

British Philatelic Bulletin

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The Most Ancient & Most Noble
ORDER of the THISTLE
Tercentenary of the Revival



Arms of His Royal Highness
The Duke of Rothesay

22^p

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Editorial

DOUGLAS N MUIR

Capex 87

This month, one of the year's two major international stamp exhibitions will take place in Canada. Capex 87 is in Toronto from 13 to 21 June. (The other major international – Hafnia – will be at Copenhagen in October.) The British Post Office will be making its Exhibition card available for the first time at the Interpost stand. This card (details on page 219) is the first of a series and features the Flowers stamps. At Capex it will be sold with a special cachet and will be numbered on the reverse – unnumbered cards without the cachet will also be available from the Bureau. Future exhibitions, including British nationals, will also have specially cacheted cards available from the British Post Office stand.

Another item produced for the exhibition will be the P & O prestige stamp book specially overprinted with the Capex logo in gold. For availability, other than at Capex, see page 227.

In terms of displays, the National Postal Museum will be exhibiting in the Court of Honour. There will be five frames of GB George VI material, rarely seen outside the NPM, together with the registration sheet of the first stamp of British Columbia and Vancouver Island.

The display of George VI material has been especially researched and newly written up for the exhibition. It will consist of design and essay material for the first definitives designed by Eric Gill, the high values and the various commemoratives. There will also be a complete frame on the subject of the proposed Anglo-French stamp of 1940 which never came to fruition because of the fall of France. This will be the subject of an article in a future edition of the *Bulletin*, based on the revelations of the new research. Visitors to Capex, however, will have the benefit of a preview.

Scottish Heraldry

21 July 1987



On 21 July four stamps are being issued for Scottish Heraldry to mark the 300th anniversary of the revival of the Most Ancient and Most Noble Order of the Thistle. The designs by Jeffery Matthews show various heraldic arms in a square format.

The permanent establishment of the Order is the Sovereign and 16 Knights but the Sovereign may from time to time admit more. The Lord Lyon is King of Arms of the Order and usually also its Secretary. The heralds and pursuivants are officers of the Order. In the Thistle Chapel in the High Kirk of St Giles in Edinburgh are displayed the armorial crests of the Knights and their banners hang in a nearby aisle of the Kirk.

Interior of the Thistle Chapel



Ceiling boss in the Thistle Chapel

The **18p** stamp shows the arms of the Lord Lyon King of Arms. They are not his personal arms but rather the arms of his office. On ceremonial occasions the Lord Lyon carries a baton of blue and gold and in the arms two such batons are crossed behind the shield. Round the shield is a collar composed of alternate thistles



and sprigs of rue, and from it hangs the Lord Lyon's badge. The crown above the shield and on the head of each lion is the Crown of Scotland, now in Edinburgh Castle.

On the **22p** stamp is the banner used by Prince Charles when in Scotland. It reflects three



of his Scottish dignities. He is the Great Steward of Scotland (the blue and silver chequered band on the gold background), the Lord of the Isles (the black ship, called in heraldry a lymphad), and the Duke of Rothesay (the central shield where the royal arms have the addition of a blue label denoting the eldest son). This banner was conferred on Prince Charles by the Queen in 1974.

On the other two stamps are examples of the use of heraldry today by corporations. The **31p** value shows the arms of the Royal Scottish Academy of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture, founded in 1826. The principal feature of the design is the winged bull, symbol of St Luke, patron saint of painters.

On the **34p** stamp are the arms of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, established in 1783 for the



advancement of learning and useful knowledge. The castle represents the castle of Edinburgh. The red and blue double helix across the shield represents DNA (Deoxyribonucleic Acid), the primary genetic material, the discovery of whose structure in the early 1950s was a major development in modern science.

Both shields on the 31p and 34p stamps have a square at the top bearing the royal tressured lion rampant. This can only be added with the explicit consent of the Sovereign. Animals supporting the shields on each side are granted in Scotland only to those corporations which are established by Royal Charter or by Statute. The sun on the shield of the Royal Society and the urn in the crest of the Royal Academy symbolise enlightenment.



Knights' armorial crests in the Thistle Chapel

The most familiar insignia of the Order of the Thistle are the star worn on the left breast and the broad green riband from which hangs a gold badge showing St Andrew in an oval frame. On both is the motto of Scotland *Nemo me impune lacessit* "No-one attacks me with impunity".



Illustrated here, and on the presentation pack and first day cover, are the Royal Arms of Scotland from the time of King James IV (1488–1513). On the small lozenge are the matrimonial arms of his Queen, Margaret, daughter of King Henry VII of England. The original of this painting is in a Book of Hours compiled for the King and Queen and now preserved in Vienna. It contains the earliest known illustration of the Royal Shield of Scotland surrounded by a collar of thistles.

The Post Office is grateful to the respective owners for their permission to reproduce the arms depicted on the stamps.

Royal Arms of Scotland at the time of James IV



Technical Details

Designed by Jeffery Matthews, who also designed the 1984 Heraldry set, the stamps have been printed in photogravure by Harrison & Sons Limited. In format they are square, 34.7mm x 34.7mm, perf. 14½, printed on unwatermarked phosphor-coated paper in sheets of 100 on PVA Dextrin gum.

PHQ Cards

PHQ cards (Nos. 103 A–D) featuring each of the four stamps will be available from 7 July, price 15p each.

Presentation Pack

The presentation pack will cost £1.27 and was designed by Jeffery Matthews with text by Henry Tilling. Illustrations of the Badges were drawn by Jeffery Matthews and photographs of



Breast Star and Sash Badge of the Order

the Thistle Chapel were taken by Michael St Maur Sheil. On the reverse of the pack appear in black the four stamps of the 1984 Heraldry set, as a related thematic issue.

First Day Cover

The first day cover features the illustration from the Book of Hours of James IV and Margaret with the Royal Arms of Scotland and was designed by Jeffery Matthews. It costs 16p each. Two pictorial postmarks will be used for the Bureau first day cover service, one from the British Philatelic Bureau featuring an ancient



SCOTTISH HERALDRY

Royal Mail First Day Cover



Mrs J Robinson
200 Manorbier Road
ILKESTON
Derbyshire
DE7 4AB



SCOTTISH HERALDRY

Royal Mail Mint Stamps



royal coat of arms; the other is from Rothesay, Isle of Bute and features a thistle.

A first day cover service will be provided by the Bureau with the official Royal Mail cover addressed to the destination required with the four stamps cancelled with either postmark. The charges will be £1.51 (inland) and £1.32 (over-seas). Application forms, available from the Bureau and at Head Post Offices, should be returned not later than 21 July.

Customers requiring only the special pictorial postmarks may obtain them under the

reposting facility by sending on the first day of issue a stamped addressed envelope under an outer cover endorsed 'Special First Day of Issue Handstamp' to:

'British Philatelic Bureau' 20 Brandon Street,
EDINBURGH EH3 5TT

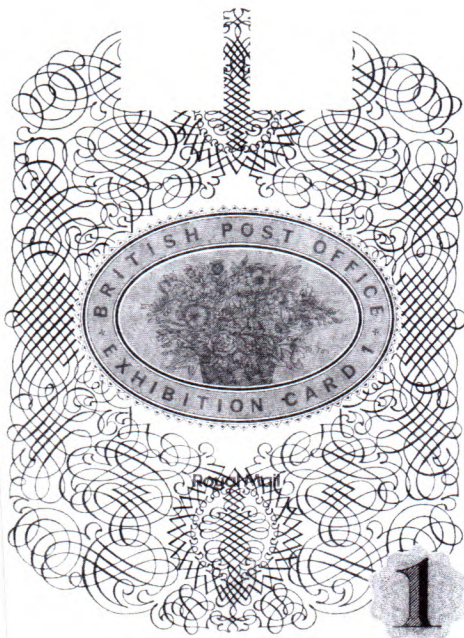
'Rothesay'

Special Postmark Duty,
Renfrewshire Post Office,
County Square
PAISLEY PA1 1AA

Exhibition Card

Further to the preliminary information which appeared in the February *Bulletin* we now have further details on the Royal Mail Exhibition Card.

The card will be A5 in size and printed in a combination of two colour litho and two colour intaglio on the front and two colour litho on the back. Printing is by Debdens Security Print of Essex. The card will be issued on 13 June 1987 to coincide with the opening of the international exhibition Capex 87 which runs to 21 June. It will bear the 31p and 34p values of the Flowers issue, and the design of the card is also related to the Flowers issue. All the stamps will be cancelled "Royal Mail Exhibition Card No 1, Edinburgh, 13 June 1987" and will be on sale from the British Philatelic Bureau and British Post Office stands at designated exhibitions at home and overseas for 12 months. The price will be £1.



Shown is a black and white reproduction of an early proof of the card. This will be illustrated in full colour next month.

There will be a multilingual text on the reverse of the card. On the front, the bottom left hand corner will be left free for the application of

a special cachet at each designated exhibition. Cards will also be numbered on the reverse at the exhibitions. Cacheted cards will only be available at the stamp exhibitions. These include:

Capex 87	13-21 June
Autumn Stampex/BPE	22-27 September
Hafnia 87	16-25 October
Philatelia 87	6-8 November
Spring Stampex	1-6 March 1988

A full list of these exhibitions and dates will appear in a later *Bulletin*.

Cancelled cards without a cachet or a number will be available from the British Philatelic Bureau from 13 June, 1987.

St John Ambulance Plates & Colours

The plate numbers and colours printed of the St John Ambulance stamps to be issued on 16 June are as follows:

18p

New blue 1A/1B	Greenish yellow 1A/1B	Magenta 1A/1B	Black 1A/1B	Silver 1A/1B	Pink 1A/1B
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22p

New blue 1A/1B	Greenish yellow 1A/1B	Magenta 1A/1B	Black 1A/1B	Silver 1A/1B	Cobalt 1A/1B
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31p

New blue 1A/1B	Greenish yellow 1A/1B	Magenta 1A/1B	Black 1A/1B	Silver 1A/1B	Bistre-brown 1A/1B
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34p

New blue 1A/1B	Greenish yellow 1A/1B	Magenta 1A/1B	Black 1A/1B	Silver 1A/1B	Greenish grey 1A/1B
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Other plates have been used for the 18p value. Those notified at the time of going to press are as follows:

1A/1B, 1A/1B, 1A/1B, 1A/1B, 1A/1B, 2A/2B
1A/1B, 1A/1B, 1A/1B, 1A/1B, 1A/1B, 3A/3B
1A/1B, 1A/1B, 2A/2B, 1A/1B, 1A/1B, 3A/3B
2A/2B, 2A/2B, 2A/2B, 2A/2B, 1A/1B, 3A/3B
2A/2B, 2A/2B, 3A/3B, 2A/2B, 1A/1B, 3A/3B

St John Ambulance Perforations

The perforations quoted in the May *Bulletin* for the St John Ambulance stamps, and those in the presentation pack, are wrong. They should read 14 x 14½, rather than 14 x 15. Any inconvenience to collectors is regretted.

"Did You Remark the Postmarks?"

GUY AVERILL

The very last words that Dr Watson recorded from the lips of Sherlock Holmes left his readers in hope: "You can file it in our archives, Watson. Some day the true story may be told." We know that Watson kept his notes on the cases of the great detective in a tin box at Cox's bank. What a wonder for the world if that were ever to be opened! We could learn the true story of the Giant Rat of Sumatra "for which the world is not yet prepared."

This year is the centenary of Holmes's first appearance in print, a potboiler from a young doctor with literary ambitions who wanted enough money to continue work on his historical romances, meticulously researched and ineffably boring, but which he considered would give him a lasting reputation. What poor critics of their own work writers are! The colourless wimps of the historical novels are long and rightly forgotten. Holmes has never been out of print. Yet Doyle sold the copyright of that first story – *A Study in Scarlet* – for a mere £25.

Holmes burst upon the late Victorian public not only as the hero of a series of rattling good stories but also as something that they were conscious society needed – a detective who solved crimes both by logical deduction and scientific observation. This came to a public in whose mind the Jack the Ripper murders of a few years previous had left the firm impression,

from Queen Victoria downwards, that the detective branch of Scotland Yard was a home for incompetents. The police in the Holmes stories, Messrs Lestrade, Gregson and Athelney Jones, may seem like caricatures today. To Victorian readers they were kindly versions of Inspector Abberline and his colleagues who had muddled, muddled and misread every clue to the identity of the Ripper.

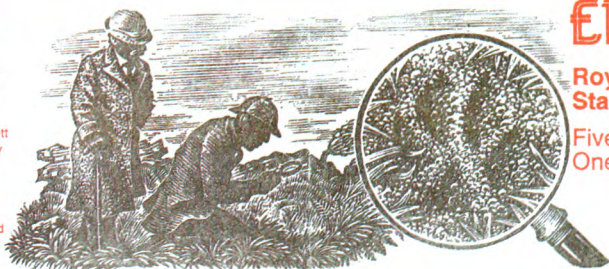
Even official histories of the police acknowledge the impetus that the stories gave to the modernisation of the detective service. That's not why we read them now. We read avidly because they are superb stories, masterly examples of narrative skill. We read them because the characters of Dr Watson and Sherlock Holmes are so strongly defined that they become more like old friends than fictional characters. And we can also read them as a genuine gold mine of information on life and manners in late Victorian London.

It is also obvious, from a careful reading of the whole canon, that Holmes was a good working postal historian. Indeed, one case, that of the *Five Orange Pips*, may truthfully be said to have been solved by postal history. The places of posting, dates of posting and the intervals between them allow Holmes to identify the writer as sailing on a particular ship. You will get, from the Postal History Society, a

"A Study in Scarlet", stamp book cover of 14 April 1987



Sherlock
Holmes
*The Hound
of the
Baskervilles*
Second in a
series from
an idea by
Mark Collicott
Illustrated by
Andrew
Davidson
Printed by
Harrison &
Sons Limited



£1

Royal Mail
Stamps

Five at 18p
One at 13p

"The Hound of the Baskervilles", stamp book cover of 14 July 1987

formal definition of postal history as being the study of routes and rates. While I wouldn't quarrel with that, I would regard it as a bit limiting. There is a lot more than that on some envelopes. And Holmes was a man who read more from a letter than the words.

Take, for example, these words from his second appearance in *The Sign of Four*, looking at a letter to Miss Morstan, the future Mrs Watson: "Post mark, London SW, date July 7. Hum, man's thumb mark on corner – probably postman. Best quality paper, envelopes at sixpence a packet." That's quite a lot of information to gather before reading a letter. Paper was something of a speciality with Holmes. Still in *The Sign of Four* he identifies a treasure diagram as being on paper of Indian native manufacture; in *A Scandal in Bohemia* he is able to identify his client by the watermark of the paper on which his note is sent. I wonder if the Holmes family had some connection with paper manufacture for Sherlock's brother Mycroft shows equal familiarity with papers in examining the note in the case of *The Greek Interpreter*.

The brothers shared another skill – that of drawing conclusions from handwriting. Mycroft: "Written with a J pen on royal cream paper by a middle aged man with a weak constitution." Sherlock (in *The Norwood Builder* when Inspector Lestrade is puzzled by the differences in writing in the same note): "It was written in a train. The good writing represents stations, the bad writing movement and the very bad writing passing over points. A scientific expert would pronounce at once that this was drawn up on a suburban line since nowhere save in the vicinity of a great city could there be so quick a succession of points. Granted that his

whole journey was occupied in drawing up a will then the train was an express stopping only once between Norwood and London Bridge."

Holmes shows acute observation of handwriting again in *The Man with the Twisted Lip*. The distraught wife of a missing man receives a letter from her missing husband. It has a Gravesend postmark posted that morning. But then he deduces that the address of the envelope did not know the full address. The name is in a black ink, left to dry while he went to find out the rest of it. The remainder of the address is grey from being blotted. When Dr Watson expresses his amazement at this deduction he comes out with another aphorism which budding postal historians would do well to keep in mind: "It is, of course, a trifle, but there is nothing so important as trifles."

It was a happy time for communications and Holmes was an enthusiastic communicator. Much is made, these days, of the communications revolution and how efficient it is. But Holmes could send a telegram and expect an answer within hours; he could receive, by an afternoon delivery, letters posted in the morning; he could use an express messenger service. When the plans for a new British submarine went astray, in *The Bruce Partington Affair* they had originally been brought by a Government messenger "post haste". It is not clear how soon Sherlock Holmes was connected to the telephone service in London but he was certainly using it in 1902, in the case of *The Three Garridebs*. One startling tribute to the speed of the postal service comes in *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. Watson is encouraged by Holmes to stay at Baskerville Hall, submitting daily written reports by post. He is miffed to discover that

Holmes had been observing the house from the moor and expresses his annoyance at the wasted effort that has gone into his reports. Holmes produces them from his pocket and says: "Here are your reports, my dear fellow, and very well thumbed I assure you. I made excellent arrangements and they are delayed only one day upon their way." Baskerville Hall is never located more precisely than "Devon" but to get letters within 24 hours after they have been posted to London is quicker work than, I suspect, could be achieved today. It was, of course, both the golden age of the train and of the postal service. In *The Valley of Fear*, Holmes is able to get a note to Scotland Yard sent up by the milk train and that is an institution that seems to have vanished from the land.

The Five Orange Pips is one of the best of the Holmes stories concerning vengeance exacted by the Ku Klux Klan on a renegade member and his family. The first letter arrives from India, with a Pondicherry postmark (and presumably a French colonial issue stamp). When opened, out fall five orange pips. The addressee, recognising a death threat from his former comrades, is duly frightened. The letter arrived on 10 March, 1883. The poor man was found dead seven weeks later.

A relative succeeded to the property and on 4 January 1885 he too received a letter enclosing five orange pips, postmarked in Dundee. Three days later he was found lying dead in a chalk pit. Then, in the autumn of 1887 his son received a similar letter: "This is the envelope," he tells Holmes, "the postmark is London – Eastern Division." Holmes agrees to help and discusses the letters with Watson.

"Did you remark the postmarks of those letters?"

"The first was from Pondicherry, the second from Dundee and the third from London."

"From East London. What do you deduce from that?"

Holmes concludes that the writer is serving on a sailing ship, from the interval in time between posting and arrival of the letter with the longer elapsed time in the first case being seven weeks, the difference in passage between a sailing ship and the mail packet. Holmes visits the files of *Lloyd's Register of Shipping* following the career of every vessel which touched at Pondicherry in January and February 1883. By cross-checking with arrivals and departures in Dundee and London he identifies the ship but too late to save his client. There are only three

Americans on board and he writes to the police in Savannah to pick them up, knowing that the mail boat will beat the sailing ship. But the Klansmen escape to a higher justice for their ship sinks in mid-Atlantic.

Of course, there are occasions on which he did not want to discuss the envelope. The potentially explosive letter "from a foreign potentate" which has gone missing in *The Adventure of the Second Stain* is being described to Holmes. Its shape and colour are given, the nature of the device with which it was sealed, the type of handwriting. At which point Holmes interrupts to ask what was in the letter. The Prime Minister (interestingly, Doyle uses the term Premier), describes its contents in the vaguest terms and fearful of saying a name out loud writes down the sender's name on a slip of paper. They surely cannot have feared "bugging" in the 1890s!

The Adventure of the Dancing Men which is, to the best of my knowledge, the first story to make use of a coding system, is sparked off by letters from the United States. Holmes deciphers the code and, in the process, makes a remark which would serve as the motto of a conscientious postal historian: "What one man can invent, another man can discover." I know from my own experience that faced with an early 19th century cover with manuscript marks and amateurish handstamps in profusion I have often wished for a Holmes at my side to guide me through them one by one.

A good example of this is the way Holmes treats the evidence in *The Adventure of the Cardboard Box* which has been sent through the post containing two ears (not a pair). First he notes that the string is a type used by sailmakers and that the knot is that of a seaman. The male ear has been pierced for an earring, inclining him more to nautical suspects. The box is "wrapped in brown paper with a smell of coffee". The address is in straggling characters and done with a broad pointed pen, a spelling mistake has been corrected. Finally, the ears were packed in rough salt. Other enquiries confirm his views and lead him to the suspect who turns out to be a ship's steward.

While one would welcome Holmes as a postal historian I am not sure that he would be a good neighbour. He is something of an anti-hero, often cuttingly rude to Dr Watson who is more patient with Holmes than most would be. Keeping tobacco in a slipper is a permissible eccentricity, shooting the Queen's initials into

the plaster of the wall with a revolver is not. His recourse from his lows is a seven per cent solution of cocaine (a weakness rather than a crime in Victorian England, but hardly meritorious). But his highs are tremendous.

He has become one of the great literary heroes – as well known as Quasimodo or Don Quixote. There is hardly a language into which the stories are not translated. Plays, films and television adaptations date from the 1890s; indeed, in the first London play based on him, in which William Gillette played the great detective, Billy the page boy was played by a promising juvenile called Charlie Chaplin. The recent series of adaptations on Granada Television is being sold worldwide.

He came out of retirement to catch the German master spy at the beginning of the First World War – Mrs Hudson had kept the addresses of the spy's last seven letters for him. We know that he returned to his cottage and his bees on the Sussex Downs.

Perhaps in some time of future stress there a walker might hear a policeman's whistle, the hiss of steam from a train, the clatter of a hansom cab and a ghostly voice echoing: "Come Watson, the game's afoot."

New Stamp Book Covers

Five new stamp book covers are to be issued on 14 July. These will include two counter books and three machine-vended books.

The counter books priced £1.30 (containing 10 x 13p stamps with one central phosphor bar) and £1.80 (containing 10 x 18p ACP) will carry a special promotion offering customers the opportunity to send off for a special "Brighter Writer" kit, comprising a set of patterned stencils and water colour pencils, plus an instruction leaflet showing how plain stationery can easily be transformed and personalised. The books are designed by Trickett and Webb Limited. Cylinder numbers will appear on every sixth book and both books will appear in both left and right hand formats.

The three machine-vended books include two 50p and one £1 books. The first 50p book (cover No.2 in the MCC Bicentenary series) features the Ashes Urn and embroidered velvet bag on the front cover, and on the reverse the 1874 pavilion. Designed by Patricia Howes, the contents are 2 x 18p, 1 x 13p and 1 x 1p with phosphor bands as before.

The second 50p book (cover No.2 in the Botanical Gardens series) features the Royal Botanical Gardens, Edinburgh. Designed by Graham Evernden, the contents are 3 x 13p, 2 x 5p and 1 x 1p with phosphor bands as before.

The £1 book (cover No.2 in the Sherlock Holmes series) is entitled *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. The cover was designed by Andrew Davidson based on an idea by Mark Collicot. The contents are 5 x 18p and 1 x 13p stamps, again phosphor bands as before.



Both the 50p Botanical Gardens and the £1 books will be available from the new electronic stamp-vending machines being introduced into selected offices throughout the country. Other vending machines will have the 50p Cricket book once existing stocks are used up. Cylinder numbers of the stamps will appear on every eighth vending machine book.

All stamps are printed in photogravure by Harrison and Sons Limited, the stamps on the Chambon press and covers on the Libra bookmaking machine. The five stamp books will be available initially from philatelic sales counters or by post from the British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, Edinburgh EH3 5TT.

Postage Stamps, the Pursuit of Quality

Part 2

AUBREY WALKER

Production Control Up to this point, the pursuit of quality will have led to the existence of a well-organised Quality System, excellent art and design work, selected paper coated for the required printing process (gravure, offset litho, or intaglio) and carefully selected and tested printing inks. Now production control will be considered.

Firstly, the Process Department must study the artwork and a decision made as to how many and what colours are required. Separation negatives are then produced and positives made. Often, considerable work is necessary at this stage, masking off some areas and enhancing others. Not only considerable work, but skill and expertise as well as patience will be in evidence.

The first printing stage will be the production of a limited number of essays. Only when these satisfy the printer are they submitted to the customer for approval. The customer or the designer may express an opinion, and changes may be required. Very careful records are kept of all procedures and ink formulations used so that subsequent production will match the essays.

When approval is obtained, the photographers produce "step-and-repeat" negatives for the production of plates or cylinders, a separate one for each colour needed. This can be as many as eight, at present. At one time lithographic printers would restrict themselves to four-colour work (black plus the three primaries) but in more recent times, several colours may be used for the wet-offset process also. This calls for the same skills mentioned above.

From the "step-and-repeat" process, multi-positives for each colour are produced, and plates or cylinders made. Until recently, cylinder production depended on the craftsmanship acquired over a great many years, but as the years passed and the craftsmen retired, it became necessary to replace them by computer control. This means that faults at this stage are likely to be quite different and much more serious than any seen so far. Philatelists, be on the watch. When a computer goes haywire, it usually

makes a real job of it. Unfortunately for philatelists, the printers' quality watchdogs will probably snap up any defective material first!

The second printing stage follows when plates or cylinders are complete, and consists of proofing. This may be carried out on a different press from the one used for production, but conditions will relate to the production press as closely as possible.

This second stage is required so that "spots", blemishes or errors may be recognised and corrected, and this exercise is carried out both by the printers and the customer. Anything missed here will constitute a "constant error". An example of this is the missing serif seen (or rather not seen) on a 7p Machin (figure 7). Another example is the so-called "Queen with beard" on the 1p stamp from a 10p book, 8p + 1p + 1p. This probably arose from a repair rather than an original fault.



Figure 7. 7p missing serif

It may be of interest that proofing sheets produced by Harrisons are distinguished by the sheet numbers which are printed in red. All unwanted proof sheets are made waste under security conditions.

The third printing stage is required to adjust the various parameters of the press, and is known as "make-ready". At this stage, the sheet

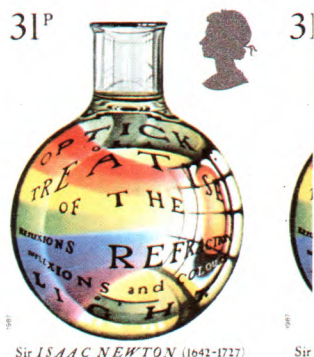
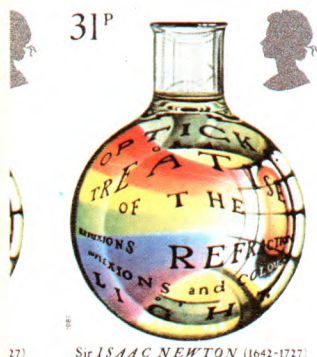


Figure 8. A proofing sheet (imperf) with the sheet numbers in red.

numbers are again printed in red. "Make-ready" takes place on the production press, and commences only after corrections required by the "spotting exercise" have been completed. This third stage immediately precedes the printing run for the customer, and on a gravure multi-unit press as used at Harrisons includes the following:

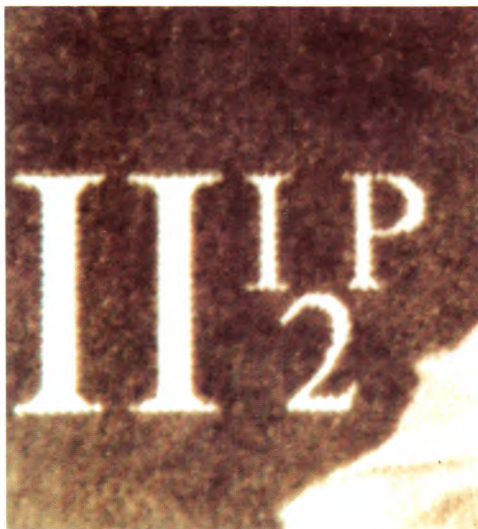
1. Ensure that the ink matches exactly that determined by the essaying and proofing operations.
2. Check that the correct paper is used for "webbing up", or on the feed board.
3. Fit the required cylinders, check the correct ink for each cylinder.
4. Commence printing, adjusting the printing pressure, knife pressure, colour register, ink viscosity, and ink colour. At this stage, the perforator will not be in operation. Incorrect adjustments can each give rise to typical faults – "dropped heads", mottled printing, doctor-blade marks (due to damage or foreign matter) or incorrect shades (see figures 9 and 10). The press-operator takes the appropriate action to correct the faults as they arise and when he is satisfied, the perforator is engaged and sheets taken for comparison with the accepted proof. A sheet is also sent for "spotting" after which acceptance by, and signature of, the overseer allows the job to run.

The fourth stage, the customer's printing run, now commences after the ink for the sheet numbers has been changed from red to black. All "make-ready" with red sheet numbers is made waste under security conditions (figure 8).

Figure 9. Shades of 12½p and typical doctor blade flaw on a Harrison's test sheet.



Figure 10. Variations on printed stamps



normal



mottled printing

What can go wrong at this stage? The short answer is 'anything'. A bit of paper under the doctor blade, foreign matter on the web (in one classic case the printer's manager insisted that potato crisps caused a problem!). Evaporation of solvent from the ink, or the addition of a little too much solvent (see fig.11). On the Jumelle press, the momentary failure of the electro-assist would cause the appearance of white specks resembling a snowstorm on the stamps, whilst

normal

paper stretch could cause a gradual drift in perforation registration requiring continual correction.

In the case of wet-offset lithography, there are further complications. The ink viscosity cannot be altered on the press, and unlike gravure, is supplied to the printing plate by a roller. The distribution of ink along the length of the inking roller is adjusted by the inker and colour control bars are printed on each sheet to

failure of electro-assist produces a snowstorm effect



permit measurement of ink density. The printing pressure may be adjusted by varying packing under the printing plate. Also in conventional wet-offset printing the press operator must control carefully the ink – water balance and the composition of the damping solution. As we remarked earlier, everyone is human and prone to err. Even press-operators must blink occasionally and that is when a defect slips through.

So what can be done about these occasional lapses to continue our pursuit of quality?

Well, the overseers check the output at frequent intervals, and samples are taken for systematic examination by trained “spotters”, who also measure any specified luminescence. Finally, examiners carry out 100% inspection, specifically looking for blemishes or defects. No, not “finally”, for there is a further random sampling check at the point of despatch, and in the case of the British Post Office, sample sheets are also examined by their scientists.

So how do defects ever reach the public? As we said at the beginning, perfection is unattainable, at least at the current state of the art. Automatic inspection machines as well as humans examining on 100% basis simply cannot guarantee that every defect will be recognised.

Even when defects *are* recognised and the items separated, there is bound to be a small but finite probability that some will inadvertently reach the customer. This is what will keep philatelists happy and on their toes.

The real fun is not in just collecting defective items, but in working out just how it happened and at what stage in the process. There is so very much that *can* go wrong that one can only salute the printers for ensuring that their deliveries maintain such a consistently high quality. But save us from philatelic perfection!

Inspection and Selection and the overall quality system

Apart from the 100% “Examining” and “Telling”, inspection is carried out on a sampling system designed to relate the sampling plan to the type and number of items. This implies that very small numbers of defects may be missed. The situation is improved by the use of on-line monitors for coating and gumming at Harrisons, plus an on-line phosphor monitor on the Jumelle press.

The basis of the Quality System is:

1. The vetting of all suppliers to the printers, with access to *their* quality control procedures.



Figure 11. Ink solvent variations. Left – dry; Right – a little too much solvent.

These illustrations were produced in a laboratory to demonstrate particular faults that could occur in printing.

2. Careful formulation and laboratory control of all materials used.
3. Thorough and complete documentation of all procedures and quality data.
4. Rapid feed-back of information to permit remedial action.
5. Close co-operation with customers and consideration of their comments.
6. Constant re-appraisal of formulations and procedures in order to take advantage of newly available materials, and learn from experience.
7. A small army of electrical, electronic, and mechanical engineers who repair, maintain, modify and improve machinery and equipment, ie make it go better.
8. A much larger army, unseen (sometimes), of Quality Assurance Advisors — Philatelists! — without whom many errors would remain undetected.

Capex 87 P & O Booklet

At the international stamp exhibition Capex 87 in Toronto, Canada from 13 to 21 June, the P & O prestige stamp book will be available from the Interpost exhibition stand specially overprinted for the exhibition. The overprint will bear the words “Capex ‘87” and incorporate the official exhibition logo in gold. This booklet will only be available at the exhibition, or subject to stock, by mail order from: Interpost, PO Box 378, Malverne, New York 11565, USA. The price will be £5 (or equivalent currency) plus 75p postage in Europe or £1 from the Far East and Australia.

"London 1980"

British Special Issues: No.136

FRANCIS KENNEDY

This issue made Post Office and philatelic history. For the first time, a stamp was issued directly to publicise a philatelic exhibition in advance of the event. Distinguishing the issue from those of 1978 and 1979 (British Architecture and the Rowland Hill death centenary, the exhibition involved, in this case LONDON 1980, is referred to in the design. In the earlier issues the exhibition was only mentioned in the margins of the miniature sheets associated with the stamps.

Another feature of the 1980 50p stamp (issued on 9 April) was that it was printed in recess (line engraving or intaglio). The design, a montage of famous London buildings, was by Jeffery Matthews who drew it in line to facilitate the engraving of the master die by Geoffrey Holt.

Printing was by Harrisons on the Jumelle press. After printing began, the master die needed to be re-engraved so the stamp exists in two states known as Die I and Die II. The two are most easily distinguished by the broken top horizontal line in the vignette containing the Queen's head (Die I) and the continuous line which replaced it (Die II). There are many other small differences, described in specialist catalogues.

The printing was in agate. Various shades of green exist due either to problems during printing or subsequent chemical re-action. Only the true agate colour is catalogued. Apart from the die differences, there are several constant printing flaws which can be allocated to given positions in the sheet. Sheets consist of 50 stamps in two panes of 25, perf. 14½ x 14. On withdrawal on 8 April 1981, sales had reached 24,997,000.

Miniature Sheet

A special printing in miniature sheet form was issued on 7 May 1980, the day after LONDON 1980 opened at Earls Court, London. The single 50p recess-printed stamp, fully perforated, was set within a surround, printed in photogravure, bearing the LONDON 1980 logo and inscribed INTERNATIONAL STAMP EXHIBITION 6-14 MAY

1980 above the stamp. Below the stamp was BRITISH POST OFFICE THIRD MINIATURE SHEET and 75p. All the stamps in the miniature sheets were Die II. The sheet, measuring 90 x 123mm was sold pre-packed with a printed card at 75p, the additional 25p being in support of the exhibition.

Printing was in two stages. First a recess cylinder with 36 widely spaced impressions of the stamp was put to press. The resulting sheets were halved and a photogravure cylinder bearing 18 surrounds completed a sheet lay-out of 18 miniature sheets. This was then perforated and guillotined into 18 singles.

The major error of this printing was the imperforate sheet of which a few have been reported. The quantity sold was 3,557,000 prior to withdrawal on 6 May 1981.



Philatelic Terms Explained

KENNETH F CHAPMAN

No.13: Jubilee Line

A philatelic centenary is due for commemoration this year for it was in 1887, Victoria's Golden Jubilee year, that the philatelic "Jubilee Line" came into general use following its experimental adoption in conjunction with the later printings of the 1d lilac (16 dots) bearing control letters from G to X.

The Jubilee Line consisted of a type-high raised rule enclosing all the images within each pane on the printing plate. It was placed so that it protected the outer edge of the printing plate (and thus the outside edges of the stamp images adjacent to the sheet margin) from damage during printing when heavy pressure is applied as the printing surface of the plate and the paper make contact.

This protective device was used for some printings of the 1887 ½d vermilion and all printings of the ½d bluish-green. The advent of bi-coloured stamps brought Jubilee Lines in both colours used for printing the 1½d, 2d, 4d, 5d, 9d and 10d stamps and the 1s in green and carmine.

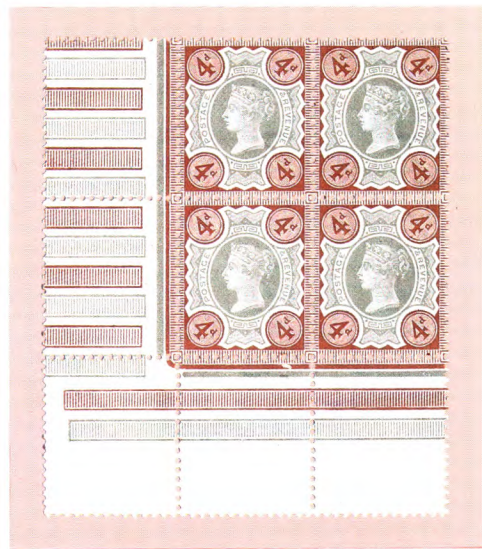
Sheets were divided in panes of differing sizes for various values of the "Jubilee" issue. The resulting Jubilee Lines enclosed each pane so that sheets of 240 stamps divided into two panes of 120 separated by a stamp-width vertical gutter, the lines surrounding 120 stamps.

The 4d stamp was printed in sheets of 320, consisting of 16 panes of 20 stamps. This "mill sheet", as it was termed, was then cut into four Post Office sheets of 80 (four panes of 20), each pane being enclosed by Jubilee Lines, one for each colour. Similar treatment was accorded the 4½d, 9d and 10d stamps. A pane of 20 of these is a very collectable item, complete with its Jubilee Lines and, as an added refinement, what are called "pillars" in any stamp-sized gutter margin still attached to the pane. The pillars were printed as fillers in the stamp-sized gutter margins between the panes. They consisted of lined-rectangles filled with close parallel bars, their purpose being to even out the printing pressure on the whole plate and prevent the slight paper

sag which tended to occur when the gutters were blank and free from a type-high stamp image or ornament of any kind.

The King Edward VII issues (mainly based on the QV Jubilee designs) were also printed with Jubilee Lines and pillars. The ½d and 1d stamps provided two types of line known, respectively, as continuous (ie unbroken) and co-extensive, in which the rule had a small break corresponding with the narrow white margins between the stamps in the sheet.

The Edwardian Jubilee Lines on the ½d and 1d values offer the chance of further study. What appear to be random cuts, dots and other white blemishes in the rule (on both the continuous and co-extensive lines) were, in fact, marks deliberately created by the printers, it is thought, to distinguish plates during production and before they were officially numbered.



New Stamp Rolls

A new stamp roll, specially printed for a large user of the post will be available for sale from philatelic counters and the British Philatelic Bureau from 23 June 1987.

The rolls, priced at £10, will contain 1,000 x 1p stamps and will be reeled for sideways delivery.

Printing is by Harrison & Sons Limited in photogravure on Advanced Coated Paper (ACP). The gum is PVA Dextrin.

The stamps are not regarded as new issues and no first day of issue facilities will be offered.

St John Ambulance Designs

DEBBIE COOK

As an illustrator you are offered many types of project which can test your creativity and skills. When I was asked by The Post Office to prepare four stamp visuals for St John Ambulance, I felt it was the right subject matter for me. I always saw St John's as a very "black and white" organisation, tying it very closely with my method of working: essentially, a strong black and white illustration and a carefully chosen range of limited colours. Add this to the requirement of researching the subject in great depth and you have the ingredients of the way I produce an illustration.

St John Ambulance have, throughout history, fulfilled the need for a first aid service wherever they saw it. In the 1880s they attended the pit-heads and factories; in the 1920s, with the advent of the motorised society, they attended roadside accidents; in the Second World War they were always there to help the bombed-out survivors; in the fun of the late 1950s and early 1960s they attended the pop concerts and sporting events; and today, they provide a vital link with the assistance in transportation of vital donor organs by means of the Air Wing.

As I delved into the subject of St John the material I discovered would have made perfect individual stamps. However, with my final four choices I hope to have produced a set which shows the development of St John until the present day, a development which can be seen through the changing transport used during the last 100 years. From the two-wheeled litter, through the motorised ambulances, to the aeroplane. Unfortunately, other more obscure methods of transport like the bicycle litter and hospital train had to be jettisoned.

When the concepts I produced had been accepted I spent many days of intense research at the St John's Gate Museum in Clerkenwell, London EC1. Finding just the right costumes from old photographs and dress regulations, flicking through old copies of *First Aid* magazine for stretchers and ambulances and discovering the multitude of first aid equipment detailed in their catalogues. I also travelled to Stansted Airport to meet Air Wing volunteers and inspect



the planes used. It is strange how every commission adds something more to your life. I seem to notice St John members more and more. Whether they are collecting outside the local supermarket or in attendance at a sporting venue, I always catch sight of their black and white uniforms and feel reassured at their presence.



The Museum Piece

DOUGLAS N MUIR

Postal Mechanisation

On 26 May a new display went on show in the main gallery of the National Postal Museum on the theme of British postal mechanisation. It will run until 21 July and contains postal items and research material covering the period 1935 to date.

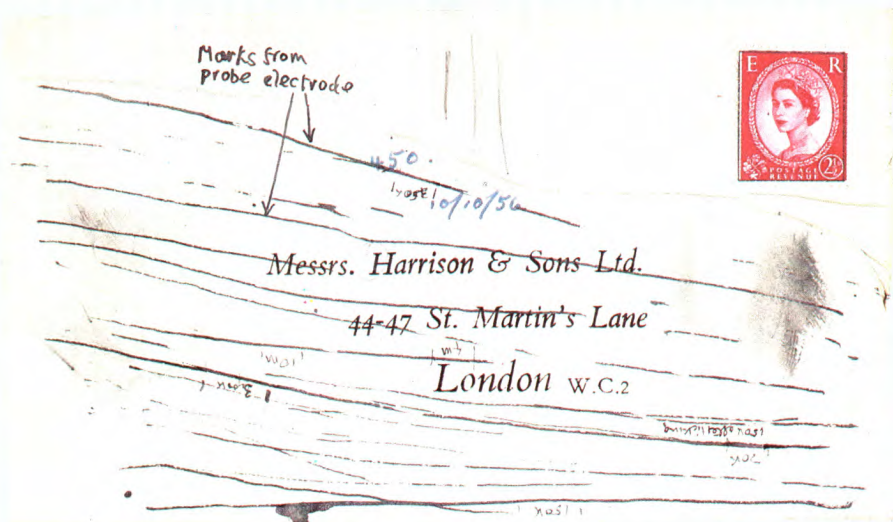
Among the items on display are Brighton Transomas from 1935 (the first sorting machine to work successfully and to mark the envelope), various British trials of sorting machines and the marks they produced including Luton and Norwich phosphor dots, and the trials of coloured phosphor dots introduced in 1978 and which are now applied to most letters and cards of inland mail.

One of the areas covered in depth is the work done to try and find suitable materials to mark stamps so that they could be used to face the letters for automatic cancelling. As issued, the

stamps first had graphite lines in 1957 and later phosphor bands of varying make-up. But the first trials in the laboratories took place in the late 1940s with purely optical scanning. When this was not successful the chemists and engineers turned to the application of lines to the stamps – firstly on the front and finally on the back. Various substances were used including zinc, salt, metallised paper and even silver paper from chocolate wrappings.

The final decision was to use naphthadag, or graphite lines. The example illustrated shows a trial of 10 October, 1956. Aquadag lines were printed in a frame on the front of some 2½d Wilding stamps by Harrison's. (Other trials had two short lines on either side of the stamps.) Some of these were applied to envelopes as here and put through a prototype machine which came to be called ALF – Automatic Letter Facer – in the research station at Dollis Hill. The black lines on the envelope are marks from the probe electrodes at different levels. In the end the graphite lined stamps were issued in 1957 together with the experimental ALF at Southampton.

Among the other areas of strength are the experiments with phosphors and with circular phosphor discs on stamps to obviate problems with first and second class recognition on ALF.



Postal History from the Channel Islands

4. Price List from Rio

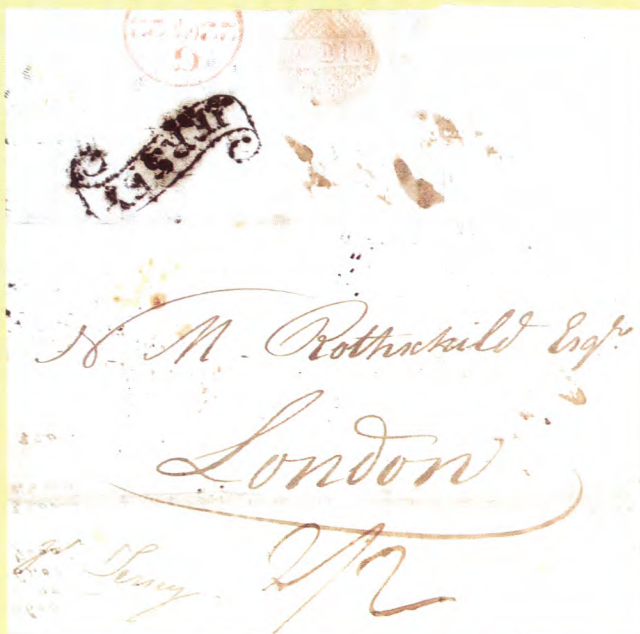
JOHN SIMPSON

This cover, for such it must be called as it originally contained a letter, was sent from Rio de Janeiro in Brazil to Rothschild's in London in December 1821. It bears an ordinary Jersey Scroll, the normal marking applied to letters posted in that island between 1810 and 1830, the first circular date stamp being issued for Jersey in 1830. Why should a foreign missive carry a Jersey mark?

The item concerned is a *prix courant* (a list of commodities available and the prices applicable) issued by W Theremin & Co. in Rio. There is a date inside, 13 Dec 1821, but the letter is missing. An arrival mark in red for London of 22 Feb 1822 shows that the journey took 71 days and one immediately thinks of the tall ships races. In the first half of the 19th century Guernsey had a flourishing ship-building industry based to the north of the harbour at St Peter

Port and at St Sampson's. Its boats crossed and recrossed most of the seven seas continually, but a considerable proportion of their trade was with South and Central America. Coffee and hides would be loaded at Rio or Bahia for transport to northern Europe and the current price lists and invoices would naturally be carried as well. The captains would make for Jersey or Guernsey to drop any mail for England and to see their families before continuing to Holland or France with their cargoes.

In both Jersey and Guernsey there had always been strong opposition to the Ship Letter regulations and the Jersey States had refused to register the Act. Between 1808 and 1834 there was no Ship Letter marking available at Jersey to apply to mail for onward transit which was dropped there by boat. In this case they applied the normal scroll mark. This is the second type, in



use from 1817 to 1830, which has no stop after the 'Y'. (Notice that the sender has indicated the route in the manuscript 'pr Jersey'.) Although the foreign origin of the list is clearly shown, it was treated as having originated in Jersey. At that time the rate to Weymouth was 3d and the inland mileage charge to London was 10d, i.e. 1/1 per single sheet. As this is charged at 2/2 it must have been a double letter, with some enclosure such as an invoice or letter. As a Ship Letter it should have cost an additional 2/2 made up of twice the Ship Letter charge of 1/- plus 2d for the Captain's gratuity.

It may be of interest to note some details from the list. The commodities supplied by Theremin's included sugar, coffee, cotton, hides, rice, tobacco, run, timber, horned cattle and ipecacuanha. Freight prices to Great Britain, France and the Netherlands were given and importers in Great Britain were expected to pay 15% of the landing charges on entry. This was 16% for Portugal (the 'motherland' of Brazil) and 24% for the rest of Europe. Trade, apparently, was very profitable!

First Day Cancels at Epsom Withdrawn

As of 13 April 1987 the first day cancellation facilities at Epsom S O have been withdrawn. These have now been incorporated with the Kingston upon Thames facilities. New Kingston upon Thames dies have also been ordered for Weybridge, though no date of introduction has yet been advised.

Telecom Telegraph Postcard

Telecom Technology Showcase issued a new card on 20 May featuring a drawing of a Victorian telegraph office as used to illustrate the sheet music for *The Telegraph* song. This is No.16 in their Ephemera series and the mint cards cost 10p each. Orders (including 40p for postage) should be sent to The Philatelic Clerk, Telecom Technology Showcase, 135 Queen Victoria St., London EC4V 4AT, cheques being made payable to British Telecom.



Gems of the R M Phillips Collection

146. The Early Letterpress Era

Two artist's drawings for the 1876 8d value with large coloured corner letters. These were submitted in April 1876.

These items can be seen in Frame 30 of the open display of the R M Phillips collection at the National Postal Museum during normal hours – 9.30am to 4.30pm Monday to Thursday and 9.30am to 4.00pm on Fridays.



Letters to the Editor



Official British Inland Airmails

Sir,

With reference to your articles on the Official Inland Airmails, I have finally unearthed a photograph of the Westland Wessex tri-motor G-AAGW taken at Haldon about 1933 and enclose it along with another close-up of the livery of the Great Western Rail Air Services. You may like to print it although the quality is somewhat poor now. Perhaps that is Captain Olley by the aircraft!



Your magazine is excellent and although I do not always understand all the terms I find enough to interest me in all the articles. I was particularly interested in the article on the Channel Island stamps during the Nazi Occupation, one of the designs being by R W Cutland. There are not many of us about!

Shirley, Southampton

M A CUTLAND

Prestige Stamp Books

Sir,

I am, as Mr Neve is (*March Bulletin*), a collector of GB stamps but, unlike him, I am absolutely satisfied with all the items the Post Office issues and services. Of course, collecting GB stamps from abroad is more difficult than it would be if

you lived in Great Britain, but I positively believe that without some obstacles to overcome there wouldn't also be the big pleasure that real collecting gives.

I also collect "se-tenant" and have solved the difficult problem that so grieves Mr Neve in a very easy way. I got in contact with other stamp collectors living in England, to whom I send the panes I do not need (they can use them for postage). In exchange, I receive other philatelic items, such as sets of mint stamps fdc's or even new stamp books.

I suggest that Mr Neve follows my example. I am sure he will also be enriched by contact with a foreign person.

If this is of any "solace", I can assure you that I'll not be among those collectors who, as Mr Neve prophesies, are going to give up collecting GB stamps. I am absolutely enthusiastic about all your services and, if I may express a wish, I ask you not to make things too easy for collectors.

Rheinfelden, Switzerland JENNY BURCKHARDT

Youth Philately

Sir,

On reading through, yet again, the most interesting and poignant lead article by Les Stubbs in the March *Bulletin* I was immediately struck by the apparent omission of any reference whatsoever, to what surely must be the singularly outstanding contributory reason for the apparently declining interest among the younger generation for what is reputedly the world's foremost pastime.

I refer, of course, to the inexorable rise in the cost to the collector of supporting the hobby to a satisfactory and rewarding level, which, apart from curtailing the more adventurous activities of the average adult collector, must undoubtedly be having a somewhat more devastating effect on the very limited resources available to school children by way of weekly pocket money.

Sadly, it would seem that this recurring financial restriction is not confined solely to the acquisition of older and proportionately more scarce items, needed for the completion of long collected sets, but has burgeoned into "New British Issues", which, in themselves, have spiralled in both price and frequency of issue to such an extent as to have become almost prohibitive to the young collector.

As a result, we are now faced with a declining interest of sufficient magnitude as to have attracted the deepened concern of the

industry, but which is, I fear, though possibly well intended, perhaps a decade too late.

Leamington Spa, Warwickshire MJPritchett
(an average collector)

Mary, Queen of Scots Aerogramme

Sir,

I was somewhat surprised to see that your article about the Mary, Queen of Scots aerogramme, page 143, *March Bulletin*, has no reference to Sheffield, either on the aerogramme or in the article about Mary's life.

The article says, "For the next 20 years she was kept prisoner in a series of mansions ending with Fotheringhay Castle".

The aerogramme says, "fled to England and after 18 years of imprisonment, was executed at Fotheringhay."

May I bring to your attention the fact that for 14 of these 18 or 20 years Mary was held a prisoner in Sheffield in the custody of George, 6th Earl of Shrewsbury (whose tomb is in Sheffield Cathedral). Mary was brought to Sheffield Castle on 28 November, 1570; she remained there and at Sheffield Manor, with a few odd breaks at Chatsworth and Buxton, until 2 September, 1584.

I would have thought that these 14 years would have warranted a mention, if not an illustration.

Sheffield

A TROWER

The article on Mary's life was curtailed for space reasons only, and many episodes in her remarkable career had to be omitted. Her date of birth, as many readers have pointed out, was 8 December 1542, not 28 as wrongly reported. Ed.

Postboxes in India

Sir,

In the *May Bulletin* Mrs Cox, in her letter, refers to a house at Dalhousie in India which, in 1865, had been co-owned by a Mr Baden Powell and she wondered if there had been a connection with the founder of the Boy Scouts.

In 1865 Robert Baden-Powell (who later became Lord Baden-Powell) would have been aged eight. Indeed, he was not posted to India by the Army till 1876.

However, there was a connection. Baden Henry Baden-Powell was half brother of the founder of the Scout movement. Henry was a civil servant in India. He went out in 1860 and was based at Lahore. He became a judge at the Chief Court of the Punjab, which, during the summer, moved to Simla.

Robert Baden-Powell stayed with his half brother during leave in 1878. That was in Simla but it is probable that Baden Henry had earlier had a house at Dalhousie.

Mrs Cox mentioned the house called "Snowdon" at Dalhousie. The residence of commanders-in-chief in India at Simla was also called "Snowdon". It was used for this purpose from 1873.

Edinburgh

D C JEFFERIES

Architects Cylinders Correction

Some of the cylinder numbers and colours reported last month were incorrect. They should have read:

18p 3E Deep grey

31p 1F Black; 1G Dull violet

34p 4E Deep grey.

June Digest

Issued in June

2 June **St John Ambulance PHQ cards**
(Nos.102 A-D) 15p each

13 June **Exhibition card** with 31p and 34p
Flowers stamps, price £1

designer: Carroll Dempsey Thirkell

printing: Debdens Security Print,
litho and intaglio

16 June **St John Ambulance stamps** 18p,
22p, 31p, 34p

designer: Debbie Cook

printing: The House of Questa, offset
lithography, 30mm x 41mm, perf.
14 x 14½, printed on unwater-
marked, phosphor-coated paper in
sheets of 100 on PVA Dextrin
gum.

**Bureau f.d. service alternative
handstamp** — London EC1

presentation pack: £1.27

23 June **Standard aerogramme** with new
ACP-type phosphor ink, 26p

printing: McCorquodale Envelopes
Ltd

23 June **1p Stamp Roll** containing 1,000 x 1p,
sideways delivery

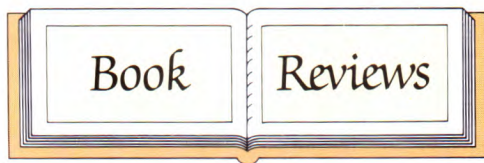
printing: Harrisons, photogravure on
ACP, with PVA Dextrin gum

Withdrawn in June

16 June **Medieval Life issue** — all items

23 June **26p PCP National definitive** (issued
27.1.82)

34p PCP National definitive (issued
28.8.84)



Old Letter Boxes by Martin Robinson
(Shire Publications No.188). 32pp, lavishly illustrated. £1.25

This excellent little book is a must for all car owners. With the still-growing interest in street furniture, I was particularly pleased, too, to see the results of so much effort updating in a refreshing way my original work of 1969 (*The Letter Box* Centaur Press, 1969). For those interested in the artifacts of postal history much



The only survivor, so far as is known, of the Ludlow wall boxes made in the reign of Edward VIII. It is at Bawdsey in Suffolk, and is illustrated in Martin Robinson's book.

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pleasure is to be found in searching them out, as any member of the Letter Box Study Group will agree. For all of us Martin Robinson's work is a most welcome addition to our library.

JEAN FARRUGIA

For those interested, Jean's own book can still be obtained from the National Postal Museum, as can the above book. Those who would like to know more about the Letter Box Study Group should contact Sally Jones, 43 Miall Road, Hall Green, Birmingham B28 9BS. Ed.

Phosphor Variation on Standard Aerogrammes

The new ACP-type phosphor ink, recently introduced for second class stamps will in future be used for the phosphor bars printed alongside the Non Value Indicator (NVI) on standard aerogrammes.

The aerogrammes, printed with the new phosphor ink by McCorquodale Envelopes Ltd will be available from 23 June 1987 by post from the British Philatelic Bureau and from philatelic counters.

The aerogrammes are not regarded as new issues and no official first day of issue facilities will be offered.

British Philatelic Bulletin

Editor Douglas N. Muir

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