschedé of Haarlem have used EME,

methods for GB stamps for many years now and I suppose that their product should be called gravure, except for the 8p of 1979 and, of course, the new Castles stamps which are recess. In fact their method is slightly different to that used by the other gravure printers of GB stamps. The machine used for the Walsall cylinders is made by Hell but I understand that it is not a Klischograph. Harrison use a Klischograph and the output is made to an intermediate stage before the actual engraving takes place. The Enschedé method is more advanced and does not involve this intermediate stage, the output being direct from computer to engraving tool.

The EME method of engraving uses a diamond stylus similar in operation to a lathe. The copper cylinder is rotated slowly while the stylus cuts the cells. These vary in depth and the deeper the cut the greater the surface area removed from the cylinder, giving darker areas. Cells in adjacent rows are staggered by half a cell and give the appearance under magnification of a screen. In fact this method provides a screen angle of 45°. Screen angle is important when more than one colour is used since, if the same angle is used for different colours, an unpleasant effect, known as a moiré pattern, is produced. This is similar to the graduated squares sometimes used deliberately on television and film to disguise the appearance of a suspect or interviewee. To avoid this, the screen angle is varied. One does not often encounter this on GB definitives since so few of them have been bi-coloured, but it is vital when producing cylinders for multi-coloured printing.

The Klischograph machines are quite capable of producing screen angles of 30° or 60° by varying the rotational speed of the copper cylinder with the frequency of the cutting tool in a carefully calculated fashion.

I understand that the reason why Walsall used two cylinders for the gold definitives was because one printed the background and the other the head and that these were of different resolutions, the one producing the head being finer than the other. The gold ink used poses particular problems and it is possible that future monochrome definitives from this firm will use only one engraving stylus.

As you can see, today's stamp production, even of the comparatively simple monochrome issues, owes almost everything to the computer. The new image, which was mentioned here last time, is in fact a digital scanning direct from one of the original photographs taken of the Machin plaque. This is why it could be supplied to other printers on disk and why Enschedé could send it direct to the engraving tool.

Further developments may be in the offing. Laser engraving methods are also possible today and may be used in future stamp production.

Short-lived flowers There is no doubt that the current Flowers Greetings stamps are an all-time favourite with the general public. This is not so with collectors who are struggling to keep up-to-date with all the plate combinations used in their production, to say nothing of actually acquiring them. To assist them in the first objective a com-

plete list to the time of writing of the numbers used for the various forms of the issue is given below. Some of them have been given in earlier articles but the list will save readers from looking up back issues of the *Bulletin*. The bouquet winner book is proving particularly elusive and is known, so far, on only one of the 41 different combinations. Even winner books without plate numbers are scarce. In a recent auction, they fetched around £50 each. The closest to one that one collector I know came was seeing a discarded winning cover on the floor of a post office, with all the stamps removed. It had not been scratched but it is possible to tell a winner from a loser by careful examination (and even more certainly by the use of a UV lamp). Judging by the price a plain book fetched at auction it would pay you to offer to buy any purchaser of a winning book several fine bouquets in exchange for it! Of the non-promotional combinations, w1w1 w2w1w1w2 is very scarce. Only one of the combinations has not appeared in book form; unless you know different, of course. As you can see from this full list, some plates are taken off the press and put back later which is why some of them appear to be out of sequence.

New books This month, August, several new books are scheduled to appear. Among them will be the Walsall books of four with 37p and 63p stamps for worldwide airmail services, printed in gravure from EME cylinders. At the time this article was submitted, I had not seen them but I will report on them in my next article ●

First (non-promotional) version 29 combinations	W1W1W1W1W1W1*	W1W3W4W1W2W3**	W2W3W6W2W3W5	W4W4W7W3W4W7
Combination also exists on the pane in a presentation pack*	W1W1W2W1W1W1*	W2W3W4W1W2W3*	W3W4W6W2W3W5	W4W4W8W3W3W6
Appears only in a pack**	W1W1W2W1W1W2*	W2W3W4W2W2W3*	W3W4W6W2W3W5*	W4W4W8W3W3W7
Others exist only in book form.	W1W1W2W1W1W3*	W2W3W4W2W3W4	W3W4W6W3W3W6	W4W4W8W3W4W7
	W1W1W2W1W2W3*	W2W3W5W2W3W4	W3W4W7W3W3W5	W5W5W9W4W3W6
	W1W1W3W1W2W3*	W2W3W5W2W3W5	W3W4W7W3W3W6	W5W5W9W4W3W7
	W1W2W3W1W2W3*	W2W3W6W2W3W4	W3W4W7W3W4W7	W5W5W9W4W4W7
	W1W3W3W1W2W3*			
Second (promotional) version 12 combinations so far!	W6W6W10W5W5W8	W6W6W11W5W5W9	W6W7W11W5W5W10	W7W8W13W6W5W11
None appears in a pack.	W6W6W10W5W5W9	W6W6W11W5W5W10	W6W7W12W5W5W10	W7W8W13W6W6W11
	W6W6W11W5W5W8	W6W7W11W5W5W9	W7W8W13W6W5W10	W8W9W14W7W6W11

Sub post offices Nothing is taken more for granted by the public than the friendly, neighbourhood sub post office; only when it closes for good is its convenience and social value realised and sadly missed. James Mackay reports

IN MANY hamlets and villages all over the British Isles the sub post office is the modern equivalent of the parish pump, a place to meet and exchange news and gossip, to pick up one's old age pension, children's allowance or giro (depending on circumstances), to get a television licence or encash a postal order. And, of course, it's still the main place to obtain stamps and post letters and parcels.

Sub post offices have functioned in some strange places. The story goes that, on one occasion, the great department store magnate, H Gordon Selfridge, was travelling in the Scottish Highlands and popped into the 'Jenny-a'-things', as village shops were jocularly known because they sold everything from hardware to groceries, and often over the same tiny counter. When Selfridge remarked to the shopkeeper that he, too, had a store that sold everything, alluding to his vast Oxford Street emporium, the Highlander gave him a knowing look and responded, 'Ah, but do you have the post office as well?' Selfridge could reply that, yes, indeed, he did have a post office – and it bore his name. He might have added that there was also a sub post office in Harrod's Stores in Brompton Road. Both of them handled telegrams, registered mail and the full range of agency work but did not cancel ordinary mail, so their distinctive postmarks may only be found on registered covers, receipts and postal orders.

North of the Border, two large department stores boasted their own sub post office, though neither had a postmark that identified the store. Thus the sub office at 234 Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow was located in Treron's, while the office at 47 Princes Street, Edinburgh was in the sub-ground floor of Jenner's. Incidentally the former had a most distinctive postmark, while the latter

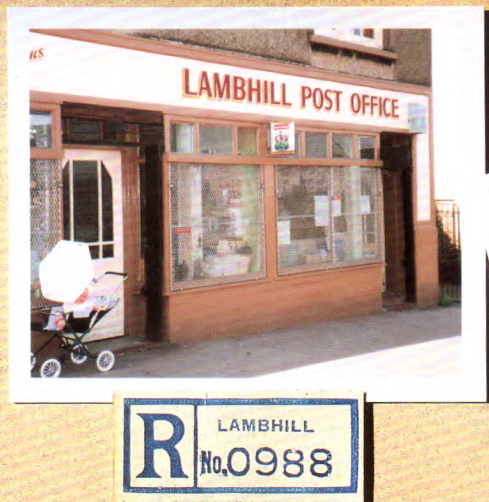
was probably the last office in the UK to use a Climax rubber datestamp. Today there are sub offices in supermarkets, shopping centres and motorway service stations, and a few actually bear the appropriate name of their location.



Sub office datestamps

Poignant reminder London, in the 19th and early 20th centuries, had a wide range of offices located in unusual places including such historic sites as the Royal Courts of Justice, the Royal Automobile Club and the Hearts of Oak Benefit Society. Several hotels, such as the Hotel Cecil and the Langham Place Hotel had post office facilities, and there were several offices in the major exhibition centres. The postmark from the office at the main entrance of the Crystal Palace, dated 30 November 1936, is a poignant reminder of the night that this celebrated landmark was burned down. Amid the debris the following morning was discovered the office datestamp, its handle badly charred but the steel face intact, with the date slugs still in place from the last time it was used.

Generations of postal historians have pursued the tangible mementoes of the British sub post office. At the turn of the century, and continuing down till the First World War, there were probably more sub offices per head of population in the British Isles than in any other country. Furthermore, the town sub offices (those located within the delivery area of a town or city)



had datestamps that bore the actual address of the office, whereas in many other countries the identity of the office would be concealed behind a letter or numeral. This system of precisely identifying sub post offices continues to this day. To be sure, it gives rise to anomalies when a sub office moves from one location to another, perhaps another street, but in the interests of economy the old datestamp is retained in use, sometimes for many years. In more recent years there has been a tendency to give district names to sub offices in order to avoid this problem.

Parcel and registration labels From 1883 till the First World War every sub post office also had its own distinctive parcel labels which not only included the full postal address of the office, but also its telegraphic code, if it had this facility. In fact, many of the smaller country offices had parcel labels long before they had a datestamp, and this explains why labels are often found with the name and date entered in manuscript, and even occasionally pen-cancellation on the adhesive stamps as well, though they were supposed to be obliterated at the nearest head post office.

From 1907 till the 1960s sub post offices also had distinctive registration labels, and one can trace the socio-economic development of a vil-

lage by the changing inscriptions on the labels, beginning with labels which bore the name of the sub office, when it was still in a rural setting. Then, when the village was absorbed into the neighbouring town and the independent sub office was transformed into a town sub office it would use labels with the town name followed by an identifying number, the sub-office indicator in official parlance. Many of the earlier labels had a space for the insertion of the number in manuscript or by means of a small rubber stamp, but latterly the numbers were printed on the labels as a matter of course.

A distinction should be made between the sub post office whose premises are owned or rented by the sub postmaster, and those whose buildings are the property of the Post Office. The latter were known as Salaried Sub Offices (sso) because they were manned by full-time postal staff. At the turn of the century these ssos sprang up in the burgeoning suburbs of large towns and cities and were usually staffed by girls, under the eagle eye of a 'superintending counterwoman'. They also existed in many towns where a head post office had been downgraded and, indeed, they existed until fairly recently when, as part of the policy of rationalisation, numerous post office buildings have been sold and the functions

R GLASGOW 274
No 1840



Opposite page, from left
Datestamps from The Lizard,
Helston, Cornwall – the most
southerly post office. 1948,
above, and 1996.

Lambhill PO, Glasgow G22
6QT – the named registration
label below later gave way to
'Glasgow 274'.

This page The reconstructed
PO on St Kilda, one of Britain's
most remote islands.

North Lowestoft – the most
easterly post office in the UK

of the sub office transferred to a counter inside a supermarket.

Lower down the scale, there have been sweeping changes in the village sub offices. In the 1950s and 1960s many of them disappeared, partly because they were unremunerative and partly because it was becoming increasingly difficult to obtain staff willing to work the long hours, and be tied to opening five and a half days a week. The PO negotiated an agreement with the National Federation of Sub Postmasters in July 1987, resulting in the reclassification of all sub offices transacting fewer than 50,000 units of business per annum. The regarding of Scale Payment Sub Offices to Credit Stock Offices over the past 10 years reflects the change to Community offices in rural areas – a trend which, it is hoped, will stem the tide of retrenchment which has gone on so relentlessly in recent years.

The set of stamps celebrating the centenary of the National Federation of Sub Postmasters has appropriately chosen sub offices representing the four countries of the United Kingdom. Harolds-wick (20p) is the only one which may be described as a superlative, being the most northerly post office in the British Isles. Scotland can also boast the highest – at Wanlockhead (1500ft, 451m) – and the oldest operational office in the world –

at Sanquhar, which has been in the same building since at least 1712 and may date from 1710. For eight years (1922-30) Scotland also had the most westerly post office in the United Kingdom, on the island of St Kilda; but when the island was evacuated in August 1930 and the sub office closed, that honour then passed to the sub office at Garrison, near Magherafelt, Co Fermanagh in Northern Ireland. Prior to the creation of the Irish Free State, the most westerly office in the UK was on Great Blasket Island, Co Kerry, but since its closure in the early 1950s that distinction passed to the office on Valentia Island. The most southerly sub office in England is at The Lizard in Cornwall, and the most easterly is the North Lowestoft sub office in the High Street, Lowestoft, Suffolk.

The sub offices of England are represented by the attractive Tudor facade of the office at Painswick, Gloucestershire (26p), while the sub office at Beddgelert in Snowdonia (43p) represents Wales. Ballyroney, Co Down (63p) represents Northern Ireland and incidentally shows one of the surviving red telephone kiosks still in use ●

For articles, by Dr Mackay, on the post offices at Sanquhar and Wanlockhead, see *Bulletins* January 1994 and August 1995.

The Wilding definitives What to look out for, by Matthew



ANYONE who has ever tried to make sense of the 1988 or 1992 decimal Castles will know just how complicated they can be! I spoke to one collector recently who expressed his relief at the introduction of the 1992 series because it meant he could give up with his 1988 Castle plate blocks collection, and begin all over again. How wrong he was! The pre-decimal Castle high value stamps are no more straightforward, but at least the boundaries are known, unlike the unknown quantity that is the current series. In this article I outline the variations between the stamps, which are based around possibly the four most beautiful designs in British philatelic history.

The same four castles have been depicted on the high value definitives ever since 1955, when Waterlow and Sons Ltd produced the 10s value. The stamp showed a picture of Edinburgh Castle, the building now, of course, featured on the current £2 stamp. The original stamp was issued on 1 September 1955 and was followed on the 7th by the £1 value, showing Windsor Castle, now the star of the £5 high value stamp. The 2s 6d and 5s values completed the set when they were released on the 23rd of the month, carrying pictures of Carrickfergus and Caernarfon Castles respectively. These are now depicted on the £3 (and on the now obsolete £1) and £1.50. The castles and inscriptions were accompanied by a portrait of The Queen.

New printer From 1958 the job of printing the castle high-values went to (then) London based

printers, De La Rue & Co Ltd. The 10s was, again, the first value to go on sale being released on 25 April 1958. The £1 was the next value to be issued, appearing three days later, with the 5s going on sale on the 30th and the 2s6d following suit on 17 July. These eight stamps were printed on paper bearing the St Edward's Crown watermark. Paper containing a different watermark was brought into use shortly afterwards. This watermark was the Multiple Crowns design and 5s appeared on paper bearing the new watermark on 15 June 1959. The £1, 10s and 2s6d then followed in June and July.

Another new printer! By 1963, production of the Castle high value stamps had switched from De La Rue to Bradbury Wilkinson and Co Ltd. The values appeared in ascending order on 1 July, 3 September, 16 October and 14 November respectively. These went on sale on paper with no watermark and in reverse order – the £1 being issued on 4 December 1967, the 10s on 10 April 1968, the 5s also appearing on this day and 1 July being the release date of the lowest value, the 2s6d. Differentiating the stamps of De La Rue and those of Waterlow, on St Edward's Crown watermarked paper, can be difficult. Here are some tips which may come in handy. First of all, the colours of the designs differ a little. The 2s6d is a blackish brown shade, invariably appearing as a warmer shade of brown when produced by De La Rue. The De La Rue 5s is a softer shade of rose-carmine while the 10s ultramarine is a deeper,

Hinton. Part 2, Pre-decimal Castles, 1955-67



2s6d printed by (from left) Waterlow, De La Rue and Bradbury Wilkinson

duller shade on DLR issues. The De La Rue £1 appears in a softer shade of black. Some De La Rue copies have narrower horizontal gutters between the stamps than those sheets emanating from Waterlow plates – those below 3.8mm being from the De La Rue produced sheets.

The earlier Waterlow examples are printed on creamy paper and the narrow horizontal rows mean that the top perforation tooth on De La Rue copies is noticeably narrower than that of Waterlow's. One final check can be made by looking at the individual lines in the design – those of De La Rue stamps tend to be sharper, giving the impression of a clearer, more detailed image.

If you possess marginal examples then it is undoubtedly a great deal simpler to tell between the printers. De La Rue sheets can sometimes contain a ⊥ or ⊥ in one of the vertical margins. The mark is used during production as a trimming guide-mark. On the Waterlow sheets this appears as a ○ or ⊕ and is visible in both margins, unless one of them has been sliced off. A few De La Rue 2s 6d values from 1959 also bear a small dot in the bottom margin below the first stamp, which can be useful as a final confirmation of a De La Rue Castle.

Also on the Waterlow sheets there are trimming guides visible in the perforation gutter, between the marginal stamps, marking the centre of the four sides. These appear as —, and a + is also seen in the centre of the sheet. At the corners of the sheet another trimming mark, ⊥, is present. (Unless, of course, it has been trimmed off!).

It can also prove fairly difficult to differentiate between the Bradbury Wilkinson and De La Rue issues on the paper with the multiple crowns watermark. I shall try and help here as best I can. Firstly, the De La Rue 5s and 10s reverted to scarlet vermilion and blue, whilst the Bradbury colours didn't change – at least not to the same degree – and appear much more as red and ultramarine. The engraving on the BW versions is quite a lot deeper than that of De La Rue, and the detail on The Queen's diadem is a lot sharper. The Queen's face appears less flattering, and more wrinkled, and the sheets bear a plate number, a feature not found on sheets of these stamps produced by De La Rue. Also, the vertical perforation rows contain slightly closer holes – perforation 11.9 against 11.8. (11.9 perforation holes per 2cm on Bradbury Wilkinson stamps and only 11.8 on those stamps produced by De La Rue. It is best to invest in a perforation gauge for detecting these differences). For anyone interested, the second De La Rue set is also available as part of a presentation pack, which exists both with or without a \$6.50 inscription, added to packs intended for sale in America.

Inverted watermark Several values appear with an inverted watermark, caused when sheet-fed paper was inserted the wrong way into the press. The first De La Rue 2s 6d, second De La Rue 2s 6d, second De La Rue 10s and the second De La Rue £1, as well as all four Bradbury Wilkinson stamps that have a watermark are affected by this usually common and, thus, inexpensive feature. Less than twenty of the second De La Rue 5s exist and mint examples retail at about £350. Only one mint copy of the Bradbury £1 has ever surfaced to date, and the first De La Rue 2s 6d does not exist in mint condition.

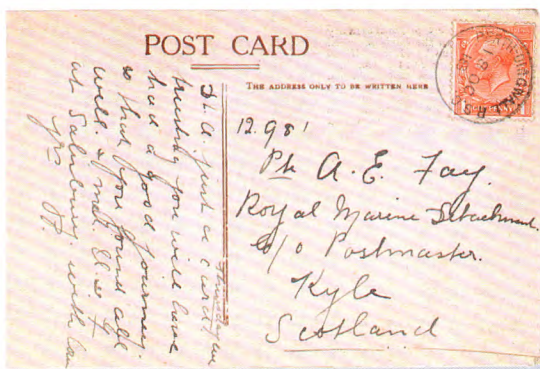
Average prices for the others are: first De La Rue £1, £110; Bradbury 2s 6d, £420; Bradbury 5s, £170; fine used Bradbury 10s, £315.

Varieties The second De La Rue 2s6d is known offset on the reverse, priced at about £250. The Bradbury Wilkinson 5s value (with watermark) also exists with the design printed on the gummed reverse side, but this time not offset. This error is quite scarce, as with all 'printed on the gummed side' stamps, and would probably fetch around £420. One further variety I should bring to your attention is to be found on the Bradbury Wilkinson 2s6d, with watermark, which exists in huge quantities with chalk surfaced paper. This was an official release, issued on 30 May 1968, and it can be tested for by looking for the presence of a black mark when the surface is touched by silver wire. This sells for next to nothing – about 10p, just like its ordinary counterpart. The first four De La Rue stamps exist overprinted with the

word CANCELLED applied in violet ink. Forty sets are known to exist, and these retail at around £425 a set. The Bradbury Wilkinson £1 also exists with a small or large overprint, usually fetching around £25. Another attractive variety, which occurs on most printings, can be seen on the Queen's elbow, where the hatched shading can be partially omitted. This exists to various degrees and I have a set of three showing the progression of the feature, as it was gradually retouched. Mounted together they appear most pleasing, so look out for it in your kiloware!

Approximate prices for the basic sets are: Waterlow £150, first De La Rue issue £375, Bradbury Wilkinson with watermark £6, second De La Rue issue £125, Bradbury without watermark £5 •

New TPO finds Tom Norgate describes a further discovery



LAST MONTH I described the discovery of the first use of a Victorian TPO marking on live mail, that of a South Western TPO handstamp used on a letter from Queen Victoria. In the same, eight-volume collection of TPO markings of England, Scotland and Wales now in the National Postal Museum, I have now found another handstamp previously unknown used on mail.

The Highland TPO was established in August 1870. The use of handstamps is recorded from two years later. Over the following 45 years approximately 25 different handstamps have been listed as being issued and most have been recorded

on mail. All had the word 'Highland' included in full or abbreviated form.

This changed in 1917. As a result of economies during the First World War, major changes took place in the sorting arrangements in the Scottish Highlands. Amongst these was the renaming of the service to Dingwall from the south. From November 1917 this was named the 'Dingwall-Perth R.S.C.' (Railway Sorting Carriage) and the 'Perth-Dingwall R.S.C.' depending on the direction of the train. Examples of the former marking are scarce but the latter has hitherto remained unrecorded. Now a picture postcard addressed to a Private in the Royal Marine Detachment at Kyle (probably Kyle of Lochalsh) has been found with the stamp cancelled by this datestamp, used on 18 October 1918. The Dingwall-Perth R.S.C. handstamp is recorded in Harold S Wilson's *The Travelling Post Offices of Great Britain & Ireland* (1996) but not until January 1924 •

This item, and the collection of TPO markings can be viewed at the National Postal Museum by appointment. Telephone 0171 600 8914

Books NPM Review of 1996 • A guide to postal stationery

National Postal Museum Review of 1996 As always this handsomely produced *Review*, ably edited by Douglas Muir, contains a feast of fine illustrations and informative reports of the Museum's work. The PO Secretary, Richard Osmond, and Christine Jones the new Director, Heritage Services in charge of both the NPM and PO Archives record the progress made at the NPM during 1996 despite 'uncertainty' and 'trying circumstances'. Plans for exhibiting part of the Museum's philatelic collections in Glasgow, and relocating the entire Museum in central London both fell through and in November the Museum was forced to close to the public for the redevelopment of King Edward Building. This work has taken longer than expected, but the Museum should reopen in early August.

1996 saw a number of good exhibitions, especially those for the bicentenary of Robert Burns and of Mauritius stamps from the Royal collection. These are duly chronicled in a well-illustrated section. Under Work in Progress we read of the listing of postal history material (including some 1341 TPO/Railway items) stored in some 140 albums. Remounting continues of the collection of special issue artwork and essays – over 100 special issues have been dealt with, to 1975, also some George VI and Elizabeth II Wilding definitives. Two Friends of the Museum, Mike Bament and Don Staddon continue good work on postal history (particularly Penny Posts) and Wilding and Machin stamp books. Don mounts new stamp issues to keep the main gallery display of basic British issues (from 1902) up to date – this is a most useful and popular feature for visitors. The Museum's vast stamps of the world collection continues to benefit from the work of Derrick Page who also looks after the famous Freddie Mercury Collection – a star attraction at the Capex international exhibition.

Staff continue to produce stamp histories from research in both museum and archives. Some have already been published in earlier *Reviews* and one on the 1953 Coronation issue is now available in book form – to be reviewed here next month.

Christine Jones, in her former role as Collection Manager Artefacts, records improved storage arrangements and the loan of NPM material to such prestigious institutions as the Science and National Railway Museums. Zara Matthews provides a nicely illustrated record of postal service paintings and portraits held by the NPM, also a new listing of the pillar boxes collection. The boxes are identified by Letter Box Study Group numbers, as well as PO type. The Recent Acquisitions report shows the wide range of material acquired by the NPM quite apart from the stamps, artworks and postal history items of particular interest to readers of this magazine. Several more letterboxes were acquired, an unusual 'Supertackle' mobile training desk for coding desk operators, a fine silver salver depicting a packet boat, and badges and medallions. Four volumes of TPO covers included two postmarks not previously recorded (see articles, by Tom Norgate, here and in last month's *Bulletin*).

Simon Bates and Martin Rush report on PO Archives, especially the Map Collection. The entire collection has been photographed and large reproductions of the circulation maps are available in the Archives Search Room. Krystyna Koscia provides a further worthwhile account of paper conservation, including a look at the use of non-archival plastic for storing philatelic material. She also writes on the advice given by the NPM to the Mauritius Commercial Bank Ltd for safeguarding its collections which include the famous 'Post Office' Mauritius stamps of 1847.

The *Review* concludes with a listing of the NPM postcards and handstamps of 1996 and a short report of the activities of the Friends of the Museum. The Friends had a busy year, attending numerous exhibitions, recruiting 124 new members, enjoying talks from several eminent persons, making visits to Pitney Bowes, BT Museum, Isle of Man Philatelic Bureau and elsewhere, and reading two bumper issues of their excellent publication *Crosspost*.

Tributes are paid to Jean Farrugia and Stan Goron who retired during 1996 as PO Archivist

and Manager of the NPM, after 44 and 26 years PO service. Stan raised the NPM's stature in the museum world. When he took over in 1986, the NPM was still essentially just a stamp museum, now it is a true museum of the history of the postal service with an increasing number of visitors. Much of Stan's time in recent years was devoted to plans for a way forward for both the Museum and Archives. Now merged under one Director, he, like many of us, will look forward to seeing even greater progress in the years ahead.

The 1996 *Review* is amongst the best of the nine produced since 1988 – all now becoming collectors' items in their own right and building up into a most useful reference work. 32 pages plus list of Acquisitions for 1996 and cumulative index of all nine *Reviews*. Price £5. Available at NPM shop, or by post from British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, Edinburgh EH3 5TT •

The Collectors' Guide to Postal Stationery Peter van Gelder's new book on the collecting and study of postal stationery is a welcome addition to the rather small number of books which are currently available relating to this subject. It is aimed more towards the beginner or would-be collector rather than someone with an established collection, although many an advanced philatelist is likely to learn something new about postal stationery, such is the coverage of this modest little book. Although the book is intended to be a general guide to the collecting of stationery that has been issued by almost every country in the world, the GB collector will find much in it of interest to him, including many specific references to stationery issued by the British Post Office.

In the first few chapters the author explores the individual histories of the various types of postal stationery and discusses possible definitions of what type of material might be considered as coming under the main heading, wisely leaving the final choice in the matter to the reader. I found it strange therefore that having chosen to include as stationery only those items on which a stamp is printed, the author devotes nearly a whole chapter to two pseudo items of

stationery and the celebrations in 1890 for the Uniform Penny Post Jubilee.

The author goes on to discuss in some detail the six different types of stationery which have been issued throughout the world over the past 160 years, although I could not get used to his term 'postal card' rather than 'postcard' which is normally used in this country. The author draws collectors' attention to stationery items which might look similar but can vary in size, colour, or type of paper and cardboard used in their production, pointing out that these variations can add to the depth of a collection. Even newspaper wrappers, considered by some to be the 'ugly ducklings' of stationery, are described in some detail. For the beginner the book gives plenty of information on how to start a collection, what limits should be set to keep its size within reason, where new material can be bought, how items should be stored and displayed and most importantly, what to do, or not to do, to keep a collection in good condition.

At the end of the book there is a useful bibliography, although I would have liked to have seen the inclusion of works such as Malcolm Lowe's *The Mulready Advertisements*, particularly as the author refers to these particular items of stationery several times. Similarly the glossary contains references to terms not applicable to postal stationery, while other expressions, normally associated with stationery, have been omitted. The book's illustrations, of which there are plenty, are unfortunately all in black and white which fails to do many of them justice. I would have preferred to have seen colour used wherever possible, but I am aware this would have increased the book's selling price.

Despite these minor criticisms, this is an excellent book which should be read by every beginner and would-be collector of postal stationery. This branch of philately is becoming ever more popular and this book will help to guide the novice through the uncharted jungle of building up a collection. Soft bound, 88 pages, price £7.95, postage 50p from Squirrel Publishing, 6 & 7 Castle Gates, Shrewsbury SY1 2AE. *Review by Colin Baker* •

Competition Win an original work of art worth £750!

THIS MONTH'S COMPETITION is sponsored by Fourpenny Post, dealers in blank, serviced and counter datestamp FDCs

Introducing Fourpenny Post This company, run by John and Susannah Strettle, has provided a FDC service for GB stamps since the 1970s. In the 1980s they enjoyed offering collectors a choice of Royal Mail, Philart (and Philart Luxury), Mercury, Presentation 'Silk', Stuart and Cotswold covers along with a choice of pictorial and relevant postmarks for commemorative and definitive issues. The 1990s gave John and Susannah a fresh challenge as they continued to build their specialised FDC service. Soon, the only blank covers left for collectors and dealers to use would be Royal Mail, Cotswold, and Stuart.

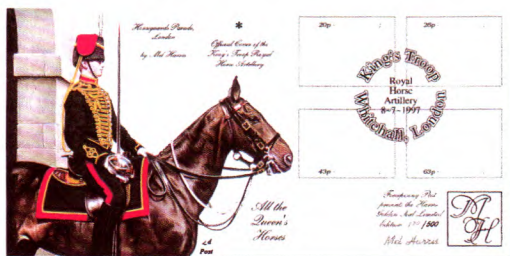
The idea of the 4d Post Annual Series of famous artist-designed FDCs, available as blanks, was conceived just before the Burns issue in January 1996. A specially designed cover has been produced for each GB issue since, most available for collectors and dealers to buy and service themselves. The stylish design and production achieved early recognition for the company, winners of the retail section of the Tyneside Business Innovation awards in 1996. 4d Post is the only company providing blank ordinary and blank official covers for collectors to purchase and service themselves.

Stamp designers Anne Yvonne Gilbert (1984 & 1994 Christmas and 1985 Arthurian Legends stamps), Mel Harris (stamps for Austria, Hong Kong, etc), and Tony Lewery (1993 Inland waterways) are currently part of the design team. New for 1997 is the '4d Post presents the Harris Golden Seal Edition' series – an exclusive limited signed series of official covers in full colour. This will be restricted to two per year, for 1997 All The Queen's Horses and the Royal Golden Wedding.

Send for a list of suppliers of 4d Post covers. Enclose a stamped label (60p rate) for a 4d Post Welsh black slate coaster and sample 4d Post cover of our choice whilst stocks last. Fourpenny Post, 30 Dinsdale Avenue, Wallsend, NE28 9JD. Telephone 0191 262 8844.

To enter the competition answer the questions below and send, with your name and address, on a postcard or back of an envelope to: August Bulletin Competition, Royal Mail, 22 Finsbury Square, London EC2A 1NL to arrive by 26 September. Entries must be posted separately; multiple entries in one envelope will be disregarded. The answers will be found in this *Bulletin*.

- 1 Where was Enid Blyton born?
- 2 When was the Highland TPO established?
- 3 Who printed the 10s stamp released on 25 April 1958?
- 4 What is the telephone number of the National Postal Museum?



1st prize Original artwork, by Mel Harris, for All The Queen's Horses – King's Troop Royal Horse Artillery FDC, framed, valued as a piece of art at £750

Two 2nd prizes All The Queen's Horses Official FDC (with 1st prize design). Usually £12.95

Three 3rd prizes MG Car Club official FDC designed by Mel Harris, usually £9.90

Four 4th prizes Football Legends official FDC designed by A Y Gilbert, usually £7.50

Five 5th prizes Golden Definitions FDC designed by A Y Gilbert, usually £3.04

The competition is not open to employees, their families and agents, of Royal Mail or 4d Post.

The winners of the May competition were M Ilott of Berkshire (1st prize), B Berg of Finland (2nd) and R Silver of Suffolk (3rd).

The answers 1) Edmund Dulac; 2) Turner Duckworth; 3) 28; 4) Leslie L R Hausburg; 5) 29 May-8 June 1997. Our thanks to all who entered.

Postbag

Commemoratives I should like to add my comments to those of Mr Bruce (May). Our experiences are in many ways parallel; I too first became interested in philately more years ago than it is comfortable to remember. In my case, I stuck with it until about 1980, before coming to the same conclusions regarding the British PO's ever-proliferating issues of increasingly unlovely and expensive products. 'Racket' might be the word that springs to mind were any other commercial organisation involved. Sorrow, however, more than anger, are the feelings evoked, over the loss of a reputation for producing what was needful, supplemented occasionally by a beautifully designed set of stamps in commemoration of a meaningful event in the nation's history, to a proliferation of coloured coupons produced with the sole aim of raising money from the punters.

I too have recently returned to the hobby, Mr Bruce, but I fear we are voices in the wilderness – dinosaurs, no doubt. My recourse is to ignore that which I dislike, concentrating on definitives and such commemoratives and FDCs as hold any real meaning for me. MRS EDNA WOODROFFE, COVENTRY

First day covers In response to Hamish Bruce (May, page 284), no you are not alone. Until the 1880s the Post Office seemed to keep very rough and securely closeted records of the actual date of first issue of postage stamps, though after privileged access their intentions have now become clear, and any erratic pre-issue acquired a financially valuable significance to Victorian collectors and their successors. These were accidental or mistaken early pre-releases of new stamps, and form part of the bona-fide postal history of the UK, of legitimate historical interest.

The current enthusiasm for FDCs is something different altogether. It has established, by a strongly advertised commercial process, the production of philatelic souvenirs to commemorate a stamp issue with a decorated envelope incorporating postmarked stamps, usually at a place connected historically, or even punningly, with the event.

There can be no doubt from other prior records – particularly the *Bulletin* – of what was the intended date of first issue. The value of a commercial FDC ought, therefore, to be the cost of materials, postage and the organiser's legitimate profit in selling it to those who care to have an attractive souvenir. Now anyone is at liberty to collect anything legal that he fancies and to pay the price he thinks it is worth. After all we all collect and pay a premium over face value for an unused stamp or over scrap paper price for cancelled mail. What I object to particularly is artificial creation of scarcity, limited editions and unreal value placed on material which has acquired a wrong pre-issue date. For me a commercial FDC has long seemed meaningless and pointless to collect.

To be fair I have always objected equally to the (admittedly beautiful) £1 1929 PUC which never served any useful postal function and was created deliberately to be a philatelic souvenir to enhance the price of the set, pointing the way for countless other unnecessary issues worldwide.

I would never presume to try to tell another collector what he ought or ought not to acquire, but I do suggest that we think carefully before supporting an artificially contrived market in postal memorabilia. B D CAMERON, ORPINGTON

Machin definitives I refer to Mr Myall's 'Preparing for the Machins' (June *Bulletin*) and also note that once again the stamps are in the limelight to have them replaced with a different design. When I saw the pictures of the Wilding definitives, reproduced so beautifully, it brought back memories of my stay in England. I was at a boarding school in 1965 and, writing home every week brought me into contact with the Wilding stamps for postage use only. Collecting stamps was not the 'in thing' during those days but a school friend who collected stamps found the Kenyan stamps on my mail more attractive than the Wildings. When the new Machin series started he regretted having complained about the Wildings. He wondered how The Queen could

have accepted the new designs. That was 30 years ago; I am sure he has pages and pages of the Machins if he is still collecting. I started collecting GB Elizabeth II stamps in 1975 and still feel the Wildings are most attractive. So perhaps we could change back to something similar with a recent portrait of The Queen. Why not ask The Queen as to how she feels about the Machin stamps as she takes a keen interest in the designs of British stamps. That should, once and for all, settle this ongoing debate. S F ESMAILJI, KENYA

Machins v Wildings I have read the various comments in recent issues regarding the Machins and the Wildings and agree that it is time for a change. The Machins are boring, boring and boring, although not necessarily in that order. The Wilding designs were just that, *designed*, individually and with care. An updated version of these would not only stimulate sales but also attract new collectors, as I was attracted at an early age. They would also be a fitting tribute to Dorothy Wilding. Am I alone in thinking this way? Is there anyone out there listening? JIM O'NEIL, HOYLAKE

Over 80 years collecting I have a large collection of stamps of the world totalling over 44,000. Of these some 23,000 are Commonwealth issues. I started to collect when I was about five years old, approx 1910. My first stamp was received on a letter from France. I was very excited with it and kept the envelope in my dressing table drawer. As I grew older I mixed with school fellows and so met other boys who were stamp collectors so I was 'hooked' and have collected since then. As years passed I got more stamps and bought myself an album (Woolworths in those days) for a few pence. My collection grew as more low value stamps came along. When I became a more serious collector, I was fortunate to find, in box full of stamps given me by a lady, several penny blacks and a lot of the one penny issues of Queen Victoria, 1858-60. J A PAGE, NEW ZEALAND

Mr Page has collected stamps for 87 years. Can any reader beat that? ED ●

Events

National Postal Museum The Museum is expected to reopen on 5 August with a new major exhibition 'Golden and Glorious' showing Royal stamp issues. A display of the work of Terence Millington, designer of the Post Offices stamps opens in the ground floor exhibition gallery on 12 August, day of issue of the stamps. **Enquiries** 0171 600 8914

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

27-30 August The Picture Postcard Show 1997 at New Royal Horticultural Hall, Greycoat and Elverton Streets, London SW1. Admission £3 27th, £1.50 other days. **Enquiries** D Davis 01702 587603

29-31 August 49th International Stamp Fair and 36th 'Europa' International Philatelic Exhibition at Palazzo del Turismo, Riccione, Italy. **Enquiries** Comune di Riccione, via Vittorio Emanuele II, 2, I-47036, Riccione, Italy

13 September Philatelic Music Circle Annual Convention at Victory Services Club, Seymour Street, London W2. 11.00-17.00. **Enquiries** I Summers, 01706 826655

13-14 September Brussels '97 exhibition at Sheraton Airport Hotel, Brussels. Displays from some of finest collections in Europe, Belgian Postal Museum, leading dealers, etc. **Enquiries** Erik Paaskesen Philatelists, 0032 2 676 64 97

15-20 September Croydon '97 exhibition and stamp fair (20 Sep) at Fairfield Halls, Croydon. Organised by Croydon Phil Soc to mark its 90th anniversary.

17 September Display of Victorian Postal Stationery by *Bulletin* contributor Colin Baker to Derby Phil Soc at Queens Hall, London Road, Derby (opposite Royal infirmary), 17.30. Visitors and prospective members welcome ●

Index to volume 34 Compiled by Dr Jean Alexander

Air mail See also Postal stationery

Atlantic *Beith* 21
 Empire *Beith* 304
 Etiquette 266
 News in Flight *Malcolm* 54
 North Atlantic *Beith* 19, 240, 268
 Via Rome *Beith* 21

Awards

ABPS 238, 364
 Philatelic Writers Society 333
 Rowland Hill, October insert 231
 Royal Mail stamps 166, 264

Biography

Berry, Alan 364
 Burbage, Colin 198
 Burnett, Maitland *Negus* 346
 Carty, Danny 266, 362
 Evans, Lewis 198
 Gibb, Alex 198
 Goodwyn, Charles *Holman* 246, (L)350
 Goron, Stan 41, 377
 Graham, Kenneth 266
 Griffiths, Steve 9
 Hausburg, Leslie R *Negus* 278
 Johnston, Bryan 362
 Macdonald, Keith 134
 Mackay, James *Holman* 86
 Mackay, John 9, 198
 Morris, Margaret *Mackay* 308
 Moubray, Jane 25
 Philbrick, Frederick A *Negus* 214
 Rapkin, Franceska *Holman* 46
 Reeves, Angela 72
 Robinson, Barry 232
 Rothnie, Pat 76
 Smith, Gordon *Negus* 119
 Ward, John 266
 West, Richard 201

Book reviews

27, 60, 91, 124, 158, 185, 218, 254, 286, 314, 348, 377

British Philatelic Bulletin

Back issues 363
 Binders 98, 329, 363
 Bulletin interviews 46, 86, 246, 308
 Philatelic Bulletin poll 234
 Publications 260, 329

British Postmark Bulletin

170

Channel Islands

78, 171, (L)350

Cinderella

College stamps *Gee* 14, (L)127
 Conservation ('duck stamps') 12
 Iona labels 238
 Lundy Island 332

Commemorative covers

32, 39, 296, 318, 328, 363

Definitives See also Stamp books

1996 Checklist 142
 Boots label 233
 Coils 127, 194, 362
 Country 104, 198, 264, 295, 328
 High Value 7, 24, 104, *Hinton* 155, 166, 199, (L)222, 264, 295, 328, 331, 352, *Hinton* 374
 Machin (L)159, 199, (L)222, 290, *Myall* 299, *Hinton* 302, 328, (L)350, 380
 Gold definitives 71, 196, 233, *Mackay* 243, 311
 Machin values, sheet stamps
 1p 199, 226, 264
 2p 264, 290
 4p 264, 290
 5p 264, 290
 6p 264, 290
 10p 264, 290
 20p 104, 199, 264, 290
 26p 264
 30p 264, 290
 31p 264, 328, 362
 36p 39
 37p 264, 328, 362
 39p 264, 290
 43p 199, 264, 290
 50p 199, 226, 264
 £1 199, 226, 264
 NVI 39, 70, 104, 199, 233
 Printers 105, 199
 Self-adhesive 167, 194, 197
 Wildings 299, *Hinton* 344, 374, (L)381
 Withdrawal 36p 39

Design

Children's stamp designs 364

RSA student stamp designs

280
 Stamp Advisory Committee 169
 Swiss 'living' design 11
 Walsall trial stamps 255

Designers

Benard, Jean Luc 292
 Birmingham, Christian 357
 Clay, Simon 4
 Games, Abram 76
 Melinsky, Clare 165
 Pollock, Ian 229
 Stephens, Kate 100
 Stoddart, Laura 36
 Turner Duckworth 260

Events

31, 63, 95, 159, 191, 223, 256, 287, 319, 351, 381

Exhibitions

Capex 13
 Hong Kong '97 176
 Ilsapex '98 107
 Italia '98 75
 Keeping You Posted 106
 Midpex 298
 Newcastle '96 74, 179
 Norwex '97 237
 NZ Philatelic Literature 238
 Olympilex '96 *Rapkin* 80
 Pacific '97 266
 Picture Postcard Show 365
 Postal memorabilia 106
 Rare Stamps of the World
 Mackay 334
 Stamp '96 Autumn 73
 Stamp '97 200, 236, 330, 364
 Stamp Show 2000 332
 Stampex Autumn 1996/7 10, 73, 106, 137, 333
 Stampex Spring 1997 75, 136
 Thematica 267, 298

Fairs

200

First day covers

(L)284, 380
 Enid Blyton competition 366

George V

1925 British Empire Exhibition
Sabey 180

George VI

Matheson 270

Inks

Fluor 228

Meter marks

75 Years *Mackay* 146

National Postal Museum

Association of Friends 72, 170
 Exhibitions
 Golden and Glorious 358
 Post Haste! 8
 Queen's Collection –
 Mauritius 8, 42, 107,
 Mediterranean 359
 Sub Post Offices 8, 71
 Freddie Mercury Collection 8
 News 8, 41, 66, 71, 130, 260
 Postcards 8, 170, 199, 233, 329, 359
 Review 1996 377
 Stamp histories 104, 377
 TPO Collection *Norgate* 336, 376

Obituary

Games, Abram 76
 Goodwin, Jack 133
 Ogden, Eric 328

Overseas

Europa stamps 337
 Guernsey Actors stamps 171
 Mauritius *Ibbotson* 42, 107
 Norway postal anniversary 237
 Ukraine Royal visit 284
 World definitives *Mackay* 58

Perfins

Mackay 338

Post boxes

30, 127, 189, 202, (L)350, 351, 366

Post Office Archives

Curiosities *Bendall* 79,
Stephenson 184, *Bendall* 239, *Perry* 306
 First World War relics 22
 Miniatures 114, 211

Post Offices

Grimsby postshop 40
 House of Commons 274
 Scottish 77

Sub-Post office stamp issue
322, 324, 326
Sub-Post offices *Mackay* 371
Truro postshop 226

Postal history

Bletchley Park *Mackay* 317
Parcel labels *Mackay* 372
Postal map 18th century 171
Registration labels *Mackay*
372

Postal stationery

Aerogrammes
Captain Cook 198
Christmas 7, 39
Golden Wedding 198, 290
Quantities 198, 359
Scottish 105, 169, 198,
Mackay 212, 296, *Mackay*
342, 359
Standard 198
Airpacks 134
Book review 378
Stamped to Order *Baker* 82,
127, 131, 138, 208

Postbuses

Early services *Robinson* 173

Postmarks

Philatelic handstamps 265
Slogan service 104

Printers

Enschédé 105, 199, 369
Harrison 199, 264, 369
Walsall (graveure) 113, 199,
Myall 203, 255, 264, 365,
369

Railways

Letter stamps 107, 201, 238,
Eades & Oakley 281, 297
TPO Collection *Norgate* 336,
376
TPO services 367

Royal Mail

Princess Royal Distribution
Centre 367
Stamp album pages 168

Societies and Associations

ABPS 12, 76, 332, 364
Anniversaries 200
Astro Space Stamp Society
12, 76
Bridlington 267
Bristol Philatelic Society
centenary 171
Collectors Club *Balls* 121

East Worthing 201
Great Britain Philatelic
Society 331
Machin Collectors Club 76
Northeast Philatelic Week-
end 267, 365
Philatelic Congress 12
Philatelic Music Circle 11
Scottish Congress 201, 297
Stamp Active 366

Special stamps

1972 Silver Wedding 24
1979 Rowland Hill error 296
1995
Christmas stamp award 71
Quantities 169
1996
British Cinema award 264
Classic Cars 4, 30
Christmas 36, 105
Ephemera 39
Poll 116, 234
Robert Burns 7, 8, 40
Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust
40
Women of Achievement 23,
30
Yearbook 40
Yearpack 40

1997
Architects of the Air 258,
260, 296, 328
Enid Blyton 356
Great Tudor (Henry VIII)
100, 135, 168
Missions of Faith (Ss
Augustine & Columba) 164,
Mackay 182, 264
Post Offices 324, 362
Programme 7
Queen's Horses 290, 292
Tales of Terror 228, 264,
337
1998 programme 132, 263
Christmas (L) 159
Collectors plates 30
Number of issues (L) 380
Presentation packs 104
Stamp album promotion 132
Stamp histories 104, 377
Subject suggestions 234

Stamp books

Book value digits 188
Christmas 38, 110
Decimal Stamp Books *Myall*
51, 110, 186, 250, 311, 368
Greetings
1996 reprint 39, 70, 113,
327
1997 68, 133, 162, 186,

250, 296, 370
Landor cover design 312,
368
New issues 7, 39, 71, 132,
133, 162, 186, 251, 328,
362, 363
NVI 112, 226
Hong Kong label 132, 162,
194, 252
Olympics 110, 186, 189, 252
Packet labels 312
Prestige 199, 360
Promotions
ASDA 39, 71, 104, 110
Holiday 363
Marks & Spencer packs
127, 187, 251, 313
'Send-a-cake' *Myall* 51,
112, 313
W H Smith 7, *Myall* 51
Vending machines 188, 252

Stamp collecting

(L) 191, *Balls* 121, (L) 381
Stampmaster GB 135
Stamp supplements in news-
papers 133
Youth 13, 333, 364

Thematics

75, 333
Gold Stamps *Mackay* 243
Medicinal Plants *Wilson* 150

Victoria

OUS overprints & underprints
Gee 216

Authors

Baker, Colin 82, 138, 208
Balls, Martin 121
Bates, Simon 114, 211
Beith, Richard 19, 21, 240,
268, 305
Bendall, Colin 79, 239
Eade, Sara 281
Furnell, Michael 179
Gatrell, John 78
Gee, Fred 14, 127, 216
Hinton, Matthew 24, 155,
302, 344, 374
Holman, John 46, 86, 137,
246, 276
Ibbotson, Peter 42
Mackay, James 58, 146,
182, 212, 243, 308, 317,
334, 338, 342, 371
Malcolm, Donald 54
Matheson, Jean 270
Myall, DGA 51, 110, 186,
203, 250, 299, 311, 368
Negus, Ron 119, 214, 278,
346
Norgate, Tom 336, 376
Oakley, Neill 282
Perry, Andrew 306
Rapkin, Francesca 80
Robinson, Martin 173
Sabey, Alan, 180
Stephenson, Barbara 184
Wilson, Tom 150

Notes

(L) = letter (Postbag)

Author's name in italics

July 1996 issue was num-
bered incorrectly Volume 34
Number 11

May 1997 contained a sup-
plement – *British Victorian
Stamps* by James Mackay

Each issue contained a sup-
plement listing Comemora-
tive Covers

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