

BRITISH PHILATELIC

The ROYAL MAIL magazine *for stamp collectors*

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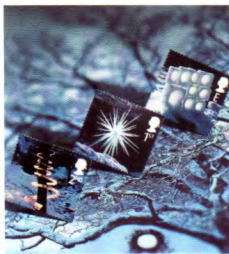
NOVEMBER 2003 £1.10

Bulletin

2003 Yearbook preview • Post
offices on the Isle of Bute



Forthcoming issues and withdrawals

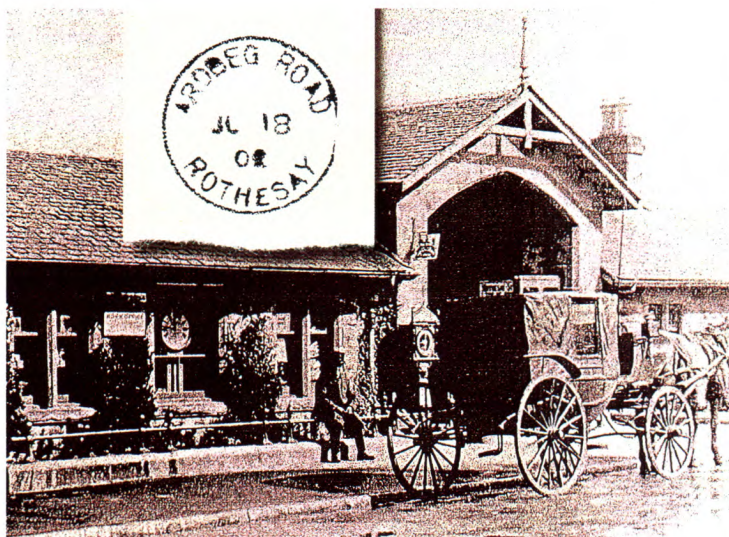


Cover Royal Mail's Christmas stamps and the presentation pack, featuring ice and snow landscape sculpture by Andy Goldsworthy. Photograph by Geoff Dann.

28 October	Issue Christmas stamp cards.
31 October	Withdrawal 1st class 'Boots' promotional stamp pane.
31 October	Withdrawal 1st and 2nd class coils of 1000 issued 29 April 1997.
4 November	Issue Christmas stamps, presentation pack, stamp books, Smilers sheets, and airletters (national and Welsh).
4 November	Issue 2003 Year Pack and Year Book (standard and leather-bound versions).
4 November	Withdrawal 2002 Christmas stamps, presentation pack, stamp books, stamp cards and airletters (national and Welsh versions).
4 November	Withdrawal 2002 Year Pack and Year Book (standard and leather-bound versions).
4 December	Withdrawal Wilding Definitives Collection I miniature sheet and stamp cards (presentation pack already sold out).

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

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Post offices of Bute The Isle of Bute and picturesque Rothesay are well-known to holidaymakers but, as Colin Peachey finds, they also have much to offer a collector **78**

Above: the former PO at Craigmore Pier, Rothesay, c1930.

The **British Philatelic Bulletin** is published monthly by Royal Mail, 148 Old Street, London EC1V 9HQ • **Editor** J R Holman • **Price** £1.10 single copies from Post Office Limited philatelic outlets • **Annual subscription** £11.75 in UK and Europe; £16.75 rest of the world. Subscriptions should be sent to Royal Mail Talents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB • **Binders** to hold 24 issues, price £7, are available by post from Royal Mail (Edinburgh address above) • Royal Mail also publishes the fortnightly *British Postmark Bulletin*, which gives details of forthcoming special handstamps. Available on annual subscription from Edinburgh address above: £12.25 UK and Europe, £24.95 rest of the world • **Copyright** Design & text Royal Mail Group plc, unless attributed to a specific author. All requests to reproduce any article should be addressed to the Editor, British Philatelic Bulletin, Royal Mail, 148 Old Street, London EC1V 9HQ • **Design** Robert Maude • **Printed** in Great Britain by Perivan White Dove • **ISSN** 0953 8119 • Royal Mail is a trading name of Royal Mail Group plc. Registered in England and Wales, no 4138203, registered office 148 Old Street, London EC1V 9HQ

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Stamp scene Exhibitions • Societies news

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Thematica 2003



Jeffery Matthews' rough working sketches, preparatory to his more advanced visuals submitted to Royal Mail for the 25th Anniversary of the Coronation, 1978.



Souvenir sheet printed by De La Rue Global Services in a limited edition of 5,000

Sketches copyright Jeffery Matthews. Stamp former and submitted artwork copyright Royal Mail Group plc 1978. Reproduced by kind permission of Royal Mail. All rights reserved.

Thematica souvenir sheet

This sheet was also given out at the Thematica exhibition in June. Any remaining after the November show will be destroyed.

España enquiries

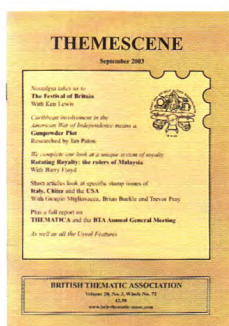
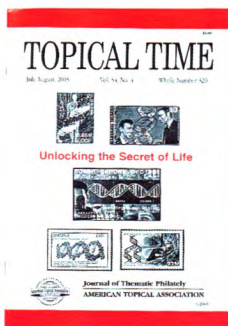
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sored by Spanish Post in collaboration with the Spanish Federation of Philatelic Societies. The venue occupies about 50,000 square metres and will house some 3600 exhibition frames as well as stands for dealers and postal administrations. Exhibits will be arranged in non-competitive and competitive classes, non-competitive including displays by postal authorities, museums, stamp printers and designers as well as a Court of Honour. The competitive entries will be displayed under the following categories: Championship, Traditional, Revenue, Postal History, Postal Stationery, Aerophilately, Astrophilately, Thematic, Maximaphily, Youth, Open and One Frame (both experimental), and Literature •

The Singapore exhibition will include the World Stamp Championship. To promote the exhibition, Singapore Post, together with 15 world-class companies, is issuing a set of souvenir sheets marking the 150th anniversary of the first use of stamps in Singapore. The sheets contain two stamps plus labels advertising the companies: American Express, Coca-Cola, McDonald's, Reader's Digest, Swatch, CNN, Creative Technology, Microsoft, Siemens, Singapore Airlines, AIA, GlaxoSmithKline, HSBC, Shell and Sony. The series began in November 2002 and will be completed in February 2004. Online orders may be placed at <http://vpostmall.vpost.com.sg> •

Details of the ATA American Topical Association, PO Box 57, Arlington TX 76004-1181, USA. www.americanatopical.org

Societies news The July-August issue of *Topical Time*, published by the American Topical Association, includes articles on Unlocking the Secret of Life (From Darwin to DNA), Veterinary Medicine, Jacques Cartier (explorer), Castles on the Mosel, Peace Doves and Homing Pigeons, Mints and Minting, Ancient Persian Architecture, Precursors of a United Europe, and Miniature Paintings of India, as well as features on pictorial postmarks, publications reviews, etc. Particularly useful for thematic collectors is the listing of thematic articles in specialist and general philatelic publications •



The September *ABPS news*, official magazine of the Association of British Philatelic Societies, includes reports on Midpex in June, the Philatelic Congress at Gateshead in July, and the relaunch of Stamp Active to encourage school stamp clubs. The setting up is announced of an annual award for society journals and newsletters, initially open only to local societies affiliated to ABPS. Further details will be published in *ABPS News* in December and entries will need to be submitted in early January. The 'Post Office update' section gives details of recent Royal Mail issues and stamps from the Isle of Man, Jersey, and Guernsey, and the new portrait of The Queen, by Lord Lichfield, used on new high value stamps from some Crown Agents territories. 'Exhibition notebook' reports on Thematica, and looks ahead to Basildon 2004. There is a useful 'Diary' listing forthcoming local events, also some national and international exhibitions as far ahead as 2008. The British Philatelic Trust takes four pages with news of its activities which include mention of its hire of aluminium trunks to carry exhibits and displays, publications, a 'Who Was Who in British Philately' on the Trust's website (www.philately.org.uk/bpt/), and the need for the Trust to raise more funds following the ending of Royal Mail's grant (although Royal Mail will continue to support some activities). It reports over 85 entries received in the national and international classes for Autumn Stampex. Mike Brindle, the new ABPS General Secretary introduces himself, and the news concludes with the usual reports of activities of local and specialist societies and regional federations. The 52-page *news* is well-produced and illustrated, and a credit to both the ABPS and Editor, Richard West.

The September Newsletter of the Insurance & Banking Philatelic Society of Great Britain includes a number of features of interest to collectors of British stamps and postal history; these cover the Bath Postal Museum, TPO postmarks, and recent British special and definitive issues. There is a look at the Cinderella Stamp Club, and news of the I&BPS and its members. The Society, founded in 1951, is open to anybody employed in, or retired from, the financial services industry. The annual subscription is £5.

The September issue of *Themescene*, the journal of the British Thematic Association, includes interesting articles on the Festival of Britain 1951, the Gunpowder Plot of 1775 (Bermuda), the Rulers of Malaysia, and the world's smallest theatre, as well as a report on Thematica, the Association's AGM,

ABPS enquiries A Bosworth, 18 Rymer Road, Benenden Heath, Maidstone ME14 2JQ.

Insurance & Banking PS

John Pearce, Elm House, Temple End, Great Wilbraham, Cambridge CB1 5JF. E-mail: john@templestamp.freeserve.co.uk

British Thematic Association

For details contact Ian Paton, 15 Humberstone Road, Cambridge CB4 1JD. Telephone 01223 461793.

Details of the Association

from Terry Barnett, 7 Mackets Lane, Hunts Cross, Liverpool L25 0QA. Telephone 0151 486 2610. E-mail terryhunts@supanent.com or see website www.gbfdc.co.uk

and a look at new issues and some of the special handstamps recently announced in the *British Postmark Bulletin*. Also of interest are comments on the state of thematic collecting and the role of the BTA by the Association's President, Chairman, and Editor, respectively Brian Sole, Christine Earle, and Wendy Buckle. The Association now has 281 members •

The Association of Great Britain First Day Cover Collectors was formed in 1995 as a way of bringing together GB FDC collectors and to try and encourage first day cover collecting. Membership now stands at over 330. The Association publishes six newsletters a year which contain articles, letters, information and much of interest to the FDC collector. It also produces four or five 'official' covers per year (offered to members only), and tries to hold two FDC auctions a year. Membership costs £10. On 16 November the Association will stage a unique GB First Day Cover Fair – no stamps, no postal history, just GB first day covers with some of the country's leading FDC dealers present. The Fair will be at Moat House Hotel, St Mary's Street, Bedford, open 10.00-16.00, admission free •

Harmers For details of future sales write to Harmers, No 11, 111 Power Road, London W4 5PY, telephone 020 8747 6100 or see website www.harmers.com

Auctions GB proved to be the star of Harmers All-World auction on 28 August with an 1840 1d Rainbow Colour trial sheet of 12 selling for over £27,000 (estimate £18,000). The entire GB section performed well with many lots exceeding their estimates. A particular highlight was a collection of 1841 to 1879 one penny stamps, which achieved more than six times its estimate at over £6,400. This was shortly followed by a complete pane of 20 10d stamps from 1887-92. There are only three panes of this setting (A) known, one of which is in Royal Mail Heritage (formerly National Postal Museum) and this fine and rare item achieved £4,350 (est £2,000). A collection on leaves with issues to about 1950 was so highly sought after that it achieved £7,600 (£2,500) and a subsequent collection in three albums went for £4,100 (£900). Another outstanding item from this section was a 1918-19 10s steel-blue block of four which went for £8800 (£7,500). Collections of non-GB material also did well. A Commonwealth George VI collection in three albums achieved £4,999 (£2,500), an 'Old Time' all world selection realised £6,469 (£2,500) and an Airmail collection in three large 'Silombra' albums contained in a box achieved £12,900 (£10,000). The most dramatic sale amongst the collections was a French Post Offices and Colonies collection which made £28,200 (£15,000). The total sale value for the auction was £450,000. The 'Gactano Vullo' collections come under the hammer on 11-12 November. Catalogues for this sale cost £35 for the three volumes, or can be viewed on-line •

Grosvenor Catalogues and further details from Grosvenor, 399-401 Strand (third floor), London WC2R 0LT. Telephone 020 7379 8789. Website: www.grosvenorauctions.com

The Grosvenor auction on 6-7 November will include almost complete reconstructions of the Penny Back from plates 1A to 11 and Twopence Blue plates 1 and 2. Owing to the exceptional quality and rarity of these reconstructions, they will be offered intact, providing an almost unique opportunity to purchase reassemblies of the world's first adhesive postage stamps as they originally existed. An exceptionally strong GB section will feature rare postal history, including a highly important 1642 Civil War campaign letter from the Earl of Warwick to his son-in-law Viscount Mandeville, re-

porting that he had lost the fight with Prideaux and the Commons for control of the Letter Office. The Surface Printed boasts rare unused high values including the 1867-78 watermark Maltese Cross £1 and the 1882-83 watermark anchor 10s, together with rarely attempted used reconstructions of the 1883-84 2s6d, 5s and 10s, and 1884, 1888 and 1891 £1 stamps. A comprehensive section of 20th century lots includes the only known example of the 1911 Edward VII 1d trial printing perforated 14 at Somerset House, and an example of the extremely rare Downey head 1d perf 14 (formerly SG 327a), both recently granted Royal certificates of authenticity ●

Cavendish's 21-22 November auction of GB and Worldwide material will include GB rarities and postal history (notably Warwickshire and Clwyd), Levant, Canada, and Egypt. For details of this and future sales contact Cavendish (see right) or visit their website www.Cavendish-Auctions.com ●

Cavendish Philatelic Auctions

153-7 London Rd, Derby DE1 2SY. Telephone 01332 250970
Website www.Cavendish-Auctions.com



Post Office pub Thanks to Mr G A Briggs of Bicester we feature the 'The Penny Black' pub in Bicester. The pub is located in what was the town's former post office; the words 'POST OFFICE' are still displayed above the door. Sadly the pub's sign does not show a Penny Black stamp! ●

New catalogues On 28 November Stanley Gibbons publishes the 2004 editions of *Collect British Stamps* and *Stamps of the World* (in four volumes covering countries A-D, E-J, K-R, and S-Z). Also available from the same date will be the 5th edition of Part 8 of its standard catalogue covering Italy and Switzerland, and the 13th edition of Volume 1 (Queen Victoria) of the *Great Britain Specialised* catalogue. A new addition to its range of thematic catalogues, *Collect Motor Vehicles on Stamps*, is in preparation ●

Orders and enquiries Stanley Gibbons Ltd, Parkside, Christchurch Road, Ringwood BH24 3SH. Telephone 01425 472363.

TPO book Interest in the Travelling Post Office and their postmarks has increased following the announcement of the withdrawal of the service; the last TPOs will run in January. Readers might be interested to know that a book *The Travelling Post Offices of GB & Ireland* by Harold S Wilson, published by the Railway Philatelic Group, is still available, price £25 post-paid. The Railway Philatelic Group, founded in 1966, publishes an excellent journal, *Railway Philately*, which often includes features on TPO postmarks, as well as railway letter and parcel stamps, and postage stamps depicting railways ●

TPO book Orders should be sent to Mr Wilson at 17 Heath Avenue, Littleover, Derby DE23 6DJ.

Railway Philatelic Group

Contact Fred Taylor, 5 Garth Lane, Widdrington, Morpeth NE61 5EN.

Royal Mail news 2004 issues • Christmas • Phonecards • 2004 Yearbook • Collectibles



Classic Locomotives issue

These illustrations are shown at proof stage. The issue will be previewed in next month's *Bulletin*.

Forthcoming special issues The 2004 programme will start on 13 January with a set of six stamps entitled 'Classic Locomotives'. This will feature some of our most popular preserved railways – Talylyn in Wales, Bo'ness & Kinnell in Scotland, Bluebell in East Sussex, Great Central in Leicestershire, Severn Valley in Worcestershire, and Keighley & Worth Valley in Yorkshire. The stamps and miniature sheet will be printed in fine-screen litho by De La Rue. This will be the first set dedicated to the preserved lines, although the Talylyn Railway featured on the cover of a £1.40 stamp book in March 1981, and the

Welsh Highland Railway was shown on the 26p Fire & Light stamp in the Millennium series in 2000. The stamps will also be available as a miniature sheet. Some of the Classic Locomotive stamps will also feature, along with 'The Station' Pub Signs stamp, Machin definitives, and Scottish country stamps, in a Railways prestige stamp book to be issued on 16 March. Entitled *Letters by Night*, this will pay tribute to the Travelling Post Office service which is scheduled to end in January after 166 years. The book will be printed by De La Rue.

There will be two issues in February – the now annual Occasions set (five stamps) and 10 1st class stamps featuring the *Lord of the Rings* books by J R R Tolkien, the stamps marking the 50th anniversary of the publication of the first book in the series, *The Fellowship of the Ring*. Both sets will be printed in litho; the Occasions by De La Rue, Lord of the Rings by Walsall. A Tolkien prestige book was issued in October 1992 for the centenary of his birth, and the 20p Magical Worlds (children's literature) stamp of July 1998 featured his famous creation, the Hobbit. The forthcoming set is expected to be extremely popular with Tolkien aficionados worldwide.

The British Journey series, which started with the Scotland issue this July, continues in March with Northern Ireland and Wales in June. The issue for London, originally announced for July has been postponed.

A set featuring famous Ocean Liners, including the new *Queen Mary 11*, will be issued in April, continuing the Transport theme issues of recent years. Collectors will recall the British Ships issue of January 1969 at the time the *Queen Elizabeth 11* went into service. A further set is now announced for April, to mark the centenary of the Entente Cordiale; this will be a joint issue with La Poste, the French Post Office.

The bicentenary of the Royal Horticultural Society will be commemorated in May. The Society's Halls in Westminster have been used for many stamp exhibitions, including Stampex, and an exhibition relating to exhibitions and shows staged there is being organised – see June *Bulletin*, page 317. A prestige book will accompany this issue.

Two other important anniversaries are also being commemorated – the 250th of the Royal Society of Arts, by six stamps in August, and the 150th of the Crimean War, by an issue in October.

Flora and fauna issues are always popular, and the Woodland Animals set due in September is likely to be no exception. The annual Christmas issue will go on sale in early November ●

Please note Some details of the 2004 programme given here amend those published last month.



Christmas Shown here are this year's generic Christmas Smilers sheets, on sale from 4 November: price £6.15 (sheet of 20 1st class stamps) or £4.20 (2nd class). The labels alongside the stamps feature winter animals (1st class) and ice sculptures (2nd). Also shown is a sheet of 20 of the 1st class 2001 Christmas stamp (robins), which went on sale on 30 September, price £6.15. The labels alongside the stamps depict a story of a snowman, robins, and Father Christmas. The stamps in these Smilers sheets are all printed by lithography, whereas the stamps from other sources are printed in gravure.

For details of how to order customised versions of the sheets, with your own image printed on the labels phone 0845 074 2000 (UK customers) or +44 131 316 7489 (overseas). Visit www.royalmail.com/smilers to place an order using digital photos. Customised sheets will also be available through Snap Digital photobooths at selected Post Office branches and Safeway stores.

Following the Christmas stamp promotions in 2001 and 2002, this year's promotion is linked with the *Who Wants to be a Millionaire* TV show. Customers buying a book of 12 1st class Christmas stamps (or loose stamps) will receive a game card and the chance to win £1 million.

The 2002 Christmas stamps, stamp books, presentation pack, stamp cards and airletters will be withdrawn from sale at Royal Mail Talents House and Post Office philatelic outlets on 4 November. Also to be withdrawn will be the 2002 Yearbook and Yearpack ●

Left-hand sections of the three sheets illustrated above; sheets are each of 20 stamps.



Royal Mail phonecards A number of popular phonecards featuring stamps are still available from Royal Mail Tallents House. These are (above, left to right): Golden Jubilee £5 and £20 showing the Millennium 1st class definitive stamp (order codes PY722 and PY724); £5 'Calling Card' showing 1st class Millennium definitive (PY575) and £10 'Calling Card' showing 1st class gold definitive (PY576), and Coronation Anniversary £5 and £10 cards showing two of the stamps from the Anniversary set (PY789 and PY790) •

Awards enquiries should be sent to Rachel Lonsdale, Stamps & Collectibles, Royal Mail, 148 Old Street, London EC1V 9HQ. Telephone 020 7250 2267.

Rowland Hill Awards This month's *Bulletin* includes a form for readers to nominate in both the Royal Mail Innovation and British Philatelic Trust sections of the Rowland Hill Awards. The nominations will then be short-listed for final judging. The criteria are set out on the nomination form. The Awards, sponsored by Royal Mail, the British Philatelic Trust and the Philatelic Traders' Society, were initiated in 1997 to recognise individuals and organisations who have made a major contribution to philately during the year. The awards for 2003 will be made at a ceremony in London next Spring.

Please complete the enclosed nomination form and return by 31 December to Rachel Lonsdale at the address given on the reverse of the form. All nomination forms will go into a draw for £100 worth of Royal Mail philatelic products •

2003 Yearbook Price £33.95 standard version (order code AY077) or £75 de luxe leather-bound edition (AY078). The latter is available only from Royal Mail Tallents House.

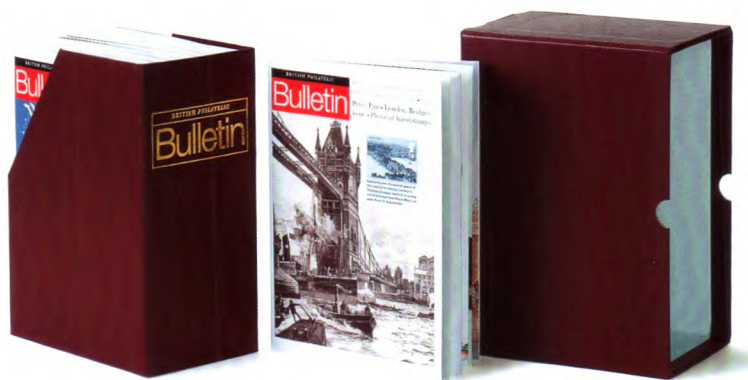
2003 Yearpack Price £29.50 (order code AR055).

2003 Yearbook and Yearpack The new Yearbook, on sale from 4 November, will contain information and spaces for all special issues of 2003: Birds of Prey, Occasions, Secret of Life, Fun Fruit & Veg, Extreme Endeavours, Coronation Anniversary, Prince William, British Journey – Scotland, Pub Signs, Transports of Delight, British Museum and Christmas. As always the book gives interesting background stories to each issue with details of the designers. The 2003 Yearpack containing the same special stamps will also be available from 4 November •



Framed stamps and stamp cards A number of new products are being added to Royal Mail's Collectibles range. Framed stamp cards (PHQ cards) have proved popular and we now offer framed sets of the British Journey – Scotland and British Museum cards for £24.95 each (order codes PY826 and PY825). The Scotland cards are framed in a white acid-free mount printed with the map references of the locations depicted on the stamps and cards. The frame is in navy blue stained pine wood to complement the rich colours of the cards. The British Museum cards are framed in a white acid-free mount silk-screened in black and cool grey with details of the stamp issue subject matter and year of issue. The frame is in graphite finish solid wood to complement the striking images depicted on the cards. Also now available is a framed set of all the special stamps of 2003, price £69.95 (PY823), and a framed sheet of the Flowers Smilers generic sheet which went on sale on 21 January 2003. The sheet is enclosed in a white acid-free mount with silk-screen printing in black and grey giving the subject matter and year of issue; the frame is red stained solid wood. Price £29.95 (PY824).

These framed products should be ordered from Royal Mail Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB, UK telephone 08457 641 641, from overseas +44 131 316 7483. The following postage and packing charges should be added to all orders: UK £2.95, Europe £5, rest of world £14 •



Storing the Bulletin Binders and box files are available for storing this and the *Postmark Bulletin*. The sturdy box files, in maroon for the *Philatelic Bulletin* and green for the *Postmark Bulletin*, are available from Royal Mail Talents House, price £8.50 each. Order codes: PB349 (Philatelic), PB350 (Postmark). The traditional binders for the Philatelic and Postmark Bulletins cost £7 (order code BB001) and £6.50 (PB322) respectively •

New delivery office Work began in late August on a new £2.3 million delivery office in east Belfast. When opened in January, its 150 staff will handle 36 million letters a year for the Belfast BT4, BT5, BT6 and BT16 postcode areas. The new 15,000 sq ft office is in Prince Regent Road and replaces the Beersbridge Road office which has served the area since 1957 •

Launch of SmartStamp 'SmartStamp', a new Royal Mail service for small businesses, allows customers to purchase and print single or multiple stamps at any time, using their normal desktop PC and printer. It will also allow customers to print a company logo or slogan to create a much more professional look to the mail piece. Collectors interested in postal history developments should watch out for such impressions on their mail •

Collect British Stamps The 2004 (55th) edition of the ever-popular Stanley Gibbons *Collect British Stamps* colour checklist will be published on 28 November, price £9.96. It will be available from Royal Mail Talents House in Edinburgh as well as from Stanley Gibbons Strand shop and Publications centre at Ringwood, and stamp and book shops •

Draw winners The winner of our June draw for the Coronation Anniversary sheet was Rees Banton of Cumbria. Winners of *The Post in the Hills* books (July draw) were: James R Mooney of Pittsburgh, USA; Brian Finch, Caterham; Geoff Lawrence, Huddersfield; Philippa T Backe, Norway; and D Ross, Surrey. Packs of the new high value stamps (August draw) were sent to K Khoo of Singapore; R Herring, Cornwall; J Sparham, Kent; Mrs D Stewart, Cumbria; and J Hajpel, Canada •

Autumn Stampex The Editor reports on a successful show

AS ALWAYS, there were a number of exhibits in the competitive displays to interest collectors of GB stamps and postal history, although this year with the emphasis on the latter. L Alkoc displayed 1d blacks, 2d blues and 1d reds printed from black plates, illustrating the difficulties faced by the printer with 12 different plates used in the first year. His notes on the distinctive features to look for were useful to collectors in plating examples. Tony Walker's display of pre-decimal Machin stamps included not only cylinder blocks, booklet panes and coil leader strips of issued stamps, but also much 'archive' material in the form of essays by Andrew Restall for the new definitive series. He also showed an early mock-up of the 1969 *Cooks* book. Some of his items were illustrated in the *Bulletin* in March and April 2000. Robin Tibbenham's 'Rise and Fall of Machine Vended Booklets' traced the development from the 2s books of George V's reign (1931) through to the £1 and £2 books sold from machines outside post offices until recent times. He displayed 'exploded' books showing the interleaving pages, illustrated covers, etc. A well-presented exhibit.

On now to postal history and Colin Breddy's study of the 'Ireland' handstamp found on some mail from Ireland 1784-1810. This marking was probably applied by the Irish PO in an attempt to monitor the amount of mail, as payment for cross-channel mail was credited to the British. He showed examples on cover with useful maps of the routes taken. Harold Wilson's exhibit on TPOS was timely, as the service will shortly be coming to an end after nearly 170 years. Among the many rare items in his display was an early MISSENT TO/RAILWAY/POST OFFICE mark in red (normally only found in black) on a cover dated 1839 carried on the experimental TPO on the Grand Junction Railway. Also shown were covers carried on the Continental Night Mail from Dover to London which was introduced in 1867.

Reginald Patchett's 'Crash and Interrupted Mail of Europe' included a number of GB covers such as C Graham White's attempted flight from Blackpool to Southport in 1910 which was

abandoned due to bad weather. C Hubert's plane crashed on the third day of the 1911 Coronation flights, ruining the plane and fracturing the legs of the pilot. Eight mail bags were recovered and put on another flight, although no explanatory cachet was applied. In 1936 a Croydon to Amsterdam flight crashed in dense fog; the plane was destroyed by fire and only two of the 17 on board survived. Mr Patchett showed a charred cover with manuscript explanation of the damage and repaired by GPO sealing tape. Peter Lister's display of the 1911 Coronation Posts included pilot-signed cards, bundle labels and dispatch notices, also one of only two ordinary (as opposed to pictorial) cards carried on the flights. This bears the message: 'This is an attempt to evade the iniquitous charge of 6d for a thin piece of paper worth only 2/6 per 1000. Whether it flies through to you or whether it is destroyed and thrown out remains to be seen. What does the postmark say?' It received the special London flight cancel of 11 September. John Davies's 'Genesis of the Jubilee Envelope' included preliminary designs for the 1890 envelope, telegrams about the design and printing, and a paste-up of the final layout.

As always, the Youth Exhibits contained some well thought-out and colourful displays, some including stamps that many adult collectors would be pleased to own. Amongst the most imaginative were Rhiannon Warwick's 'Wish You Were Here!', Jessica Moore's 'Tour of Jersey', Lucinda Jowet's 'Around the World in 80 Stamps', and Charlotte Rookes's 'Before the Penny Black' which earned her a large silver award.

This reviewer would like to suggest to the organisers a re-think of the layouts of the displays, it being difficult to locate some from the listing in the exhibition catalogue. The Royal Mail stand was kept busy with collectors wanting cylinder blocks of definitives printed by De La Rue at its new Byfleet premises, Wilding miniature sheets and the new Transports of Delight stamps and miniature sheet. The stand also displayed a wide range of 'collectibles' and panels relating to the 40th anniversary of this magazine ●

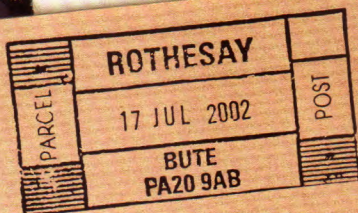


GLENBURN
HOTEL HYDRO,



ESPLANADE & PIER, ROTHESAY.

Admission, Rothesay



The post offices of Bute Colin G Peachey

explores the island's postal past and present

BUTE IS A pretty island, some 15 miles in length, nestled south of the Cowal peninsula and a mere stone's throw from Colinton by car ferry. There is also a frequent ferry service from Wemyss Bay (south of Glasgow on the mainland) to the main town, Rothesay, and I when I visited in July 2002, I found Rothesay crowded with both day trippers and others enjoying a longer stay on this peaceful island. The northern tip of the island is hilly. There are rolling hills and much farmland in the south, with long sandy beaches at Ettrick Bay in the west, and most of the residential areas to the east. The island was a favourite with Victorian and Edwardian holiday-makers from Glasgow, this being the period when Rothesay flourished, and early postcards in my collection show Ettrick Bay and the fine Victorian buildings in Rothesay, an example being The Terrace in Ardbeg Road.

Today there are three post offices in Rothesay, and only five on the island in all, although I visited sites of post offices which are no longer open. In Rothesay, the 'usual' thing has happened. The counter has moved out of the lovely old Victorian building which still shows the year 1896 on its façade, and is now housed in smaller 'shop style' premises on the seafront. Modern Self-Inking Datestamps (SIDs, right) are in use at the two counter positions, lettered B and G which I assume indicate the names of the counter clerks – Bob and George perhaps? I note that on my previous visit to Rothesay in 1990, when older single circle datestamps were in use (the office had only recently moved to its seafront location), that these too were lettered B and G. A nice parcel handstamp (shown opposite) is also in use. The Victorian premises continue in use as the sorting office, and long may they do so! Since the sorting office manager is a collector, there is a display of Post Office artefacts in the Enquiry Office – this is worth a visit. Also, one can obtain a further datestamp on certificates of posting – this time a double circle (shown opposite) which is normally used on 'early bird' local letters posted for the early morning collection.

The other two Rothesay offices are Gallowgate, only 150 yards or so from the main office along the sea front, and Ardbeg Road.

Rothesay Castle, dating from the 13th century, is also in the town centre, in well-kept surroundings though the castle itself is in ruins. One mustn't forget that the Prince of Wales is given the honorary title of the Duke of Rothesay, but the castle could hardly be used as his residence when he visits the island!



For keen postal collectors, a replica Penfold pillar box can be found at Rothesay's Winter Gardens on the esplanade, next to the pier. The nearby Tourist Information Centre is full of books of old views of the area, all most interesting.



Opposite page: the village of Kerrycroy and vintage postcards. The 22p stamp in the 1987 Heraldry issue featured the banner of Prince Charles, Duke of Rothesay, and the alternative first day postmark was also for Rothesay.



Opposite (left to right, top to bottom): Ardbeg Road PO; the former post office building in Rothesay, now used only as a sorting office; Gallowgate PO; Port Bannatyne PO; Port Bannatyne's Ludlow wall box; and the current Rothesay PO.



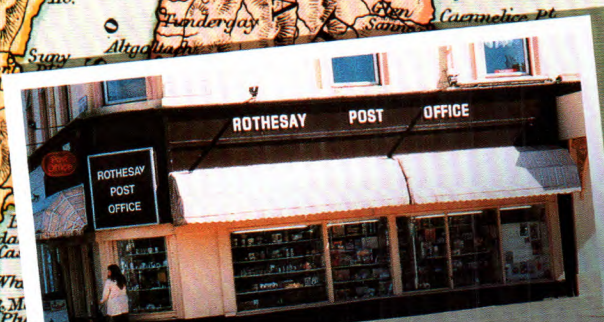
Articles by Colin Peachey on the post offices on the Road to the Isles and on Islay were published here in October 1998 and September 2000. Other articles about his visits to Scottish post offices have been published in the *British Postmark Bulletin*.

Bute's other post offices The two other post offices on the island are at Port Bannatyne and Kilchattan Bay. The former is to the north, the first town encountered if one comes via the Colintraive car ferry. Situated on a lovely bay, I have an old postcard of the Hydropathic Hotel on the hill above the town (see p78). I explored this location but I was told it 'fell into the wrong hands' and was allowed to deteriorate and alas it is no more. Although I did not explore the precise route there was at one stage a tram route from Rothesay via Port Bannatyne to Etrick Bay on the west coast. I have an early (but undated) postcard of a tram on this service: the keen collector may care to research further. Kilchattan Bay is a pretty resort to the south east, though the post office was closed when I visited and I had to write later to obtain an example of the datestamp in use.

I was able to explore five further locations on the island that once had post offices, though only at the first three was I able to confirm the precise building that had housed the post office. The first was Craigmores Pier, Rothesay, now a garden shop and café. The pier stopped serving boats in 1940 and the post office closed in 1980. The second former office was at Kingarth in the south, only a mile or so from Kilchattan Bay. This office closed in 1946. Thanks to help from local residents, I was able to locate the third former office at Straad, in the south west. I was able to ascertain that the cottage with post and telephone box outside was really the post office; it closed in 1982. Other now closed offices were at Ascog, a smart southern suburb of Rothesay, and Kerrycroy, a picturesque village with black-and-white-faced cottages which only had a post office for a few years prior to the First World War.

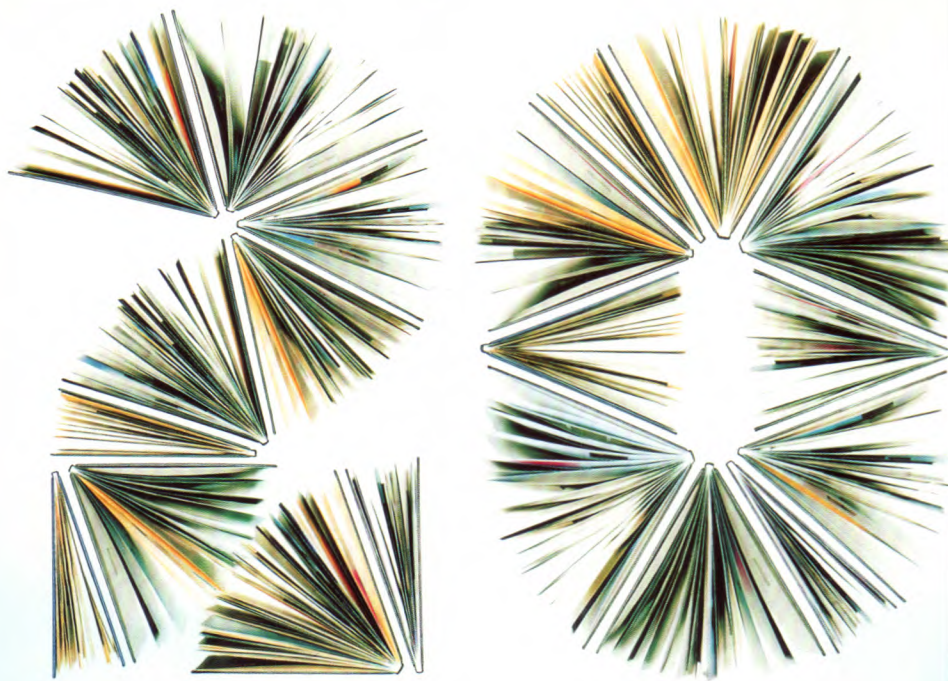
I will end with a further mention of letter boxes. There is, apart from the replica Penfold mentioned earlier, a good selection of wall boxes and pillar boxes on Bute. The 'star' is arguably one of the oval experimental boxes of 1929 with aperture at one end and stamp machine (no longer in use) at the other, a format which makes these scarce boxes difficult to photograph. This box is at Craigmores Pier. For the collector of 'matters postal', there is plenty of interest crammed into the small space of Bute.

Details of the postal service on Rothesay and the numerous postmarks used over the years can be found in James Mackay's book *Bute*, number 6 in his Islands Postal History series, published in 1979 ●



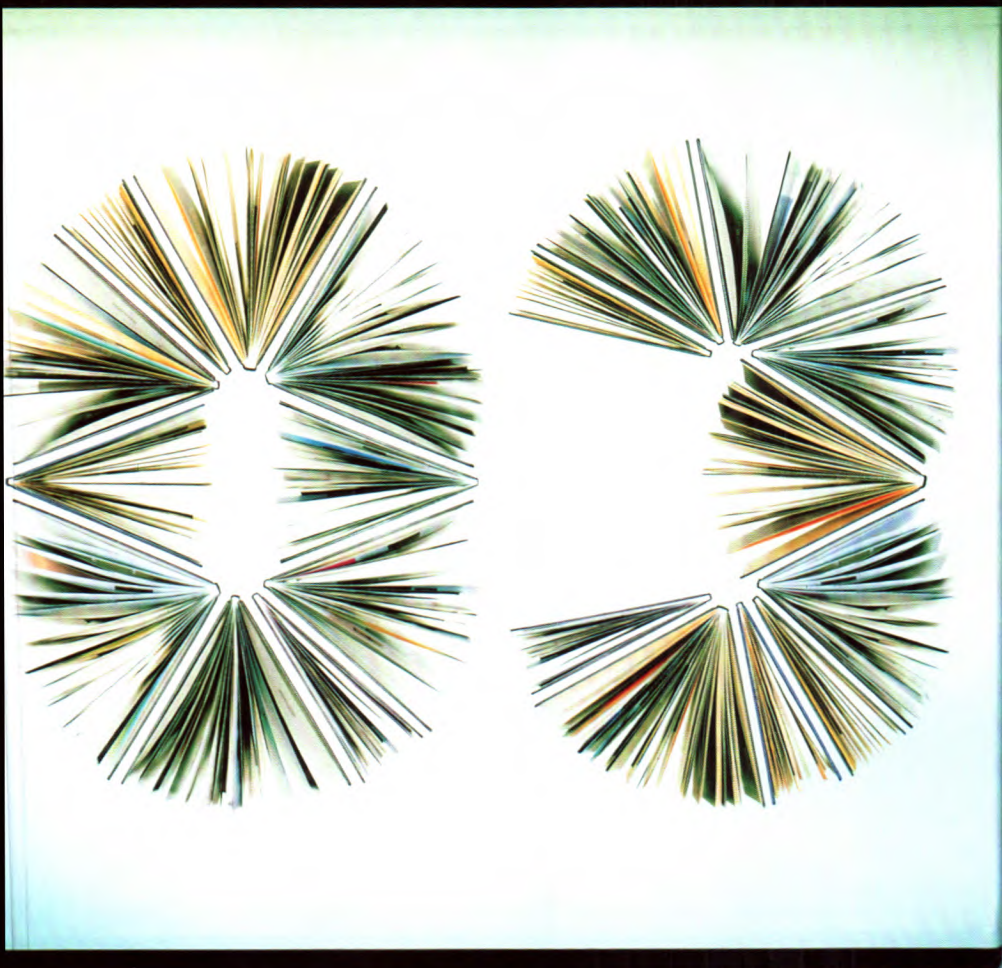
The 2003 Royal Mail Yearbook Twenty years ago Royal Mail launched a new product, the Yearbook, bringing an added dimension and a fresh insight to the year's stamps. As Richard West discovers, this 20th edition is something quite special, and the product of a great deal of thought.

ROYAL MAIL SPECIAL STAMPS 20



SINCE ITS INTRODUCTION in 1984, the Yearbook has proved to be the ideal and luxury home for the year's special stamps. As with any good idea, it has been copied, and now similar year books are produced by postal administrations around the world. Royal Mail has decided to make this, its 20th Yearbook, something which is even more special, and a great deal of thought has gone into every single aspect.

First there is the slipcase: on the front appear the figures 20 made up of Yearbooks from the past 20 years. To create the effect the Yearbooks were photographed on a glass plate from above. The back of the slipcase continues the idea with the figures 03, cleverly combining Yearbook 20 with the year 2003. The cover of the Yearbook itself is finished in a distinguished dark grey, with the '20' from the slipcase repeated in blind embossing.





Marcus James, Dean Price and Angela Herlihy of Royal Mail's Publishing Team, which coordinates the Yearbook's content and production. Opposite: checking printer's proofs is one of the team's many tasks. Centre: two spreads from this year's special 20th edition.



Open the book, and included for the first time are end-papers in a different paper, which is also in a subtle shade of grey, to provide that traditional book feel. Each Yearbook from the single print run of 35,000 copies is individually numbered on the front end-paper.

Inside, there are separate chapters for each of the twelve special stamp issues of the year. The page headings continue in the dark grey theme, while the type is also in grey. The text has been written by Fay Sweet, and the book designed by The Chase. Throughout there is a contemporary feel, with quotes from the text highlighted, complemented by the stunning photographic images. These powerful photographs make the book even more dynamic, combining the old with the new, black-and-white with full-colour. Some images are the work of the celebrated photographer Nick Turpin; many juxtapose everyday people with the subject of the stamps. On double-page spreads in two separate chapters, whole-page images provide striking comparisons: the celebrations for the Coronation in 1953 and on the 50th anniversary; and contrasting archive and contemporary views of the British Museum. Even the black-and-white photographs have been given a grey overtone, enhancing their appearance and blending with the tonal feel of the book.



Producing the Yearbook each year is painstaking work, occupying Royal Mail's dedicated team for many months. Work starts in October the previous year, with Royal Mail steering the approach that might be taken. Over the months, following discussions with the writer and the designers, the final product evolves. A key element is the photographs, demanding many hours of painstaking research.

'Live as long as you may, the first twenty years are the longest half of your life'
Robert Suchey, 'The Doctor'

In 1983, I was a medical student in the history of medicine department at the University of London. I was asked to write a paper on the history of medicine. I was given a list of topics to choose from. I chose 'The Doctor'.

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separate boxes, alongside the spaces for mounting the stamps. Mounts are provided for each issue, and of course the year's stamps are also supplied. This Yearbook also lists all who have designed British stamps over the past 20 years.

The entire Yearbook is heat-sealed for protection. Sadly, many collectors are unwilling to break open this wrapping to view the product inside: they deny themselves a visual treat and enjoyment of the wealth of absorbing information.

The Yearbook for 2003 costs £33.95, but there is also a leather-bound edition available at £75. This year for the first time it is possible to have this 'leather' version personalised with a name gold-blocked onto both the book cover and box. This personalised version, ideal as a gift, particularly say for a child born in 2003, costs £89.95. As a further unique feature it has been possible, on-line through ebay, to bid for a distinctively numbered personalised Yearbook: the numbers which have been made available are 1 to 20, 50, 100, 200, 2000 and 2003.

If you have not previously considered a Yearbook as a way of enhancing your enjoyment of the year's stamps, why not treat yourself to this 2003 edition? If you have bought Yearbooks in the past, you will not wish to miss this latest, very special, volume ●



THE DESIGN STORY

When the Royal Mail announced the launch of the 2003 Yearbook, it was a landmark moment in the history of the philatelic industry. The Yearbook is a unique publication, combining the art of stamp design with the art of book design. It is a book that is both a collection of stamps and a book of design.

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This year, the writer Fay Sweet was fortunate in being able to interview both Sir Edmund Hillary and the Nobel Prize winner Sir John Sulston, of the Human Genome Project. As always the Yearbook offers much captivating information linked to each stamp issue. It is ensured that it is not a repeat of that which has already appeared in presentation packs. There are also details about the designs of the stamps themselves, presented in

Stanley Gibbons catalogues Richard West talks to David

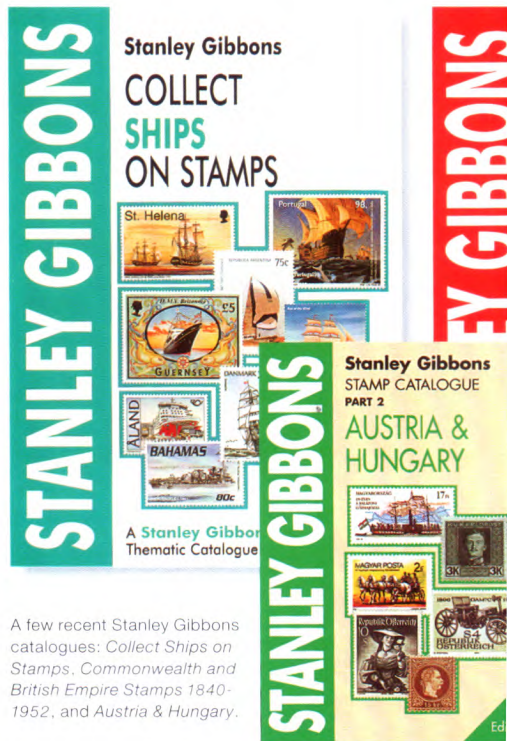
AFTER 36 YEARS David Aggersberg has decided it is time to say goodbye to his involvement with the Stanley Gibbons catalogues. In those years he worked with four of the previous Editors, then 18 years ago was appointed Editor when Stanley Gibbons Publications moved to Ringwood.

He has seen many changes. When he was first involved, the type was set in hot metal, with the pages made up by hand: it could take six weeks to obtain a printing block for a new illustration. In those days there were just five new editions each year. Everything has moved on – today the electronic world is taking over, and many more volumes are being produced. In the future, David believes the internet will play a vital role.

As Editor, David has had to keep abreast of these changes while still giving the collector what is wanted: it is a two-way communication process. The demands made by collectors have changed: general collectors are now very few, while specialisation and thematic collecting have grown in popularity. David sees the hobby as thriving, although those at the top end seem to be pulling away from the rest: in his view a great pity.

The Gibbons catalogues have always been notable, and David has maintained the fine traditions. Most important is the question of accuracy. Thanks to collectors always more than willing to share their knowledge, and a network of experts, new information is constantly being presented. But it needs to be checked, then double-checked. All stamps listed must be physically seen. It can be like putting together the pieces of a jig-saw puzzle. Some problems can be very difficult to unravel, for example checking the printings of certain modern definitive issues, as information is not always available even from the issuing Post Office.

Pricing can be contentious, although these days it tends to be more representative of the market. Re-numbering following new information was once a problem, but is now less difficult, it being accepted that gaps might occur in the numbering. Perhaps, above all else, presentation is a key factor: ensuring that their listings are clear and



A few recent Stanley Gibbons catalogues: *Collect Ships on Stamps*, *Commonwealth and British Empire Stamps 1840-1952*, and *Austria & Hungary*.

meaningful to all users has always been one of the strong points of the Gibbons catalogues.

Within the catalogue department are specialists in various fields: David tended to concentrate on the Commonwealth listings, leaving the Great Britain and Foreign essentially to others. But being in overall control, it was David who had to ensure deadlines were met, who would liaise with suppliers and, most importantly, ensure that the catalogues remained commercially viable.

This was not David's initial plan for a career: he had hoped to work in a library, but poor eyesight prevented this. Instead he started with the stamp auctioneer Vessey, before moving to Gibbons, straight into the catalogue department.

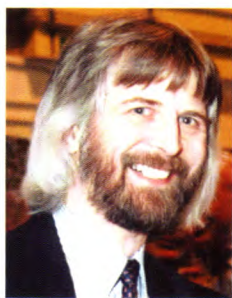
He sees his personal achievements as expanding the listings in the Commonwealth catalogues, adding stamp booklets and early inverted water-

Aggersberg and Hugh Jefferies about the change of Editors

Stanley Gibbons
GMP CATALOGUE
COMMONWEALTH
BRITISH EMPIRE
STAMPS 1840-1952



2004
Edition



David Aggersberg, top, and Hugh Jefferies. Hugh can be contacted at Stanley Gibbons Ltd, Parkside, Ringwood, Hants BH24 3SH.

marks, introducing the *Great Britain Concise* catalogue, as an interim between *Collect British Stamps* and the *Great Britain Specialised* volumes, and introducing the thematic range of catalogues.

David also collects, from the age of 11, although he has not really pursued his interests since being involved with the catalogues. His preference is for Great Britain from 1952, especially stamp booklets. He also has a vast knowledge of toy soldiers.

David has found the 36 years enjoyable, providing much personal satisfaction which he hopes is shared by collectors who find these volumes ever useful. He has been glad to fill the role, but now feels it has been long enough. While vacating the editorial chair, David does not regard himself as having retired. He intends to remain in the philatelic world – and perhaps will now have more time for his own collection.

Distinguished pedigree The new catalogue editor is Hugh Jefferies. With a great-grandfather who collected stamps, a grandfather who was a Fellow of The Royal Philatelic Society London, and a father who collects GB, how could he fail to become a collector? It started for Hugh in the same way as with many – at the age of eight he was given an album and packet of stamps by his father. Come the age of 11, Dad suggested concentrating on the Commonwealth, adding that further specialisation could come later. But Hugh stuck with the Commonwealth and decided early that used were preferable to mint, believing they would be less expensive. When he got married it seemed the right time to stop adding all the new issues: the collection therefore stops at 1980.

When Hugh was about 14 his Godfather decided that a useful present would be a subscription to *Gibbons Stamp Monthly*; a gift which continued for several years. Thus began a close association with *GSM*, in recent years as its Editor. Having been an avid reader, he felt he had a good idea of what readers expected from the magazine.

After college, Hugh started his career selling advertising space for a leading London publisher. He did not enjoy that work, and considered a switch to local government. Then a vacancy arose for an advertisement sales manager at Gibbons, working on *GSM* and on the recently launched magazine *Flora* for flower arrangers. His own collecting interest and work experience made him ideal for the position. He worked for 10 years on *Flora*, later as Assistant Editor and, following the move of Stanley Gibbons Publications from London to Ringwood, its Editor, when the then Editor decided not to relocate. Hugh also started to write for *GSM*, taking over the popular 'Through the Magnifying Glass' column from the legendary James Watson on his retirement. In 1988 he was appointed Editor of *GSM*, coupled with a few other responsibilities, such as Marketing Manager (writing the copy for advertisements), Production Manager and Circulation Manager. This gave him an excellent perspective on all aspects of the magazine.

Pleasing the reader Hugh fully appreciates the need to please the reader, while accepting that this is difficult with a general magazine. Whilst keen to hear the views of readers, he hopes that *GSM* is always interesting and entertaining, and a good source of information.

This also applies in his new role. As Hugh says, 'David is going to be a very tough act to follow. It would be impossible to replicate his vast experience and knowledge of stamp production processes in particular'. When Hugh was asked to be Editor he regarded it as a great accolade – what better task could there be than editing the world's most famous and respected stamp catalogues? His only doubt is whether editing both the catalogues and *GSM* will leave time for his own collection!

Continuing the traditions of previous Editors, Hugh realises the catalogue user is all-important – all needs and requirements must be served. He has suddenly been reunited with the world of new issues. The firm policy remains: before listing, all stamps must be seen, and information confirmed, not least the date of issue and how widely a stamp has been on sale. Some postal administrations are sadly lacking when it comes to providing full, and accurate, information. For example, descriptions of designs are often woefully inaccurate. Checking the details of just one issue can defer the listing of those that follow, otherwise a break in continuity of the numbering system might result.

The problem of new issues In 1949 an article in *GSM* was already pondering on how all the new issues might be listed while keeping catalogues to an acceptable size and price. The problem has clearly not gone away. Would collectors accept a more abbreviated listing – a list of denominations and a set price rather than detailed descriptions of each value? How would the thematic collector feel about this?

The cost of production, not only printing but also the time taken in researching and assembling all the information, affects the price of the final product. It is realised that a 'sectionalised' catalogue for some areas would enjoy limited sales. Would the collectors concerned be prepared to pay the price? The new British Commonwealth

catalogue with listings from 1840 to 1952 has been greatly welcomed, but what about collectors of the present reign?

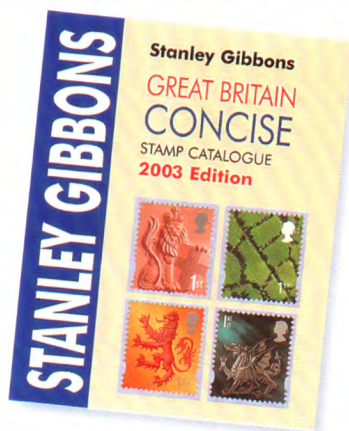
Moving into the electronic age is helping catalogue production, and will also enable the publication of further 'thematic' catalogues. Colour is being introduced into all catalogues, while more attention will be given to the Foreign catalogues, which have perhaps been a little neglected of late. Miniature sheets are to be added to *Stamps of the World*, the 'simplified' catalogue.

As mentioned, pricing is always contentious. Gibbons now strives to make pricing more realistic, carefully checking market levels. There is no point in deliberately pricing stamps too high or too low, even though high catalogue prices might help dealers who like to offer their wares at a fraction 'of Gibbons'. And remember, the prices Gibbons quote are for stamps in fine condition.

Back home Hugh finds his own collection very relaxing, and a way to keep in touch with other collectors. Unfortunately his own children, although both have dabbled in stamps, have not totally succumbed to the hobby's delights.

As catalogue Editor, he appreciates how much work his task involves. He wants to give collectors what they want, but warns that the catalogue cannot 'be all and end all'. Collections should be developed as the owner wishes; catalogues should help, not dictate. He is anxious to hear what collectors want from the catalogues, bearing in mind that they must be commercially viable and their integrity must be maintained, while responding to changing requirements. So, it's over to you •

Text © Richard West 2003



Philately on-line Sites for cover collectors, by Ron Negus



www.britishfirstdaycovers.com The site compiled by dealer Adrian Bradbury lists details of nearly 8,500 covers. Entering the words 'Commemorative Covers' or 'First Day Covers' into any search engine on the internet will locate many thousands of sites around the world from dealers and other organisations that have these items available for sale.

THE POPULARITY of collecting commemorative covers is shown by the publication of the *Review* on this topic with each monthly issue of the *Bulletin*. For those collectors seeking further information, I would recommend that they examine selected dealers' websites on the internet. An excellent example can be found at www.british-firstdaycovers.com (above). This professionally produced site lists details of nearly 8,500 covers, of which over 3,500 are illustrated. The site is extremely easy to use, and contains interesting information about cover collecting in general that should attract those considering branching out into this field.

The site is compiled by Adrian Bradbury, a dealer who designs and markets first day and souvenir covers. He is also the producer of a catalogue, entitled *Collecting British First Day Covers*, that has been published, annually, since 1981. The website includes details of this book, an order form for the current edition and a couple of sample pages to give an idea of its content. This catalogue contains information about all British stamp issues from the Penny Black onwards and illustrates many thousands of first day postmarks that can be found associated with each particular issue.

For his own stocks of covers, listed on the site, the stamps used on them have been categorized into the following eight groups. Commemoratives, Definitives, Prestige Stamp Booklets, Booklets with Commemorative Labels, Greetings, Miniature Sheets, Self-Adhesives and Millennium. Each group can be explored using the built-in

search facility. Searching also provides a way to locate any of the autographed covers produced by Bradbury. Typing a celebrity's name in the Search box will show if any covers are available from the limited editions signed by that person.

Another approach to finding relevant covers is to select the Browse option on the index tabs, which are arranged at the top of each web page. This reveals thumbnail pictures for each of the 30 main themes for which the Bradbury covers have been published. These embrace subjects as varied as Royalty, Birds, Flowers, Christmas, Railways and Religion, as well as the various named series of covers for which this dealer is well known. Clicking on any one of the icons takes you to a page on which individual covers relating to the chosen subject are displayed in miniature form.

When any picture on this subsequent page is selected, an enlarged illustration of the cover appears, accompanied by a fuller description. This provides the facts about the stamps used on the cover, the type of postmark applied, the date of issue and the number of covers produced. Below these basic items a list of postmarking locations is given with a stock code and price for each one. This listing allows a shopping basket to be created online by selecting the stock numbers of interest. As more items are added, a tally is kept at the top of the web pages that shows the current total spent. This can be adjusted before the order is submitted, if necessary.

The final attraction on this particular dealers' site is the BFDC Organiser. This is a computer program designed to allow the collector to catalogue his holdings. It is supplied on a CD-ROM, but can be ordered via the website. Subsequent updates to the stamp issues covered are available via the internet or on a separate CD •

Eminent early collectors Sir William Avery, by Ron Negus

THE NUMBER OF PHILATELISTS who have been able to say that they own a copy of the renowned 'Post Office' Mauritius stamp of 1847 is very small indeed. Amongst this elite group is Sir William Avery, and he was the proud possessor of two of these rarities. In his albums there were copies of both the 1d and 2d values in mint condition! In March 1908, Sir William indicated that, although he was ill, he would like these stamps to be displayed at the Imperial Stamp Exhibition at Caxton Hall, London being organized by the Junior Philatelic Society. Unfortunately, he was unable to fulfil his promise as his health got worse, and his death later that same year led to the stamps being sold.

The Mauritius stamps were accompanied by many other rare specimens in his albums. These had been obtained through judicious purchases over the closing years of the 19th century by this very wealthy British collector. By 1901, it was claimed that he had the largest private collection in England, and this was only exceeded in extent and value by the national Tapling collection in the British Museum.

Although his name survives among philatelists because of this important collection, it is also well known among the general public because of the widespread use of Avery weighing machines and scales in shops and other locations. Sir William was a member of the family descended from the founding fathers of the manufacturers of these, W & T Avery of Birmingham, and for some part of his career was the proprietor and Chairman of the firm.

Collection sold and re-started William Avery was born in 1854. About eight years later he began collecting stamps, and by the end of his school years, in 1871, had built up a holding of almost 2,000 specimens. This was a remarkable achievement given the limited number of stamps in issue during this early time in philatelic history. How-



ever, other pressures prevailed, and Sir William sold this initial collection upon leaving school. Some eight or nine years later, he felt the need to start collecting again, and bought a Lincoln album for the purpose. Being rich enough to be able to buy almost at will, he was soon able to match, and surpass, his schoolboy holdings and the pre-printed spaces in his album were soon full.

In 1884, Sir William came into contact with Charles J Phillips, who was to become Managing Director of Stanley Gibbons Ltd six years later. At that time, Phillips was a part-time dealer in Birmingham and described his first encounter with Avery as follows.

'...I was secretary of the Birmingham Philatelic Society. At one of our meetings, the chairman produced one of the old penny embossed envelopes with an inscription around it lettered 'W & T Avery'. I was requested to write to the firm to ask for a few of these envelopes for the members of the Society. Mr Avery (as he was then) replied and asked me to call upon him, and on my doing so he showed me a fine general collection, and expressed surprise that there were any other collectors in Birmingham.

'He joined the Society and became one of my best clients. About 1886, he was so much occupied in business that he placed his collection in my hands for sale on commission, and I sold the greater part of it. Some two years later he had more time at his disposal, and he restarted his collections on bolder lines, and purchased some very large blocks of stamps.'

Sydney views One of the first notable purchases made by Phillips for Avery was the 'Bullock' collection of Australian material, which included a superb range of Sydney Views together with many other rare items. A large general collection that had been formed by Mr W W Blest followed shortly afterwards, and, in its turn, was enhanced with West Indian and further Western Australian

rarities. In addition, Sir William was buying liberally from Continental dealers, and the size and quality of his collection grew rapidly from the mid-1890s onwards. Other major rarities that he owned included a large block of unused double Geneva stamps, four complete sets of the first issue of Moldavia, including the 27 paras value in a pair, the two cent value of the first issue of British Guiana, and a number of very scarce 'Postmaster' stamps of USA. His holdings occupied no fewer than 40 albums, and many included both mint and used specimens of the same stamp.

He was asked once how difficult it had been for him to gather such an enormous collection, and he replied: 'In the early days I often felt most discouraged when I saw really fine collections of specialities, but I persevered, and, as the saying goes 'most things come to those who wait'. I am glad to say that by waiting and patiently working I have now got many stamps which at one time I thought it would be impossible for me ever to secure.'

William Avery never wrote any philatelic books or articles, but he was always willing to share the treasures in his collections with other collectors via exhibitions. For the London International Exhibition of 1897, he acted as Treasurer, as well as submitting exhibits. Subsequent medal winning displays from him were seen at the Manchester exhibition in 1899, and at the London International in 1906.

Lantern display He was active also on the society scene, and was President of the Birmingham Philatelic Society for a number of years. His activities in the Junior Philatelic Society led to their magazine *The Stamp Lover* remarking that 'he had a warm sympathy for the young collector' and provided 'an influence that was as unseen and unobtrusive as it was helpful and encouraging'. In 1891 he joined the (later Royal) Philatelic Society, London and was elected a member on the same day as Ferrary. He was appointed to the Council of that body a few years later, but in 1903 resigned from the post. His letter of resignation to the Secretary said 'I cannot manage to attend

meetings and it is unfair to the Society that a member of the Council should not do his share of the work'. Whilst he was a member, however, he gave a number of displays and the London Society history records that in 1901 'Mr Avery gave another lantern display, by means of a novel apparatus, the Aphengoscope, producing magnifications of the stamps themselves.' It would seem that this device was a forerunner of the epidiascope.

Charity work Outside stamps, William Avery was active with many charitable causes and it was as a result of his services for them that he received a baronetcy in 1905. Some 10 years prior to this, he had handed over most of the responsibilities for the family firm to others, and moved to a large residence in Windsor. He married twice, and had a son from his first marriage, who inherited the title. After giving up his work in Birmingham, he retained his association with the town as a life governor of the University there. He also accepted a directorship with a couple of unrelated businesses, one of which was a well-known motor car manufacturers. He chose this because he was an ardent motorist himself.

Soon after he received his title, Sir William was diagnosed with heart and kidney trouble, and spent much of his time under medical care. The illnesses gradually grew worse and he was forced to give up many of his activities. Finally, at the early age of 55, on 28 October 1908 he died at his town residence in Portland Place, London.

In the following year, the Strand dealer W M Peckitt, who was noted for acquiring large and famous collections, bought the Avery material. It was reputed to have sold for almost £1.5 million, at today's prices. Peckitt disposed of the material amongst some of the leading collectors of the day and, as a result, many of Sir William Avery's prize specimens found their way to new owners. Amongst them were King George V (for the Royal collection), Ferrary, Lord Crawford, Duveen, Hind and Caspary – a truly glittering array of philatelic notables that reflected the importance and quality of the Avery material ●

Cover corner



Left, an inventive cover from Derek Williams with cancellations dated six years apart. Above, a 'stamps missing in transit' cover submitted by Robert Phillifent.

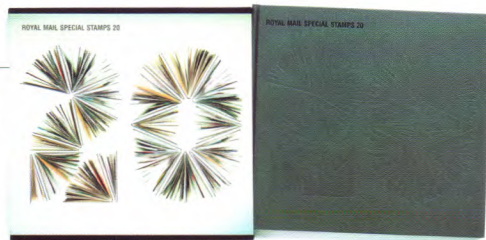
THE FIRST of this month's covers was submitted by Derek Williams, founder of the Association of GB First Day Cover Collectors. The cover bears both 1979 Rowland Hill and 1985 Royal Mail Public Postal Service stamps. The Rowland Hill stamps, from the miniature sheet, are cancelled by a special postmark for the first day of issue, 24 October 1979. The Royal Mail set has been cancelled by the counter datestamp of Gatwick Airport on the day of issue, 30 July 1985. The cover was sent by registered post that day and carries a Redhill registration label and has pale blue lines to indicate registration. The horizontal line continues under the Rowland Hill stamps. Mr Williams deduces that the envelope was printed for the Royal Mail issue, with an oblong the right size to take the block of stamps from the miniature sheet, and the Royal Mail stamps cancelled by the Gatwick datestamp whilst the oblong was left empty. Subsequently the stamps from a Rowland Hill miniature sheet were skilfully removed from a FDC that had been can-

celled six years earlier and put into the empty space. He writes: 'I don't know what category one should put this cover in, or how many there are. It isn't a double dated cover as the Rowland Hill stamps were not on it when they were cancelled. It isn't a forgery as everything on it is genuine. It is certainly very inventive though, and a fascinating example of the lengths people will go to in order to produce an interesting cover.'

The second cover was submitted by Robert Phillifent. It was posted in Cardiff on 9 October 1967 and, it is assumed, the right-hand top corner of this cover fouled the cancelling machine which folded it – there is part of the cancellation on the back – resulting in the stamp being removed. A blue crayon tick indicates where the stamp was and the Post Office in London EC applied (twice) a green boxed STAMPS MISSING IN TRANSIT strike to ensure that no postage due was levied on the addressee. This explanatory strike is very unusual and is also known in red and from Liverpool •

Prize draw Win a Yearbook

WE HAVE FOUR of the new 2003 Yearbook for prizes in this month's draw. To enter, simply write your name and address on the back of a postcard and send it to: Yearbook Draw, British Philatelic Bulletin, Royal Mail, 148 Old Street, London EC1V 9HQ to arrive by 28 November •



Postbag Letters to the Editor

Wilding reissues I have greatly enjoyed the reissue of the Wilding stamps since 1998 – this has developed into a rather nice little collection in its own right. I note Douglas Myall's point (Mainly Machins, August) that stamps in the two miniature sheets are of smaller size. The 47p Wilding in the Coronation prestige book is a good match to that in the first miniature sheet, but the 68p from the book is noticeably different in shade to that in the second sheet. Compare especially the rose and thistle at top left and right to see the difference. The 47p and 68p from the book are separately listed by Stanley Gibbons as 2378-9 in their catalogue supplement. Also listed is the £1 stamp (in the design of the 1953 Coronation 1s3d) from the book. The colour is given as deep yellow-green compared to slate-green for the similar stamp in the Stamp Show 2000 miniature sheet. The two stamps can also be told apart by the fact that the prestige book stamp is watermarked, has two phosphor bands, and is printed on cream-surfaced paper. The stamps in the book were all printed by Walsall, whereas the miniature sheets are by De La Rue. G LANE, LONDON SW19 ●

Opportunity missed On the whole I approve the subjects and designs of the 2003 special stamps – things have certainly looked up since the dire days of the Millennium sets of 1999-2001. However I think Royal Mail might have issued stamps to commemorate three literary giants whose anniversaries fell this year – the centenaries of the births of Evelyn Waugh and George Orwell (Eric Blair), and the 50th anniversary of the death of Dylan Thomas. Similarly I feel the 50th anniversary of our national stamp exhibition, Stampex, warranted a stamp, especially as special stamp issues are really aimed at us collectors rather than the general public. Other countries issue stamps for their national stamp exhibitions and philatelic congresses – why not the UK? Perhaps we could have a stamp in 2009 to mark the centenary of the first Philatelic Congress held at Manchester in 1909. Note I said stamp – singular, not plural! F HARRISON, DOVER ●

Pub Signs I have just purchased the latest issue of GB stamps, Pub Signs, and may I say that they are the best that I have seen for quite some time. All credit is due to the designer and the printers for doing such an excellent job. The theme of Pub Signs would make a good topic for an extended series, perhaps once a year a new issue with different signs illustrated. Other postal administrations adopt this in their issuing policy, so why not Royal Mail? Have other readers any thoughts on this? NORMAN D LATTER, LANCING ●

Stamp values I note that 44 out of the 80 special stamps issued this year are at the basic 1st class rate. I welcome this as it gives me a chance to find used examples on the mail I receive at home and work. I like to collect genuinely used stamps as well as mint ones, FDCs and presentation packs. However quite a proportion of the mail is at the second weight band (60-100g) and there are no special stamps to cover this at the 2nd class rate, ie 34p. Perhaps this value could be included occasionally in future issues? Also, is there any chance that the Christmas airletter could again have its own stamp design, instead of the Machin head as on the standard airletter? Could not one of the designs of the Christmas stamps be used on the airletter? MRS H MACDONALD, EXETER ●

Railway stamps On holiday this summer I traveled on some of the preserved steam railways in Wales and found to my surprise that they issued their own stamps for carrying letters and postcards on their trains. Some of these stamps are very attractive and nicely produced. Could you include an article on them sometime? DARREN COOK, IPSWICH ●

Railway letter stamps are issued by a number of preserved railways and I hope to include a feature about them in the Bulletin early next year. Several articles on these stamps were published here October 1984 – April 1985, and Sara Eade and Neill Oakley wrote about Talyllyn Railway issues here in May 1997. ED

Competitions Win £200 in two easy-to-enter competitions



August identify The detail is from the 19p Toys stamp of 1989. The winner was James Willard of France.

August knowledge Answers: 1) Nicholas Jenkins; 2) 1973; 3) Otto Hornung. The winner was Peter Ganaway of Hampshire.

Ten runner-up prizes were also sent for each competition. Our thanks to all who entered.

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

- 1 What colour was the 1st class NVI Machin definitive when first issued in 1989?
- 2 The 1983 River Fishes stamps marked the 300th anniversary of the death of which famous angler?
- 3 In which country is a world philatelic exhibition being staged in May 2004?

Send your answer (addressed to either November *Identify* competition or November *Knowledge* competition), name and address on a postcard or back of a sealed envelope to: British Philatelic Bulletin, Royal Mail, 148 Old Street, London EC1V 9HQ. The senders of the first cards drawn in each competition on 12 December will each receive £100. Ten runner-up prizes of presentation packs or first day covers will be awarded in each competition. The competitions are not open to Royal Mail employees •

Events

30 October - 1 November Philatex at Royal Horticultural Hall, Greycoat Street, London SW1. Thurs 11.00-19.00; Fri 10.00-18.00, Sat 10.00-17.00. Over 100 dealers. Admission free. Refreshments available. **Enquiries** 01793 513431.

8 November Wombourne & District PS Stamp Fair at Civic Centre, Gravel Hill, Wombourne, 10.30-16.30. Midland Phil Federation Autumn Assembly, dealers, competitions, refreshments. Souvenir postcard. **Enquiries** Roy Summers, 22 Greenfield Road, Wombourne, Wolverhampton WV5 0AP.

8 November Maidstone & Mid Kent PS Stamp Fair at Grove Green Community Centre, Maidstone (close to junction 7, M20), 10.00-16.00. **Enquiries** B Stone-street, 32 Bedgebury Close, Vinters Park, Maidstone ME14 5QZ.

16 November GB First Day Cover Fair, organised by Association of GB FDC Collectors. See page 70.

18 November Lecture 'Poster, poster on the wall...' by Roger Crawford: Phoenix Centre, Phoenix Place, London WC1 (next door to Heritage Royal Mail), 19.00. **Enquiries** Libby Buckley, 020 7239 2561.

21-22 November Leeds PS Annual Stamp Fair at Pudsey Civic Hall. 40 dealers, specialist societies meeting. **Enquiries** R Shiers, 0113 268 2370.

28-29 November Thematica II - see page 68.

29 November Friends of Postal Heritage AGM at Phoenix Centre, Phoenix Place, London WC1. **Enquiries** C Macey, 23 Reading House, Halffield Estate, London W2 6HD •

Late news



The Bulletin at Stampex Shown above are Robert Maude (*Bulletin* designer), Caroline McNamara (Royal Mail), and Jeffery Matthews (stamp designer) on the Royal Mail stand on the opening day of Autumn Stampex. Jeffery cut a special cake to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the *Bulletin*. Some of the *Bulletin* front covers and memorabilia were displayed on the stand. *Bulletin* contributor Douglas Myall received a Large Vermeil medal and Albert H Harris Literature Award for the 3rd edition of *The Complete Deegam Machin Handbook* (reviewed here last month). The Stampex Silver Mailcoach Trophy was awarded to A Mayflower for his display of Mulready envelopes and letter sheets. Almost 7000 collectors visited the exhibition – the highest number for some years •

New postal orders Post Office Ltd has produced a new design of postal order, available at Post Office branches from 6 October. The colours of the postal orders have changed: the 50p and £1 denominations are now green, £2-£5 blue, £6-£10 brown, and £15-£20 purple. There is a new image of The Queen's head. From 6 November three new-style Gift Postal Orders will be available in £5, £10 and £20 denominations. These will be accompanied by a choice of five different gift cards with envelopes, one free with each purchase of a Gift Postal Order •

Priority services The price of the c4-size Airtsure prepaid envelope increased from £6 to £6.99

from 9 October. For details of other priority service changes see Late News in October *Bulletin* •

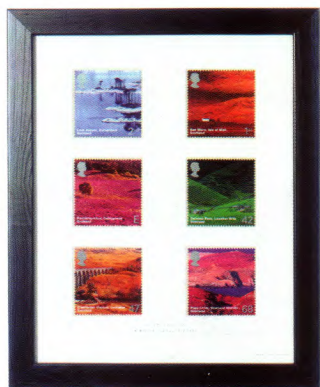
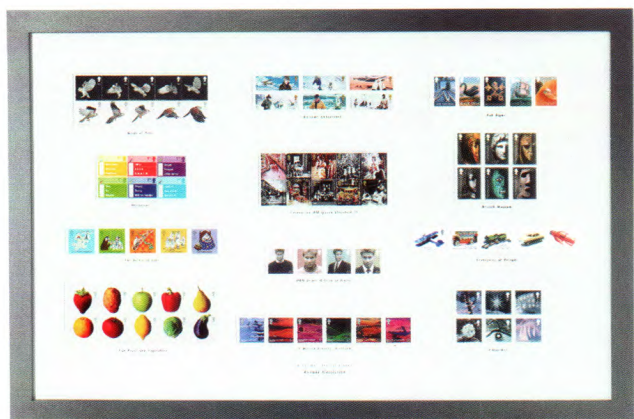
The British Library A major collection of Polish stamps, in 46 volumes, has been presented to the British Library by York-based collector Janusz Kaluski. Included are stamps issued in the 19th century when Poland was a Russian province, and stamps from the end of the First World War announcing the existence of an Independent Polish state. Also included are stamps issued during the German occupation in the Second World War and stamps produced at the same time by the Polish Government in Exile, in London. Further information about the Kaluski Collection can be obtained from the Philatelic Collections at the British Library. Telephone 020 7412 7635, e-mail philatelic@bl.uk •

Rare stamps exhibition Monaco will again host an exhibition of the world's rarest stamps and philatelic documents, 3-5 December 2004. Items will be on display from 18 postal museums and 122 individual collectors. Some 70 postal administrations and international stamp dealers will offer classic and modern stamps for sale. A number of activities are planned with many social events for collectors to attend •

Bulletin back issues J F Walker has for disposal copies of the *Bulletin* from the 1960s. Anyone interested should collect from him and make a small donation to a local hospice. Contact Mr Walker on 023 9237 9701. John Jackson has copies from 1967 to 2002 including most indexes. Any offers will be donated to an environmental charity. Contact Mr Jackson on 01204 529797. John Wood has for disposal copies from September 1989 to May 1996; e-mail john@longmorewood.fsnet.co.uk •

Concorde postcard Modern postcard dealer Ron Griffiths has produced a card to mark the final flight of Concorde. The card can be ordered from him at 47 Long Arrotts, Hemel Hempstead HP1 3EX, price 50p each plus 40p postage •

In the frame New framed stamps and postcards



2003 framed stamps The complete set of Royal Mail's special stamps for 2003, including Coronation and Prince William issues, in a solid wood frame with a graphite finish. Dimensions 863 x 575mm. Price £69.95. Code PY823.

A British Journey framed postcards The first stop on the British Journey series is Scotland. These postcards of the stamps issued in July 2003 are mounted in a dark blue stained wooden frame, with precise map references of the locations. Dimensions 455 x 556mm. Price £24.95. Code PY826.

British Museum framed postcards 2003 sees the 250th anniversary of the foundation of the British Museum. The moody atmosphere of the stamps is captured on these postcards, mounted in a graphite-finish solid wood frame. Dimensions 892 x 327mm. Price £24.95. Code PY825.

Framed flowers A gloriously colourful first from Royal Mail. The Smilers generic sheet issued in January 2003 makes a cheerful subject, matched by a wooden red frame. Dimensions 446 x 385mm. Price £29.95. Code PY824.

For more information or to order, call our customer order and enquiry line on 08457 641 641 or visit www.royalmail.com/originals

Royal Mail

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