

November 1992



Royal Mail

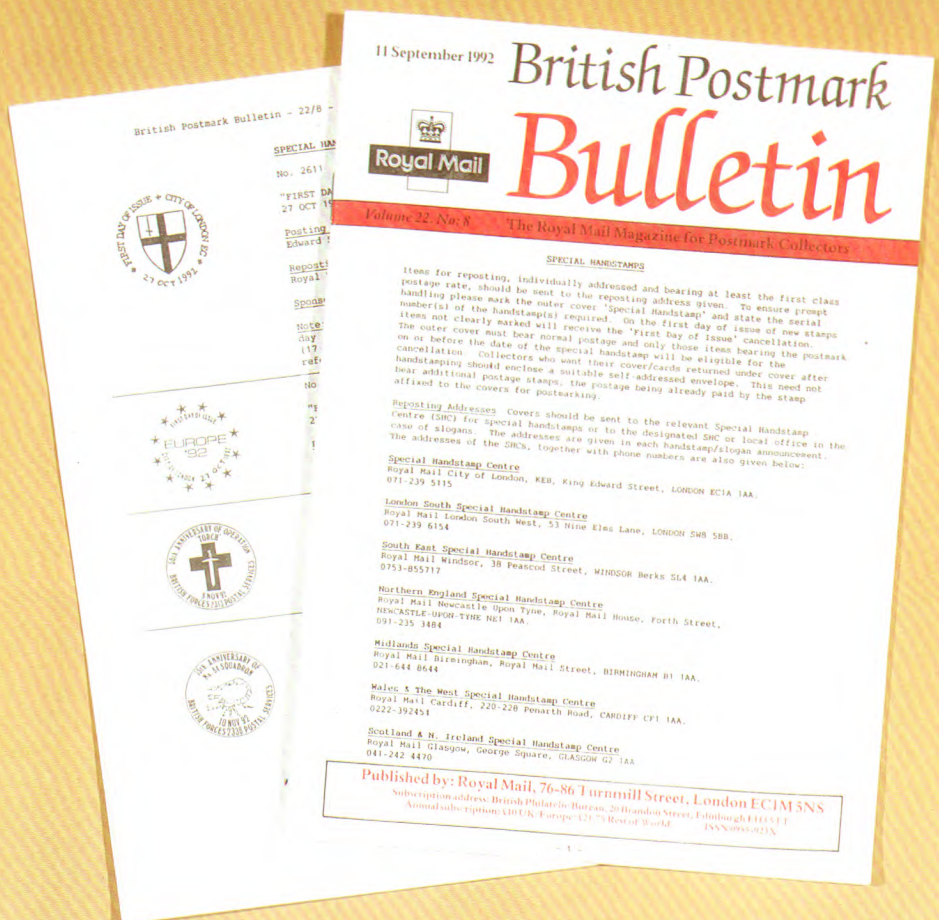
British Philatelic Bulletin

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British Postmark Bulletin

The Magazine for Postmark and First Day Cover Collectors



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British Philatelic Bulletin — November 1992

Contents

Christmas 1984 – British Special Issues No. 174	56
Decimal Stamp Books – 4 – Douglas Myall's specialist report	57
Royal Mail Philatelic Products – Collectors' Pack, Yearbook, Souvenir Covers	60
Postmark Postcards – Cards for the postmark collector	62
RSA Student Stamp Designs – British Summertime	64
People in the Post Exhibition – The NPM's current display	65
Royal Mail News – Greetings stamp cards, Mail Packs, etc	66
NPM Christmas Postcards – Mail Coach Scenes	66
24p Green Stamp Withdrawn – Inconsistent Phosphor	66
Royal Mail Teachers' Diary – For the Activity Teacher	67
Bulletin Back Issues – Back Number Service	67
Gems from the Phillips Collection – Army Telegraph Stamps	68
Railway Letter Stamps – New Train Issues	68
50th Anniversary Commemorative Aerogramme – Special Printing	68
Posting Boxes – First Elizabeth II Box	69
Competition – Win £75 worth of philatelic products	69
Book Reviews – Focus on Stamps	70
British Philatelic Trust – New Appointments	70
Six Month Digest – Recent and forthcoming issues	71
Green Issue in Green Pack – Launch of children's stamps	71
November Digest – This month's comings and goings	72
Events – Guide to exhibitions, fairs and displays	72

Main Feature



The Machin – Your Views on Change 52



Bulletin readers divided roughly 50-50 on the question of has the Machin series come to the end of its natural life? There was little support for pictorial definitives as replacements.

"... the most beautiful and perfect in the world..."

The Machin – Your Views On Change

J R HOLMAN

In the June *Bulletin* we asked readers if they wanted a change in the Machin definitive stamps, and whether they would like to see pictorial definitives in the future. Somewhat surprisingly only 67 of the *Bulletin's* 45,000 readers replied which suggests to me that the Machins are not so popular as I had thought. I imagined a considerable number of letters in support of keeping the Machin design.

The opinions of the 67 were fairly evenly divided for and against retention of the Machin – 37 wanting no change and 30 favouring a new series. Of the 67 respondents, 54 live in the UK, 13 overseas. Some 39 readers expressed a view on pictorial definitives – 14 being in favour, 25 against. As promised a selection of your comments are published below, beginning with those who wanted a change from the Machin.

N S Wilde of Derbyshire, a collector since 1934, expressed the view, shared by others, that the surfeit of colour changes, values, papers, phosphor bands, perforations, etc has made the Machin series so unwieldy for the collector. "Enough is enough", he writes, "so it might well be a 'breath of fresh air' to see a standard, not too elaborate pictorial issue...I'm sure that values could be equally divided by England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland with suitable views therefrom...I will go for pictorials, preferably only twice the size of the present definitives."

New Portrait Required

Howard Stone of Buckinghamshire, although "a serious collector of Machin Definitives and thus a great admirer of the design's elegance and simplicity", says he "feels it is time for a change. However, rather than go pictorial I would urge the Post Office to substitute for the Machin head a more contemporary portrait of The Queen. The Royal Mint did this some years ago for coins, adopting a design by Raphael Maklouf; could the Post Office not do the same?" A change to a new portrait of The Queen was favoured by several writers, some of whom commented (tactfully) that Her Majesty had aged somewhat since 1967 and that an up-to-date portrait would be welcomed. R A Bell of Sussex wants to see

a new portrait of The Queen but request "don't employ the artist who put that ghastly picture of The Queen on our new notes... Maybe there is an artist somewhere who can compete with Wilding and Machin..."

Amongst those who asked for pictorial definitives was Max Regitz of Germany who suggested stamps showing famous Britains "who enriched the world with their gifts", for example James Watt, George Stephenson, and Shakespeare. Mrs E Bolton of West Midlands "favours small format stamps, smaller perhaps, than the commemorative stamps, depicting the Kings and Queens of England; each value depicting a different monarch, e.g. 1p King Alfred the Great moving chronologically through to the Queen on the highest value".



The classic Machin head

D J Cargill of Middlesex writes in praise of the new Guernsey flower definitives, feeling that "a change on this line would be highly welcomed." He continues: "I would suggest that the NVI and low make up values are retained. Indeed it would not be unreasonable to have a choice of definitives, pictorial for leisure correspondence and Machin for business. I know we have the greetings stamps but they are not suitable for all occasions and in any case cannot be bought singly".

In Praise of the Castles

Scenic views would be welcome by L S Mouatt of Sussex and P Arrowsmith of Northants; D MacInnes of Ross and Cromarty believes the new high value castles "can set a new trend. To me these pictorial definitives are far more pleasing."

Dr P M Watkinson of Avon also likes the castle stamps, he writes: "I see the chief attraction of the Machin definitives being in their simplicity; after the fussy detail of the Wilding series they were a complete change. However, to my mind they are too simple and I have never liked them. As to a replacement, the obvious solution is to expand the castles theme of the high value stamps. For reasons of economy the size will probably have to be the same, though a square stamp based on the longer side of the current issue would be interesting. I would prefer line drawings in single colours to photographic views such as those of the current Jersey definitives. These again would blend in nicely with the high value stamps. With no loss of very proper respect, the Queen's Head, could and should occupy a very much smaller area of the stamp with the figures of value retaining a similar size to the present Machin series".

J M Clarke of Dorset describes the Machins as "a dreary series that has dragged on too long". He recalls the designs for pictorial definitives suggested by the late C P Rang, Editor of *Gibbons Stamps Monthly* in the 1950s, adding "for years Austria, Switzerland and other countries have produced very fine 'single size' pictorials. New Zealand was doing it last century!"

Pictorials would be welcomed by Mrs A Nuse of Germany who finds the Machins "a little antique now". Pictorials, for example "Prominent landmarks of London" would, she says, enable us to "learn as we lick". M Longhurst of Aberdeen asks that if the stamps are changed can we "replace the incorrect and disturbing 'I' for a proper '1', like the commemorative stamps." (See note at end of article. Ed.)

E Hallsworth of Liverpool raises an interesting point about definitives. He suggests that "when we have a change of monarch it is only right and fitting to pay tribute to them in their first definitive design of the reign to show their face". For subsequent definitive series he thinks the stamp could show scenery, sites of historic interest, flowers, etc. Like Mr Cargill, he cites Guernsey as an issuer of good definitive stamps. K. Ferrie of New Zealand favours definitives showing The Queen's portrait with national



Some current and recent Commonwealth definitives

floral symbols as illustrated in the *Bulletin* of October 1986.

In general those who favoured a change criticised the Machin more on "philatelic" than design grounds, feeling that the numerous change to the series had lessened their enthusiasm for it. Mr G Hedlund of Sweden summed it up: "So, please, change the present definitive series as soon as possible to give us collectors a chance to mount our collections and to give new stamp collectors a chance to start building a new collection from the beginning, which should not cost them a fortune."

Most Successful Ever

Arguing for retention of the Machin was Dr P Spooner of South Africa, describing it as "among the most successful designed stamp ever issued. It is simple, it is patriotic, it is obviously British, the values of the stamps are obvious to see and

the colours are distinctive". K Webber of Australia answers should the design be changed? with "never. This unique simplicity, both distinctive and noble, sets it apart above all other stamp designs. It should remain inviolate for as long as Queen Elizabeth II is Queen. When she is no longer Queen, then perhaps it will be appropriate to introduce pictorial definitive designs. When that time comes, designers may well consider that a head is no longer mandatory and that the words 'Great Britain' will have to replace it as the means by which the country is identified. Food for thought?"

E Bannister of Northumberland is against pictorials, commenting: "whatever size of paper used, the pictorials would reduce the Queen's Head to a small silhouette, and we would have given up our postal heritage, our links back to the Penny Black (and its significance worldwide), and potentially assume the postal position of a banana republic."

R Jack of London feels: "If collectors want to collect pictorial definitives, they can choose from almost any country in the world. If they want to collect a modern 'classic', then there are very few to choose from – the Machin stands out head and shoulders above the competition. Its a simple, dignified design which continues a tradition, going back to the 1d Black, of portraying the monarchs head and the value, no more and no less. When you've already got the perfect design, why change it? Modern commemorative are gaudy and prolific enough to satisfy the needs of those who want pictorials, so please leave the Machins alone. If non-collectors don't see enough of commemorative stamps then maybe the answer is more second class commemoratives, not pictorial definitives." G Gilby of Cleveland echoes Mr Jack's view of pictorials: "I feel fairly strongly that pictorial definitives would be a retrograde step and would almost certainly result in some loss in both quality and prestige".

Mrs B Gaspar of London also rejects pictorials – "you have deluged us for years now with the commemorative issues and I think we have had a surfeit of them". Her opinion of the Machins summarises the views of other writers: "The Machin Heads offer a great deal of interest and fun for a reasonably modest outlay and not everyone has a lot of spare cash to spend on their collection. To older people like myself, they symbolise stamp collecting as it used to be..."

Makes Collecting worthwhile

Andrew Hill of Hertfordshire wrote at

considerable length in support of the Machin. The variations in paper, gum, phosphor, etc clearly appeal to him and make collecting worthwhile. He writes: "In considering this matter I have asked myself why I have lost interest in other issues such as commemoratives or the Channel Islands and Isle of Man post-independence issues. The reasons give further clues to the success of Machins." He "lost interest" because "they were practically collected for you. Everyone's collections are virtually the same. There are very few variations.... The stamps comprised a range of designs from the stunningly beautiful to the downright ugly. Discarding emphasis from my personal view as to attractiveness, one is still left with groups of stamps which do not always lie happily next to each other...". I understand his comment but feel that the interest in definitive variations would still be there if the Machin changed. We would still have book and coil stamps with a new series and no doubt periodic colour and phosphor changes.

Dr J Turner of North Yorkshire wonders why we should even contemplate changing the Machin after only 25 years: "The first designs for penny and two pence stamps had lives of 40 and 43 years respectively, whilst the third design of the penny stamp lasted 20 years."

Dignity

A number commented on the beautiful design quality of the Machin. R Erith of Suffolk finds "their qualities of simplicity and elegance coupled with the beautiful proportion of the portrait give them a timelessness which is unbeatable. My favourites were the first edition of the First and Second Class stamps in Black and Blue respectively. These were quite outstanding and I shall never tire of admiring them." Miss P Rigby wrote of the "dignity" of the Machin which she feels is lacking in the definitives of Australia from where she writes. For J Kind of Oxfordshire, the "simplicity in appearance, and complexity for collectors, have made the Machins a series without equal."

D Poole of Warwickshire thinks "the Machin Head is the best definitive design going. The 'Double Heads' issue demonstrated that it stood up with the Penny Black design". For D Jenks of Devon "the Machin is the definitive definitive. It offers unlimited scope for the true philatelist and for the most basic of collectors alike". W White of Dorset considers that any change to pictorials "would lose our uniqueness in the



Current and recent definitives from foreign countries

world of stamps – just the Queen's Head and everybody knows the world over where it comes from."

R Sanchez writes from Argentina to express his view that the Machin design is "the most beautiful and perfect in the world... the symbol of the most classic, beautiful and best printed stamps of the world."

The last words in favour of the Machin go to Mrs S Lockwood of Kent: "I would not like to see the series discontinued, even though at times it is frustrating. Establishing which issue is which (i.e. photogravure, lithography, printers, colours, dates of issue, values, etc) is a challenge and all part of the fun involved in tracking down that vital 'gem' to fill a gap. If definitives were to become pictorial, that would make collecting them as easy as special issues and *then* what would we do with our time?!"

Thank you for all your comments – the quality of which outweighs the quantity received. I have no doubt that your views will be taken into account by Royal Mail Managers when the time comes to consider a new definitive series.

As promised, all letters received went into a draw, the senders of the first 10 drawn will receive a presentation pack of the current Machin stamps (1p-75p). They are: J Barks

(Hampshire), Mrs E Bolton (W Midlands), D Poole (Warwickshire), F Hambrook (Surrey), J Machado (London), Mary Morris (USA), J Pegg (Cornwall), L Van Peski (Portugal), K Webber (Australia), and N Wilde (Derbyshire).

Note: A number of collectors have asked about the numerals used on the definitive stamps. The following information may be of interest:

When we had to change the numerals for the new decimal definitive issue in 1971 it seemed appropriate to choose a typeface which reflected the classical qualities in Arnold Machin's bas-relief portrait of The Queen. In 1925 the Monotype Corporation commissioned Eric Gill to design a typeface based on his inscriptions cut in stone. The result was the typeface "Perpetua", which includes this particular delineation of the "one" along with other arabic numerals. This was the face chosen as the basis for the new denominations.

Gill's numeral was not new, for the same form is found in some of the 15th century Italian faces like Garamond (1545), Plantin (1569), Caslon (1720), Baskerville (1757) and Imprint (1912). The fact that there is ample historic precedence for its use with other arabic numerals seemed to justify its use on the stamps.

Christmas 1984

British Special Issues: No. 174

FRANCIS KENNEDY

Finding a new theme for the annual Christmas Stamps is a constant challenge to all the commissioned designers and to the Post Office Stamp Advisory Committee. On this occasion the theme was no novelty but its presentation was a precedent in British stamp designing history. The designer, Yvonne Gilbert, a newcomer to stamp designing for the Post Office, submitted her finished work in crayon pastels. This was the first time that the printers, Harrison and Son (High Wycombe) Ltd, had used artwork of this kind from which to produce photogravure-printed stamps. The successful outcome was a tribute to all concerned. The soft tints of the crayon of the original have been preserved an aspect accentuated by the clever use of white backgrounds.

The theme is The Nativity depicted over the five values which are customary to allow for the inclusion of a second class rate stamp (in 1984

this was 13p) for use when posting Christmas cards.

The designs were: **13p**, The Holy Family; **17p** The arrival in Bethlehem; **22p** Shepherd and Lambs; **31p** Virgin and Child; **34p** Offering of Frankincense.

Two major constant flaws occurred on the sheet printings of the 17p stamp. They were: Dot cylinder, Row 9, stamp 2 – a dark spot on Joseph's left sleeve; Dot cylinder, R10/7 – a group of dots over the donkey's right eye. Beyond these, the Gibbons *GB Specialised Stamp Catalogue* used to list three minor constant varieties.

A novelty was the release of the 13p stamp at a discount. The 12½p and 15p Machin definitives had been sold at a discount over the Christmas period in 1982, but this 13p Christmas stamp of 1984 was the first non-definitive to sell officially below face value. The concession was restricted to the immediate pre-Christmas season and the stamps involved were underprinted with a double-lined blue star printed on top of the gum. This assisted accounting procedures within the Post Office and prevented a purchaser buying at the discounted rate and selling the stamps at full face value.

This underprint was applied to stamps in 1984 Christmas book which contained a folded pane of 20 stamps (10 x 2), face value £2.60 but sold at £2.30. The cover of this booklet was also designed by Yvonne Gilbert to co-ordinate with her stamp designs.

As usual, the sales far exceeded those of the other special issues of the year, the figures for the 1984 Christmas stamps being: *13p* 251,570,800 from normal sheets and 120,000,000 blue starred stamps sold in books; *17p* 148,837,700; *22p* 16,367,400; *31p* 14,675,600; *34p* 12,686,600.

The five PHQ cards for this issue were numbered 80a – 80e; 230,000 sets were produced.

A special Christmas areogramme with a postal validity of 26p was placed on sale at 30p on 20 November 1984. Designed by Victor Ambrus, it featured Victorian horse-drawn mail coaches in a seasonal setting. Earlier in the year the 200th anniversary of the first mail coach was celebrated (see May 1992 *Bulletin*, page 209). Some 1,371,150 aerogrammes were issued.

Following custom, there were two pictorial "First Day of Issue" cancellations – one used by the British Philatelic Bureau in Edinburgh and the other at Bethlehem, Dyfed, the small Welsh village with an appropriate name!

© Francis Kennedy



Decimal Stamp Books – 4

D G A MYALL

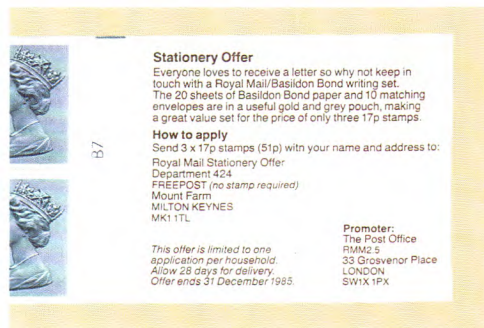
Stamp Book Promotions

From time to time Royal Mail, either alone or in conjunction with other interests, runs a special promotion of stamp books. These publicity efforts are in addition to the annual prestige books. Royal Mail are rightly concerned to preserve their carefully cultivated image epitomised in the series of window books, with their distinctive red and yellow livery, and there are limitations on the subjects which may be associated with stamp books. Promotions concerned with letter-writing are especially favoured and there have been many over the past ten years. The first was the £1.53 Holiday Postcard Stamp Book issued on 12 July 1982. The back cover became a voucher worth 10p in part payment for six postcards from any retailer.

Among the many letter-writing promotions involving stamp books was a series on the themes of social letter writing which began with the £1.70 "Love Letters" book of 3 September 1984. This contained 10 stamps at the then 1st-class letter rate and for four of these one could obtain a blank 20-minute cassette tape for recording messages. The third in the series, Fan Letters, featured a stationery offer comprising 20 sheets of Basildon Bond writing paper and ten envelopes.

The first use of window books in a promotion associated with letter-writing was, I believe, a

1992 "Kellogg's Book" – 2 x 39p stamps and four airmail labels



Stationery Offer
Everyone loves to receive a letter so why not keep in touch with a Royal Mail/Basildon Bond writing set. The 20 sheets of Basildon Bond paper and 10 matching envelopes are in a useful gold and grey pouch, making a great value set for the price of only three 17p stamps.

How to apply
Send 3 x 17p stamps (51p) with your name and address to:
Royal Mail Stationery Offer
Department 424
FREEPOST (no stamp required)
Mount Farm
MILTON KEYNES
MK1 1TL

This offer is limited to one application per household. Allow 28 days for delivery. Offer ends 31 December 1985.

Promoter:
The Post Office
RMM2 5
33 Grosvenor Place
LONDON
SW1X 1PX

Stationery offer – 1984 £1.70 "Love Letters" book free book of four 1st class stamps on proof of purchase of any Lion brand stationery from John Menzies. In this case the promoter was the retailer and the books were supplied by DRG Stationery. The offer closed on 1 April 1989.

The "Kellogg's Book"

The latest of these special offers appears on cartons of Kellogg's Bran Flakes and was first seen in the shops on 28 August 1992. There are, in fact, two offers. The cartons contain a coupon, redeemable at post offices, worth 50p off the cost of an Airpack for sending packages overseas. They also contain tokens, two on a 500g pack and three on a 750g pack. Ten of these (and a 20p coin) can be exchanged for a letter writing



Printed by Walsall Security Printers Limited

W2 W2 W2

39p

By air mail
Par avion

By air mail
Par avion

By air mail
Par avion

By air mail
Par avion

up to 60g
24p
18p
39p
57p
42p
34p
dia, SE Asia

For letters up to 10g

set comprising paper (Basildon Bond again), envelopes and a book of two 39p stamps with four airmail labels. The stamps prepay the worldwide rate for letters outside Europe up to 10g. The book was specially ordered for this promotion but it contains no mention of Kellogg's or the offer of a letter-writing set.

The special book of two 39p stamps was placed on sale at the British Philatelic Bureau, Collections and philatelic counters a month earlier, on 28 July. These are the only places it can be bought. It will be on sale from these outlets only until the next tariff change or until stocks are exhausted. The closing date of the stationery offer is 31 March 1994 (the airpack offer closes 31 December 1993) and as an increase in postal rates is likely before then it will be interesting to see whether this 78p book remains available for so long.

The books were produced by Walsall Security Printers Ltd, who also printed the stamps and labels. The production methods were very similar to those described here in August, the airmail stickers being rouletted on a sheet-fed cut and crease machine. It was originally intended that the plates used would be the same ones used on the panes of four 39p stamps in the books first issued 16 September 1991, but new plates needed to be made to the same four 39p stamps format and so the number has changed. This means that half the printing was treated as waste since the plates contained 72 panes of four, in nine rows of eight columns, and this layout could not provide 144 panes of two stamps, all with binding margins at the left. The books of four are all from plate combination W1 W1 W1 W1, and all books of two are from combination W2 W2 W2 W2.

Barcodes

Barcodes are formed by a series of lines and gaps of varying width. No special printing techniques are required and they can be read by a simple optical scanner. They uniquely identify a product so that when the number is read at the checkout it is instantly compared with a computer database which contains the price and description of the item and these are shown in the till record and printed on the receipt. Because a barcode is a unique product identifier, the barcode patch was accepted as proof of purchase for the Lion brand offer mentioned above.

There are several different coding schemes in general use but the one used in supermarkets and on Royal Mail products is limited to encoding

the figures 0 to 9. These are printed underneath the bars although they are not essential for operation and provide only a visual check. The matter is complicated but without going into tedious detail, it can be said that retailer product codes (other than for books and magazines) comprise four parts, representing; the country of origin, the manufacturer, the product and a checkdigit. Barcodes which begin with the figures 50, for example, indicate UK products. The final digit in a barcode is a checkdigit which serves to validate the code so that a read error is recognized as such and is not treated as a different valid number.

All Royal Mail window books have carried a barcode on the outside back cover and examples were illustrated here in August. The one on the "Kellogg's Book" is reproduced here.

It is a very simple matter to decode the numbers allocated to Royal Mail books. After the UK designation, 50, the numbers 14721 indicate a Royal Mail product. The next digit shows the series. At first, there were two separate series. Series 1 was used for books sold by retailers and series 2 for those sold through post offices. From October 1988, this distinction was dispensed with and all window books were allocated sequential numbers in series 1. From 1990, the Christmas and Greetings books were also given barcodes in series 1 since they were also sold through retailers.



Bar code on "Kellogg's Book"

The next four numbers in the booklet barcode are sequential and are unique for a given product, although if the same window book is printed by more than one firm they all carry the same barcode. Prior to the issue of the "Kellogg's Book", the sequence was unbroken (apart from no. 6 which has never been identified) and had reached 31 as shown by the list of the most recent books below. Remember, the final digit is ignored for this purpose.

50 14721 100265 10 x 2nd, Walsall and Questa
50 14721 100272 4 x 2nd

50 14721 100289 4 x 39p
 50 14721 100296 4 x 33p
 50 14721 100302 Christmas book 1991
 50 14721 100319 Memories Greetings book

It will be seen that the window book sequential number for the "Kellogg's Book" has jumped from the expected 32 to 66. The reason is that many barcodes have recently been allocated for use on other Royal Mail products and many more are likely to be allocated in future. This was foreshadowed in the article by Barry Burke in the August *Bulletin*. Maybe a whole new field of collecting is opening up; it could become quite a challenge to complete a set of barcodes. I have already mentioned the mysterious number 6; now we have over 30 "missing numbers" and a visit to your local Post Shop may be indicated. So far, the 50p and £1 machine-vend books and the prestige books have not carried barcodes, presumably because they are not sold through retail outlets.

You may also have noticed the little arrowhead on the barcode on the 78p "Kellogg's Book". This is known as a "light margin indicator" and is sometimes included to ensure that the border around the barcode is at the specified distance from the barcode itself. It was included on the book in error but it should not make any difference when being read by the barcode scanners.

Three- and four-plate printings

In my first article (May) I briefly mentioned which parts of the design are printed by each of the plates used at Walsall in their three-plate products. The number of plates for the books of four 1st class NVIs was later increased to four for a time. (Books of 10 continued to be printed by three plates only.)

There have been three four-plate printings with W1, viz: W5 W10 W9 W1, W5 W11 W9 W1 and W5 W11 W10 W1. They were not seen on sale until early 1992. All appear only in books with Olympic covers and the first two are quite scarce. The first four-plate combination to be reported was W5 W12 W10 W2 (20 December 1991). Surprisingly, this appeared only in books with the pre-Olympic covers (with black barcodes) which seems out of sequence. Fourth plate W2 has not been seen in Olympic books.

Subsequent four-plate combinations all had Olympic covers, the highest combination being W6 W16 W11 W4. After that, all books of four 1st-class stamps reverted to three-plate combinations,

those seen so far being: W7 W16 W11 (13 June), W7 W17 W11 (29 June) and W8 W18 W12 (29 August).

Reprint of £1.32 book

In September's *Bulletin* I gave some hints on how to distinguish the various papers and gums used to print modern small format stamps. Another "reference" can now be obtained from the window books printed by Walsall and containing four 33p stamps, prepaying the overseas postcard rate.



Plate Number Pane of 33p stamps – £1.32 book, 8 September 1992

Originally, this book was issued, on 16 September 1991, with stamps and labels printed on paper supplied by Coated Papers Ltd (CPL) and gummed PVA. On 8 September 1992 it was re-issued with stamps and labels printed on paper supplied by Harrison & Sons Ltd and gummed PVA-dextrin. These papers are quite distinct, the Harrison gum appearing creamy in comparison with the white PVA gum of the CPL paper. All panes from plate combination W1 W1 W1 are on CPL paper; all those from combination W2 W1 W1 are on Harrison paper. The Harrison paper is not the same as that used for their own books (of 1st class NVI stamps). That has a coating suitable for photogravure printing. The paper supplied to WSP has a coating suitable for lithographic printing; it also has less fluorescent brightening agent and so appears dull under ultra-violet light.

Swans/Marine Timekeepers

The date of issue of the Marine Timekeepers stamps will be 16 February 1993 as stated on page 4 in September, *not* 19 February as shown on page 5. We regret any confusion caused. The alternative "First Day of Issue" postmark for the Swans issue will now be worded Weymouth, *not* Abbotsbury.

Royal Mail Philatelic Products

BARRY BURKE *Products Manager, Royal Mail*

Tourist Information Centres

Last month I said I would give you further details of which Tourist Information Centres are taking part in our promotion of stamp products. Readers will recall that customers who spend £2.50 or more on selected stamp products available at participating Centres will receive free an exclusive bookmark in which five mint "Happy and Glorious" stamps have been mounted. Centres definitely taking part at time of writing are:- Brighton, Dover, Nottingham, Pickering, Sandbach, Stroud, Tonbridge and York. We are hoping others will join as the promotion progresses. I am afraid the offer is open to personal callers only and, at least for the time being, is restricted to those Centres which come under the English Tourist Board umbrella. I will update this list as more Centres join the scheme; meanwhile if you live in or are visiting any of the above towns, the Tourist Information Centre will be well worth a visit!

Christmas 1992

This Christmas there are two promotional offers to tempt you to consider Royal Mail products when drawing up your Christmas gift list. First, in the Christmas Presentation Pack, there is a voucher which entitles customers to 50p off the usual price of a Presentation Pack Album. I am always surprised that more customers do not use the albums – after all, Presentation Packs are our second most popular product, after First Day Covers, yet the Albums for Packs are nowhere near as popular as those for FDCs. Perhaps collectors are using the same album for both? Anyway, this offer is available for a limited period only so make sure you take advantage of it!

Details of the Christmas Pack itself were given in the October *Bulletin*, as were details of the First Day Cover and Stamp Cards. I have been enthusing about this year's Christmas stamps since I first saw the design over a year ago. In my opinion, they are quite simply the most beautiful and apt Christmas stamps we have ever produced. Indeed, instead of sending Christmas cards this year, I will be buying a stock of Stamp Cards and sending these to friends and relatives (with the appropriate stamp affixed, of course).

1992 Collectors' Pack

The Collectors' Pack, containing one of each of



the 38 special stamps issued during the year, will be available from the British Philatelic Bureau, Collections, Philatelic Counters, Post Shops ("Plus" and otherwise), main post offices and some sub post offices from 10 November, price £11.95. The pack bears reference number 233. The stamps are contained within clear strip mounts on a quality display board. Useful background information about each issue is given in the six-page folder. On the back cover the 19 pictorial "First Day of Issue" handstamps used at the British Philatelic Bureau and "alternative offices" are illustrated and details given of the dates of issue, designer, printer and method of printing of each set of stamps.

The pack has been designed by Why Not Associates with text by Mike Barden and photography by Why Not/Rocco Redondo. It has been printed by Clement & Foster Limited of London.

The 1991 Collectors' Pack, price £11.50, will be withdrawn from sale at the Bureau and other outlets on 11 November.

This year, the Collectors' Pack contains an offer entitling customers to £1 off the *Royal Mail Special Stamps 1992 Yearbook*. If you regularly buy the annual Collectors' Pack but have not seen the Yearbook, you have been missing out!

1992 Yearbook

The 1992 Yearbook will also be available from 10 November, price £19.95. The Yearbook was first published in 1984 and proved very popular – that edition is now catalogued by Stanley Gibbons at £110! (1992 *GB Concise* catalogue). However, I would urge any collector not to buy the Yearbook as an investment (a return on which cannot be guaranteed), but as a well written and beautifully illustrated record of the 1992 stamp programme which can be admired and enjoyed by collectors and non-collectors alike.

The 1992 edition contains the nine sets of 1992 special stamps – Wintertime, Happy & Glorious, Tennyson, Europa, Civil War, Gilbert & Sullivan, The Green Issue, Single European Market, and Christmas. Useful background information is given on the designs, designers, and subject matter. The stamps are supplied on a stock card and can be mounted on the relevant page if desired. The 1992 Yearbook, which includes many fine illustrations of the subjects commemorated by the stamps, and of the stamp designers, maintains the high standards set by its eight predecessors. The 1991 Yearbook won a major pan-European design award and we believe the 1992 Yearbook to be even better!

Royal Mail Souvenir Covers

Souvenir covers, introduced in 1972, are of the same basic design as first day covers, designed for use with special stamps after the day of issue. Owing to poor demand they are being discontinued. The last souvenir cover will be produced for the Christmas issue, and will be available from Collections and philatelic counters from 11 November, price 21p. Souvenir covers are currently (1 November) available for the Christmas 1991, Wintertime, Happy & Glorious, Tennyson, Europa, Civil War, Gilbert & Sullivan, Green Issue and Single European Market special issues, and for High Value Definitives and Greetings (Memories) stamps. All will be withdrawn one year after issue.

Post Shop News

In June we gave a listing of postshops, many of which stock some of Royal Mail philatelic products, such as presentation packs and albums. Since then further post shops have opened and more are planned. Postshops opened since the June *Bulletin* went to press are located at the following post offices:

27 Hargreaves Street, BURNLEY, Lancs BB11 1DY
20-34 Warwick Road, CARLISLE, CA1 1AB
Northumberland Street, HUDDERSFIELD HD1 1AA
75 Stricklandgate, KENDAL, Cumbria, LA9 4AA
59-61 Grange Road, MIDDLESBROUGH,
Cleveland, TS1 5AT
24 Castle Street, SALISBURY, Wiltshire, SP1 1AB
Cole Street, SCUNTHORPE, S Humberside,
DN15 6RA
St Mary's Street, SHREWSBURY, SY1 1DE
130c Lord Street, SOUTHPORT, Merseyside,
PR9 0AA
42 The Bridges, SUNDERLAND SR1 3LL
19-21 Old Market Place, WARRINGTON,
Cheshire, WA1 1QB
191 High Road, Library Site, Wood Green,
LONDON N22 6DZ

By the time you receive this *Bulletin*, two more former Philatelic Counters will have been converted to "Post Shop Plus" outlets. These are Croydon and Southampton. Readers may wish to note that Southampton Post Shop Plus is at a new 'open plan' site (similar to Bath) and is now located at 12-14 High Street, SOUTHAMPTON, SO1 0WE. We have been assured by Post Office Counters Limited that the problems some collectors encountered at Durham Post Shop Plus earlier this year were teething troubles which should now have been cured.

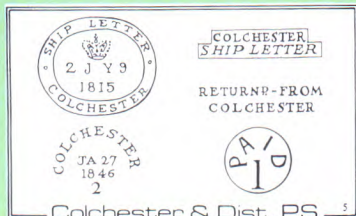
Postmark Postcards

JAMES NEGUS, FRPSL

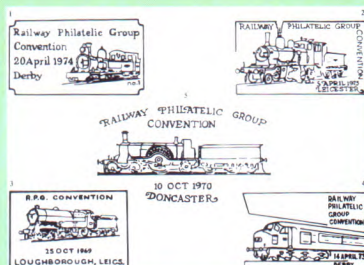
In October 1990 *Bulletin* (pages 34-35) I provided a checklist of postcards, published between 1939 and 1989, reproducing British postmarks. Many of these cards resulted from the efforts of local philatelic societies. The checklist generated quite a good response and I am pleased to give a further checklist of cards not previously listed, together with some amended information.

An important series of postmark postcards was produced by the Postal History Society from 1958 to 1973. Despite extensive enquiries, I have not managed to examine all PHS cards and would be delighted to hear from *Bulletin* readers who have cards for the following years (I should, of course, welcome reports of any postmark cards not listed here or in the October 1990 article):

1960	Different print of Bishop Marks card (London International Exhibition) for use at Parham.
1961	17th Conf. at Paris (? card produced).
1963	19th Conf. at Dun Laoghaire.
1964	20th Conf. at Brockenhurst.
1965	21st Conf. at The Hague (? postmarks on card).
21.10.67	23rd Conf. at Guernsey.
2.10.71	27th Conf. at Jersey.



1991 Colchester card of scarce postmarks



1987 card for Railway Philatelic Group anniversary

PHS cards occur both plain and stamped-to-order for 1959 (with/without 3d Wilding) and 1970 (with/without 4d Machin). The following years have only been seen s.t.o.: 1962 (3d Wilding), 1968 (4d Wilding), 1969 reissue (4d Machin), 1972 and 1973 (both 2½p Machin). The Railway Philatelic Group card of 10.10.70 is also s.t.o. (4d Machin). It is not known if non-s.t.o. versions of all these latter cards were also produced.

Checklist of Postmark Postcards

Issued	Postmarks of	Occasion
9.10.58	Windsor	14th PHS Conference
29.9.60	Hereford	16th PHS Conference
1.10.66	Waterford, Holyhead	22nd PHS Conference, Portmeirion
1.10.66	Holyhead, Menai Bridge, Bangor	do.
5.6.71	Bristol	Wiltshire Fedn Convention, Bristol
26.4.75	Glasgow	Glasgow Postal History Exhibition
29.9.79	Amersham	Amersham PS 21st Anniv (as souvenir cover stiffener)
3.11.79	Colchester	1st card, Essex Phil Assn Autumn Rally
21.8.80	Scottish Shipping	Scotex, Glasgow, in colour with incorrect caption "Columbia"
		do., black print, "Columba" caption
11.4.81	Colchester	2nd card, Colchester PS Jubilee Festival

18.9.82	Exeter	1st card, PS 50th Anniv (reprinted Mar 1992)
30.4.83	Stroud	Three Counties Fedn Convention, Stroud
5.10.83*	Hemel Hempstead	1st card, PS 20th Anniv do. Exhibition special pmk 29.10.83 do. pmkd on Anniv day 3.12.83
20.11.84*	Hemel Hempstead	2nd card, PS 21st Anniv do. pmkd or slogan pmk Anniv day 3.12.84
20.11.84*	Aberdeen	Aberdeen PS 75th Anniv
31.7.85	Worcester	By Midlands Postal Board
8.10.85*	Darlington	1st card, by Darlington PS
4.11.85	Worthing	Worthing PS 50th Anniv
21.12.85*	Stourbridge	Midland PHS for Stourbridge PO Centenary
6.4.87*	Railway Phil Group	21st Anniv by Hemel Hempstead Group
4.87*	Petersfield	Petersfield PS 21st Anniv (reprinted Apr 1987, address side revised)
18.6.88	Yorkshire	Yorkshire Phil Assn Convention, York
15.11.88	Hemel Hempstead	2nd card optd for PS 25th Anniv do. pmkd for Anniv Exhibition 3.12.88
15.11.88	Hemel Hempstead	3rd card, PS 25th Anniv do. Specimen overprint do. pmkd for Anniv Exhibition 3.12.88
22.4.89	Redcar	40th NE Phil Association Convention
28.10.89	Woking	Woking PS 40th Anniv
24.3.90	Scots Maltese X's	Scottish Phil Congress, Falkirk
31.3.90	Belfast Maltese X	North of Ireland Fair & Exhibition do. with dated Maltese Cross cachet
8.90	Rugby	1st card (dated 1989), by Rugby PS
11.9.90	Garden Festivals	By Darlington PS
19.11.90	Worthing	By Worthing PS, set of 7 do. with Chapel Rd. PO cachet
6.12.90	Redcar	2nd card, by Redcar & Cleveland PS
26.3.91	Yorkshire TPOs	Railway Phil Group Convention, York
29.6.91	Rugby	2nd card, Rugby PS, Rugby World Cup do. signed by designer John Monro do. with Relay Launch cachet
26.10.91	Colchester	5th card, Colchester PS
29.2.92	Newcastle	Newcastle upon Tyne PS, set of 3 do. with First Day of Issue cachet
28.3.92	Sussex	Sussex PHS 1st Anniv, Worthing
2.5.92	Exeter	Exeter PS 1st card reprint (Mar 1992) reissued
2.5.92	Exeter	2nd card, Exeter PS 60th Anniv
25.7.92	Reynoldston	150th Anniv its first postmark

* = correction to October 1990 listing

Abbreviations

Anniv = Anniversary

Fedn = Federation

Phil (Assn) = Philatelic (Association)

PHS = Postal History Society

pmk(d) = postmark(ed)

PS = Philatelic Society

TPO = Travelling Post Office

Acknowledgements to: K Downing, R W Dymond, M B Evans, R Gibson, W Gough, D Hardwick, J E O Hobbs, M Hogg, J R Holman, P F Lyons, A Pavey, C G Peachey, R Shanahan, Mrs E Thorp, Mrs J Widdowson, C Williams.

RSA Student Stamp Designs

In July we gave details of the Royal Society of Art's Student Stamp Design Competition for 1991/92. Over 450 students entered this competition, designing stamps on the theme of "British Summertime". Some of their work was shown at an exhibition at the RSA's London headquarters from 29 April to 20 May 1992.

Deborah Macy (Polytechnic South West) produced four designs featuring bathing huts, wind surfing, a seaside pier, and deck chairs – all based on photographs taken at Brighton, Exmouth and Teignmouth. The aim was to reflect the "cheerful atmosphere" of the seaside; gold was used for The Queen's head "as this gives a warmth and brightness to the stamps." Camilla Sopwith (Middlesex Polytechnic) used a monoprinting and paper stencil technique to produce designs showing afternoon tea, a pier and beach, gardening, and boats at quayside.

Drawing inspiration from the cartoons of Donald McGill (1875-1962) as a starting point, Thomas Walker (Derbyshire College of Higher Education), developed a set of stamps which demonstrate seaside activities in a comic way. His "rolled up trousers" approach features the traditional seaside "knotted handkerchief", relaxing in a deck chair, donkey riding, and paddling. Roger Hardy (Kingston Polytechnic) made good use of the idea of rolled up stamps to form pictures of a stick or rock, ice cream cornet, beach towel, and deck chairs. Emma Brownjohn (Camberwell College of Arts) took as her theme "images of the traditional British summer holiday" – picnic on the beach, lights on pier, Big Wheel and towers, and Punch and Judy. Sine Sorensen, herself a stamp collector, worked with over 100 primary school children in four primary schools in Surrey, getting them to give their ideas of summer. Her final designs



were based on paintings by children aged from four to seven.

Kirsteen Wright (Nottingham Polytechnic) took several rolls of film at Blackpool during near-deserted October days, using her photographs, hand-tinted, to produce delightful designs reminiscent of holidays past. The stamps featured donkeys, seaside railings, sandcastles, and the pier. The designs cannot be specifically recognised as Blackpool; they could be any British seaside town.

The RSA has arranged a travelling exhibition which will include some of the stamp designs as well as items from other sections of the competition. The venues and dates for 1992 are as follows: Swansea Institute of Higher Education, Townhill Road, Swansea SA2 0UT (28 September-12 October); Falmouth School of Art & Design, Wood Lane, Falmouth TR11 4RA (26 October-9 November); Sheffield City Polytechnic, Psalter Lane, Sheffield S11 8UZ (16-30 November); and Polytechnic of Huddersfield, Queensgate, Huddersfield HD1 3DH (7-21 December). The locations and dates for the rest of the travelling exhibition, January-May 1993, will be published later.

Shown here are winning designs by Sine Sorensen (child's painting), Camilla Sopwith (afternoon tea) and Kirsteen Wright (donkeys).

People in the Post Exhibition

This fascinating exhibition, of interest to social and postal historians, is on show at the National Postal Museum until April 1993. Arranged in five sections on the ground and mezzanine floors, "People in the Post" is a largely photographic exhibition. It opens with a look at the work of the "Post Office Medical Service", one of the oldest such services in the country. In 1855 a medical officer was appointed in London "to examine all candidates for appointment, to inquire into cases in which there is a suspicion of feigned or exaggerated illness..." Photographs show postal staff receiving treatment, chief medical officers Dr G C Steet (1882-92) and Dr J Sinclair (1913-21), and current Royal Mail staff in the Fitness Centre below King Edward Building (home of the London Chief Post Office and National Postal Museum).

The second section deals with "Engineering & Stores", both vital to the smooth-running of the postal and telecommunications services (the latter have been run by British Telecom since 1981). A "breakdown gang" is depicted tackling fallen telephone lines brought down by a tree in 1890. Also shown is the famous PO Engineering Station at Dollis Hill (opened 1933), Sir William Preece (Engineer in Chief, 1892-99) and the work of the present Research Centre at Swindon (see *Bulletin*, September 1989).

"The Post Office at War" section, features the PO Home Guard on duty at St Martin's-le-Grand, and the ruins of the Central Telegraph Office, destroyed by fire in 1940. Rebuilt after the war, this was, in 1963, the original home of the Philatelic Bureau. (The present building on the site is British Telecom Headquarters.) On display on the landing between the ground and mezzanine floors is a large photograph of one of the temporary post offices replacing offices damaged in the Blitz. Some of the most interesting exhibits, in a display cabinet on the mezzanine floor, are carbonised blocks of George VI ½d and 1d stamps (recovered from the Moorgate PO, destroyed in a raid in December 1940), a GPO tin helmet, fireman's axe, and a photograph of the destroyed Compressor Room in the Central Telegraph Office.

The fourth section, "Postmen and Messengers", features photographs and attractive colour illustrations of the uniforms of the General Post letter carrier (1793-1855), District letter carrier (1837-55), letter carriers (1855-60; 1862) and postman (1936), telegram messenger boys, and postmen in summer and



Two of the four "People in the Post" postcards issued by the Museum on 6 May 1992

winter uniforms. Photographs show mail delivery by van and motorcycles in the 1920s and 1930s, as well as interesting studies of mail delivery by horse in Wales (1930s) and Hebrides (1960s). We are shown the work of the Post Office cats – vital in keeping down the mouse population in sorting offices! Medals awarded to PO staff during the reigns of Edward VII, George V and George VI are displayed; also a certificate, signed by Postmaster General Wilfred Paling, presented to A R Weston in recognition of over 50 years service in 1948.

The final section features "Women in the Post Office" with photographs showing the Corps of Women Grooms and Drivers, bicycle delivery during the Great War, and work in the PO Savings Bank, Money Order Dept, and telegraph service. Today women are employed in areas that were once exclusively "men's work"; Rae Callcut is shown hard at work maintaining the boilers under the King Edward Building.

The exhibition was compiled by Tony Gammons, who has written informative, illustrated leaflets for each of the five sections, "People in the Post" can be seen at the National Postal Museum, King Edward Street, London EC1, open Monday-Friday 9.30am to 4.30pm. The Museum is a few minutes walk from St Paul's Cathedral and underground station.

Royal Mail News

Greetings Stamp Cards

Ten Royal Mail Stamp Cards (Postcards) will go on sale on 19 January 1993, reproducing the designs of the 1993 Greetings stamps which will be issued on 2 February.

Postcards are becoming increasingly useful and collectable commemorative items. We feel that the increase in size from the original stamp allows for a greater appreciation of the quality of the art illustrated by the stamps, making them a valuable gift item and useful supplement to a specialist collection.

Designs will be taken from the 10 Greetings stamps due to be issued on 2 February 1993. It is planned to feature all 10 stamps, each on an individual postcard. Price 21p per postcard.

Mail Packs

The new postal stationery announced in last month's Stop Press went on sale at selected post offices in the Midlands, the British Philatelic Bureau, Collections and philatelic counters on 27 October. Entitled "Mail Packs", they comprise C4 (229 x 324mm) and C5 (162 x 229mm) size padded envelopes bearing 1st or 2nd class postage paid symbols. The C5 "packs" are valid for UK postage up to 250g, the C4 "packs" up to 350g. They have been designed by McGee & Co, and printed by Plastek Ltd. Price – C4 size 1st class £1.30, 2nd class £1.10; C5 size 1st class 95p, 2nd class 80p.

Green Issue Colours & Cylinder Numbers

The cylinder and colours used were as follows:
24p: 1A (emerald) 1B (greenish yellow) 1C (pale olive-yellow) 2D (rosine) 1E (black)

28p: 1A (orange vermilion) 1B (lemon) 1C (bright blue) 1D (new blue) 1E (bright green) 1F (ultramarine) 1G (black)

33p: 1A (new blue) 1B (greenish yellow) 1C (rosine) 1D (light green) 1E (emerald) 1F (blue) 1G (black)

39p: 1A (emerald) 1B (greenish yellow) 1C (bright crimson) 1D (bright orange) 2E (bright blue) 1F (black)

NPM Christmas Postcards

The National Postal Museum's "Christmas" postcards will be issued on 10 November 1992. The set of four cards will feature Mail Coaches fighting their way through the snow during the bad winter of 1837. The Mail Coach service was

thrown into chaos during the winter months of 1837/8 with many coaches being out of action for days on end. The cards, reference numbers 13-16/92 show:

13/92 – The Holyhead and Chester Mail Coaches stuck in the snow on Hockley Hill near Dunstable, Bedfordshire. The Guard on the coach to the right of the picture has taken the horses in an attempt to get the mail to the next Post Town.

14/92 – "The Snow Storm" delay of the mail. On this card the Guard can be seen mounting one of the leaders prior to taking the mail forward.

15/92 – This card shows the Birmingham Mail Coach stuck fast in the snow. The Guard, Bamford, is taking the mail to London on fresh horses.

16/92 – On many occasions the coach horses could go no further and fresh horses were brought out from the next Post House. In this case the Devonport coach is shown crossing the Downs near Amesbury.

The cards cost 25p each from: National Postal Museum (Mail Order), King Edward Street, LONDON EC1A 1LP. Minimum order £1 plus handling charge of 24p on orders up to £24 and £2.14 over £24 (sent registered post). A special handstamp will be used on 10 November 1992. Cards/covers to receive this cancel should be sent to: Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail City of London, KEB, LONDON EC1A 1AA. Please ask for "NPM Special/10 November". The Museum's regular Maltese Cross cancel will also be available. Collectors are referred to the note on the use of 18p Christmas stamps for special handstamps on 10 November – see page 31 of October Bulletin.

The Museum will issue four sets of postcards during 1993: 19 January – "People in the Post", showing aspects of the modern Post Office in the exhibition now on at the Museum; 6 May – "Gems of the Museum"; 14 September – "Uniforms"; and 9 November – Christmas. Details will be published here nearer the time.

24p Green Stamp Withdrawn

Some of the 24p Green Issue Special Stamps were found to produce an inconsistent phosphor reading, causing mis-sorts. Once this was discovered, remaining stamps were withdrawn from Post Office counters. Stocks remain on sale at the British Philatelic Bureau, Collections and Philatelic counters.



Royal Mail Teachers' Diary

The **Mailbag Pocket Diary**, which is on sale now at The Design Council bookshop in London, is packed with children's illustrations, and stories which can be used as starting points for art, design and technology activities.

Colin Pawson, Royal Mail Head of Philatelic Marketing, said: "This beautiful and practical diary is a useful resource tool. The diary was developed as part of Royal Mail's education programme which is linked to special stamp issues. For the teachers, it provides plenty of examples of excellent design related projects that span the primary curriculum.

"The diary contains children's artwork, poems and stories combined with examples of design related projects that span the primary curriculum. It should be a marvellous source of inspiration. Royal Mail and The Design Council support the same aims in terms of increasing visual literacy among teachers and school children in primary education."

The material used in the diary comes from three principal sources: Royal Mail's education programme, The Design Council's exhibition, "The Wolf-Proof House" (on display until October 1992 at The Design Council in London); and children's own stories and poems.

The diary, printed on recycled paper has been specially designed for ease of use by Royal Mail's educational design consultants. It covers 53

weeks (of the 1992/93 school year), has 120 pages, fold-out year planners and a list of useful contacts. Price £4.95, on sale at Design Council Bookshop, 28 Haymarket, LONDON SW1Y 4SU, or by post from Design Council, FREEPOST, PO Box 10, WETHERBY, W Yorkshire LS23 6YY (£1 postage & packing).

Bulletin Back Issues

Back issues are available for one year from the British Philatelic Bureau in Edinburgh and the National Postal Museum in London, price 60p a copy for issues to August 1992, 70p per copy thereafter.

Mr Maynard Davies, of Bristol, operates a non-profit making scheme for collectors to acquire and sell back numbers. He has for sale bound reprints of Vols 1 & 2. Photocopies can be supplied to order of issues from Vols 3-6. Original copies of many issues from Vol 7 onwards are available. A limited supply of used binders is also available.

Mr Davies is interested in acquiring issues from Vols 3-6 but has adequate stocks of later issues. He is not able to undertake the time consuming task of searching and copying specific articles. Mr Davies can be contacted at: Hall Floor Flat, 4 Cecil Road, Clifton, BRISTOL BS8 3HR. All enquiries should be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope or international reply coupon.

Gems from the R M Phillips Collection

203. Army Telegraph Stamps

In June we showed some of the "Military Telegraph" stamps which went into use late in 1884. They were produced to aid Army Telegraphs officers in Egypt who were required to keep accounts of small amounts paid in currency. Military Telegraph stamps remained in use until 1890.

From 1895 stamps were provided by the Inland Revenue to facilitate accountancy by officials of the War Office Telegraph Department. The two stamps shown here are overprints on contemporary postage stamps. The ½d vermilion stamp was used in the Ashanti War (1895-96), and the green during the Boer War (1900-01).



These stamps can be seen on page 24 of vol XLIV in the "Victorian Revenue and other Fiscals" display of material from the Phillips Collection in the main gallery of the National Postal Museum. Detailed research was undertaken in the preparation of this display; the writing up is based on the latest published and unpublished work. The Museum in London's Chief Post Office, King Edward Street, EC1 is open Monday-Friday 9.30 am to 4.30pm.

Lionel Jones, Philatelic Officer

Railway Letter Stamps

Shown here is the "Wartime Weekend" stamp issued by the North Yorkshire Moors Railway on 31 October. It comprises the 25p definitive stamp showing locomotive "Dame Vera Lynn" (issued 6 February 1992) with suitable overprint.



The stamp is available mint at face value plus postage from: Mrs M Atkins, 5 Tiber View, Brinsworth, ROTHERHAM, S. Yorkshire S60 5EA from whom details of first day covers and other NYMR stamps are available.

Railway Letter Stamps are issued by a number of privately-run railways under the Railway Letter Agreement with Royal Mail.

50th Anniversary Commemorative Aerogramme

Air Letter forms bearing a George VI 6d adhesive stamp went on sale at post offices on 7 December 1942. They were for use of civilians writing to members of the Forces serving in East Africa; the service was extended to South Africa on 9 April 1943. On 18 June 1943 Air Letters with an imprinted 6d stamp were made available at all British post offices.

To commemorate the 50th anniversary, the standard aerogramme is being printed with an anniversary symbol on the front. This will be available from the British Philatelic Bureau, collections and philatelic counters from 1 December 1992. It will go on sale at post offices as stocks of the existing aerogramme are used



up and remain on sale throughout 1993. Price 34p single aerogramme, £1.90 pack of six.

The aerogrammes in the pack bear a "discount star" on the top flap; thus there will be two versions of this aerogramme for the specialist collector.

There will be no "first day" facilities, i.e. "First Day of Issue" postmarks. Collectors wanting a first day cancel, are advised that the Heathrow Airport tourist handstamp, showing Concorde, is the most appropriate for this new aerogramme. To receive this cancel, send aerogrammes on 1 December to: Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail City of London, KEB, LONDON EC1A 1AA, requesting handstamp No.2598. This handstamp is in permanent use.

Posting Boxes

135. First Elizabeth II Box

Featured this month is the first pillar box of the present reign. Jean Farrugia's book *The Letter Box* (1969) tells us that it was erected in Whitehall, near the Horseguards' Parade, in November



Photo: Post Office Photo Library

1952. It was replaced by a double-aperture box in 1965; that box is believed to have been subsequently removed. Martin Robinson's book *Old Letter Boxes* (1987) states that the original boxes had 8 inch (200mm) posting aperture, later boxes had the aperture increased in size to 10 inches (250mm).

Competition



Win £75 worth of British stamps

Enter this month's competition and stand a chance of winning £75 worth of current British philatelic products of your choice – stamps, stamp books, postcards, albums, etc. Answer the questions below, the answers will be found in this month's *Bulletin*, and send with your name and address on a postcard to: November Competition, British Philatelic Bulletin, Royal Mail, 76-86 Turnmill Street, LONDON EC1M 5NS to arrive by 28 December.

The sender of the first all-correct entry drawn on 28 December will be invited to order £75 of philatelic products; five runners-up will be sent presentation packs of the Swans stamps. Answers and winners' names will be published in the February *Bulletin*.

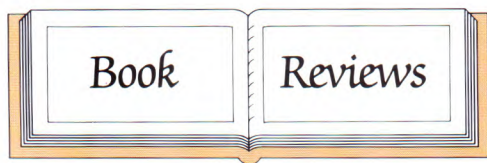
1. Who designed the 1984 Christmas stamps?
2. Where in London was the first pillow box of the present reign erected in November 1952?
3. What is the date of issue of the 1992 Christmas stamps?
4. Air Letters bearing a George VI adhesive stamp went on sale on 7 December 1942. What was the denomination?
5. "People in the Post" exhibition is on show at which London museum?

The competition is not open to staff (and their families) of Royal Mail National and its agents. No correspondence will be entered into; the Editor's decision will be final.

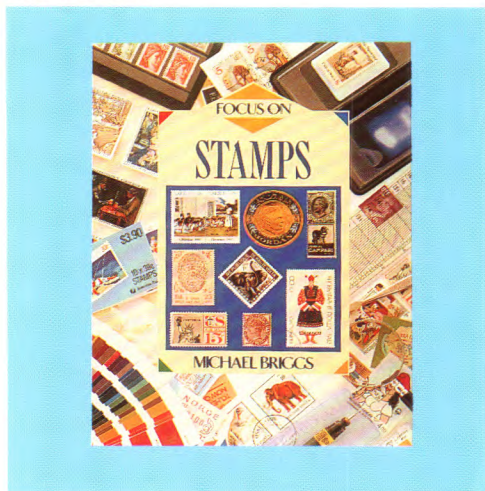
The winners of the August competition were: L Litwin of Cheshire (£75 worth of Royal Mail products); P Cross of Suffolk; P Hawkins of Kent; S Collins of York; Mrs B Ferron of Surrey; and A Kirk of Queensland, Australia (Green Issue presentation packs).

The answers were: David Hockey; 2. Twelve; 3. Edmund Dulac; 4. "Vermillion Giant"; 5. Brewing.

Our thanks to all who entered.



Focus on Stamps, by Michael Briggs, is an ideal Christmas present for young stamp collectors. This is no dull text book but a colourfully illustrated and well-written guide to the main aspects of stamp collecting, covering such diverse matters as where to Obtain Stamps, Cinderellas, Airmail, Collecting by Theme, and Unusual Stamps. The illustrations have been carefully chosen, a good mix of old and modern material. The chapter on Mistakes is of particular interest, dealing not only with major errors and constant varieties but with mistakes in stamp design and inscription. Illustrated are stamps of St Kitts Nevis (1903) showing Columbus using a telescope, long before it had been invented; and Norfolk Island (1986) wrongly inscribed "Home Society" instead of "Home Secretary". This error was subsequently corrected so collectors can have both versions.



In the section on Early Postal Systems, illustrations show a stone tablet letter, Roman post cart and courier (on stamps from Austria and France), early Russian and German messengers, and an Irish "Bianconi" mail coach of the 18th century.

Under the heading "Unusual Postal Services" we read of letters sealed in zinc containers and floated down the Seine during the Siege of Paris, tin-can mail from Niuafo'ou (Tonga), and

catapult-launched planes used to shorten delivery times across the Atlantic. The section on Postmarks highlights the importance of examining all used stamps, especially those on cover. Useful addresses, both in the UK and overseas, are given in the chapter on Stamp Clubs. The book concludes with a brief but helpful guide to foreign alphabets and some clear, well-drawn maps. 76 pages, hardbound. Published by Hamlyn Children's Books. Price £7.99. Available from book shops, or by post from: Stanley Gibbons Publications, Parkside, RINGWOOD, Hants, BH24 3SH.

British Philatelic Trust

The Trust has recently announced the appointment of two new Trustees. Derrick Howlett succeeds John Bryant-Smith, who retired last December after nine years service as a Trustee. Derrick spent all his working life in the printing industry, the last 30 years with Harrison & Sons Ltd, High Wycombe, the well-known stamp and currency security printers. Until retirement recently he was their Sales Director, and for 13 years served on the British Stamp Advisory Committee. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, and his main leisure interests are golf and music. He is married with two daughters.

David Lane replaces Keith Fisher as a Post Office nominated Trustee. Mr Lane has been recently appointed as Director and General Manager, Royal Mail National, the new strategic business unit responsible for the development and growth of Royal Mail business, including philatelic products. This follows a 10 year career in British Petroleum and Grand Metropolitan up to 1987, when he joined Royal Mail to establish Customer Care, including the re-introduction of Sunday collections, Royal Mail's new identity, employee relations strategy, and consumer marketing products. In 1990, Mr Lane became General Manager of Quadrant, the Post Office Catering Business, before being made responsible for Royal Mail National. Aged 36, he is married with four children, with whom he likes to spend time when not working.

Details of the work of the Trust can be obtained from its Secretary: John Littlebury, British Philatelic Trust, 107 Charterhouse Street, LONDON EC1M 6PT.

Profiles of David Lane and Derrick Howlett were published in the Bulletin in February 1992 (page 129) and April 1992 (p. 188). Ed.

Six Month Digest

Listed below are the issues of the past six months and the proposed dates of issue for stamps until April 1993. Any change in these dates will be notified in the Bulletin. British Philatelic Bureau order codes are quoted where known.

6 May	NPM People in the Post cards (NQ913)
2 Jun	Civil War stamp cards (AQ213)
16 Jun	Civil War stamps (AS505)
16 Jun	Civil War pack (AP105)
23 Jun	Scot Aerogramme/Scots Guards (QS030)
7 Jul	Gilbert & Sullivan stamp cards (AQ218)
21 Jul	Gilbert & Sullivan stamps (AS510)
21 Jul	Gilbert & Sullivan pack (AP106)
28 Jul	50p book – Archeology 4 (TB017)
28 Jul	£1 book – Punch 4 (TB018)
28 Jul	78p book – Kellogg's Bran Flakes (UB053)
1 Sep	Green Issue stamp cards (AQ224)
8 Sep	4 x 33p book (UB062)
15 Sep	Green Issue stamps (AS516)
15 Sep	Green Issue pack (AP107)
15 Sep	NPM Artefacts postcards (NQ914)
15 Sep	NPM Machin postcard (NQ915)
22 Sep	50p book – Sheriff's Millennium (TB019)
22 Sep	£1 book – Sheriff's Millennium (TB020)
22 Sep	4 x 1st class book/W (UB055)
22 Sep	4 x 2nd class book/W (UB054)
22 Sep	10 x 1st class book/W (UB057)
22 Sep	10 x 2nd class book/W (UB056)
22 Sep	10 x 1st class book/H (UB061)
22 Sep	10 x 2nd class book/H (UB060)
22 Sep	10 x 1st class book/Q (UB059)
22 Sep	10 x 2nd class book/Q (UB058)
29 Sep	Single European Market stamp card (AQ229)
6 Oct	Christmas aerogramme (QX015)
13 Oct	Single Euro Market stamp (AS521)
13 Oct	Single Euro Market pack (AP108)
27 Oct	Tolkien Prestige Stamp Book (YB004)
27 Oct	Christmas stamp cards (AQ230)
27 Oct	Mail Pack C4, 1st class
27 Oct	Mail Pack C4, 2nd class
27 Oct	Mail Pack C5, 1st class
27 Oct	Mail Pack C5, 2nd class

Forthcoming

10 Nov	Christmas stamps (AS522)
10 Nov	Christmas pack (AP109)
10 Nov	Christmas stamp book (UB063)
10 Nov	1992 Collectors' Pack (AR027)
10 Nov	1992 Yearbook (AY031)
1 Dec	50th Anniv Aerogramme single
1 Dec	50th Anniv Aerogramme pack

1993

5 Jan	Swans stamp cards
19 Jan	Swans stamps and pack
19 Jan	Greetings stamp cards
2 Feb	Greetings stamps and pack
2 Feb	Marine Timekeepers stamp cards
16 Feb	Marine Timekeepers stamps and pack
2 Mar	Orchids stamp cards
16 Mar	Orchids stamps and pack
27 Apr	Europa stamp cards

Notes:

The 4 x 33p book (8 September) has revised text and contains stamps on paper with PVA Dextrin gum. The previous printing (September 1991) had PVA gum.

The NVI stamp books (22 September) include the revised wording about the use of NVI stamps on overseas mail but do not have the Olympic/Paralympic logos on the front cover.

W = Printed by Walsall Security Printers;

H = Harrison & Sons; Q = House of Questa.

Green Issue in Green Pack

Christopher Hall, age nine, and Lewis Fowler, age six, designers of the 24p and 28p stamps, were present in London's Green Park on 14 September for the launch of the Green Issue stamps. Photographers from the national press "snapped away" merrily whilst Christopher and Lewis patiently posed with enlarged versions of their stamps and with actress Tracy-Louise Ward. The designs were selected from 30,000 entries in a Royal Mail – Blue Peter competition. The stamps, which went on sale on 15 September, are available from the British Philatelic Bureau, Collections and philatelic counters.



November Digest

Issued in November

10 November: 1992 Christmas stamps – 18p, 24p, 28p, 33p, 39p.

Designer: Caroll, Dempsey and Thirkell Limited.

Printing: Harrison & Sons Limited, photogravure, 41 x 30mm, perf. 15 x 14, sheets of 100, PVA Dextrin gum. 18p on fluorescent coated paper with one phosphor band, 24p-39p on phosphor coated paper.

Pictorial First Day of Issue postmarks: British Philatelic Bureau, Bethlehem, Llandeilo, Dyfed, and Pangbourne.

Presentation Pack: No. 232, price £1.75.

10 November: Christmas stamp book containing 20 x 18p Christmas stamps. Price £3.60.

Printing: Harrison & Sons Ltd. Pane of stamps has margin at top and bottom (similar to Greetings stamp books).

Note: Any unsold stocks of this book will be withdrawn from general sale at post offices on 24 December; it will remain on philatelic sale at the Bureau, Collections and philatelic counters.

10 November: 1992 Royal Mail Special Stamps Yearbook, price £19.95. Contains all special issues of 1992. Available from Bureau, Collections, philatelic counters, postshops, main post offices, and some sub post offices.

10 November: 1992 Collectors' Pack, price £11.95. Contains all special issues of 1992. Available from Bureau, Collections, philatelic counters and main post offices.

10 November: National Postal Museum postcards – 4 designs featuring mailcoach scenes. Price 25p each. Available from Bureau and National Postal Museum.

11 November: Christmas souvenir cover. Price 21p. Available from Collections and philatelic counters.

Withdrawn in November

11 November: 1991 Christmas stamps, presentation pack, stamp cards, £3.60 stamp book, souvenir cover, 1991 Collectors' Pack, and 1991 Royal Mail Special Stamp Yearbook.

Note: The 37p national definitive originally scheduled for withdrawal on 13 September will now be withdrawn on 18 December 1992.

Events

7 Nov 92. Cornwall Philatelic Federation annual exhibition and fair at Cornwall Coliseum, Carlyon Bay, St. Austell, 10.00-16.00. Enquiries: D W Morrell, Hendra, Kingston Cross, Stoke Climsland, CALLINGTON, Cornwall, PL17 8PQ.

14 Nov. 92. Autumn Assembly of Midland Philatelic Federation at Oakengates Town Hall, Limeswalk, Oakengates. 10.00-16.30. Dealers, displays, refreshments. Enquiries: Dr E R Clark, 122 Coniston Road, WOLVERHAMPTON WV6 9DU, Tel. 0902 755262.

14 Nov. 92. Camberley & District Stamp Fair & Exhibition at Civic Hall, Camberley. 10.30-16.30. Dealers, displays, competition, raffle, refreshments. Admission 20p. Enquiries: J L A Davey, 22 Waverley Drive, CAMBERLEY, Surrey, GU15 2DL.

Postal Memorabilia Display

David Harrop of Stockport is an enthusiastic collector of postal and railway memorabilia. For some time he has staged permanent displays of material from his collection at the Manchester Transport Museum, Boyle Street, Cheetham Hill, Manchester, and at the Brookside Rail & Post Museum, Brookside Garden Centre, London Road, Poynton, Stockport, Cheshire. He has recently provided a new permanent display for the Crewe Heritage Centre, near Crewe Railway Station, open daily 10.00-17.00. Details from Mr Harrop at: 15 Hawthorne Road, Heaton Mersey, STOCKPORT SK4 3DQ. Tel. 061-442 1089.

Tolkien Prestige Book

The Tolkien book contains five new stamp variations, but *not* all in the mixed value pane as stated in October Bulletin, page 35. We apologise for any confusion caused.

