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Tennyson Stamps

The following details of the designs of the Tennyson stamps supplements the preview article on that issue in the February *Bulletin*.

The 24p stamp shows the poet in a photograph by Herbert Barraud from c.1888, and *The Beguiling of Merlin* by Sir Edward Burne-Jones (1874), a scene from the poem "Merlin and Vivien".

The 28p value shows a portrait taken by Julia Margaret Cameron in 1868, with *April Love* by Arthur Hughes (1856), which illustrates Tennyson's "The Miller's Daughter".

The 33p stamp features John Waterhouses's 'I am half sick of shadows', said *The Lady of Shalott* (1888), inspired by Tennyson's poem "The Lady of Shalott". The photographic portrait of Tennyson, aged 55, was by J E Mayall. A chalk drawing by M. Arnault, based on Mayall's photograph, is in the National Portrait Gallery,

London. It was given by Tennyson's widow in 1894. The Gallery's *Complete Illustrated Catalogue* (1981) lists some 13 paintings, photographs and other representations of Tennyson.

The 39p denomination shows Tennyson as a young man, c.1840, from a portrait by Samuel Laurence; it is superimposed on the painting *Mariana* by Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1868-70), depicting a scene from Tennyson's poem of the same name.

Irene von Treskow, who designed the stamps, said: "Tennyson was incredibly famous and therefore inspired many artists. I wanted to show a cross section of their work, and the theme that runs through much of it is the image of a romantic woman."

50p and £1 Book Cover Changes

Shown below are the covers of new 50p and £1 books available from the British Philatelic Bureau, Collections and philatelic counters from 28 April 1992 and from machines at post offices as stocks of earlier books are used up.

The books are No. 3 in the "Archaeology" and "Punch" series started in September 1991. The contents remain the same.



1991 Special Stamps Poll

In the December *Bulletin* we asked readers to nominate their three favourite sets of special and greetings stamps issued during 1991; also their favourite individual stamp from the 56 stamps in the 10 issues. Almost 2000 of you responded - an increase of 150 on the 1990 figure. We thank all who voted, especially those from overseas. Voting forms were received from no fewer than 36 countries: Australia, Belgium, Canada, Colombia, Cyprus, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, Iceland, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Oman, Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, Turkey, USA, and Zimbabwe.

Points were allocated for each vote for the sets: three points for the first choice, two points for the second, and one for the third. This enables us to get a clear picture of the relative popularity of each issue. The final figures were:

Maps	2262
Dogs	2058
Greetings - Good Luck	2020
Roses	1871
Christmas	1647
Dinosaurs	1054
Greetings - Smiles	670
Sport 91	476
Scientific Achievements	317
Europe in Space	211

Separate figures were compiled of overseas votes:

Dogs	366
Maps	319
Greetings - Good Luck	274
Roses	258
Christmas	218
Dinosaurs	198
Greetings - Smiles	164
Europe in Space	71
Sport 91	71
Scientific Achievements	67

The voting for the favourite individual stamp was as follows (stamp number as per December Bulletin in parentheses):

Dogs 22p (1)	198
Good Luck - Pot of Gold (44)	101
Roses 22p (18)	100
Scientific Achievements 37p (9)	98
Smiles - Teddy (47)	85
Christmas 24p (33)	78
Good Luck - Well (46)	77
Good Luck - Cat (40)	76
Dogs 31p (3)	65
Maps 24p (28)	64
Good Luck - Duck (42)	57
Dogs 33p (4)	54
Maps 39p (31)	54
Sport 37p (17)	47
Smiles - Policeman (52)	47
Maps 33p (30)	47
Dogs 37p (5)	45
Good Luck - Key (41)	44
Roses 33p (21)	45
Roses 31p (20)	41
Christmas 39p (36)	40
Christmas 18p (32)	36
Dogs 26p (2)	35
Good Luck - Rainbow (38)	33
Roses 37p (22)	32
Good Luck - Butterfly (45)	31
Good Luck - Nest (37)	30
Christmas 33p (35)	29
Good Luck - Magpie (39)	27
Sport 22p (14)	25
Smiles - Stan Laurel (56)	25
Smiles - Dennis (48)	24
Smiles - Mona Lisa (54)	24
Maps 28p (29)	23
Scientific Achievements 31p (8)	22
Christmas 28p (34)	21
Good Luck - Boot (43)	21
Dinosaurs 31p (25)	20
Dinosaurs 26p (24)	19
Sport 31p (16)	14
Roses 26p (19)	14
Dinosaurs 22p (23)	14
Sc Achievements 22p (Babbage) (7)	13
Dinosaurs 33p (26)	12
Dinosaurs 37p (27)	10
Smiles - Clown (53)	8
Europe in Space 37p (12)	7
Sc Achievements 22p (Faraday) (6)	6
Europe in Space 22p (10)	6
Smiles - Punch (49)	6
Smiles - Cheshire Cat (50)	6

Sport 26p (15)	5
Smiles – Moon (51)	5
Europe in Space 37p (13)	2
Europe in Space 22p (11)	0
Smiles – Queen of Hearts (55)	0

It is interesting to compare the votes of the overseas readers with the overall popularity of the sets. Overseas readers preferred Dogs to Maps, and Europe in Space to Scientific Achievements.

The *Bulletin* Editor personally read all your comments and 1991 Yearbooks have been sent to the five readers whose comments were thought to be particularly apt or interesting. Their comments, and those of other readers, are quoted below.

Dogs

This was the second most popular set overall, containing two of the ten most popular individual stamps (22p and 31p values). The reason for their popularity varied between love of animals, dogs in particular, and appreciation of the artistry of George Stubbs. Mr K Beaney of Essex described them as “classical simplicity”; M Garford of New Zealand expressed the view that “it is appropriate that man’s best friend should be depicted on stamps – man’s most popular hobby”. A Marshall of Leeds found the Dogs “excellent – just what special stamps ought to be” in what he described as “an otherwise largely poor year”. C Stuart of Wiltshire praised

members – the Dogs set was the clear winner with Maps, Christmas and Roses far behind. F Houtkruijer, describing himself as “a Dutch Anglophile”, thought the stamps “represent the very finest pictures of these lovely English dogs”. Lorraine Bryan of Surrey tells us that the Dogs “are the only ones all my overseas exchange pals liked”. A 1991 Yearbook goes to R Stewart of Perth for his comment “I was amazed that such elegant and interesting stamps could be produced from what I had considered a worn out topic.”

Scientific Achievements

This was not a well-liked set, coming next to last in overall voting, and last with our overseas readers. Somewhat surprisingly, therefore, the 37p stamp in this set was the fourth most popular individual stamp. A number of readers commented on the educational value of this set, feeling that scientific work is not appreciated as much as it should be in the UK. L P Barry of Herts wrote: “It is good to remind people of everyday things, that are usually taken for granted and be grateful to those who achieved them for us.” Professor Atkinson, of Canada, praised the designs and format: “balanced pairs of clean design, richly balanced colour in individual pairs, and set, apt symbolism for the achievements, a sense of completeness to the set.” However rather more readers objected to the way Babbage and Faraday were portrayed and many commented on the difference in design approach between the two pairs.

Europe in Space

There was little praise for Royal Mail with this set. Although more popular with overseas readers; it received few votes and, as individual stamps, none of the four reached double figures in terms of votes. Firstly, those who admired the novel approach of Jean-Michel Folon included Señor Enseñat of Spain: “I find this set of stamps original, futuristic, simple, unique and modern. I also like the interesting colours, their ambiguity, and their dedication to Europe.” Mr B Jones of Gwent thought the stamps “very simple yet the colours and patterns gave the intrigue and wonderment necessary to ask oneself what is actually out there.” Mrs Downs of Birmingham voted for this set because of “their subtle, beautiful colours; because of the intriguing nature of the designs; because they are, refreshingly, completely different from the usual run of UK stamp design; and for their ele-



the “traditional pictorial artwork with no symbolic abstruse pictograms that are unclear”. M Martin of Somerset liked the issue because “Dogs have made the headlines for all the bad reasons. I feel sure this issue would have pleased the many dog lovers in this country.” Mr A F Watters, President of the Taranaki Philatelic Society in New Zealand, took a poll of his

gance.” Larry Rosenblum of California found them “daring and innovative. It makes people think, hopefully about space, but always about stamp design.” Perhaps tongue-in-cheek, Brian Linney of Worcestershire voted this set first but commented “I have chosen Europe in Space for their originality. A view into my ‘Dust Bin’ from space – that’s original! The ‘Dust Man’ looks a lot like Henry VIII.” Gerard Kennedy of West Yorkshire wrote: “I suppose someone will like them. Royal Mail Stamp Committee must have been to a rave party the night before approving these. Boldly go – and don’t come back.” A lot of strong words were used against these stamps – dreadful, awful, horrid, etc. A number of you called for a new stamp advisory committee, and a good many declared them the worst, in their view, British stamps ever. Perhaps the last word should go to Sergio Bettinello of Italy for his remark “Folon is Folon.”

Sport 91

As with the Sport issue of 1988, many who commented on the 1991 set liked the feel of movement the designers had captured. The bold colours also had their admirers. Mr P Howes of Bristol wrote: “During 1991, many sets resulted in a ‘sameness’ of colour or design format within the set. This criticism cannot be levelled at the Sport set which have colour, life and movement.” A similar comment from C Enright of Luxembourg: “The set is alive with the fluidity of motion, grace and strength that epitomises first class sport.” Mr M Ely’s opinion earns him a 1991 Yearbook: “By the use of bold design and dynamic lines you can almost feel the exhaustion and pain the athletes endure in training and competition.” There were no forthright expressions of dislike about this issue, but its low position in the voting table perhaps suggests apathy towards it. Maybe there would have been greater interest had the set been issued whilst the Rugby World Cup was in progress and with rugby featured on the inland 1st class rate stamp.

Roses

This was the fourth most popular set, with the 22p value the third favourite individual stamp of 1991. Many praised the choice of roses but felt disappointed with the colouring which was thought too dull. White backgrounds appealed to many but were disliked by others. Flower stamps are always popular and it was interesting

to note from your comments how many stamp collectors are also keen gardeners (not the Editor I have to admit). Mr H Fowler of West Sussex liked the white background and the clarity of the value, comparing this to the Dogs 26p and Europe in Space 37p (left stamp) which he found difficult to read. “Using” the roses stamps was, he says, “like sending a gift of flowers.” Mr J Roberston of Glasgow also commented on the importance of seeing the values on these stamps – “unlike Europe in Space (picture of spilled can of paint!), or Maps (value invisible).” A C Smith of Somerset says he is “always totally supportive of the Post Office’s adventurous policy in stamp design but finds it “always reassuring” to see more traditional stamps; he described the Roses as “superb”. Mr J Miller of Devon thought the issue “reflects the sense of quality that the Royal Mail usually portrays in its stamp designs.” He continued, “there are exceptions!, vis Europe in Space – ugh!!” Elizabeth Boyle of Glasgow, one of our younger readers, aged 12, thought the Roses stamps would appeal to both adults and children. Many youngsters are attracted to thematic collecting and flowers is one of the more popular themes. Several overseas readers recalled roses seen in British gardens, public and private; for Mrs D Rosenberger of Switzerland, “Roses are England!!!”.



Dinosaurs

Again there was a lot of comment about the white background (on the whole you seem in favour), and on the educational value of the stamps and their particular appeal to children. Mr D Yates of Gloucestershire summed it up and wins a 1991 Yearbook: “Like giant xylophones they stand in pastel splendour, uncluttered by inevitable frames. Their purpose obvious, their message plain, appealing to our childhood sense of awe.” J Milliner of Australia hoped that this set will “excite the curiosity of the younger generation, and will cause more

the younger generation, and will cause more interest in the hobby of philately." Let's hope so Mr Milliner. J Starkey of Lincolnshire found the designs "more in the tradition of stamp graphics – not just a mini-photo but an informative design adapted to minuscule size." Several, including Miss H Kitts of Essex, remarked on Prof. Kneale's idea of showing the relative sizes of dinosaurs and man. Miss Kitts thought "the clever usage of colour and shading seemed to convey great size and power very well." Mrs H Kojima of Japan thought "the idea of coloured Dinosaur bones was really unique"; continuing, "We always admire your sense of humour on British stamps." A reader in Surrey, who perhaps best remain anonymous, clearly has that British sense of humour – he voted for the Dinosaurs set as "they remind me of my mother in law!" As individual stamps, they did not achieve high scores – the 31p was the most popular.



Maps

This – the most popular set overall, and second most popular with overseas readers – was much praised both in design terms and for subject matter. It is evident that Ordnance Survey maps are held in high regard and affection. Mr P Clark of Kent thought they "stand out both in the concept and clarity of their design. Their additional interest lies in the glimpse they afford of geographic and social change in the country." The concept of showing the development of one place (Hamstreet) over time was much liked, R Smith of Surrey concluded "It is 200 years captured in miniature". The use of intaglio (recess) printing was popular, as Mr D Leak of Norfolk, wrote "It is such a treat to have a stamp printed in intaglio." Few would disagree Mr Leak. C Trollope of Merseyside wrote: "These are not 'Glanter Stamps' – they draw the

eye to roads, routes, railways and other fine detail." This fine detail came to the rescue of Uwe Schütte of Germany: "on our holiday in southern England we got lost in Hamstreet, and only with the help of the newly purchased stamp did we manage to find our way back". D Smith would have no such problems as he lives in Hamstreet, his house is marked on the 33p and 39p values. He writes: "There can't be many other philatelists who can claim this honour. Our friends near and far are most impressed! Thanks." The few criticisms of this set mostly concerned the difficulty of reading the value and some felt that the dates "1791 1991" were rather lost at the bottom of the stamp; better would have been the caption ORDNANCE SURVEY BICENTENARY.

Christmas

Despite the highest of praise for this set, it came only fifth in the league table. As always there were many comments on the importance of a religious theme, showing the true meaning of Christmas. The quality of the reproduction of the illuminated manuscripts was praised, making them for V Maxwell of Somerset, and A Coates of Yorkshire the best Christmas set to date. Mr A Bedford-Russell of Wiltshire also found the Christmas aerogramme the best ever. Yet again comments were made about the clarity and positioning of value and Queen's head – the Rev. E Ogden of Lancashire thought these were "clear but not intrusive to the design." Sir Kirby Laing of London made a general comment on the difficulty of reading the value and seeing the Queen's head on certain stamps, especially where metallic ink is used. He referred specifically to certain of the Dogs and Greetings stamps. C Shilley of Southampton was so moved by the illuminated manuscripts that he submitted his entry with an illuminated initial letter; he commented "Associates the best of modern communications with the best of ancient art." For a final comment, we come on down, to Leslie Crowther of Avon: "The art of the old master of illuminated lettering is wonderful, and beautifully depicted on these stamps." Those who didn't much care for the Christmas stamps noted that the medieval theme had been used before, or that the five stamps appeared too similar when viewed as a set.

Your views on the Greetings stamps and some of your general comments on 1991 issues will be published next month.

Special Stamps Criteria

A number of readers have asked about the criteria for issuing special stamps. The current criteria, largely based upon that introduced in 1964 by the then Postmaster General, Anthony Wedgwood Benn, are as follows:

- a. To commemorate important anniversaries;
- b. To celebrate events of national and international importance;
- c. To reflect the British contribution to world affairs, in particular to the Commonwealth and Europe, in a variety of fields of activity including the arts and sciences;
- d. To reflect the many and varied aspects of Britain and the British way of life;
- e. To extend public patronage to the arts by encouraging the development of minuscule art;
- f. To fit in with the Post Office's commercial targets for philately.

Then conventions were developed with experience of working to the criteria, and these are:

- a. Any topic which may conceivably be controversial or cause offence nationally or internationally is avoided, e.g. political implications or propaganda, particular religious factions;
- b. No living person, other than Royalty, is depicted;
- c. Anniversaries are restricted generally to 50 years of multiples thereof;
- d. Past and future years are considered to ensure a balance and variety of subjects taking one year with another;
- e. Within a year's programme the aim is to provide a variety of categories of subjects.

For further guidance we turn to the interesting discussion paper "The Post Office and the Support of Philately" presented to the 1987 British Philatelic Congress by Colin Pawson, now Royal Mail's Head of Philatelic Marketing. Mr Pawson's paper was published in the *Congress Handbook*.

The changes to the criteria made since 1964 reflect the growing importance to the country of the European connection, and the realignment of the Post Office in 1969 with the Post Office Act which came into effect on 1 October of that

year. The act abolished the ancient position of Postmaster General and the direct link to the Treasury (a move which had started in 1951) and required the new body to apply commercial criteria to all of its activities.

The changes to the conventions reflect the growth of popularity of special issues – we restrict suggestions for celebrating almost all anniversaries to multiples of 50 years – and to ensure that subject choice is not based on personal whim, dictated by the individuals fortunate enough to have that responsibility at any one time, but that the Post Office remains corporately consistent over many years. It is instructive to study when and why we have departed from this rule. Most examples reflect the nation's demand that we celebrate royal occasions like the 25th and 40th anniversaries of The Queen's accession, and the Royal Silver Wedding Anniversary of 1972. Others, like the 25th anniversary of the Battle of Britain issue demand a place in the programme because they are such significant events in the nation's history and because, in that case, it was felt that many of the people to whom the issue paid tribute might not, unfortunately, be able to mark the 50th anniversary.

Armed with these criteria and conventions, we are able to prune the suggestions to make a short-list of perhaps 15 subjects which we must reduce usually to eight, including Christmas. You will have counted as many as 10 in some years but collectors have urged that we reduce the number of issues and we have met that demand. Inevitably this does not please the people whose ideas have to be turned down, and inevitably it can mean that in a year packed full with anniversaries we must ignore some that would be recognised in a leaner year.

At the short-list stage regular collectors and members of the general public have a say in the final choice of subjects through discussion groups. These are chosen as representative of the whole country; their opinions are of great value, sometimes surprising, and they certainly guide, without necessarily dictating, the final choice. These discussions may one day prove a fascinating area for philatelic study.

The work of the Stamp Advisory Committee which oversees the design work on special stamps was described by Barry Robinson, Head of Design, in the first of five articles published here in October and December 1988, January, April and May 1989. It is hoped to publish a further article on the SAC later in the year.

Optically Variable Ink

Giving a new dimension to Stamp Security

DR. A R LANE

Royal Mail Research & Development Centre, Swindon

Over the past two years a number of factors have encouraged Royal Mail to review the technical performance of postage stamps and related products such as cancelling inks.

The first of these was the revelation that postage stamps were being reused on a relatively large scale in a fraudulent way. The national press followed this subject with interest in the early days and the matter became more emotive when it was found that charities were often the innocent suppliers of the used stamps which were subsequently recirculated. This reuse pointed to two weaknesses, firstly, that there was a significant number of stamps which escaped cancellation due to various problems with the stamp cancelling machines, and secondly that the existing ink used for obliteration could easily be removed from the shinier, less penetrable surfaces of litho printed stamps. The potential loss to Royal Mail due to these activities was estimated at £10 million.

High Speed Postmarking

A further feature which had to be considered was the introduction, on an accelerating programme, of 120 of the new culler-facer-canceller TSC 88 machines (CFCs), manufactured by Toshiba in Japan, which are intended to replace the existing facer-canceller-tables (FCTs) and automatic letter facers (ALFs) (*Ref. 1*). These new machines, the first of which arrived at Reading in June 1991, are specified to process 35,000 letters per hour up to C5 in size at a belt speed of 4 metres per second, which is more than twice the speed of the ALF machine.

Because of this increase in speed and the modular design of the CFC, it was necessary to locate the phosphor illuminating UV light source and the photodetector much closer together; their distance of separation being about 15 cm, and to allow for the much smaller but equally powerful lamp that was used by the Japanese. The result was a requirement for the stamp phosphor bar signal to increase by at least 50 per cent.

Finally, the concern for the environment became more noticeable over this period and

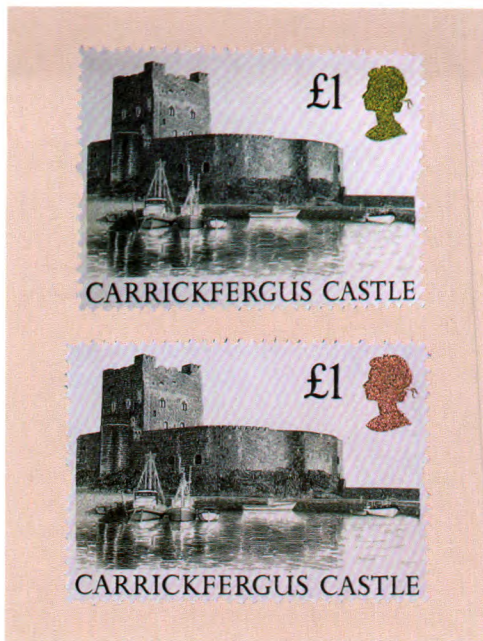
changes, for security or operational reasons, needed to follow an environmentally friendly direction.

A small number of committees were set up to consider the problems and establish objectives. These committees were mainly directed at improved cancelling ink development and future stamp security. The ink committee comprised technical staff from the Swindon laboratory, safety representatives and staff from the major sorting offices who had agreed to undertake trials on the new inks. This subject would make a story in itself, but, suffice it to say that trials were carried out in Birmingham, Glasgow, Belfast and London EDO offices and eventually a very satisfactory product was achieved which was in use throughout the nation by August 1991. In addition cancellation quality standards were prepared and affixed to the machines for easy reference. This activity was reinforced with a poster campaign in offices of which, "Make a Good Impression on the Queen" was an excellent example. These actions, together with the 100 letter test procedure, have served to improve to some extent the quality of mark applied and reduce the number of misses. However, inevitably, further minor problems have arisen with the arrival of the CFCs and the changeover and machine familiarisation processes.

Paper & Printing Security

A committee of senior Royal Mail staff met regularly to consider improvements to the security of paper and printing. Representatives of the printers attended some of these meetings to discuss the benefit of new features. The aim was to achieve more secure stamps which gave sufficient visibility of cancellation mark, performed well in the mechanised letter facing process and had a distinctive visual appearance. The first to be considered were the high value Castle series and the results were as follows:

The first examination was aimed at the stamp base paper. Recently, most British stamps have been printed on a paper of a high whiteness value. It was felt that this was not necessary and



£1 stamp viewed from two different angles to show the change of colour of the optically variable ink. Normal lighting has been used.



Top: old and new £1.50 stamps viewed under long wave ultra-violet light to demonstrate the new fluorescent castle design.

Bottom: new £1 stamp viewed alone under long wave UV light.

that the optical brightening agent used to create this effect could be removed to environmental benefit. The result is a warmer tone which is less contrasting with the printing ink.

Perforations were the next to be assessed. After considerable deliberation it was decided that they were an important contributor to the security of a stamp and therefore this aspect should be further developed. The result was the introduction of an oval perforation covering the area of three normal holes, which was positioned on the two vertical edges close to the central position, commencing at the ninth hole from the base.

In consideration of the design features, it was decided to re-engrave the design onto new plates, and the results that Harrisons have achieved is notable. In order to achieve a higher level of security, a fluorescent additive was incorporated into the printing ink which adds a further warmth to the tone, but also gives distinctive colours when viewed under ultra-violet light of 365 nm.

Optically Variable Ink

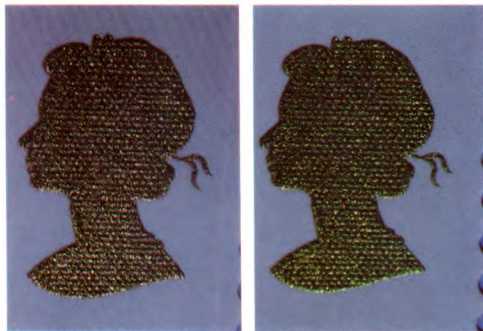
Finally, a *pièce de résistance* was required. Many questions had been asked of the Post Office Materials Laboratory and Harrisons about new inks. Chemical, heat and radiation sensitive materials were discussed, and abandoned. Gradually, the long list of substances was reduced, until, after many hours of discussions, one product remained – Optically Variable Ink (OVI). This product was Swiss, and hence expensive, but it was stable, rub resistant and capable of application by the recess technique. It had only previously been used for banknote printing, appearing in countries as far apart as Argentina and Thailand. The next choice was where to print the variable ink on the stamp; this was limited to three possibilities, the value, the castle name or the Queen's head. An initial trial of the ink was carried out printing the value on the magenta £1.50 stamp, which was successful but the impact was not felt to be strong enough. A decision was, therefore, made to take a new approach to the engraving of the monarch's head and create the appearance of a solid silhouette, which could be applied in the new ink.

The special characteristic of the OVI is that it changes colour when viewed from different angles. It is available in three colours, green to blue, blue to red and green to gold. The latter product was chosen for printing the four

stamps. BW Inks in the United Kingdom and their parent company SICPA in Switzerland were most helpful in making this ink available for a world first printing on British postage stamps and providing their staff to help with the evaluation.

Technically Advanced Stamps

Having decided upon the materials and perforation requirements, a series of trials commenced to find the correct conditions for printing these technically advanced stamps. Harrison's were able to coat a base paper free of optical brightener without difficulty but the coloured inks for the castle design required several modifications before they gave the right degree of fluorescence. The most effort was required to optimise the recess printing process to suit the OVI, which did not behave quite like any previous ink. When to all these developments was added the tight specification for the new perforation tool, it can be appreciated that there was occasionally some nail-biting at High Wycombe, Royal Mail Stamps, London and the Swindon Materials Laboratory. Due praise should be given to Harrison's staff, for achieving success with these stamps, but the tireless devotion of Ron Powell deserves special recognition.



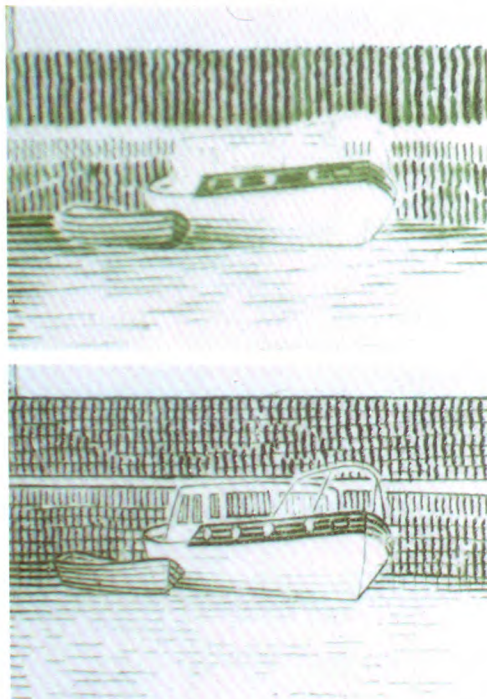
The Queen's head from the £1 stamp magnified to show the green to gold colour change.

The new high value stamps were printed on an Intagliocolor 8 press, which is a combination product of De La Rue, Giori and Koenig & Bauer technology. Using four plates this press can produce up to 6,000 stamp sheets an hour. It is a sheet fed machine which introduces interleaving papers to separate the printed sheets as the ink is relatively slow to dry.

The new stamps represent, in principle, the concepts of banknote printing rather than conventional stamp technology. New low value definitive stamps will also be launched in due

course which have features which reduce the possibility of imitation, copying or re-use.

The increased speed of mail processing and the requirement for greater security is providing as great a challenge in respect of the low value definitives, especially as four printers are involved, and thus many will not be available before the next tariff change.



Top: detail from the original £1 Carrickfergus Castle design.

Bottom: the same area taken from the new £1 value to show the improvements to the engraving.

it is hoped that the new high value stamps, similar as they at first appear to their earlier relatives, but which contain so many new features, will be well received by the philatelic community, and that collectors will consider looking at these and other stamps in their collections in a new light.

Ref. 1. Orr, M., Culler Facer Cancellor Project, Royal Mail Mech 2000 magazine, 3rd edition, July 1990, pp.10-11.

Notes: (1) OVI is a trademark of Sicpa, Lausanne. (2) Harrison's I8 intaglio machine, mentioned above, was illustrated in Douglas Muir's article "Production of the Map Stamps" in November 1991, page 65. Ed.

National Postal Museum News

The Museum's collection of Commonwealth and Foreign stamps supplied by the Universal Postal Union in Berne has been brought up to date following extensive mounting sessions by the Manager, Stan Goron, and by Friends of the Museum, Mike Bament and Cyril Macey. Some of this extensive collection is on display in the Main Gallery, the rest can be seen by appointment. It includes most countries of the world, although it should be noted that not all countries supply stamps through the UPU on a regular basis.

A new display of Revenue and Fiscal stamps from the R M Phillips Collection is now on display in the Main Gallery. It is hoped that some of the pillar boxes from the Museum's collection (stored in the basement) will soon be on show in the main hall of the London Chief Post Office.

The Museum will issue four postcards on 6 May, in connection with the "People in the Post" exhibition. These cost 25p each and can be ordered from: National Postal Museum (Mail Order), King Edward Street, LONDON EC1A 1LP. Minimum order £1; handling charge 24p on orders up to £24; £1.97 over £24 (sent by registered post.)

A special handstamp will be used on mail posted at the Museum on 6 May. Cards/covers to receive this handstamp should be sent to: London North Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail City, King Edward Street, LONDON EC1A 1AA. Please state clearly that "NPM - 6 May Special Handstamp" required. The Museum's regular Maltese Cross cancel will also be available - ask for "1985 - 6 May".

The Museum has produced an attractive annual report, entitled *The Philatelic Year*, since 1988. The report covering 1991 is now available, price £2 from the NPM Mail Order office, address above. It includes details of new acquisitions, exhibitions, conservation work, the Philatelic and Postmark Bulletins, and the activities of the Association of Friends of the NPM. The reports, containing much interesting reading matter and colour illustrations, are becoming collectors' items.

Greetings (Memories) Stamps

The cylinders and colours used for these stamps are as follows: B1A (gold) B1B (lemon) B1C (magenta) B1D (brown ochre) B1E (new blue) B1F (grey-black).

Gems from the R M Phillips Collection

196. 1883 Surcharges

The 3d and 6d surcharges of 1883 (S.G. 159, 162) are well-known to philatelists. The stamps were printed in lilac and surcharged in red. The two basic stamps were previously, 1881, printed in rose and grey respectively. The lilac stamps were intended as part of a proposed scheme whereby all values were to be printed in a common colour - purple - and surcharged with the value in bold figures. The Phillips Collection (Vol. 34, page 14) includes two imperforate 1s stamps in purple; page 47 of the same volume contains examples of the ½d, 1d, 1½d, 2½d,



4d, 5d, 6d, and 1s values in purple with appropriate surcharges in black. Only five such sets are believed to exist. Unused examples of the issued 3d and 6d surcharged stamps, and imprimiturs, can be seen on pages 52-53 of Vol. 34, and used copies on pages 58 and 60 of Vol. 35. The stamps were registered on 23 November 1882, and announced in the *Post Office Circular* of 19 December. The Collection includes fine unused and used blocks of eight of the 3d value.

The Phillips Collection can be seen in the National Postal Museum, King Edward Street, London EC1 - a few minutes walk from St Paul's Cathedral or the Museum of London. Open Monday-Friday 9.30am to 4.30pm; admission free.

Steam Mail Coaches of the Ocean

CAPTAIN JOHN G. STREET

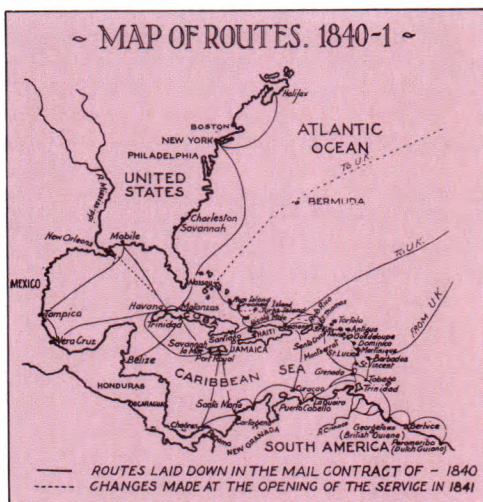
In 1837 when Queen Victoria succeeded to the throne, the West Indies were looked upon as the most cherished possessions of the Crown. Business was brisk and remunerative, showed signs of expansion, but it was clear that poor postal services were hampering the progress that was looked for. Improvement in Postal Services were however soon to become a reality.

James MacQueen, a Scotsman, who was much travelled in the West Indies, laid before Her Majesty's Government his first plan for a Steam Packet service between England and the Caribbean in July 1837. In September of the same year James MacQueen followed up his first proposals by placing before the Government his far more ambitious "General Plan for a Mail Communication between Great Britain and the Eastern and Western parts of the World"; also to Canton and Sydney westward by the Pacific. Such proposals over 150 years ago were a masterpiece of clear thinking and shrewd prevision.

Coffin Ships

In those days mails were carried across the Atlantic in the Royal Navy sailing Brigs, often referred to as the "coffin ships". The dates of such ships sailing was spasmodic, the times taken for the passage varying enormously. These Brigs were not in any manner suitable for the carriage of mails which were on occasions carried beneath the dining saloon table. James MacQueen was of the opinion that if Great Britain possessed all the channels of communication in the Western Archipelago it would thereby secure the principal political influence therein; otherwise in a very short period such influence would fall into the hands of the United States who were earnestly looking about.

On 26 September 1839 the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company which had been formed was granted a Royal Charter to carry mails. It was a terrific challenge to build a fleet of fourteen ships in order to fulfil the requirements of the service. Another three ships were required to operate the feeder services between the islands of the West Indies. By having the ships, all of wooden



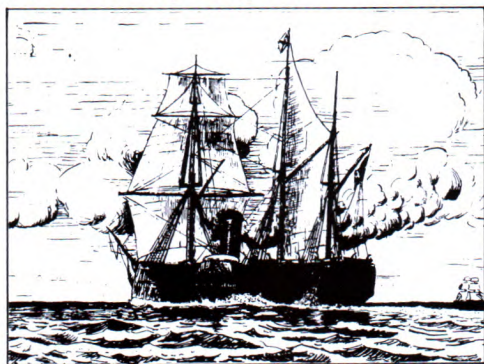
construction built at various ship yards in Britain, it was achieved. All these fourteen ships were to have boilers to power the steam engine necessary to turn the paddles as these were paddle steamers. In order to ensure that there was sufficient coal a massive operation was undertaken to send tons of coal out in sailing ships both to the West Indies and the bunkering ports en route. The Royal Mail Steam Packet Company was financed by various merchants plus there was a Government contract payment. The contract called for two sailings per month from a British Port to the island of Barbados and thence to Granada, Santa Cruz, St. Thomas, Nicola, Santiago de Cuba, Port Royal Savannah la Mar and Havana. The return voyage was in reverse order as far as Nicola Mole after which Samana Bay was called at before returning across the Atlantic. Connecting with the main line steamers were steam ships and three sailing ships serving all the principal islands and countries of the Spanish Main with an extension northwards to New York and Halifax, Nova Scotia. This vast network of routes, together with the Atlantic crossings, required an annual mileage of 684,816 nautical miles. This was a far greater undertaking than any previously attempted by private enterprise.

Stiff penalties could be incurred for late arrival or failure to call at a port on the itinerary for the voyage. At first the Admiralty insisted that a Royal Navy Officer be carried on each vessel to oversee and be responsible for the mails but this did not continue for many years.

Royal Mail Steam Packet Company made Southampton the port but at first, although the railway of the day did not go as far as this, Falmouth which had been used by the Royal Navy for embarking mails was the port at which they had to be taken on and discharged at. This of course meant that the Mail Coaches of the era had to trundle down to Falmouth. James MacQueen had felt that steamships should be the Mail Coaches of the Ocean.

First Sailing

On 3 January 1842 - 150 years ago - the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company *Thames* sailed from Falmouth bound for Barbice and soon afterwards the *Tay* for Barbados. The schedule called for a passage time of nineteen days. Thus began the first commercial under free enterprise carriage of mails. It was also the first time a ship was to make the crossing from Britain to the West Indies using steampower continuously.



Pen and ink drawing of "*Thames*", after the water colour by Captain John Sumpter Mitchell.

The *Thames* was a wooden paddle steamer of 1,889 tons, (old measurement), built by William Pitcher at Northfleet on the Thames. The engine was supplied by Maudslay, Sons & Field of London. The ship was launched on 20 May 1841. All ships of the fleet were surveyed by an Admiralty Surveyor, comprising a rigorous examination of the hull and speed tests over a measured mile, before they could be classified as a Royal Mail steam packet. Although it would be 70 years before it would become compulsory, each ship was provided with sufficient

boats for all on board, such were the standards required by this newly formed shipping company.

Having settled down the West Indies service, the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company began organising a service to Brazil with a feeder service to Buenos Aires, Argentina. On 9 January 1851 the R.M.S.P. *Teviot* set sail bound for Rio de Janeiro via Lisbon, Madeira, St. Vincent (Cape Verde Islands), Pernambuco and Bahia. The service was to be once a month, passage time 28 days 19 hours being called for and to Buenos Aires (after transshipment at Rio) not longer than 38 days 3 hours. By now mail communication was expanding quickly and other shipping companies were involved.

Gone - but not forgotten

In 1932 the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company ceased to exist under that name but a Company was incorporated under Royal Mail Lines Limited which continued to run the shipping fleet. As the British Merchant fleet declined, Royal Mail Lines was taken under the Furness Withy Group but even today, although there are no actual Royal Mail Line ships there is a Royal Mail section in the Group.

That bleak, cold January morning of 3 January 1842 - 150 years ago saw the commencement of what was to become a revolution in communications between Great Britain and other parts of the world, not only with mails but passengers, cargoes and doubtless from the political aspect strengthened Great Britain's hand in many parts of the world.

The sailing of the R.M.S.P. *Thames* belonging to the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company on the 3 January 1842 carrying the first mails commercially and using steam power continuously is a truly historic occasion, 150 years ago - is an anniversary that deserves to be celebrated.

Sources: *A Centenary History of Royal Mail 1839-1939* by the late T A Bishell, and other archive material.

Captain Street is Chairman of the Royal Mail Association, founded in 1989 to keep alive the great spirit and camaraderie which throughout the long period of The Royal Mail, as a shipping Company, was of the highest order.

The map and drawing of "Thames" are both reproduced courtesy of Furness Withy Group Archives - Richard Alexander, Archivist & Historian. Ed.

Designing the 1992 Europa Stamps

KEITH BASSFORD

Unlike other special issues that I have designed, Europa '92 was produced in three separate stages. Normally a special stamp issue has a single subject or anniversary that enables the designer to compose a set of stamps with a concept and style that gives a harmonious visual link to each of the stamps in a special issue.

The first stage of Europa '92 was the commission from Royal Mail to design two stamps to celebrate the CEPT theme for 1992: Discovery - the landfall in the New World by Christopher Columbus in 1492.

I submitted two approaches in answer to this brief; the first as two se-tenant pairs, 24p and 39p. The 24p pair with two engravings from 1594 by Theodore de Bry showing Columbus departing from Palos in Spain and his arrival in the New World. The 39p pair reproduces a map of the World by Francesco Rosselli, engraved in 1508 illustrating the discoveries of Columbus but without the mainland of America; Columbus believed that he had found islands off the coast of Japan and that China was further ahead.

Columbus went to his grave still believing that he had reached Asia.

The second of the two submissions for the CEPT Discovery theme was based around the sail training ship *Keisei*, part crewed by members of Operation Raleigh participating in the Grand Regatta Columbus departing from Cadiz in April 1992. I considered that the *Keisei* would link well with the *Santa Maria*, the flag ship of Columbus. These two stamps would then show one of the original ships that sailed to the New World 500 years ago and one of the ships taking part in the recreation of that historic first voyage to the Americas. I designed these two stamps with the thought that they would be engraved, this being the printing process that would show to the best effect the fine lines of mast and rigging and to give a feeling of both the history and tradition of seamanship.

It was this pair of stamps that the Stamp Advisory Committee accepted as the best way to celebrate the subject of Discovery.

Stanley Paine was commissioned to produce



Keith Bassford's preliminary designs

technically accurate illustrations of both ships and with redesigned typography from agreed text. The next stage was to produce a final guide for the engraving of illustration, caption and value by Chris Matthews of Harrison & Sons.

Essays were produced and approved by the Committee except for a change of background colour on the 39p to match the 24p and it was felt that the black text line on both stamps was too strong, it was agreed to change this line to a dark grey.

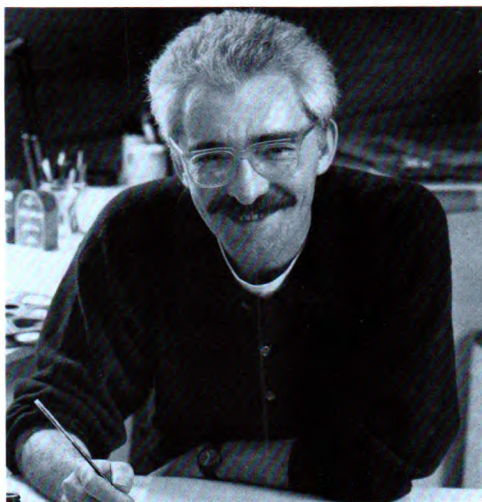
Enter the Olympics...

I had thought that this was the completed job – but it was decided to expand the issue into a broader European theme by including the participation of the British Team at the Olympic Games in Barcelona and the British Pavilion at Expo '92 in Seville.



Time again was in short supply and how to design two more stamps to live happily with the first two. As a foil to the history and tradition of the first pair that these two should be more contemporary in approach. There was limited visual material available; Expo was under construction and the Games still far away. After sifting through the research material I discovered that in both subjects the Union flag figured prominently. It was there in the fabric of the British Pavilion and as part of the symbol of the British Olympic team. Photography was the best way to show both images. I had found an official flag for the British team and I could borrow the model of the British Pavilion from the Department of Trade and Industry, all I needed was a photographer with a large facility and the ability to produce a vast amount of wind – I found Victor Watts and we did the shoot in a day.

The way to maintain a link with the first pair of stamps was by size of stamp and typography, with this set out all I needed to do was to choose from around 50 transparencies the best shot of the flag! The Pavilion fortunately was an easier choice – as it was not blowing in



Keith Bassford

the wind! Because of time the visuals were produced by colour photocopying the transparency and combining it with overlays of typography, The Queen's head and stamp frame.

The visuals passed through the Committee with no changes, so art-work was created for the House of Questa to produce essays by offset lithography.

Now I thought the project is complete but no, a third stage began to develop. The Royal Mail were also sponsors of the British team at the Paralympic Games for the disabled and, therefore, they must also have a stamp. Another brief for another stamp to fit into this already mixed issue! Having decided that the best approach was to match the design to the Olympic stamp I wanted a flag with the British Paralympic teams symbol – but there was no flag or symbol. With the approval of Royal Mail and Doug Swanson of the sponsorship committee, I commissioned Mark Jessett Associates to design a symbol for the Paralympic team. This design was accepted as the team's official device and I could produce the flag, order the photography and design the visual for submission to the Committee.

It passed through and we now had the maximum of five stamps in production – but that's not the end of the story – presentation pack, first day cover, filler card and "First Day of Issue" handstamps had to be researched, designed, visuals produced for approval and finished art work for printing to complete my involvement in the issue for Europa '92.

Postbag

J R HOLMAN

Decimalisation in the Post Office

I am still receiving letters from readers about my February 1991 article on 20 years since decimalisation. James Negus reports two further offices open for business during the strike, both serviced FDCs bearing the decimal definitives: Eye, Suffolk and Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire. Mr T Hamblin of West Midlands reports having a FDC postmarked at Inkberrow, Worcester. N Gbuay of Bedford writes: "Barnard Castle office (in those days a full post office, with a postmaster), remained open during the strike. I believe (although it is difficult to be certain after 20 years), that local mail was sorted and delivered. Unfortunately my decimal definitives FDC was posted in the FDC box which was sent to Darlington and, therefore, received the 'Posting Delayed' cachet. I should have obtained one in the normal box!"

Dr K R Young of Merseyside reports a very interesting cover, posted without stamps at Ramsgate on 8 March 1971 – the day postal services resumed after the strike. The cover bears a cachet indicating 5p to pay and two 6d Postage Due stamps cancelled by a Ramsgate rubber packet datestamp. As Dr Young points out, £sd postage due stamps should have been withdrawn from operational use prior to decimalisation. However there may have been a local shortage, hence the use of two 6d (1s. = 5p) as opposed to one 5p stamp. Owing to the postal strike, some post offices did not receive supplies of decimal definitives prior to D-Day. I should be interested to hear of other post-decimalisation covers bearing £sd postage due stamps. I would imagine they are none too plentiful.

Arthur Roberts of Stockport reports covers postmarked on Decimal Day at Chapel-en-le-Frith, Stockport, Cheshire, and Birch Vale, Stockport, Cheshire. Mr Roberts writes: "I posted the Chapel items myself for local delivery to a newsagents as a full delivery service was operating. Birch Vale cancels were given over the counter and I doubt if a delivery service was operating locally as it is a small village." He also reports a cover bearing the Offchurch,

Leamington Spa datestamp of 15 February, and can record Garstang and Eccles as open for local service although he does not have covers from those offices. Mr Roberts concludes: "If not already recorded, you may like to note that resumed collections on 8 March 1971 were for first class items only. The second class service resumed (at Manchester) on 10 March. Travelling Post Offices resumed on 9 March; I have examples of first TPO postings on 9th with new Late Fee of ½p (was 1d)."

John Linley of Redditch tells us: "I have in my possession a FDC with a Gorsty Hill, Rowley Regis, Warley, Worcs postmark dated 15 February 1971. My brother took four covers into this office and purchased and affixed the stamps on 15 February. They were hand-stamped in front of him, then left at the office until the strike was over and put through the normal system."

Caravan Post Office

Robert Morgan of Midlothian submitted a photograph of the former post office at Barvas on the Isle of Lewis. He tells us that Barvas is situated 15 miles south of the Butt of Lewis, a coastal station regularly heard on the radio shipping forecast. Elsewhere on the island rural post offices are either portable cabins or a room of a house. The post office, run from 1980 to August 1991 by Miss Mary Macdonald, was located in a caravan which stood on a crofters piece of land for which Miss Macdonald paid rent. The full range of services was provided including the sorting and delivery of mail. Following Miss Macdonald's retirement, the caravan went to "the peats". Each crofter has a "peat bank" and the caravan is now used to store



the cutting tools and acts as a shelter. Mr Morgan concluded his letter asking if any other post offices are, or were, located in caravans?

Victorian Postbox

A D Godfrey of Alcester, Warwickshire writes: "I was pleased to see in the January edition that you featured a posting box close to where I live. However I must assume that your photograph



The restored Spumal Ash Penfold box (Photo: A D Godfrey)

was taken and submitted some years ago, since the box at Spumal Ash, Studley, Warwickshire has been thoroughly restored and repainted. This was brought about largely due to the efforts of Redditch Philatelic Society and now looks splendid. Also this box is mentioned in Martin Robinson's book *Old Letter Boxes* as the only existing large size box of this type. Unfortunately this posting box is not on its original site. Until about 15 years ago, this box was actually situated 100 yards away, but was moved to a site more convenient for users."

Graham Smith, of Cirencester, also wrote about this box: "In 1985 I visited this box and was disappointed to see it in the dilapidated state shown in the photograph, with dirt and grime over its lid and missing its enamelled flap reading LETTERS over the posting aperture... its

present splendid appearance came after the Redditch Philatelic Society approached the Post Office and pointed out that this last surviving example of an original large Type A (not C) Penfold in service was in danger of disappearing due to neglect. For several days a salmon pink primer caused some concern, but eventually the familiar pillar box red was applied, the Royal Cypher and acorn picked out in gold and the base painted black. Unfortunately, however, the Royal Coat of Arms below the posting aperture was removed completely and the aperture still lacks a flap."

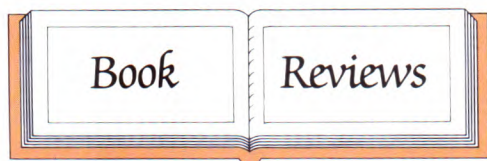
More Variety Needed?

Martin Allen of Oxford suggests a more adventurous approach to stamp issuing policy:

"I could not believe what I read about collectors protesting about the number of commemoratives in a set. What a negative attitude. British stamps have hardly touched into any imagination in terms of stamp design, number, size, or format. The definitives couldn't be more boring. Where are all the miniature sheets that every other country releases to supplement their superb sets (imperforated and perforated)? Why do we have stamps of only two variations, i.e. square or rectangular, with no difference in sizes at all? Collectors must be more adaptable. My South East Asian collection includes miniature sheets with nine in a set, a miniature sheet containing a giant stamp, sets of up to eight values, definitives showing fruit, butterflies, etc, etc. Many commemorate events that don't demand a full set of values. So come on 'the powers that be', use your imagination, ignore the groaners, get the nation interested in stamps. The Greetings stamps are on the right track. Go for it!"

Judging by other readers' letters, it would seem that Mr Allen is in the minority in wanting even more stamps. But what do the "silent majority" think – is Mr Allen on the right track? Your views are always welcome.

All letters sent to the Editor are carefully read; matters of general interest will be dealt with in "Postbag" or other sections of the Bulletin. Readers' comments relating to stamp issuing policy are brought to the attention of the relevant Royal Mail Manager. The Editor regrets that he is unable to reply personally to all letters – to do so would seriously delay production of this, and the Postmark, Bulletin.



John Moy, in conjunction with the Postal History Society, has recently published **The use of the 1894 Coded Time System in English Provincial Offices**. From the 1840s till the 1890s British postmarks bore the date but not the actual time of posting – a sore point with the public and a matter of inconvenience to the practical officers of the Post Office itself. A rudimentary system of indicating the time in code, using combinations of two numerals and a letter, was confined to Edinburgh from 1883 till 1894, but a more precise system was advocated by J D Rich of Liverpool in 1892 and given trials there, and subsequently at Birmingham and Bristol in 1893, before being adopted nationally at the beginning of 1894. This used the letters A to M (excluding J) to denote the hour, and the letters A to L (excluding J) to denote five-minute intervals. An asterisk was followed by A or P denoting am or pm. Thus KC*A denoted 10.15am. This code was applied to the various handstamps used in 1894, including double (duplex) stamps, combined (squared circle, Dulwich-pattern double circle, etc) single, registered oval, and even rectangular facsimile label parcel datestamps. Within a few months even the public had worked out the simple codes and in December 1894 the Postmaster General gave way and authorised time in clear, which was gradually adopted from January 1895 onwards. The period of the time-code stamps was thus very limited and consequently examples of such postmarks have always been keenly sought after. Previous studies by John Moy dealt with the code stamps of Scotland, Ireland, Wales and London. Now this volume discusses the trials of 1892-3 before listing fully every handstamp, the codes employed and the periods of use. Collating details from all the leading collections, some 384 English provincial offices have so far been recorded, but doubtless this excellent book will stimulate further research and bring other examples to light. The book is clearly set out, the listings of each town being alphabetically by counties, with an index which gives a brief summary of the different marks for each town. No fewer than 103 illustrations show the range of different postmarks using the time codes. 126

pages, card covers, strip binder. ISBN: 0 9518560 0 6. Available from the author at: Tree Tops, Cobham Way, East Horsley, LEATHERHEAD, Surrey KT24 5BH, price £10, postage £1.30.

J.Mc.

The final part (6) of **British Stamp Booklets** by Dr Jean Alexander and the late L F Newbery has recently been published. Part 6 covers the Series 8 and 9 books from 1940 to 1970. Series 8 comprises George VI and Elizabeth II 5s books, including those with pictorial covers, showing Historic Houses, issued 1968-70. The listings provide detailed information on the stamp contents, book covers and interleaving, binding, dates, and numbers issued. Included are books containing stamps with graphite and phosphor lines, some of which were produced in very small quantities. For example, only 7,200 of the July 1961 5s phosphor book were produced, compared with 1,148,200 of the non-phosphor version; priced respectively at £45 and £18 by S.G. (H51p/H51, 1991 *Concise Cat*). All the books in Series 9 contained only one value of stamp – the then current letter rate. Altogether there were 128 books in the series, Nos 1-20 contained 2½d stamps, 21-74 3d, and 75-128 4d values. All contained Elizabeth II stamps with various watermarks, plain and phosphor, graphite and phosphor versions, and Machin 4d sepia and vermilion issues. The February and March 1969 6s books are particularly interesting in containing panes with PVA and gum arabic; the latter are scarce – valued at £95 by S.G., compared with just 90p for PVA version (UB14b/UB14, *Specialised Cat.*, Vol. 3).

Part 1 of this series covered History and Series 1 Trials; 2 Series 1 and 2; 3 Series 4 and 5; 4 Series 6; 5 Series 7. Parts 1 and 2 cost £3 each, Parts 3-6 £4.50 each. All are available from: HH Sales Ltd, The Barn, Heaton Royds, Shay Lane, BRADFORD, W Yorkshire, BD9 6SH.

The first edition of the Stanley Gibbons **Great Britain Specialised Stamp Catalogue, Volume 5**, covering the QEII Decimal Special Issues, was published in September 1988 and quickly sold out (previously the specials had been listed with the definitives in Vol. 4). The second edition is now available. It follows the now well-established format, providing detailed listings for all issues up to the Maps set of September 1991 and repeating, from Vol. 4, the Penny Black Anniversary definitives of 1990 (including books and panes). Technical advances

and improved quality control has reduced the number of missing colour errors and worthwhile positional varieties in recent years, although the occasional imperf has slipped through. The 1990 Penny Black miniature sheet is listed imperforate and also with the black colour (recess printing) inverted and omitted (all unpriced). The 1982 29p Cars stamp is now listed with the black printing quadrupled, priced at £350. This work is especially useful for those who want details of constant varieties and details of sheet markings - cylinder numbers; traffic lights; marginal arrows; colour register, Autotron, and perforation register marks; positioning lines; and sheet values. Indeed, this may possibly be the only source of such information. Quantities sold and withdrawal dates are given. The Appendix details the perforators used for special issues. Once again the editors, David Aggersberg and Robert Oliver, are to be congratulated on a job well done. 392 pages, card covers. ISBN 0 85259 313 9. Price £16.95. Available at S.G. Strand shop, or by post from Stanley Gibbons Publications, Parkside, RINGWOOD, Hants, BH24 3SH (postage £2.75 UK, £5 overseas).

Judging from the Editor's postbag, a lot of *Bulletin* readers are interested in posting boxes as well as collecting stamps. For those who combine the two interests and collect stamps (and related material) showing posting boxes, Glenn Morgan's **Letter Boxes on Stamps and Postal Stationery** will be a most useful guide. This work is arranged in five sections, beginning with Introductory Notes which sets out the scope of the book and the explains the abbreviations used in the listings. The listings are divided between Stamps and Miniature Sheets, Stamp Booklets and Booklet Panes, Cinderella Material, and Postal Stationery. Listings are arranged alphabetically by country, then chronologically, stating year of issue, Stanley Gibbons catalogue number (where appropriate), face value and brief description of the design. The listing for GB stamps comprises the 1974 UPU 8p, 1983 12½p Christmas, 1985 22p, 31p and 34p Royal Mail - 350 Years of Service, and 1988 31p Europa stamps. The listing of books showing posting boxes on the covers is rather longer; mostly the 10p 1971-4 "British Pillar Box" series (S.G. DN46-66). The Cinderella section lists Christmas charity and strike post issues. 36 pages, card covers. Price £3. Available from: G H Morgan, 17 Kingsley Court, ROMFORD, Essex, RM2 5SY.

Collectors of Forces commemorative covers will be interested to know that the 1991 supplement to the **Joint Services Philatelic Charities Und Catalogue of Flown Covers** is now available, price £5 postpaid in UK. All other supplements and extra loose leaf binders are available. Orders/enquiries to: A J Munday, 92 Countess Road, Amesbury, SALISBURY, Wilts, SP4 7AT.

Cylinder & Plate Numbers Update

The plates and colours used for the Winterime stamps were:

18p 1A (silver) 1B (greenish yellow) 1C (grey)
1D (dull rose) 1E (new blue) 1F (black)
24p 1A (silver) 1B (lemon) 1C (rose) 1D (blue)
2E (grey-black)
28p 2A (silver) 1B (greenish yellow) 1C (bright rose) 2D (steel-blue) 2E (grey-black)
33p 1A (silver) 2B (greenish yellow) 2C (bright orange) 2D (bright purple) 2E (greenish blue) 2E (grey)
39p 1A (silver) 1B (yellow) 2C (yellow-orange)
1D (grey) 1E (vermilion) 3F (new blue) 3G (black)

The colours and plate numbers for the five 24p Happy & Glorious stamps were: 1A (new blue) 1A (greenish yellow) 1A (magenta) 1A (black), 1A (silver) 1A (gold); also 2A2A2A2A2A, 3A3A3A3A3A3A, 4A4A4A4A4A4A, 5A5A5A5A5A5A, 7A7A7A7A7A7A and 8A8A8A8A8A8A.

The 3p definitive with redrawn numerals is from cylinder 46 and the 50p on ACP from cylinder 36. Both were issued on 21 January 1992.

The cylinders and colours for the Tennyson stamps are as follows:

24p 1A (gold) 1B (green yellow) 2C (magenta)
1D (new blue) 1E (black)
28p 1A (gold) 1B (green yellow) 1C (magenta)
1D (new blue) 1E (black)
33p 1A (gold) 1B (green yellow) 1C (magenta)
1D (New blue) 1E (black)
39p 1A (gold) 1B (green yellow) 1C (magenta)
1D (new blue) 1E (bistre) 1F (black)

1992 Northeast Philatelic Weekend

The 16th Northeast Philatelic Weekend is to be held at the Swallow Hotel, Gateshead on 15-17 May. For details send SAE to: Mrs D M Martin, 46 Briardene Crescent, Kenton Park, NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE NE3 4RY.

Derrick Howlett Retires from Harrisons

On 31 March Derrick Howlett retired from Harrison and Sons Limited, a firm he has served with distinction for over 30 years.

John Harley, Archivist of Harrison & Sons Limited, writes:

For many years Derrick was responsible on behalf of Harrisons for the Post Office contract. He joined Harrisons in 1959 as an estimator. After having occupied different positions within the company, he was appointed to the Board in 1973 as Sales Director.

Following the retirement of Mr R F York, Derrick brought his own special brand of enthusiasm and great technical knowledge to the task of implementing advances in the printing requirements of modern stamps and was an active member, in a technical advisory capacity, of the Stamp Advisory Committee. Derrick's tall, friendly figure was well known and respected within the company and in the stamp world generally. A Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts and a keen golfer, he is at present also learning the clarinet. Married with two daughters, Derrick lives close to the River Thames in Marlow.

Wally Rodgers, Director of The House of Questa Limited, writes:

I have known Derrick for longer than we both probably care to remember. Whilst we have been competitors over the years, I can assure you that we both sincerely respect each others professionalism. We are indeed friendly rivals and we would fight very hard to win a contract for our own company. However, we both remain, and will in the future, gentlemen. I am quite sure that over the years I have known Derrick, his professionalism throughout the world has been greatly appreciated by all those people that he has helped and given advice to. He has been such a loyal and wonderful servant in the capacities that he has held in Harrison and Sons.

I have served with him on the Stamp Advisory Committee for quite some time and I very quickly appreciated the respect that Derrick commanded from his fellow Committee members. His knowledge of our industry and his quiet, reassuring manner gave them great confidence in the production of the various issues that he was involved in. Also, at exhibitions such as Philympia 1970, London 1980, and

Stamp World London 1990, Derrick gave an awful lot in a supporting role to the organisers and as we all know, this was greatly appreciated.

I, on a personal note, and also representing The House of Questa, would like to wish Derrick a very long, happy and healthy retirement. I am quite sure that Lou, his wife, will be very, very pleased (I hope) to see him around the house. No doubt our paths will cross, at least on the golf course, and I am quite sure that Derrick and I will not lose our friendship.



Derrick, with his wife Lou, at the reception marking the 21st anniversary of the Stamp Advisory Committee, 1989

Derrick has always been mindful of the interest of philatelists in stamp production and has helped many editors and writers with technical information to ensure accuracy in their writings. On behalf of Royal Mail, and *Bulletin* readers, we wish him a long and enjoyable retirement.

New Postal History Society

A Surrey Postal History Group has been formed, and its first journal recently published. *The Surrey Post* includes interesting articles on mail coaches, postmasters and post offices. For details of the society send SAE to: Roger Vaughan, 13 Copse Side, GODALMING, Surrey, GU7 3RU.

Posting Boxes

129. Hong Kong Boxes

Shown this month are two boxes in Hong Kong. The first, a George V box, stands on Kennedy Road on Hong Kong Island, opposite the Kennedy Road station of the Peak Tram. The photograph was submitted by Aaron Chan, of Kowloon, who sent the illustrations of Elizabeth II boxes in Hong Kong which featured here in April 1986 and January 1991.



John Brewer, of New Zealand, submitted the second picture showing the box outside the Stanley Village Post Office in Wong Ma Kok Road. The pillar box, still in use, bears the EIR cipher. The unused white-painted wall box alongside dates from the reign of George V. The white sign above the George V box states that when the box is closed, customers should use the box at the rear of the building.

Readers interested in letter boxes can obtain details of the Letter Box Study Group by sending a stamped, addressed envelope to the Secretary: Sally Jones, 43 Miall Road, Hall Green, Birmingham B28 9BS.

I have on file, awaiting publication, a considerable number of illustrations for this "Posting Boxes" feature. I regret I cannot accept any more and should be grateful if readers would not send any more in. Thank you. Editor.

Royal Mail at Overseas Exhibitions

It is intended that a member of Royal Mail will be present at British Post Office stands at the following overseas exhibitions: Granada, Spain (24 April-3 May) and Essen, Germany (7-10 May). Readers who make themselves known to our representative will receive a gift.

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: April Bulletin Competition, National Postal Museum, King Edward Street, LONDON EC1A 1LP to arrive by 29 May.

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

1. Which set of special stamps won our 1991 Favourite Stamp Poll?
2. Which vessel set sail from Falmouth bound for Berbice on 3 January 1842?
3. On which Scottish island is Barvas?
4. What is the total face value of the 1992 Europa set?
5. What do the initials OVI stand for?

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 January competition were: Mrs L Campbell-Smith of Middlesex (£75 worth of Royal Mail products); J Nusse of the Netherlands; S Freeman of Kent; Mrs M Butcher of Merseyside; A Benoit of Belgium; and V Stacey of Hampshire (Happy & Glorious presentation packs).

The answers were: 1. Ebbw Vale, 2. Kenya, 3. 1865, 4. Lancaster House, 5. 16 June.

Our thanks to all who entered.

Commemorative Covers

Information given here is based on details supplied by the cover producers; requests for further information should be directed to the relevant producer and not to the Bulletin office.

Titanic. To commemorate the 80th anniversary of the maiden voyage, a cover showing a painting of the famous ship by Simon Fisher, will be available. A special Titanic handstamp will be used at Southampton on 10 April. Some covers will be signed by survivors – Mrs E Haisman, Miss E Hart, and Miss M Dean. Postcard and other souvenirs – spoon, badge, beaker, key fob, plate, pewter model, etc. Details from: Rembrandt Philatelics, Regency House, Beacon Road, West End, SOUTHAMPTON SO3 3BS. A Titanic Convention is being held at the Hilton National Hotel, Southampton on 10-12 April; displays of White Star Line memorabilia and survivors's possessions.

Tennyson. To mark the centenary of Tennyson's death, the Royal Mail issued four stamps on 10 March. Tennyson was Poet Laureate, a salaried member of the British Royal Household, appointed by Queen Victoria. A first day cover in the "Life and Times of Queen Victoria" series depicts Tennyson, and Farringford, his Isle of Wight home. Covers with 24p stamp and "Farringford special handstamp" of 10 March cost £2, covers with four Tennyson stamps £4.90. Overseas customers add 70p postage. Orders/enquiries: G Eldridge, 177 Mousehole Lane, Bitterne, SOUTHAMPTON SO2 4TD.

Scottish Philatelic Congress. The Lanarkshire Philatelic Society hosted the 63rd Annual Congress of the Association of Scottish Philatelic Societies at Falkirk on 21-22 March. The cover features a montage of three Lanarkshire Landmarks – New Lanark; David Livingstone Centre; and Chatelherault, Hamilton. The handstamp features the Mausoleum of the Duke of Hamilton. Price £1, from: J Bird, Mains Park, Jack's Road, Uddington, GLASGOW G71 7NP.

General Election. Adrian Bradbury is producing a souvenir cover and sponsoring a special handstamp to "cover" what will probably be the media event of 1992. The cover, featuring a spring time view of the Houses of Parliament, will bear three stamps (1973 and 1975 Parliament issues) cancelled by a Big Ben handstamp. Price £7.50 or £12.50 signed by a prominent Government Minister. Overseas

customers add £1 postage and remit in sterling. Orders/enquiries: A G Bradbury, 3 Link Road, LEICESTER LE2 3RA.

Tennyson. A G Bradbury produced two special limited edition (250) first day covers for the Tennyson stamps of 10 March: (1) features engravings of Tennyson's house at Freshwater, Isle of Wight and the poet, number 66 in "Victorian Prints" series, special Freshwater handstamp. Price £6.75, overseas add £1 postage. (2) shows Tennyson with his dog in his study at Aldworth, special Haslemere handstamp. Price £9.75, overseas add £1. Orders/enquiries: A G Bradbury, address above.

Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children. To mark the hospital's 60th anniversary on 11 April 1992, a cover is being produced to coincide with the Europa stamps one of which marks Columbus's journey to the New World. The cover design, by Rowel Friars, renowned cartoonist, embraces the theme of both anniversaries. Price £7.50 or £10 signed by artist. Proceeds to research at the hospital. Orders/enquiries: S R Potts, Consultant Surgeon, Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children, BELFAST BT12 6BE.

617 Squadron. The Cambridge Stamp Centre have produced collections of covers commemorating the Squadron's raids on the Dortmund EMS canal and in memory of Flt Lt. W C Townsend (died April 1991) who took part in the Dambusters raids. The Townsend collection comprises 23 covers. Enquiries: Cambridge Stamp Centre, 9 Sussex Street, CAMBRIDGE CB1 1PA, Tel. 0223-63980 or 321853.

Railway History. Benham's Railway History series now includes covers commemorating the 150th anniversaries of the Sheffield & Manchester Rly, Northern & Eastern, and Bolton & Preston Railways. All three covers carry a "silk" illustration and bear special handstamps dated 17 November, 19 November, and 22 December 1991 respectively. Price £3 per cover postpaid. Orders/enquiries: Benham (A Buckingham) Ltd, The Bayle, FOLKESTONE, Kent, CT20 1SD.

Grand National. A full-colour cover commemorating the 150th anniversary of the Grand National is available. It features "Lottery", the first winner, ridden by Jem Mason and bears an "appropriate Liverpool pictorial handstamp". Covers are available signed by Grand National personalities: Lord John Oaksey, Jenny Pitman (first lady winning trainer), Tommy Stack.

Details available by sending SAE to: G Eldridge, 177 Mousehole Lane, Bitterne, SOUTHAMPTON SO2 4TD.

Castle High Values: Benham are offering four sets of covers/cards for the revised Castle High

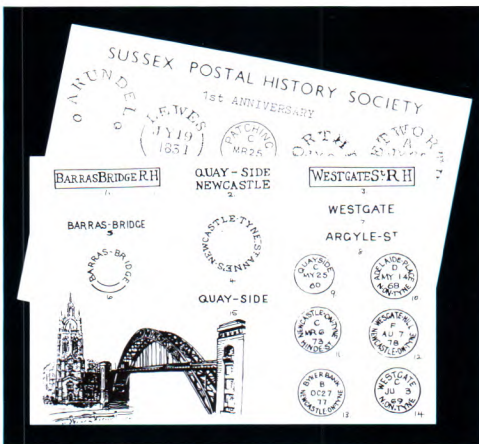


Value stamps (24 March): (1) covers with sponsored handstamps showing heraldic beasts for Windsor, Edinburgh, Caernarfon, and Carrickfergus, £17.50 each, £70 set; (2) 22 carat gold luxury cover with handstamps as above, £22.50 each, £90 set; (3) small "silk" covers at £22.50 set; (4) "silk" postcards at £22.50 set. Enquiries welcome for "specialist services" such as cylinder block, traffic light, gutter pairs, etc. Early ordering of all covers/cards advised. Orders/enquiries: Benham (A Buckingham) Ltd, The Bayle, FOLKESTONE, Kent, CT20 1SD.

King George's Fund for Sailors. The Fund, founded in 1917, celebrates its 75th anniversary this year. CoverCraft is proud to be producing a special FDC as part of the Fund's celebrations and a donation will be given to the KGFS for each cover sold. The cover featuring the Fund's logo and a appropriate nautical scene, bears the Operation Raleigh/Columbus Regatta stamp cancelled by a special anniversary handstamp of 7 April. Price £3 or £5.50 signed by Admiral Sir Anthony Morton, GBE, KCB, Chairman of the Fund and Vice-Admiral of the United Kingdom. Other signatures may be available – details available from CoverCraft. Overseas customers add £1. Orders/enquiries: CoverCraft, PO Box 713, LONDON SE19 2HH.

New Postmark Postcards

Three new postcards were issued by the Newcastle upon Tyne Philatelic Society on 29 February 1992. Card A features straight line and circular cancellations recorded as used between 1733 and 1800, with sketch of the present day Tyne Bridge. Card B depicts marks of early receiving houses and post office sites recorded as used between 1840 and 1877, with sketch of the present day Tyne Bridge and Newcastle Cathedral. Card C shows a single numbered cancellation (1844-55), 1845 date stamp, early duplex cancellations and later versions including the so-called "Scottish" types used from 1859. Price 20p each. The cards are available with Newcastle Philatelic Counter handstamp of 29 February 1992 on definitive stamp, price 50p each. Also available are cards with Philatelic Counter handstamp and a FIRST DAY OF ISSUE cachet, 50p each. Orders, with stamped, addressed envelope to accommodate 160 x 100mm cards, to: H R Stonehouse, 73 Dunsgreen, Ponteland, NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE NE20 9EJ. Remittances payable to "Newcastle upon Tyne Philatelic Society".



The Sussex Postal History Society issued a card on 28 March to commemorate its first anniversary and the Association of Sussex Philatelic Societies Convention held in Worthing that day. The card features historic postmarks of Arundel, Bognor, Brighton, Chichester, Hastings, Horsham, Hurst Green, Lewes, Patching, Petworth, Shoreham, and Worthing. Price 15p, used on day of convention 50p. Postage 25p. Orders/enquiries: John E O Hobbs, FRPSL, 12 Ophir Road, WORTHING, W Sussex, BN11 2SR.

April Digest

Issued in April

7 April: Europa stamps – 3 x 24p, 2 x 39p.

Designer: Keith Bassford.

Printing: All stamps 37 x 35mm, perf. 14½ x 14, sheets of 100, phosphor coated paper, PVA Dextrin gum. 24p *Santa Maria* and 39p *Operation Raleigh* stamps printed in intaglio (recess) and offset-litho by Harrison and Sons Limited; others printed in offset-litho by The House of Questa.

Pictorial First Day of Issue postmarks: British Philatelic Bureau and Liverpool.

Presentation Pack: No. 227, price £1.80.

8 April: Europa souvenir cover. Price 21p. Available from Collections and philatelic counters.

14 April: Scottish Aerogramme – “The Nature of Scotland”. Price 44p (includes 34p postage). Available from post offices in Scotland, British Philatelic Bureau, Collections and philatelic counters.

28 April: 50p and £1 books containing 2 x 1p and 2 x 24p stamps and 2 x 2p, 4 x 24p stamps and 2 labels respectively. Third in *Archaeology* (50p) and *Punch* (£1) cover designs.

Printing: Harrisons, photogravure. Both books contain stamps on ACP. The £1 book has straight edges at left and right sides of pane.

Withdrawn in April

22 April: Europe in Space stamps, presentation pack, stamp cards, and souvenir cover.

30 April: Walsall 4 x 2nd, 4 x 1st, 10 x 2nd, and 10 x 1st books with revised locking tab. Issued April 1991, Bureau codes UB031, UB032, UB033, UB034.

Six Month Digest

Forthcoming

7 Apr	Europa stamps and pack
14 Apr	Scottish aerogramme
28 Apr	50p & £1 stamp books
6 May	NPM People in the Post cards
2 Jun	Civil War stamp cards
16 Jun	Civil War stamps and pack
23 Jun	Scottish Aerogramme (Scots Guards)

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7 Jul	Gilbert & Sullivan stamp cards
21 Jul	Gil & Sull stamps and pack
1 Sep	Green Issue stamp cards
15 Sep	Green issue stamps and pack
29 Sep	Single European Market stamp card

Owing to pressure on space this month, the *Six Month Digest* shows just the forthcoming issues; the full digest will return next month. Ed.

1991 Checklist - Correction

J W Staines of Essex has pointed out an error in the 1991 Checklist of Definitives published in December (top of page 88); we are pleased to set the record straight. The pane of 4 x 2nd class (17p) NVI stamps, printed by Walsall from the 68p retail book issued on 6 August 1991 has straight edges at top and bottom, *not* perforated on all sides as stated. Also the description of the gum for the 1st class stamp of 7 August 1990, noted at the top of page 88 should read PVA Dextrin, not OVA – an irritating typesetting error.

Front Cover: Inside of the Olympic Stadium, Barcelona (courtesy Rex Features).



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