

BRITISH PHILATELIC

The ROYAL MAIL magazine for stamp collectors

Volume 46 Number 12

AUGUST 2009 £1.20

Bulletin

Christmas • Postbus update •
Photogravure anniversary



Post Boxes: Royal Mail celebrates the 200th anniversary of an icon with a miniature sheet and generic sheet, on sale from 18 August.



Forthcoming issues and withdrawals



Cover Martin Robinson writes about the process behind the Post Boxes stamps on page 370; the issue was previewed here in April. Photographs © Martin Robinson, except the postman, which is reproduced by courtesy of the Letterbox Study Group.

Availability All items available from Royal Mail Talents House (address below). Selected items are available at Post Office branches and Post Office philatelic outlets at the main post offices in: Bristol, Cambridge, Chester, Colchester, Coventry, Croydon, Durham, Edinburgh, Exeter, Glasgow, Grimsby, Harrogate, Lichfield, London (Eastcheap & Trafalgar Sq), Norwich, Nottingham, Plymouth, Portsmouth, Southampton (High St and Hedge End), Southend-on-Sea, Stevenage, Stroud, Trowbridge, Truro and York.

Royal Mail Talents House 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB, UK. Telephone order line (08.30 - 17.00 Monday to Friday): 08457 641 641; from overseas +44 131 316 7483. Minimum handling charge UK £1.45, Europe £1.55, rest of world (airmail) £2.15. Some products can be ordered on Royal Mail's website: www.royalmail.com/shop

28 July

Issue Miniature Medal Collection No 2: RAF Medals

3 August

Issue Thaipex 2009 Expo exhibition sheet

18 August

Issue Post Boxes miniature sheet, presentation pack, stamp cards, generic sheet, miniature sheet and press sheet • Treasures of the Archive prestige stamp book • British Design Classics stamp book (4 × 1st definitives, 2 × Concorde stamps)

21 August

Withdrawal Olympic Flag Handover miniature sheet, presentation pack, stamp cards • Beijing exhibition sheet

1 September

Issue Fire and Rescue Service stamps, presentation pack, stamp cards and medal cover

17 September

Issue Naval Uniforms stamps, presentation pack, prestige stamp book, stamp cards, Royal Mail cachet cover • Miniature Medal Collection • British Design Classics stamp book (4 × 1st definitives, 2 × Miniskirt stamps)

18 September

Issue Big Ben commemorative sheet and medal cover

28 September

Withdrawal 50th anniversary of Country (Regional) stamps miniature sheet, presentation pack, prestige book, press sheet and UK coin cover

Contents



Photogravure anniversary

75 years ago this month, the first British postage stamps printed by the photogravure process were issued. Glenn Morgan looks at the history of this enduring technique, and some of the memorable stamps it has produced **364**

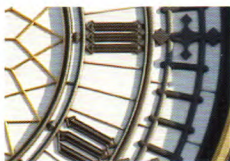
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Issues and withdrawals 354

This month The Editor previews this issue **356**

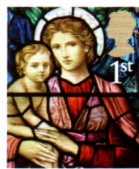
Stamp scene British Library free exhibition; Book reviews; BPMA blog project; Philatelic publications; ATA hosts 'Stamps in Your Attic'; Events listing **356**

Royal Mail news New sheet issues; Miniature Medals; Big Ben medal cover; Cathedrals silver stamps; BPMA news **360**



Online philately Glenn Morgan visits the NPS website **367**

Christmas A preview of this year's special issue: Stained Glass **368**



Post Boxes The story behind the stamps, by Martin Robinson **370**



Postbus services An updated route listing by Martin Robinson **375**

Fire and Rescue issue Richard West talks to Garry Blackburn at the design firm Rose **378**

Commemorative covers A review of some of the new covers on offer **380**

Prize draw A chance to win the Moon Landing sheet **381**

Competitions Enter for your chance to win the 2009 prestige books **382**

Events **382**

Late news **383**

This month The Editor previews this issue

AUGUST is the traditional holiday month, so many readers will be taking a break from stamps to concentrate on going away, trips out, or lazing in the garden. Don't forget however that the Posting Boxes miniature sheet and Treasures of the Archive prestige book are issued on 18 August – both of great interest to philatelists and postal historians. *Bulletin* writer Martin Robinson was Royal Mail's consultant on the Posting Boxes issue, and he writes about boxes in this issue, and also updates his earlier listing of post buses – a good number of routes have ended since his earlier lists. Another regular contributor, Glenn Morgan, looks back to 1934 and the issue of the first British postage stamps printed in photogravure – an important 75th anniversary. I hope you all enjoy reading this month's *Bulletin*, and I wish you a pleasant summer. JOHN HOLMAN, EDITOR •

Stamp scene News and upcoming events: Glenn Morgan keeps you posted

British Library enquiries

The British Library, 96 Euston Road, London NW1 2DB, or see www.bl.uk/whatson

British Library permanent exhibition A permanent free exhibition of 80,000 items is on display on the upper ground floor, offering a unique opportunity to see many great rarities including the first stamps issued by Great Britain, and the first British colonial stamps issued in Mauritius in 1847. Other material shown includes early air mails and items reflecting the postal history of Poland during the Second World War. It is well worth a viewing, and my recent visit revealed that there appears to be an increasing interest being shown from the public in general, which can only be good for the future. •

Enquiries Available from the American Topical Association, PO Box 8, Carterville, IL 62918-0018, priced \$16 plus postage \$2 (US), \$3 (Canada and Mexico) or \$5 (overseas). ATA members may deduct \$2 from the price.

Marc Chagall on Postal Stamps This 65-page book, by Mark Shleifer, has not been seen, so the information is taken from the press release. In what is only the second full-colour handbook from the American Topical Association, author Mark Shleifer explains that the 'description of Chagall's paintings is difficult because his creativity was unique and out of the realm of many existing styles of art, such as impressionism, cubism and surrealism'. There are 133 colour illustrations of stamps, which show 120 different pieces of Chagall's artwork. These are divided into three categories: 'Native Vitebsk' (where Chagall grew up), 'Bible Legends and Ancient Greek Myths', and 'Love, Circus, Ballet and Fantasy'. •

BPMA Search Room closure The British Postal Museum & Archive Search Room closed on 29 June for approximately eight weeks in order for urgent air conditioning work to take place. Staff will continue to deal with email, letter and telephone enquiries during this time, but it may take them slightly longer to respond than usual. If you plan to visit the BPMA in July or August please contact them in advance to check the current situation. Updates will also be posted on their website www.postalheritage.org.uk. •

BPMA blog and Flickr sites The Philatelic Database website has named the British Postal Museum & Archive's blog as one of its Top 10 Stamp Blogs. The Philatelic Database (www.philatelicdatabase.com) is the leading online resource for philatelists, postal historians and stamp collectors. It features articles by eminent philatelists and specialists in their fields.

The BPMA blog began in March and features several new posts each week from BPMA staff and guest contributors in around 15 categories. For those readers unfamiliar with the term 'blog', it is defined by one website as: 'A personal or corporate website in the form of an online journal, with new entries appearing in sequence as they are written, especially dealing with reflections or opinion, and typically incorporating links to other articles.'

When looking at the Flickr site while writing this piece, there were photographs of letter boxes, postal transport, uniforms, covers, public notices and much more besides. Flickr is defined as: 'An image and video hosting website, web services suite, and online community platform. In addition to being a popular website for users to share personal photographs, the service is widely used by bloggers as a photo repository.'

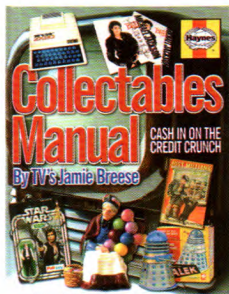
These are two further ways in which the BPMA is reaching out to its public by embracing modern technology, and by utilising popular social networking tools that are certainly not the exclusive domain of the young ●

Collectables Manual: Cash in on the Credit Crunch This enjoyable book by Jamie Breese, an established writer and broadcaster, is not primarily aimed at the *Bulletin* readership, as stamps receive scant mention among the many other collectables competing for the attention of our disposable income. In fact, just a page and a half relate to stamps, where the author encourages us to: 'try and find examples in the best condition possible', which is sound advice. As is his comment that: 'Modern commemorative stamps tend not to be worth very much'. Unfortunately, when writing about the Penny Black, we are told: 'Those in sheets...are worth the bigger bucks' – when did you last see a sheet of Penny Blacks for sale, even if it was outside of your price range?

In fact, almost the entire section on stamps, indeed most of the book, focuses on material that is probably beyond the purchasing power of many people's funds, especially during these turbulent financial times. Considering the sub-title 'Cash in on the Credit Crunch', it is also likely that few readers will have truly valuable items hidden away in their loft just waiting to be discovered. The author has often chosen to focus on the spectacular prices made in recent auction sales, which might make readers believe that stamp collecting and most other hobbies are not within their budget.

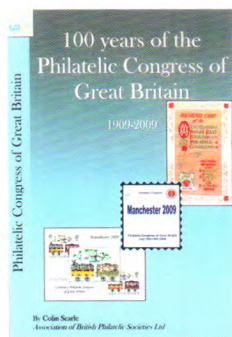
The rest of the book covers around 160 other collectables that include the well established areas, for example postcards, Dinky model vehicles and Barbie dolls, through to the more unusual, such as Starbucks cards, Margaret Thatcher, kitchenalia and plastic furniture. So, if you are seeking a new collecting interest beyond stamps or possess items that have become collectables since first acquired and now wish to sell, then this manual is definitely a worthwhile purchase ●

Go to <http://postalheritage.wordpress.com> for the blog entries and www.flickr.com/photos/postalheritage for the imagery site.



Enquiries Available from high street and online retailers, at £16.99. For more information see www.haynes.co.uk

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Enquiries Write to Colin at The Old Post Office, 1 Wellesbourne Rd, Barford, Warwick CV35 8EL or email searlecol@gmail.com

Prices £36, plus £3 postage for non-members of ABPS affiliated societies, and £18 plus £3 postage to members of ABPS affiliated societies.

Cheques should be payable to 'ABPS Ltd' and the name of the ABPS affiliated society to which you are a member is required if you are claiming the discounted price.

100 Years of the Philatelic Congress of Great Britain 1909-2009 This new book by Colin Searle covers the history of Congress from 1909 to 2009. It is fully illustrated with some rare material including proofs and original designs, and is the first ABPS publication (apart from directories) for 17 years. It carries an introduction written by Michael Sefi, the Keeper of the Queen's Philatelic Collection, and there is at least one page devoted to each of the Congresses that have taken place. The book is well illustrated throughout, in colour, and the philatelic souvenirs pictured provide a great taster for the subsequent CD catalogue of such items which is currently in progress by Colin.

The press release fails to mention that the book goes beyond simply the write-up and pictures about each Congress, for it has other fascinating features interspersed between. There are articles dealing with 'The Roll of Distinguished Philatelists' by Dr Alan Huggins, 'What Happened at Congress Half a Century Ago?', 'How to Organise a Congress' and 'Congress Memorabilia' by Martin Robinson, 'The Congress Medal' by Susan Oliver, 'The Award of Merit' by Neil Russell, 'The William Hooper Letter' by Richard Winter, 'Humour at Congress' by Colin Searle and 'Congress Personalities and their Connection with Congress'. These articles add greatly to the enjoyment of this book.

The author comments that: 'The new book is a great record of an important part of the philatelic history of this country and I hope that it will encourage everyone to attend Congress'. I completely agree with these sentiments, as I have been to four or five such events in the recent past and have always found that they provide a great opportunity to mix with like-minded individuals in a relaxed atmosphere, to take part in discussions of importance to the hobby and to see some interesting displays.

This book competently demonstrates how Congress has developed down the years from its formal beginnings to the more relaxed style of today, and why it is no less relevant to collectors in the 21st century. It deserves a place on all Cinderella collectors' and philatelic historians' bookshelves ●

Cross Post enquiries Write to Avice Harms, Membership Secretary, Friends of the BPMA, 13 Amethyst Avenue, Davis Estate, Chatham ME5 9TX. Membership is currently £15 (UK) and £20 (overseas) per year. Cheques should be payable to 'The Friends of the BPMA'.

Journals received *Cross Post*, the twice-yearly publication of the Friends of BPMA appeared at the end of May. This full-colour 52-page A4 publication on quality paper contains a wealth of information that I am sure many *Bulletin* readers would enjoy reading. This issue contains in-depth features about the Ironbridge project, the David Gentleman Album, National Savings, philatelic research methods, distributing the pensions, people in the Post Office and a new shape to a British icon (square pillar boxes). There are also book and electronic media reviews.

We are witnessing a period of intense activity by the BPMA, and much has been achieved in the past few months, especially in the areas of exhibitions, planning for Swindon and Ironbridge, cataloguing and acquiring new items. The magazine therefore rightly carries reports about all that the Friends and the BPMA has been doing since the previous issue.

180 A4 full-colour pages with softback cover. ISBN 978-0-9561905-0-5. Published by ABPS Ltd, 2009 ●

The latest 40-page A5-sized issue of *ABPS News* (April) carries the usual mix of society news and other philatelic information that is so essential to the active collector. It also contains an interesting and detailed six-page colour article by Francis Kiddle about the Philatelic Congress of Great Britain and its celebration of the centenary of the Penny Black in 1940. It also advises that the ABPS will be developing a new website over the coming months. Phase one has already gone live at www.abps.org.uk and contains the ABPS Calendar of Events, while subsequent phases currently under development will include Society/Personnel Updating, Speakers and Displays. Other subjects are in varying stages of completion and uploading, so a regular visit to the site will prove worthwhile. A full review of this new site will be undertaken by me in the World of Online Philately section in due course •

The Spring 2009 issue of the British Library Philatelic Collections Newsletter is to hand, and leads with a story about how a Post Office Mauritius 1d 'Ball cover' is currently on loan to the Library from the well-known collector Vickram Chand of Singapore. Described as one of the most important and iconic items in philately, three are known to have survived with two presently at BL. The second copy is in the Library's famous Tapling collection, while the third is in the Royal Philatelic Collection. A full-page feature about the Universal Postal Union collection of postal stationery reveals that the UPU collection in the British Library was transferred from the British Post Office in 1963, and includes a postal stationery section held in 22 volumes and two file boxes. There are apparently many rarely seen items and the collection even includes some early meter stamp impressions with specimen overprints. A news round-up, researcher's note and details about the 2009 Rossiter Trust lecture complete this edition, which has been ably edited as ever by Paul Skinner •

American Topical Association For Americans living in Dayton, the National Topical Stamp Show held in June by the ATA offered visitors a 'Stamps in Your Attic' review of holdings, along the lines of the British BBC *Antiques Roadshow*. This feature was aimed at anyone with a query about a specific postage stamp or even a full stamp collection that was perhaps left to them and for which they sought a valuation or details of how to dispose. This was a popular feature and one that I imagine could prove equally useful if held at a UK philatelic exhibition such as Stampex or Philatex •

Stamp events A listing of events for the remainder of this year •

12 September - 10 January 2010 Birmingham PS 125th anniversary exhibition, Birmingham Museum, Birmingham

16-19 September Autumn Stampex, BDC, Islington, London. Enquiries: www.philatelic-traders-society.co.uk

25-27 September StampExpo 400, Albany NY, USA. Enquiries: www.stampexpo400.org

21-25 October Italia 2009, Rome. Enquiries: www.italia2009.it

5-7 November Autumn Philatex, London. Enquiries: www.stampshows.net

4-6 December Monacophil 2009, Monte Carlo. Enquiries: www.oetp-monaco.com

ABPS general enquiries

Write to Colin Searle, The Old Post Office, 1 Wellesbourne Road, Barford, Warwick CV35 8EL, phone 07879 665658 or email Colin@searleco@gmail.com

British Library enquiries

Go to www.bl.uk/collections/philatelic, e-mail philatelic@bl.uk or visit The British Library, 96 Euston Road, London NW1 2DB.

Enquiries

For information on the world's largest thematic philatelic organisation, write to the ATA Central Office, PO Box 8, Cartersville, IL 62918-0008 USA, visit their website at www.americanphilatelic.org or email americanphilatelic@msn.com

Royal Mail news New issues and products

Generic and Smilers sheets The third Castles generic sheet goes on sale on 30 November (St Andrew's Day), featuring castles of Scotland. The Northern Ireland and England sheets are now on sale (£8.35 each), and a sheet featuring Welsh castles will be issued on 1 March 2010 (St David's Day).

The 'Flying high' and 'With love...' sheets bearing the Hello and LOVE stamps have been reprinted with the copyright notice Royal Mail Group Ltd instead of Royal Mail Group plc. These reprinted sheets will be used as existing stock is exhausted. Please note these are sheets for printing customers' own images on the labels adjoining the stamps. To order Smilers sheets see www.royalmail.com/smilers or phone 0845 074 2000 (UK) or +44 131 316 7489 (overseas). An order form, showing the stamps available for Smilers sheets, is available at main Post Office branches. Ocado users may be interested to know that they can order Smilers for Kids by this service. ●



Left: the third Castles generic sheet (30 November) features Scottish castles.

Below: the Taipex exhibition sheet (3 August), designed by MarkStudio of Manchester and printed in litho by Cartor; and commemorative sheet for the Moon landing anniversary.

JOURNEY TO THE MOON

Celebrating the 40th anniversary of the first manned Moon landing

The Apollo 11 crew members make their way to the Launch Complex 38A at the Kennedy Space Center on 16 July.

Four days later, Apollo 11 reaches the Moon. This image shows the rear side of the Moon taken from the orbiting command module.

Nineteen minutes after Neil Armstrong had stepped onto the Moon for the first time, Buzz Aldrin

Regarded as one of the world's most iconic images, *Abdic* is pictured on the cover of the book. Armstrong's reflection is visible in the water.

At 12.50pm EDT on 24 July 1968, Colombia splashes down in the Pacific Ocean. Armstrong, Aldrin and Collins are picked up by a US Navy tugboat.



At 9.32am Eastern Daylight Time (EDT), the Apollo 11 spacecraft lifts off into the Florida sky at 13

Chief presenter of the BBC's television coverage of the Apollo Moon landing, James Burke revisits

The budgeter's in the lunar soil is by Armstrong and Aldrin during their brief stroll to the Moon will

The crew orbits the Moon in space module Columbia after lunar module Eagle successfully docks following

In August 1969, the Apollo 11 astronauts are honored in a parade in New York, believed to be the largest in the city's history at that time.

In 1609 Thomas Harriot became the first person to map the Moon six months before Galileo.

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In 1889 Thomas Huxley became
 the first person to name the Hetero-
 zooids from the Gullies.

Commemorative and exhibition sheets A commemorative sheet marking the 40th anniversary of the first Moon landing is now available. It contains 10 1st class Union Flag stamps with labels featuring events from the launch of Apollo 11 to the honour parade for the astronauts. Price £13.50.

The next commemorative sheet, available from 18 September, marks the 150th anniversary of 'Big Ben'. This bears 10 1st class Union Flag stamps (definitive size, self-adhesive) with attached labels featuring the history of the iconic clock tower and its bell and mechanism. Price £13.50.

A further commemorative sheet (7 October) commemorates the 800th anniversary of the University of Cambridge. It bears 10 1st class Fireworks stamps (definitive size, self-adhesive) and pictorial labels. Price £13.50.

The first of three exhibition sheets goes on sale on 3 August. The Thaïpex sheet contains 20 1st class Hello stamps (large size) with labels featuring Bangkok tuk-tuks (local taxis). Price £8.35. Details of the Italia (21 October) and Monacophil (4 December) exhibition sheets will follow shortly •

Commemorative sheets to mark the 150th anniversary of 'Big Ben' (to be issued 18 September) and the 800th anniversary of the University of Cambridge (7 October).



The clock mechanism weighs about 4 tonnes and sits underground in the hole in the clock tower.



Members of the public can write to their local MP to request a clock tower visit.



At 10.15pm on the 31st of December 1859, the clock tower was first rung to mark the beginning of the 19th century.



The tower took 16 years to build and was one of the first parts of the new Parliament buildings to be completed.



Designers imagined the clock inside the tower in the building the dimensions of the great bell, to be sure it would be made.



IN 2009, BIG BEN CELEBRATES ITS 150TH ANNIVERSARY. IN 1859 THE CLOCK TOWER WAS COMPLETED, THE CLOCK STARTED RUNNING AND THE GREAT BELL, BIG BEN ITSELF, BEGAN ITS LONG SERVICE CHIMING THE HOUR. BIG BEN HAS BEEN A CONSTANT PART OF LONDON LIFE EVER SINCE. IT IS AN ENDURING LEGACY OF THE POMP AND GRANDEUR OF VICTORIAN LONDON. IT REMAINS A LANDMARK FOR TOURISTS AND A FOCUS FOR NATIONAL CELEBRATION.



Special stamps This month's special issue is the Post Boxes miniature sheet (18 August) shown in the April *Bulletin*, on page 240. A new 'Treasures of the BPMA' prestige book goes on sale the same day – see the June *Bulletin* (page 299) for details of the stamps and panes in this book. This month we preview the 2009 Christmas stamps, on sale from 3 November •



New Miniature Medals Collection Now available are the first two issues in a new 'Stamps & Miniature Medals' collection, jointly produced by Royal Mail and the Royal Mint. Housed in an attractive presentation box, the collection comprises miniature versions of military medals in 0.925 silver and a set of the relevant Military Uniforms stamps. The first, Army medals, includes replicas of the Military Cross and the Army Long Service & Good Conduct Medal, the Army Uniforms stamps (2007) and a booklet, written by military historian Richard Holmes, about Army medals. The second collection includes miniature RAF

medals – the Distinguished Flying Cross and RAF Long Service & Good Conduct Medal. The final collection will feature Royal Navy medals and will be available from 17 September when the Naval Uniforms stamps are issued. Limited editions of 1000, available from Tallents House, price £89.95 each •



New stamp books The third 'British Design Classics' stamp book will be available from 18 August, containing four 1st class definitives and two Concorde stamps. The fourth book in this series, on sale from 17 September, includes two of the Mary Quant miniskirt stamps and four definitives. The books cost £2.34 each •

Big Ben medal cover A new medal cover, on sale from 18 September, marks the 150th anniversary of Big Ben. It bears a Union Flag stamp (large size, gummed) with attached label showing the clock tower and fireworks, cancelled by a special Houses of Parliament postmark. The cover design features the Palace of Westminster and the famous bell. The informative and well-illustrated filler card provides key facts about the bell and clock mechanism. Until 1913 the clock was wound by hand, which took 30 hours a week; it is now done by electric motor. A timeline gives a history of the bell and clock – the bell was cast in 1858, and tolled for the deaths of Kings Edward VII, George V, and George VI and to mark the state funeral of Sir Winston Churchill in 1965. The cover, produced in a limited edition of 12,500, was designed by Creator Communications Ltd. Price £14.75 •

Coming off sale The Olympic Flag Handover miniature sheet, presentation pack, stamp cards and Beijing exhibition sheet will be withdrawn from sale on 21 August •

International Reply Coupon A new-design IRC will be available from main Post Office branches from 3 August; it was shown in the June *Bulletin*, on page 300 •



The Westminster Cathedral silver stamp cover, the fifth in the series, will go on sale on 20 October. Price £24.42.

Silver stamps The fourth in the silver stamp collection, reproducing the 56p St Davids Cathedral stamp was issued on 21 July, priced £24.42. Collectors placing a regular order for this collection will receive a booklet about Cathedral stamps and a collection box. The fifth in the series, available from 20 October, features the 72p Westminster Cathedral stamp •

2009 First day postmarks The special issues for the rest of 2009 are listed below, with the alternative First Day of Issue postmarks •

18.08 Post Boxes miniature sheet: Wakefield

18.08 Treasures of the Archives prestige book: London EC1

01.09 Fire & Rescue Services: Hose, Melton Mowbray

17.09 Royal Navy Uniforms (stamps and PSB): Portsmouth

08.10 Eminent Britons: Britannia, Bacup

03.11 Christmas: Bethlehem, Llandello

Exhibitions An exhibition in Scotland may interest collectors of this year's stamps: 'Zig-Zag: The Paths of Robert Burns' is on at Greyfriars Church, Dumfries in August, and at the Hunterian Museum in Glasgow in October and November. For exhibitions relating to the 500th anniversary of the accession of Henry VIII see the May *Bulletin*, page 287 •

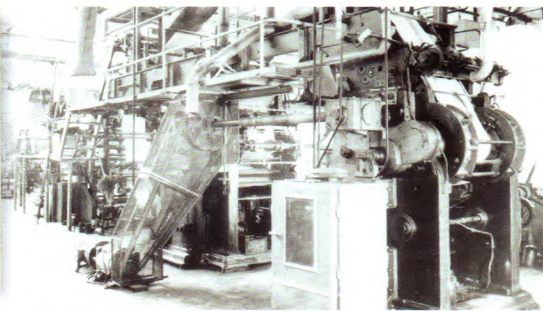
British Postal Museum & Archive Now on show is an exhibition honouring David Gentleman, who has designed more than 100 issued stamps for Royal Mail. The exhibition features artwork for many of these, and some designs which have not been seen in public before. It also features the 'Gentleman Album' of 1966, which greatly influenced British stamp design – see articles by Douglas Muir (June 2007 *Bulletin*), and Richard West (June 2008).

The BPMA is open Monday to Wednesday and Friday from 10.00-17.00, Thursday from 10.00-19.00, and also on certain Saturdays – see website for dates, and also for details of BPMA lectures and other events •

The BPMA Freeling House, Phoenix Place, London WC1X 0DL (near Mount Pleasant). Phone 020 7239 2570 or see www.postalheritage.org.uk

Post & Go machines Machines are scheduled to be installed during August and September at main Post Office branches in: London (Broadgate, Old Street, Houndsditch, Eastcheap, Broadway and London Bridge), Aberdeen, Cardiff, Dartford, Durham, Glasgow (St Vincent Street), Hereford, Inverness, Milton Keynes, Oxford, Perth, Stevenage and Truro •

75 years of GB stamps by photogravure



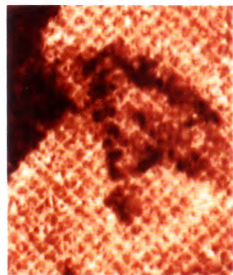
From left: proof impression of one of the Harrison Egyptian photogravure stamps of 1923; imperforate Bavarian stamp from the world's first series of photogravure printed stamps; and a Timson photogravure press, as used at Harrison up until the early 1970s.

THIS MONTH marks 75 years since the introduction of photogravure printing British stamps, a process still preferred by Royal Mail for definitives.

Photogravure stamp printing was started in Germany in 1914 when F A Bruckmann produced stamps for Bavaria, which to this day are regarded as an excellent use of this process. The Bavarian stamps were clearly an important development, and it was not long before Mexico (1917), Britain (the 1918 Waterlow War Tax stamps), Czechoslovakia (1919), Bulgaria and Württemberg (1920) followed Germany's lead. In 1921 Harrison printed 6d National Savings stamps by photogravure, and started a love affair with a printing process that would later be so significant to them.

The first photogravure postage stamps printed by Harrison depicted King Fuad's portrait on a 1923 Egyptian stamp. Use of this process came about by accident, when intaglio proofs were not ready in time and photogravure versions were substituted and favoured in Cairo. Assistance with the printing of these stamps was sought from Dutch company NRM, who also helped train Harrison staff in the skills required for mass production and creation of cylinders.

The Egyptian and subsequent contracts for other countries paved the way for Harrison to win the contracts to print British stamps by photogravure between 1934 and 1997. (De La Rue re-entered the marketplace by default when they acquired Harrison that year and currently shares all stamp production with Walsall/Cartor, while Enschedé lost its contract recently in a retendering exercise.)



A detail from the 1½d stamp opposite demonstrates the grid pattern characteristic of photogravure; it is created by cells recessed in the cylinder.

The process Photogravure printing uses fluid inks applied to a cylinder and held there in microscopic cells recessed into the plate/cylinder. Excess ink is removed with a doctor blade and the ink is transferred from the cells onto the paper. It offers increased security due to its high set-up costs when compared to lithography.

At one time collectors encountered only stamps that employed a photographic process in manufacturing the cylinders, hence 'photogravure', but the advent of computer-engraved cylinders brought a need to differentiate, as photography is no longer a part of the cylinder manufacturing process. The term 'graveure' is now used to describe modern production.

A history of the process, by Glenn H Morgan

Definitive highlights Photogravure had not been considered viable for the 20 million stamps consumed daily in Britain until late 1932, when the GPO invited tenders for the contract set to expire at the end of 1933. Although the price was £2,500 a year more than by retaining letterpress, Harrison was asked to print 40,000 experimental sheets of the ½d and 1d values by photogravure, largely on aesthetic grounds.

To fulfil their new contract Harrison acquired premises at High Wycombe, purchased the appropriate equipment, employed and trained extra staff and undertook extensive printing trials with the GPO. Finally, a new penny halfpenny photogravure stamp appeared on 20 August 1934, eight months later than originally planned, with the rest of the set appearing over a lengthy period. Harrison had maintained stamp supplies in the interim by using letterpress.

Of the new stamp, the Postmaster General, Sir Kingsley Wood, stated that the design offered: '...a more artistic effect than surface printing' and while *The Morning Post* praised the print quality, it was less than complimentary about the design and hoped that the PMG: '...does not consider he has attained an immutable perfection'. *The Daily Mirror* said: '...they show better workmanship in engraving than the old ones'. Printing trade journal *Printing* felt that: '...Harrisons have done a good job' and sought stamps 'as pictorial as those of many other countries; we now have the process, we want the design'.

The philatelic press generally favoured the new stamps, believing them to be a big step forward in colour and appearance. Charles Nissen, the British stamps specialist, thought that the head was too large relative to the frame. He also doubted that photogravure as a process would cope with the enormous output needed; thereby missing the fact that photogravure excels at long print runs.

Early problems had been experienced with production, for perforations had to be precise to one hundred thousandth of an inch and not impinge on the design. To help punch the holes centrally to the gutter between the stamps, three ever-reducing design sizes exist for the 1d and 1½d values – known as Large design (18.7mm in width), Intermediate (18.4mm), or Small (17.9mm). ½d and 2d values are found 18.4mm or 17.9mm, while remaining values are all 17.9mm.

Little changed until bicoloured Machin 1s6d and 1s9d values appeared in 1967. During 1977 high values first utilised photogravure, and in 1979 Harrison saw its near-monopoly first eroded when the 8p definitives were printed by Enschedé, largely due to the risk of UK industrial action. ►



The 1934 1½d was the first photogravure-printed British definitive stamp.



Over the next few years, Harrison saw three other printers joining Royal Mail's roster, using lithography initially (Questa and Walsall), or solely (Waddington). Enschedé printed the 1991 18p definitive using computer-engraved cylinders which virtually eliminated constant flaws and sharpened the stamp image, while Harrison continued with acid-etching until 1996. As Royal Mail sought increased security for its stamps, Walsall's first gravure definitives were issued in 1997, and Questa followed in 1998.

A growing number of high-security definitives are now printed in gravure on self-adhesive paper, heralding an exciting new era for collectors.



Top: a modern gravure stamp printing press.

Above: a 1935 Silver Jubilee stamp, from the first gravure commemorative stamp issue; a Sailing stamp of 1975 using Jumelle combination printing in intaglio and photogravure; and one of the 1966 Hastings stamps, gravure printed in nine colours.

Commemorative highlights The Silver Jubilee stamps of 1935 were the first photogravure printed commemoratives. There was little technical innovation until Harrison perfected multi-coloured photogravure printing for large web print runs, as first used on the bicoloured Europa 1960 stamps. Three-colour stamps started in 1961 (CEPT), and in 1963 the National Nature Week 4½d value used five. Nine colours were used on some of the Hastings (1966) and EFTA (1967) stamps and a few much later issues matched this number.

In 1972, the Harrison Jumelle press was first used for part of the 3p Royal Silver Wedding run, while Jumelle combination printing in both photogravure and intaglio was first employed in 1975 (Sailing). Nothing very innovative happened in the 1980s. 1994 saw Enschedé print its first gravure special issue (Europa: Medical Discoveries). Walsall followed in 1997 (Europa: Horror Stories) and Questa in 1999 (Millennium: Patients' Tale). Harrison first used computer engraved cylinders in 1996 (Centenary of Cinema) and a De La Rue imprint first appeared on a British gravure special stamp in 1998 (Children's Fantasy Novels) after buying Harrison the year before, such was the time lag between printing and issuing stamps at that time.

Glenn Morgan's Bulletin publication *British Stamp Printers* is still available from Talents House. It covers the printing process, the birth of a stamp and printer histories, and includes many colour images. (20 A5 pages. Order code BS003, price £2.95).

With the falling use of stamps and smaller print runs, gravure's stranglehold on British stamp printing has been broken, and the use of lithography is in the ascendancy due to the quality now achievable by offset. Only time will tell whether gravure stamps continue to be commissioned by Royal Mail, but Harrison and Sons will forever be remembered for introducing this printing process to British stamps back in 1934 •

The world of online philately by Glenn H Morgan FRPSL

THE National Philatelic Society (NPS) was founded in 1899 by Fred J Melville as the Junior Philatelic Society, and is still going strong. Based at the BPMA's premises in London, the library is accessible from the search room, while meetings are held at the adjacent Phoenix Centre.

The NPS website was launched at The Stamp Show 2000, with the Association of British Philatelic Societies and British Philatelic Trust also under the 'ukphilately.org.uk' domain umbrella. While the site's overall style has not altered since that time, the content is constantly updated for the benefit of all collectors. The site is divided into a dozen main sections, with easy navigation via a vertical menu bar at the left of every screen. The colour scheme is a consistent blue and black with a splash of red and text is clearly set against a white background making it easy on the eye.

Non-members can learn all about the NPS, see how to join and find out why non-London-based collectors can still benefit greatly from membership. Officers and Council, Constitution, subscription details and an application form are easily accessible and full details of the monthly meetings, other events and the annual cup competitions are also instantly to hand. Members can access Shop Window to order books, albums and accessories at beneficial prices, with collection at meetings or delivery to your home.

Stamp Lover, the NPS journal published six times a year and issued free to members, is now in its 101st year of publication and the site gives full details of its latest content, advertising rates, and how to obtain recent and past copies. To celebrate the centenary of *SL*, a valuable new site addition is a searchable index of the content of every issue since 1908 by title, author or topic. Details of how to obtain photostats of these articles are given.

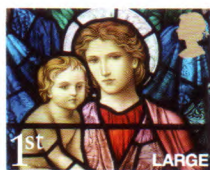
Circulating packets, monthly auctions and literature sales lists are a valuable part of most active societies, and the NPS is no different. Full details of these important member-only services are given on the website, whether you wish to be a buyer, seller or both.

The NPS library is one of the oldest and most accessible anywhere in the UK, with material going back to the 1860s and the beginnings of our hobby. Over 6500 books, 1000 worldwide periodical titles, plus stamp exhibition publications can be fully searched online using extremely flexible search criteria, almost guaranteeing that you will find items that you never knew existed. A link to the American PS Library articles database expands the chance of success, especially as the NPS has many of the titles available.

The site concludes with links to the other two UK Philately home pages mentioned above, specifically the ABPS and BPT, where the slogan 'Stamp collecting, plus much, much more!' could never be more appropriate •

www.ukphilately.org.uk/np The homepage of the National Philatelic Society's website.

Christmas This year's issue is a celebration



The stamps The windows on the stamps are as follows.

2nd class: Angel by William Morris, Church of St James, Staveley, Kendal, Cumbria

1st class: Madonna and Child by Henry Holiday, Ormesby St Michael, Ormesby, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk

56p: Joseph by Henry Holiday, Parish Church of St Michael, Minehead, Somerset

90p: Wise Man by Sir Edward Burne-Jones, from St Mary the Virgin, Rye, East Sussex

£1.35: Shepherd by Henry Holiday, at St Mary's Upavon, Wiltshire

THIS YEAR'S Christmas stamps feature the Christmas story as depicted in stained glass windows, a theme previously used in 1971 and 1992. The new stamps go on sale at Post Office branches and philatelic outlets and at Tallents House on 3 November. The 2007 2nd and 1st class Madonna and Child stamps will also go back on sale at Post Office branches.

The new Christmas stamps were designed by Andrew Ross, who previously designed the 2007 Sea Life and 2008 Insects issues, and the National Portrait Gallery Presentation Pack and FDC in 2006. Andrew has worked at a number of prestigious design companies including The Partnership and Johnson Banks.

The stamps are printed in gravure by De La Rue on self-adhesive paper in sheets of 50. They will also be available in a miniature sheet, which is conventionally-gummed.

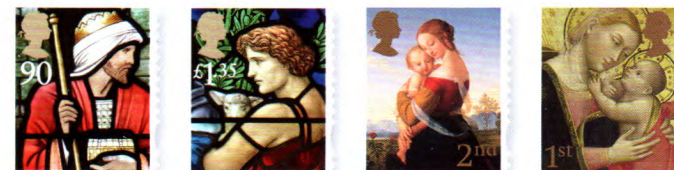
The Stained Glass Windows set includes images by William Morris and Edward Burne-Jones. Works by these two artists have also graced earlier stamps. *Strawberry Thief* by William Morris featured on a Textiles design stamp of 1982, and Sir Edward Burne-Jones's portrait of Lord Tennyson was on the 24p Tennyson centenary stamp of 1992.

The Madonna and Child stamps, designed by Peter Willberg, reproduce religious paintings: *Madonna and Child* by William Dyce, c1827, and *The Madonna of Humility* by Lippo di Dalmasio, c1390-1400. The two paintings are respectively held by the Tate Gallery, and the National Gallery in London. These two stamps are printed in gravure by De La Rue, in sheets of 50, on self-adhesive paper.

FIRST DAY FACILITIES Orders for serviced FDCs must reach Tallents House (address below) by the day of issue. Collectors may send stamped covers on the day of issue to: Royal Mail, Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB (Tallents House postmark), or a Special Handstamp Centre (Bethlehem postmark), marking the outer envelope 'FD0929' (Tallents House), or 'FD0930' (Bethlehem). For details of sponsored special postmarks see the *British Postmark Bulletin*.

AIRLETTERS The 2006 airletter (standard and bilingual Welsh/English versions) goes back on sale at Post Office branches on 3 November, having remained on sale from Tallents House since November 2006. The airletter features reindeer and Father Christmas, by Tatsuro Kiuchi. The standard version was shown in the November 2006 Bulletin, page 74.

of the Nativity seen in stained glass windows



In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.
And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep.
And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

And God said, **Let there be light:**
and there was light.

Mrs J Robinson
200 Manorbie Road
Ilkeston
Derbyshire
DE7 4AB



Royal Mail First Day Cover

The illustrated presentation pack, above, is written by Maev Kennedy and printed by Walsall. It tells the story of stained glass windows. The FDC is shown at right, with the miniature sheet.



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GENERIC & SMILERS SHEETS The 2009 Christmas generic sheet contains eight 2nd class, eight 1st class, two 56p and two 90p Christmas stamps, price £9.00. It will be printed in litho by Cartor. Five Christmas Smilers sheets, with customers' own images on labels adjoining the stamps, will be available, containing 10 × 1st class (£7.50), 20 × 1st class £13.50 (two or more sheets £12.50 each), 20 × 2nd class £9.50 (two or more £8.50 each), 10 × 56p £9.50 (two or more £8.50 each), and 10 × 90p £13.50 (two or more £12.50 each). Handling charge of £1.41 on all orders. To order Smilers sheets see the leaflet/order form in post offices, see www.royalmail.com/smilers or phone 0845 074 2000 •

Christmas prices Miniature sheet is abbreviated MS

Set of stamps or MS (Stained Glass Windows)	£4.58
Set of stamps (Madonna & Child)	£0.69
Presentation pack (Stained Glass Windows stamps)	£5.10
FDC envelope	£0.30
Serviced FDC: Windows stamps/MS (UK orders)	£5.73
Serviced FDC: Windows stamps/MS (overseas)	£4.99
Stamp cards set (7 Windows stamps and MS)	£3.12
12 × 1st class book	£4.68
12 × 2nd class book	£3.60
Generic sheet	£9.00
Airletter (standard or bilingual version)	£0.63

Post Boxes Martin Robinson on the process



Letter Box Study Group For details write to Val Scott, 38 Leopold Avenue, Handsworth Wood, Birmingham B20 1ES, or email membership@lbg.org

IN JUNE 2008 Royal Mail approached me to act as a consultant on a proposed issue of post boxes stamps to be issued in August 2009. Quite what this would involve wasn't clear at first, but within a short time it emerged that it would mean coming up with a range of ideas and supplying images and text for the stamps and associated products: miniature sheet, presentation pack, generic sheet, first day cover and filler. In the end this took eight months from first ideas to finished articles, and I was surprised by the complexity of the process, which involved exchanging countless phone calls, emails, paper documents and CDs, not to mention wracking the brain for ideas and hunting for suitable images.

I am not sure who first suggested the idea of this set of stamps, but someone proposed 2009 as the bicentenary of the introduction of the post box, using as evidence the Wakefield letter box, which bears the date 1809. Of course it's not quite as simple as that, and although we know that posting apertures of various kinds began to appear at post offices in the early 19th century, and very probably before, it is impossible to say which is the earliest. However we agreed in the end that the Wakefield box was the earliest dated survivor.

The stamps were originally to feature wall letter boxes, pillar boxes having been the subject of a special issue in 2002, but this was thought to be too restrictive a title, and 'post boxes' was eventually chosen, although a purist might argue that 'post' and 'pillar' are synonymous. I pointed out that the Letter Box Study Group's classification of letter boxes consists of pillar boxes, wall boxes, Ludlow wall boxes and lamp boxes; bracket boxes are included in the wall box category. Other wall boxes include locally-made carpenter's boxes and non-standard ones made to fit into the façade of particular post office buildings. In the end all of these have been included, if not on the stamps then in the presentation pack or generic sheet.

The first main problem was that of narrowing down the choice, and the answer involved some compromises. I suggested a number of possible criteria, eg: one from each region; one from each reign; representative types; important developments; picturesque settings; rare Victorian survivals.

If we assumed that the Wakefield box was to be included, this left three others to be chosen. I thought a regional choice would be difficult and that it was much more important to include representative types. My own preference would have been to include a First National Standard box, a Ludlow box and one other. The best known surviving First National Standard is the one at the Old Post Office, Tintagel. There are several good-looking Ludlows: an original Victorian one in Sherborne (it still has its VR enamel plate, whilst others have been replaced with later ciphers); a fine EVIIR one in Ledbury; and a unique EVIIR one in Bawdsey (but perhaps Her Majesty would not look upon that one with favour). The last choice was the most difficult, but should perhaps go to a more modern example to redress the balance. Perhaps a GVR box, an EIIIR with 10in aperture, one with a Scottish crown, or a bracket box.

behind this new special issue

My initial choice was the Wakefield box (pre-Victorian); a First National Standard (Victorian); a Ludlow (EVIIIR) and a GVR box (representative of commoner types). I submitted a CD with a number of photos for consideration, listed opposite.

It was agreed that all the boxes chosen should be good-looking, and I regret that the lamp box chosen is in dire need of a paint job, but perhaps rust adds to its picturesqueness. (Marcus James, Royal Mail's Head of Design, comments: 'The rust on the box was left in the image as it was felt that the images should be authentic and true to how the boxes are. We all felt this gave the boxes a certain amount of character, and made them seem real.') Being primarily interested in different kinds of letter boxes, most of the photos I was able to supply concentrate on the box in question, and I liked the approach used for the 2002 pillar box stamps, beautifully engraved by Czeslaw Slania, an outline of the box on a white background with a close-up of a detail. Design consultants Elmwood produced a series of different designs – some focused purely on the box, with no background, some showing the box with technical illustration and others showing the box smaller, in a broader shot of the surroundings. When these were presented to the Stamp Advisory Committee they felt that showing the box in its immediate surroundings was the most engaging route, and it was agreed that the image should be as close as possible, to ensure that detail on the box would be visible, but still retain enough of its surroundings to put the box in context. This was the right decision, I suppose, given that the stamps need to appeal to as wide an audience as possible. Most of my photos show (a) a close-up and (b) a general view. What Royal Mail wanted was something in between, with more background than was visible on most of my photos, so the boxes chosen would need to be re-photographed bearing this in mind.

It was also agreed after this first submission that the stamps should show boxes of different reigns, have a variety of backgrounds (brick, greenery, stone, etc) which were interesting but not too distracting (leaving the box as the 'hero', was the word used) and not interfering with the overlaid text. They should be good examples, not damaged, redundant or deficient; they should make a set of four but not be too similar; and they should still be in situ. I was now asked to suggest four boxes of each type, and provide exact directions for a professional photographer, Peter Marlow (who was also responsible for the stamps issued in 2008 for the tercentenary of St Paul's



First suggestions First National Standard, Old Post Office, Tintagel • Standard Victorian wall box • Ditto, with modified aperture • Edward VII with full-length door • George V medium box, large cipher, York • Elizabeth II box, roin aperture • Elizabeth II box, Scottish crown • VR Ludlow box, Sherborne • Edward VII Ludlow, Ledbury • Unique Edward VIII Ludlow, Bawdsey (above left) • Bracket box, Llandrindod Wells • Wall-mounted lamp box near Bethlehem, Llandeilo • Wakefield receiving house box • Early receiving house box, Lyme Regis • Carpenter's box, Blanchland • Carpenter's box, Lowsonford (above right) • VR box in 'wayside shrine', Rous Lench

From left: a small Victorian wall box at Cruckmeole, Shrewsbury; E11R wall box with Scottish crown, Kelso; and 1887 Eagle Range & Foundry Co sub post office box, Sherborne, Dorset.



Compromise list: VR Old Post Office, Tintagel (First national standard. WB72, 1857) • Rock of Gibraltar Inn, Enslow, Woodstock (WB75, 1861) • Cruckmeole, Shrewsbury (WB87, 1882) (above, left) • Burmarsh Road, Hythe (First lamp box. LB201, 1896) • Farmers, Bethlehem, Llandeilo (Ditto, plainer background)

Later Trewarmett, Tintagel (WB90, 1901) • Windsor Castle (WB92, 1905) • Wellington Road/Greek Street, Stockport (Same type box as previous) • Weedon, Northants (WB93, 1905)

E2R Slaithwaite PSO (WB114, 1957) • Forestfield, Kelso (Scottish crown, above centre) (WB115s, 1952) • North Road/Crossgate, Durham (WB116, 1957) • East Chinnock PO (Ludlow box, but E2R version looks different from earlier ones)

Ludlow Long Street, Sherborne (LWB152, 1887) (above at right) • St Mary's TSO, Bedford (LWB153, 1885) • Burton Overy PO, Leicester (LWB170, 1937) • Bodiam PO (LWB164, 1901)

Cathedral; this must have been a different sort of assignment!), who would appreciate their being conveniently grouped. Now you can understand how ideal choices are subject to compromise, and how many attractive boxes ruled themselves out for one reason or another.

Of our 100,000 letter boxes, ROME: removes or replaces 3,000 a year, repaints 38,000 and repairs 11,000 so there was no guarantee that boxes nominated were still the same as on my photos – some dating back 30 years or more – or even still be there. Trying to bear in mind as much of the above as possible, I offered a compromise list (see left), and did not express any preferences.

Using these suggestions, and other boxes suggested by Elmwood, Peter Marlow took a series of recte photos of lots of different boxes. These were then assessed for their visual merit and appropriateness before he went ahead and took the final shots. And so we come to the four boxes that were finally chosen. Early on it had been decided

that the Wakefield box would not be featured on any of the stamps, even though it had been the inspiration for the set. (Marcus James comments: 'It was moved to the border of the miniature sheet as the set worked better by having boxes of a similar format that were still in use.' Philip Parker, Head of Stamp Policy, comments: 'It was deemed more appropriate to use working boxes on the stamps, rather than the posting slot which is no longer in use.')

POST BOXES

The earliest known surviving posting slot was placed in the wall of Wakefield Post Office in 1809. Britain's first roadside pillar boxes appeared in the early 1850s but, in more remote and less populated areas, a cheaper and more practical alternative was needed, resulting in the development of smaller post boxes. Initially, they were installed in walls, buildings or brick pillars; later designs were also attached to lamp posts.

EARLY POSTING SLOT
WAKEFIELD

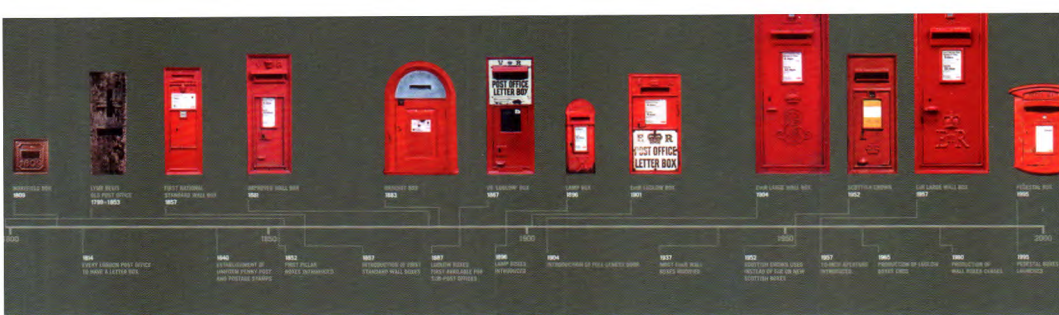
1st George V Type B (medium) wall letter box manufactured by W T Allen & Co Ltd, London, 1933-36. In the reign of George V (1910-36) wall boxes were manufactured by Allen; McDowell, Steven & Co, Glasgow; and Andrew Handyside & Co, Derby; later Derby Castings Ltd. They bear the maker's name at the bottom and can be distinguished by various details including the size of the royal cipher. There are three sizes: large, medium and small (A, B and C) and the same without collection plates (D, E and F).

56p Edward VII small Ludlow letter box manufactured by James Ludlow & Co, Birmingham, 1901-10. These boxes with distinctive enamel plates were made specifically for use at sub post offices. The same firm made the boxes in large and small sizes from 1885 to 1965. In the reign of Edward VII (1901-10) they were made with or without the recessed collection plate.

81p Victorian lamp letter box manufactured by Andrew Handyside & Co, Derby, 1896. Lamp boxes were made originally to be hung on street lamp posts, but were also built into walls. The original box of 1896 bears the word LETTERS, but from later that year this was changed to LETTERS ONLY.

90p Elizabeth II large (Type A) wall letter box, manufacturer unknown, 1962/63. From 1952 wall letter boxes were manufactured in large and small sizes, with and without collection plates, and with the EHR cipher or Scottish crown. From 1957 the aperture was increased from 8 to 10 inches. Manufacturers were McDowell, Steven; W T Allen, Allied Ironfounders, Falkirk; Lion Foundry, Kirkintilloch; and Carron Co, Falkirk. This particular box is a bit of a mystery; unusually it bears no manufacturer's name and is almost certainly an experimental version made of fibreglass in 1962/63, when the Post Office was investigating possible new materials. ►

The Post Boxes miniature sheet issued 18 August. The four boxes featured are to be found at (from left): Cookham Rise; Bodiam former PO; Burmarsh Road, Hythe; and Slaithwaite PSO.



Presentation pack and generic sheet These next items to be considered would both need lots more images. For the pack, I suggested a general introduction covering the whole range of letter boxes; the development of the Victorian wall box and its various improvements; boxes from Edward VII to Elizabeth II, including Edward VIII; different sizes and manufacturers; with/without collection plates; introduction of the full-length door; modified apertures; Scottish crowns; coin apertures; Ludlow boxes; lamp boxes and eventually pedestal boxes. In the end the sections were: the first letter boxes, Ludlow boxes, roadside boxes, developing the standard wall box, and wall boxes from Edward VII to Elizabeth II.

Featured in the presentation pack are a timeline showing key boxes (top), and a panel of photographs old and new, including one of Ringwood Post Office in Hampshire, in Edwardian days.

An edited version of this text was used for the first day cover's filler card. There were very lengthy discussions about captions and text, even the little bit which appears on the miniature sheet, which is to my mind still unsatisfactory, but in the end compromise was again the order of the day.

In addition there is a timeline illustrating key boxes from the 1809 Wakefield box to the pedestal box of 1995, and a panel consisting of images of a whole variety of boxes old and new. It would have been nice to involve the Letter Box Study Group in the choice of these, as well as at other points in the process, but in the event the urgent requirements of successive deadlines made this impractical. However I did ask the Group for approval to use a few images based on its long-running series of postcard reprints, some of which add a social dimension to mere letter box images.

A further 20 images were required for the generic sheet, and these are a mixture of key boxes, rarities, typical and picturesque locations, famous settings (Land's End, Windsor Castle, Tintagel, the summit of Snowdon), details such as royal ciphers, and old postcards. Between the generic sheet, the presentation pack and the first day cover there are 50 images of as wide a range of boxes as you could wish to see. The aim of the exercise was to present the iconic quality of British post boxes, in a way likely to appeal to specialist and non-specialist, and I hope that collectors will be pleased with the results, as well as enjoying some insight into the making of a stamp issue. I am grateful to Royal Mail for the chance to be involved in the process and for contributing to this article, which first appeared in the Spring edition of the Letter Box Study Group's Newsletter ●

All photographs © Martin Robinson except the black-and-white images, reproduced by permission of the LBSG. Presentation pack detail and miniature sheet © Royal Mail.

Text © Martin Robinson 2009

Royal Mail's postbus services

An update of the routes and dates, by Martin Robinson



Royal Mail Postbus										When Free, Blind or 10p fares are offered the full value must be shown in the box	
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	Adult	Child
										Ord	Ord
										Concession	Concession
										1/3	1/4
										2/3	1/2
										Free*	Due Fare*
										Blind*	Blind*
										10p*	10p*
										sp.	Ticket Card
Working for the Community										1	2

Passenger carried subject to terms & conditions

No. 125637

The LDV Maxus postbus, Peatling Parva, Leicestershire, May 2009, and a current postbus ticket.

IN MAY AND JUNE 2007 we published a list of all the postbus services that have run since the first, in February 1967, together with their start and end dates. Much has happened in the two years since, and many more postbus routes have been withdrawn. The reasons given are a decline in passenger numbers, fewer mail deliveries and loss of subsidies from county councils and other bodies, making the services uneconomical. Royal Mail says it is obliged to concentrate on its core function of delivering mail, rather than carrying passengers.

On a fine April day I took a trip on the Lutterworth postbus, which runs twice a day (once on Saturdays) between Peatling Parva, Bruntingthorpe, Walton, Kimcote, Gilmorton and Lutterworth in Leicestershire. It is the only form of public transport that these villages have, and enables a mixture of pensioners, housewives and students to get into town and back.

The service is well used, carrying six passengers each way on my mid-week visit, and the driver said that he sometimes has to make a double journey to the nearest village of Gilmorton to accommodate all those wishing to travel. The present vehicle, an 8-seater LDV Maxus van, was introduced in February 2008, and replaced a 14-seater vehicle. The change was made necessary because of the introduction of new European Union legislation on the fitting of tachographs to passenger-carrying vehicles above a certain capacity, which would have caused difficulties with drivers' rosters.

I was pleased to find I could use my pensioner's bus pass, and was issued a paper ticket. The round trip, from the main post office in George Street, Lutterworth, to Peatling Parva took an hour and was a perfect delight. The quiet lanes, pretty villages and rolling green countryside all added to the experience. John Williamson, the driver, seemed to know all his passengers and everyone he passed en route. He is being retired at 65 in July, but said that his successor has been trained, so the future of this service seems assured, for the time being at any rate. It was a pleasure to find such a thriving service against a background of retrenchment. ►

Withdrawn and remaining services 64 services have been withdrawn since the May/June 2007 listing, plus two services which were wrongly shown as still running. This leaves 17 services operating at the time of writing, four in England and 13 in Scotland. Details are given below, in order of their introduction, with the route number and start and end dates. I am grateful to Robin Farmer and Colin Peachey for help in compiling these details ●

Service	Region	Start	End
4 Dunbar-Innerwick-Spott	Scotland	04.06.68	04.08.07
9 Melrose/Galashiels-Lillesleaf	Scotland	28.08.72	04.04.09
11 Canterbury-Crundale	South East	23.10.72	01.09.07
17 Lockerbie-St Annes	Scotland	21.04.73	21.05.07
20 Alligin-Kinlochewe (later Diabaig-Achnasheen)	Scotland	02.06.73	17.04.09
25 Dorking-Ockley	South East	02.08.73	04.04.09
27 Biggar-Tweedsmuir	Scotland	11.08.73	06.08.07
30 Oxted-Lingfield	South East	24.09.73	04.04.09
31 Thornhill-Moniaive	Scotland	28.09.73	21.05.07
37 Aberfeldy-Lawers-Bridgend (later to Killin)	Scotland	03.01.74	24.04.09
39 Broughton-in-Furness-Cockley Beck	North West	01.03.74	30.06.08
43 Tunbridge Wells-Wadhurst-Mayfield	South East	01.04.74	29.12.07
48 Haddington-Garvald	Scotland	20.06.74	17.04.09
54 Castle Douglas-Corsock	Scotland	29.08.74	21.05.07
55 Castle Douglas-Mossdale	Scotland	29.08.74	21.05.07
56 Kirriemuir-Glen Clova	Scotland	02.09.74	01.05.09
60 Hawick-Bonchester Bridge-Southdeanrig	Scotland	15.10.74	04.04.09
61 Kelso-Nenthorn-Hume-Stichill	Scotland	15.10.74	06.08.07
69 Applecross-Toscaig (later to Torridon)	Scotland	27.02.75	17.04.09
69A Kishorn-Shieldaig (later to Strathcarron & Torridon)	Scotland	30.03.81	17.04.09
76 Castle Douglas-Auchencairn	Scotland	06.06.75	21.05.07
82 Plockton-Strome Ferry (later from Kyle)	Scotland	11.09.75	29.10.07
88 Dalwhinnie-Drummin	Scotland	05.11.75	09.12.07
89 Rothbury-Alwinton-Morpeth	North East	11.11.75	03.01.09
92 Lockerbie-Waterbeck	Scotland	17.11.75	21.05.07
104 Isle of Colonsay	Scotland	16.02.76	07.05.09
107 Aberfoyle-Inversnaid	Scotland	21.04.76	18.10.08
114 Kirkcudbright-Borgue (later to Lennox Pluckton)	Scotland	25.10.76	21.05.07
119 Isle of Bressay	Scotland	06.12.76	30.06.09
122 Abington-Crawfordjohn (later from Biggar)	Scotland	22.03.77	23.08.07
129 Llandovery-Cilycwm-Rhandirmwyn-Myddfai	Wales	18.07.77	04.04.09
131 Duns-Abbey St Bathans	Scotland	18.08.77	04.01.02
132 Brodick-Shannochie (later South Arran circular)	Scotland	30.08.77	27.12.07
133 Brodick-Blackwaterfoot (later North Arran circular)	Scotland	30.08.77	27.12.07
135 Biggar-Lanark	Scotland	19.09.77	01.08.07
142 Isle of Rousay	Scotland	23.03.78	04.04.09
144 Blairgowrie-Glenshee	Scotland	01.04.78	24.04.09
156 Dunvegan-Glendale-Borreraig (Isle of Skye)	Scotland	27.11.78	30.08.07
161 Newtown-New Mills	Wales	04.06.79	04.04.09

Service	Region	Start	End
164 Redhill-Outwood	South East	01.10.79	04.04.09
168 Aberystwyth-Blaenpennal	Wales	07.01.80	14.07.07
174 Llandrindod Wells-Rhayader <i>Monday to Friday only</i>	Wales	19.05.80	01.05.09
179 Ripon-Masham	North East	24.03.82	04.04.09
182 Reigate-Leigh <i>Monday to Friday only</i>	South East	06.07.82	03.04.09
197 Blairgowrie-Glenisla	Scotland	05.06.89	24.04.09
200 Morpeth-Whalton	North East	02.04.91	03.01.09
212 Canterbury-Wootton	South East	04.05.93	01.09.07
214 Rochester-Cooling	South East	04.05.93	04.04.09
215 Gravesend-Fairseat <i>Monday to Friday</i>	South East	04.05.93	17.04.09
216 Gravesend-Betsham <i>Monday to Friday</i>	South East	04.05.93	17.04.09
217 Maidstone-Stockbury Village	South East	04.05.93	31.08.07
218 Maidstone-Lenham Heath	South East	04.05.93	31.08.07
219 Maidstone-Stockett Lane	South East	04.05.93	31.08.07
220 Maidstone-Sutton Valence	South East	04.05.93	25.06.04
221 Skipton-Malham	North East	01.06.93	04.04.09
226 Welshpool-Foel	Wales	26.07.93	24.08.07
237 Horsham-Maplehurst	South East	31.05.94	04.04.09
239 Isle of Lismore	Scotland	13.06.94	18.07.09
244 Aberystwyth-Aberffraw	Wales	05.09.94	31.03.07
252 Haywards Heath-Balcombe <i>Monday to Friday</i>	South East	14.03.95	03.04.09
258 Hexham-Kielder Village	North East	15.04.96	03.01.09
259 Alnwick-Bamburgh	North East	18.11.96	03.01.09
271 Canterbury-Grove	South East	27.07.98	31.08.07
277 Isle of Fetlar	Scotland	01.03.99	30.04.08
282 Bettyhill-Tongue-Thurso	Scotland	30.04.01	17.04.09
283 Thurso-Tongue	Scotland	30.04.01	17.04.09

Remaining services	Region	Start
6 Lochmaddy-Benbecula Airport (North Uist)	Scotland	16.06.72
13 Tigharry-Lochmaddy (North Uist) (later to Airport)	Scotland	01.12.72
32 Portnahaven-Port Ellen (Isle of Islay)	Scotland	01.10.73
40 Sittingbourne-Wormshill (briefly extended to Bicknor)	South East	04.03.74
85 Lochport-Sidinish (North Uist)	Scotland	27.10.75
106 Callander-Trossachs	Scotland	30.03.76
108 Isle of Luing	Scotland	03.05.76
125 Timsgrarry-Callanish-Stornoway (Isle of Lewis)	Scotland	05.04.77
128 Crianlarich-Killin-Callander-Tyndrum	Scotland	23.05.77
167 Talmine-Tongue-Lairg	Scotland	19.11.79
194 Pitlochry-Rannoch Station	Scotland	04.01.89
199 Leyburn-Hawse-Bedale (later to Northallerton)	North East	06.03.90
205 Lochinver-Lairg	Scotland	10.08.92
233 Lutterworth-Peatling Parva	Mid/Anglia	18.10.93
245 Malton-Foxholes	North East	05.09.94
265 Lochboisdale-Ballivanich (later to Isle of Eriskay)	Scotland	13.10.97
274 Haddington-Humble <i>Monday to Friday</i>	Scotland	02.11.98

The Fire and Rescue issue Richard West



Garry Blackburn

'STAMPS ARE BEAUTIFUL THINGS to work on. They are beautiful pieces of graphic design, that everyone responds to.' The words of Garry Blackburn, one half of the partnership that is Rose, possibly the most prolific team over the past decade as far as British stamp design is concerned.

Rose was created in 1999, a partnership between Rebecca Oliver as Project Manager, and Simon Elliott as designer: their initials form the word 'Rose'. When the partnership split in 2002, Garry joined Simon; they were already friends, knowing each other as designers and through playing football. With Garry responsible for developing corporate identity and branding, and Simon more involved with implementation and craft, the two work in perfect harmony. Together they have over 40 years' design experience: they complement rather than conflict with each other. 'Clients like the fact we have two viewpoints, and thus cover all aspects.'

Simon had previously worked with Michael Dempsey, and so was already familiar with Royal Mail and the niceties of stamp design. As Rose, the first commission was the Fashion Hats set of 2001. Much of their skill lies in working with illustrators and photographers to fit the requirements of the postage stamp, in relation to size, typography and inclusion of the essential elements such as the Queen's head and denomination. There has to be consistency throughout each set, such as the size at which the Queen's head is featured, while the typography and colouring must complement the designs. The denominations and inscriptions need to be easily legible. They believe it is important to understand the objectives of the client – in the case of British stamps, Royal Mail – and to recognise the needs of the audience – the general public. Unlike some designers, they feel it is important not to be wedded to a particular style or attitude. The final product is not about the designers: it must be appropriate for the client. They work as a team, Garry with the ideas, and Simon ensuring the result looks beautiful.

The results have been seen over the ten years on some 15 stamp issues, each with its own challenges and individual solutions. Garry joined at the time when Simon was working on the set to mark the 250th anniversary of the British Museum (2003). The result was a delicate juxtaposition of scale, a statue from Easter Island sitting alongside a small bronze image. Working on the designs issued in 2004 for the Royal Horticultural Society proved particularly pleasing, combining the beauty of the flowers with the delicacy of the colours. The Animal Tales set of 2006 was intended to be a full collaboration between Royal Mail and the US Post Office, although in the end the concept became rather diluted. However, Garry and Simon enjoyed introducing a fun element into stamp design by bringing the characters to life. The Christmas issues they have worked on have also proved fascinating, from the rather contentious Madonna and Child paintings, to the humour of the Raymond Briggs drawings, and the Angels of Marco Ventura. It is no easy task reducing quite large paintings to stamp size while ensuring that all can still appreciate and enjoy the beauty and intricacy of the original work.

talks to Garry Blackburn, of design firm Rose



Fire and Rescue When Rose was invited to submit ideas for a set to honour Britain's Fire and Rescue Services, the commission seemed particularly appropriate for Garry's skills. The brief from Royal Mail recommended a focus on the equipment used. Today, the tasks undertaken extend far beyond the popular images of simply fighting fires or rescuing cats from trees. Nor is it simply the skills and bravery of those at the front that are essential; no less important is the equipment they use to help save so many lives.

The six stamps embrace all demands put on fire and rescue teams: from fire fighting to fire prevention (the stamp shows what can be the result of a chip pan fire), tackling chemical fires, dealing with a rescue after an emergency, flood rescue, and using dogs to search for victims. Each stamp tells a mini-story; behind each design lies a separate drama.

Each stamp has three elements: the scenario depicted, uniforms worn by those directly involved (uniform detail can vary from area to area) and the vital equipment employed. Careful research has ensured that the detail is accurate while not diluting the dramatic impact. The designs are based on photographs, some using a single photograph, others a combination of two or three. Some are from picture libraries, others were created with the help of the Fire Training College at Moreton-in-Marsh in Gloucestershire. The former airfield is used to simulate scenarios that fire and rescue teams will face: the road accident featured on the 56p stamp was specially staged.

The photographs were extensively retouched to achieve a perfect image: each included much detail that needed to be condensed to stamp size, to convey the message while ensuring a coherent set. Red and yellow are the colours associated with the fire service: the stamps use yellow for the inscriptions and denominations. The designer has to discern what to include, to leave in what is important, focused within a small area. ►

The Fire and Rescue Services stamps are to be issued on 1 September.

Examples from some of the issues designed by Rose: 2002 British Coastline, 2004 Entente Cordiale Centenary, 2005 Changing Tastes, 2007 Christmas, 2005 Christmas, 2002 Astronomy and 2003 British Museum anniversary.

Advice was sought from the Fire and Rescue Service, to ensure that everything depicted is accurate, especially the uniforms and equipment, and fastidiously correct as far as health and safety issues are concerned.

Garry also designed the first day cover, special handstamps (featuring a hose and fire blanket) and presentation pack, the front of which depicts a fire engine, while the text describes a day in the life of a fire-fighter.

With such a success story when it comes to stamp design, one might be forgiven for thinking that the only client of the team of six at Rose is Royal Mail. The group in reality has an impressive list of clients, many in the arts world, such as Tate Modern and Tate Britain, the BBC, BAFTA, China Heritage Society, Middle Temple, The Old Vic and the v&a Museum, among many others. One fact remains, however: this surely will not be their last stamp issue for Royal Mail.



Text © Richard Mose 2003

Commemorative covers New this month



Nene Valley Railway FDC serviced on 21 April bearing 25p railway letter stamp, an image of Peterborough Cathedral, and Tudor stamp(s) cancelled by a Tudor Road Birmingham handstamp featuring Elizabeth I. **Prices** £3.50 (one Tudor stamp, £6.50 (full set). Postage 50p.



GB Covers Limited edition of 35 Official First Day Covers, featuring a postbox in a K4 telephone kiosk, and Post Boxes miniature sheet cancelled with a special letterbox handstamp. Each signed and numbered. **Price** £16 plus £1.50 postage, payable to GB Covers.



Benham A GOLD 500 cover (in a numbered limited edition of 500) bearing the Post Boxes miniature sheet and an image of an early postman and wall-mounted post box framed by an intricate 22ct gold-blocked design. The cover bears a Wakefield, W Yorkshire pictorial handstamp as the location of the first wall-mounted post box, installed in 1809. **Price** £16.95 plus £2.50 postage ●



Bletchley Park A House of Tudor FDC with a secret twist: the cover design features Tudor cryptography and the cancel is a Caesar Shift Wheel incorporating a piece of code. Linked to the monarchs depicted on the stamps are stories about the plots and intrigues of their spymasters. An insert describes these, and also has a code wheel which can be used to create secret messages. Full stamp set and miniature sheet versions available. **Price** £15 each plus £1.50 postage ●



Cotswold & Stuart Covers A souvenir cover to mark the 90th anniversary of No 1 Flying Training School at RAF Linton-on-Ouse. Litho printed, featuring the crest of the FTS, it bears one of the RAF Uniforms stamps cancelled by a special handstamp. All covers are flown and signed – a range of signatures is available. **Price** from £10 plus postage. All profits to the Help the Heroes Campaign and RAFA ●



M Tanner Two Trafalgar Square Routemaster bus covers (A & B: B is shown above), limited to 15 numbered. Each includes a postcard of both images. A 1st class Routemaster stamp is postmarked 'British Design Classics' 13/01/2009. **Price** £14.99 each plus £1.50 postage worldwide. Postcards 60p each plus postage if ordered separately. Different London Tourist Routemaster maximumcard also available at £9 each plus postage ●

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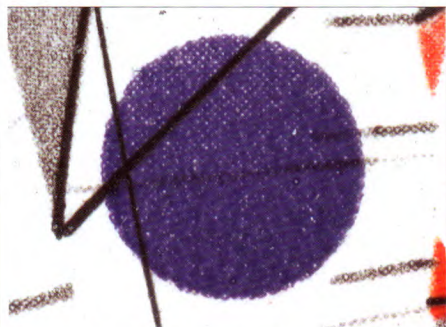
Cover producers wishing to announce a recent or forthcoming cover should submit copy of up to 75 words in the style above. The text should briefly describe the cover, state the stamps and postmarks it will bear, and give retail prices and an address for orders and enquiries. Announcements are published on a first-come-first-served basis and may be modified or shortened. Copy for consideration for the October *Bulletin* should be sent to The Editor (address on p355) by 7 August. Copy for November should arrive by 7 September. Royal Mail cannot enter into correspondence or telephone conversations concerning announcements in this Covers section.

Prize draw Moon Landing sheets to be won

Two Moon Landing commemorative sheets will be given away this month. To enter, simply write your name and address on the back of a postcard and send it to: Moon Draw, British Philatelic Bulletin, Royal Mail, 35-50 Rathbone Place, London W1T 1HQ, to arrive by 28 August ●



Competitions Enter to win the 2009 prestige stamp books



ENDANGERED PLANTS
Lady's Slipper Orchid



May identify The detail was from this year's Endangered Plants Lady's Slipper Orchid stamp. The winner was P Stilwell, Hants.

May knowledge The answers: 1) 1962; 2) blue; 3) Warwick, Orford, Bolsover, Dover, Framlingham, Carlisle, Windsor, Bamburgh, Kenilworth and Bodiam. The winner was R Hanson, Spain.

FIRSTLY, identify the stamp from the detail above. Send your answer to August *Identify* Competition. Secondly, test your philatelic knowledge by answering the questions below. Send your answer to August *Knowledge* Competition.

- 1 Who designed the 1998 Lighthouses stamps?
- 2 What was the colour of the George VI £1 definitive stamps?
- 3 In which year were stamps issued for the 9th International Lifeboat Conference?

Send your answer (addressed to either the August *Identify* competition or the August *Knowledge* competition), name and address on a postcard or back of a sealed envelope to: British Philatelic Bulletin, Royal Mail, 35-50 Rathbone Place, London W1T 1HQ. The senders of the first cards drawn in each competition on 18 September will each receive the three 2009 prestige books. Runner-up prizes of presentation packs, FDCs or stamp cards will be awarded in each competition. These competitions are not open to Royal Mail employees •

Events

Until further notice David Gentleman exhibition at British Postal Museum & Archive, Freeling House, Phoenix Place, London WC1. **Enquiries** 020 7239 2570, e-mail info@postalheritage.org.uk

30 July - 4 August Philakorea 2009 (24th Asian International Stamp Exhibition), Seoul.

3-14 August Thaipex national stamp exhibition at Siam Paragon Complex, Bangkok, Thailand.

30 August Lincoln PS Lincolnshire.Clubs' get-together at Washinborough Community Centre, Lincoln. 09.00-17.00. About 20 dealers, free parking. **Enquiries** P Wain, 01522 525984.

3-5 September The Picture Postcard Show 2009 at Royal Horticultural Society Lawrence Hall, Greycoat and Elverton Streets, London SW1. Open Thursday

11.00-20.00, Friday 11.00-19.00, Saturday 10.00-17.00. Admission £3 (season ticket £7). **Enquiries** 020 8886 0469 or 01702 587603.

5 September City of Preston PS Stamp & Card Fair, Barton Village Hall, Garstang Road (A6) near Preston 10.00-16.00. Approximately 20 dealers, Federation competitive entries. **Enquiries** P Gaywood, 01772 713917.

16-19 September Autumn Stampex at the Business Design Centre, Upper Street, London N1. Includes UK National Competitions.

12 September - 9 January 2010 Philatelic Exhibition at Birmingham Museums & Art Gallery to mark 125th anniversary of Birmingham PS. Material from the Society and from the Thomas Evans collection. Free admission. **Enquiries** A Spencer, 0121 459 7650 •

Late news

New posts minister In the government reshuffle in June, Lord Young of Norwood Green was appointed as minister with responsibility for postal affairs at the renamed Department of Business, Innovation & Skills. He replaces Mr Pat McFadden. Lord Young was Deputy General Secretary of the Communication Workers' Union, 1998-2002.

On 1 July Lord Mandelson, Secretary of State for Business, Innovation & Skills, announced that partial privatisation of Royal Mail will be put on hold. Royal Mail Chairman Donald Brydon said, 'Whatever the Government decides to do with its shareholding, the well understood problems of regulation and pension fund deficit will not go away. The management, for its part, is continuing to forge ahead with its modernisation plan which is unaffected by this announcement.'

NPS seminar The National Philatelic Society will hold an afternoon seminar on 20 August when Michael Bramwell and Peter Mellor will describe some of the contents of the Library and how these can be accessed at the Library or from the comfort of one's home. This is an opportunity to learn how to use the Library website and order books from the information displayed. The seminar takes place at the Phoenix Centre, Phoenix Place, London WC1. There will be a charge of £3 (NPS members free). Places are limited. Send applications, by 15 August, to: Christopher Oliver, National Philatelic Society, c/o BPMA, Freeling House, Phoenix Place, London WC1X 0DL or visit www.ukphilately.org.uk/nps where the booking form is available.

Auction news The Harmers auction on 14 May included a block of four of the 1840 Twopence Blue Plate 1 (corner letters HG-1H), which made £70,000. The same item had been sold by Harmers in 1952 for just £190! An Edwardian postman's tunic with three waistcoats and two shako caps realised £600. For information about future Harmers auctions phone 020 8747 6100, or see www.harmers.com.

Post & Go labels The design of the labels printed from Post & Go machines has been changed, and is now similar to the design of SmartStamps. The change started in late June. The design of the Post & Go stamps (with Machin head of The Queen) remains unaltered. For more on Post & Go see Douglas Myall's 'Mainly Machins' article in the February and June *Bulletin*.

Italia 2009 This major 'International Festival of Philately' will be held at the Palazzo dei Congressi, Rome, 21-25 October. The Palace was built in 1938 for the Universal Exposition, which was to be held in Rome in 1942, but was later cancelled. Italia Post issued 0.60 and 0.65 euro stamps on 7 March 2008, featuring the Palazzo dei Congressi and the Colosseum, and two further stamps (0.85 and 2.80 euros, the latter printed on gold paper), will be issued on 10 October, both featuring the Bocca della Verità (Mouth of Truth), one of the biggest tourist attractions in Rome. Royal Mail will issue an exhibition sheet (to be illustrated in next month's *Bulletin*) bearing the Hello stamp and labels featuring landmarks of Rome.

A new President The new President of the Royal Philatelic Society London is Alan Moorcroft who succeeds John Sacher. Alan is a noted collector of George V stamps, and wrote on the subject in the *Bulletin*, July-November 2001. He is a trustee of the British Philatelic Trust. A profile of Alan, by Richard West, was published in December 2001. Alan's eldest son Paul is the Administrative Manager at the RPSL premises in Devonshire Place, and his younger son Simon is a rising star in the philatelic firmament and a *Bulletin* contributor; his article on Winston Churchill collecting was published here in January.

Bulletin back issues Iris Thomas of Kirkcaldy is offering a run of the *Bulletin* from February 2003 to the present to anyone willing to collect or pay postage. A donation for charity would be appreciated. Contact Mrs Thomas on 01592 780128.

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