

BRITISH PHILATELIC

The ROYAL MAIL magazine *for stamp collectors*

Volume 44 Number 3

NOVEMBER 2006 £1.20

Bulletin

Sea Life • The Sky at Night
• The Bureau in Edinburgh



Forthcoming issues and withdrawals



Cover Royal Mail's Christmas stamps, featuring illustrations by Katsuro Kluchi, go on sale this month. The Christmas airletter is previewed on page 74 of this issue. Photograph by Geoff Dann.

A musical muddle We regret the descriptions of some of the Sounds of Britain stamps were 'out of tune' with the illustrations on p368 of the August *Bulletin*. The designs feature: 50p Irish Fiddle, 72p Black American Blues, £1.19 Latin American Maracas. We apologise for any confusion caused.

Issues All items are available from Royal Mail Talents House (address below); selected items are available at Post Office branches and Post Office philatelic outlets at main post offices in Bath, Birmingham, Brighton, Bristol, Cambridge, Canterbury, Cardiff, Chester, Colchester, Coventry, Croydon, Durham, Edinburgh, Exeter, Glasgow, Grimsby, Harrogate, Leicester, London (Trafalgar Square & Eastcheap), Newcastle upon Tyne, Norwich, Nottingham, Plymouth, Portsmouth, Southampton, Southend-on-Sea, Stevenage, Stratford-on-Avon, Stroud, Truro, Windsor and York.

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

31 October	Issue 2006 Christmas stamp cards (six stamps and miniature sheet).
31 October	Withdrawal 2005 Christmas stamps, miniature sheet, presentation pack, stamp cards, stamp books, Generic sheet, and 2004 Christmas airletters.
7 November	Issue 2006 Christmas stamps, miniature sheet, presentation pack, Generic sheet, two Smilers sheets, stamp books and airletters (national and Welsh).
9 November	Issue Lest We Forget miniature sheet, presentation pack and Generic Sheet • 2006 Yearbook (standard and deluxe versions) and Yearpack.
14 November	Issue Belgica Stamp Exhibition Generic sheet (Hello stamp) • Roll of 500 x 1st class definitive (PIP design)
17 November	Withdrawal Trafalgar coin and ingot covers.
30 November	Issue Celebrating Scotland miniature sheet and presentation pack • 2006 Miniature Sheet and Presentation Pack Collections.
27 December	Withdrawal 2004 Yearbook (standard & deluxe versions) and Yearpack.

Northern Ireland country stamps Please note that the gravure printings of the Northern Ireland country stamps, announced for 9 November, have been delayed. A new date of availability will be announced shortly. Royal Mail regrets any inconvenience caused.

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PHILATELIC BUREAU
EDINBURGH 1990**

The Bureau in Edinburgh

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The **British Philatelic Bulletin** is published monthly by Royal Mail, 148 Old Street, London EC1V 9HQ • **Editor** J R Holman • **Price** £1.20 single copies from Post Office Ltd philatelic outlets • **Annual subscription** £12.95 UK & Europe; £17.95 elsewhere. Send subscriptions to Royal Mail Talents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB • **Binders** (to hold 24 issues) £8.50, storage boxes (about 30 copies) £9.95 available by post from Royal Mail (Edinburgh address, above) • Royal Mail also publishes the fortnightly **British Postmark Bulletin**, giving 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 specified 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 Beacon Press • **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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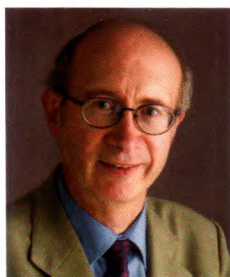


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This month The Editor previews this issue



John Holman, Editor

NOVEMBER will be a busy month for collectors of modern GB issues, with the Christmas stamps and miniature sheet on 7 November, followed by the Lest We Forget and Celebrating Scotland miniature sheets on 9 and 30 November. The Scotland sheet is the first in a series celebrating the four countries that make up the United Kingdom – a sheet for England and St George will be issued in April.

The Beatles are the subject of the first set of special stamps in 2007 – the issue was previewed here last month, and this time we give details of the Sea Life and Sky at Night stamps which go on sale during February. Plans are being finalised for the 2008 issues, and these will be announced here early next year. Meanwhile we are seeking your views on issues for 2009 and you will find with this *Bulletin* a form for you to vote for five subjects from a short list drawn up by Royal Mail's Philatelic Sector. Send your form in by 30 November for entry in a draw to win a 2006 Yearbook.

This *Bulletin* includes features on the move of the Philatelic Bureau from London to Edinburgh in 1966, and on the *Bulletin* contributor and noted author James Mackay, who celebrates his 70th birthday this month. I hope you find the features of interest. JOHN HOLMAN •

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



Glenn Morgan

Torquay 2006 The 6th National Philatelic Exhibition will be held at the Riviera Centre, Torquay on 24-25 November. The exhibition part of the show will comprise over 500 frames of some 148 competitive entries – see the exhibition's web site www.torquay2006.org.uk for details. There are about 18 entries dealing with GB philately, spread over Traditional, Postal History, Aero, Postal Stationery, Special Studies, and Social Philately classes. For those less interested in looking at other people's collections, there will be many dealers present, so you can browse their stocks for interesting items for your own collection. For collectors of exhibition souvenirs, there will be a Smilers sheet produced for the exhibition organisers by Rush-stamps in a limited edition of 400 sheets. There will also be a very limited number of overprinted plain 'Boots' sheets and, at time of writing, another sheet is in preparation, possibly showing a colonial high value stamp as a gift to entrants and for purchase at the door to visitors to the exhibition, along with the Handbook, which will list entrants and results and the dealers with their stand numbers.

The designs from a competition for the South West Counties youth will be used either as a postmark for mail posted at the exhibition or as a cachet; the designs will be on the themes of Transport of Mail and Brunel. There will be a stand for visitors to pick up free literature. It promises to be a good show •

Stamp shows Thematica II will be held at its usual venue of the Carisbrooke Hall, Scymour Street, London (off the Edgware Road, close to Marble Arch) on Saturday and Sunday 18 and 19 November. Open on the Saturday from 10.30 to 17.30, and on Sunday from 10.30 to 17.00. As always, admission is free. Regular visitors to Thematica should note that this year there is a change, as the days are Saturday and Sunday. All visitors will be given free (as long as stocks last) a souvenir sheet designed by Jeffery Matthews MBE to celebrate the 80th birthday of The Queen. The sheet features an alternative design Jeffery produced for Royal Mail in 1986 for The Queen's 60th birthday. In addition to the dealers from many parts of the World, Thematica II will include an activity area for young visitors. Dates of future Thematica exhibitions: 23-24 June and 24-25 November 2007, and 28-29 June and 29-30 November 2008.

Next year, the British Thematic Association will host a European thematic stamp exhibition, Eurothema, with exhibits from eight European countries, in conjunction with Thematica II on 24-25 November •

London 2010 – Festival of Stamps now has a website, giving basic exhibition information (such as dates, press releases, an invitation for the trade to request stand details and costs, plus a floor plan and virtual reality tour of the Business Design Centre). The distinctive and elegant logo for the show is also featured. The website will naturally contain more information as it becomes available, and collectors should check it out every so often for updates. •

The Washington 2006 exhibition has recently distributed a quarter of a million dollars in surplus funds to act as seed money for the 2016 New York show, and to support other major philatelic projects. Washington 2006 issued its final show report and announced that the world philatelic exhibition had not only received many accolades, but also had achieved a surplus. President Michael D Dixon stated that the surplus reflected the fact that significant contributions had been made by more than 600 individual and society members who had provided the seed money for Washington 2006. 'We believe we were able to meet all our expenses and preserve most, if not all, the individually contributed funds.' He said the Executive Committee recommended that the Board of Directors vote to reinstate past practices to provide seed money for the next international stamp show in the US and to support educational projects. The directors voted to distribute the initial surplus funds of just over a quarter of a million dollars to provide \$100,000 in seed money to New York 2016, and \$75,000 to the American Philatelic Society as matching funds in its fundraising campaign to move the Headsville post office from the Smithsonian to the American Philatelic Center in Bellefonte, PA. They also voted five gifts amounting to \$90,000 for various educational projects •



The souvenir sheet designed by Jeffery Matthews: free to Thematica II visitors, as long as stocks last.

London 2010 website www.london2010.org.uk

Enquiries to: London 2010 – Festival of Stamps Ltd, 107 Charterhouse Street, London EC1M 6PT.

Washington 2006 enquiries

For further information, write to Washington 2006, PO Box 2006, Ashburn, VA 20146-2006, or see the website at www.washington-2006.org.

ATA exhibit enquiries For a prospectus and application form, contact the American Topical Association: PO Box 57, Arlington, TX 76004-0057 USA. e-mail americantopical@msn.com

Methodist PS enquiries Mrs Sheila Kent, Secretary MPS, 3 Gayhurst Close, Moulton, Northampton NN3 1LQ.

PSS enquiries Colin Baker, 4 Greenhill Gardens, Sutton Veny, Warminster BA12 7AY. bakercsandr@lineone.net

ATA membership enquiries 411A Lillard Road, Arlington, Texas TX 76012-3698, USA.

GBCC enquiries Secretary-Treasurer GBCC, Parker A Bailey, 2341 SW 86th Terrace, Davie FL 33324, USA. e-mail pbaileyjr@comcast.net

ATA competition The American Topical Association's all-topical exhibition will be held 15-17 June 2007 in Irving, Texas. This National Topical Stamp Show will be held at the Sheraton Grand Hotel, located adjacent to the Dallas/Ft Worth Airport. Applications will be considered on a first-come, first-served basis and must be received no later than 16 April 2007 or until such time as all frames have been fully subscribed. •

Society publications The Methodist PS Newsletter for Summer 2006 continued its recent use of colour, which has enhanced the features within significantly. The articles are indispensable for anyone with an interest in Methodism in philately, and include details of the Post Office sited within a Methodist church (Dove Holes, Buxton PO closed in 2004 and reopened three mornings a week in the church). Article author Tom Norgate notes that this was one of three offices known to have erroneously used violet ink in its Horizon equipment and seeks details of other locations besides Canary Wharf, London E14 and Hampden Park, Eastbourne. (Tom is an acknowledged specialist in the field of British postal automation and managed to include two of his interests in the one article!) •

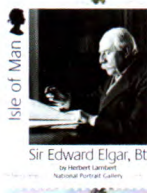
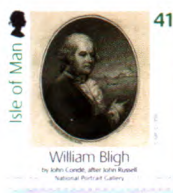
The Postal Stationery Society's *Journal* for August has appeared. It contains two main articles of interest to collectors of British stationery: Interpreting the History of GB Newspaper Wrappers, and Perforations Through Postal Stationery Items: Envelopes •

The July-August issue of the American Topical Association's *Topical Time* contains six major articles: the US as a world power (part three), baseball on stamps, V is for Victory, WWII patriotic covers, Hutt River Principality and a critique of an exhibit about Tutankhamun (Tutankhamen) •

There are a number of societies based overseas which have as their subject matter the stamps and postal history of Great Britain, two of which regularly send us their journals. The German group 'Forschungsgemeinschaft Grossbritannien eV' publishes *Rundbrief*, and issue 144 incorporates articles and snippets covering several aspects of GB collecting in its 52 A4 mainly black-and-white pages. It is in the German language and looks to be a good read (at least the pictures are interesting!) and there is a website based at www.fggb.de for those who wish to delve deeper or join the group. As a registered society the FGGB is a worldwide organisation of philatelists interested in the stamps and postal history of GB. Its work is directed mainly at German-speaking collectors, and for this reason all publications and the website (except for the Welcome page which is also available in English) relating to this area of collecting are in German •

The second publication is the quarterly *GBCC Chronicle*, from the Great Britain Collectors' Club of the USA. Its July issue comprises 40 black-and-white pages (in American Quarto?) and contains the usual tried-and-tested mix of articles about current and past stamp issues and postal history from GB to ensure that all members are catered for within each magazine •

If your society publishes a journal that has content that relates to British philately in some way, why not submit regular copies to the Editor of the *Bulletin* for occasional inclusion in Stamp Scene? •



Crown Agents Stamp Bureau The Crown Agents Stamp Bureau continues to offer dealers and collectors the opportunity to get information on new issues from the many countries that it represents on an agency basis, and collectors can also buy any of the 1110 stamps via its arrangements with Harry Allen, the official distributors for the CASB. Regular newsletters on their website depict many stamps, with some of the themes replicating those of Royal Mail, and I always find it interesting to see how other countries have chosen to treat the same subject matter.

The 150th anniversary of the Victoria Cross issues from Nauru and Kiribati (right), for example, depict contemporary black and white battle scenes from the *Illustrated London News*; while the Isle of Man recently issued a set of eight stamps to mark the 150th anniversary of the National Portrait Gallery, London, featuring individuals with a Manx connection. The portraits in the set are executed in a variety of techniques including photography, engraving and painting, illustrating the collection's wide-ranging appeal. Three are shown above; also featured are: Ewan Christian, Sir Hall Caine, Lady Maria Callcott, John Martin and Sir John Betjeman •

THE VICTORIA CROSS 150th ANNIVERSARY



Visit the Crown Agents Stamp Bureau at www.casb.co.uk or the Isle of Man PO at www.gov.im/post/stamps

Spare stamps required The Stamp Active Network, which runs Kids' Corner at autumn and spring Stampex, will shortly be faced with the problem of running out of stamps, which they require in singles, pairs, or blocks, on or off cover for young British collectors.

Perhaps you collect them off your daily mail or have unwanted items lying in shoe boxes? However they come, the team would be grateful for any contributions that you can make. Better items will become auction lots for the kids to bid on at Stampex, prizes in the tombola or for the competitions run by the Stamp Active Network. Try to remember what joy you got from stamp collecting as a youngster, and support this worthy cause that will help generate the next generation of collectors.

Please bring stamps to Kids' Corner at the next Stampex, or send them to Dave Armitage, 2 Shut Lane, Earls Colne, Colchester, Essex CO6 2RE •

Enquiries Mike Jackson Publications, 3 Cottesmore Avenue, Melton Mowbray LE13 0HY, or visit website www.mjpublications.com

Forthcoming publication Volume one of an important new work titled *The Encyclopaedia of the Maltese Cross Cancellations of Great Britain and Ireland*, by Professor S David Rockoff and Mike Jackson is due to be published 'in 2006', so must be imminent •

Stamp Active Network For further information about the Stamp Active Network and its support of young collectors, e-mail the Secretary, John Davies: davies1890@aol.com

Help for stamp club leaders Are you a junior stamp club leader? Or perhaps you are thinking of setting up a club for your young collectors? For a few years, www.planetstamp.co.uk has been run as a 'kids only' domain, but they also had many 'seniors' comment on its useful information, so they recently expanded it to include a section just for club leaders.

This section has now been developed further with a bigger 'Letterbox' archive of the most frequently asked questions, and answers, on how to run a junior stamp club. Resident guru, Erene Grieve, has compiled a lot of queries and its 'webmaster' Tony Lancaster will continue to enlarge the archive with regular updates thanks to the ongoing sponsorship from Cavendish Auctions. E-mail erenegrieve@f2s.com if you have a question.

The 'Kidstamps' club on the site, previously run by the late Anne Dummer, is now in the capable hands of Christine Finn. There will be new competitions and more articles from 'Squidge' (the stamp collecting squirrel) for young collectors to enjoy.

For those interested in competing, don't forget the British Youth Stamp Championships, sponsored by Stanley Gibbons Ltd. Entry forms and details are all on the site, and exhibits will be on display in November at 'Torquay 2006' •

GBFDC For more details write to Terry Barnett, 7 Mackets Lane, Hunts Cross, Liverpool, L25 0QA, telephone 0151 486 2610, e-mail secretary@gbfdc.co.uk or visit website www.gbfdc.co.uk

GBFDC This organisation was formed in 1994 and now boasts over 330 members. Its main aims are to raise the profile of Great Britain FDC collecting by stimulating greater interest in the hobby, to increase the number of collectors, to facilitate communication between collectors, and to generally provide more and better information about this form of collecting. It services its own covers, holds auctions, publishes a bi-monthly newsletter and organises 'informal regional pub meetings' – yes, the meetings are held in public houses and suitable hotels, so presumably become more informal as the afternoon progresses! •

Enquiries Download the price lists at www.rushstamps.co.uk or request free copies from Rushstamps (Retail) Ltd, PO Box One, Lyndhurst SO43 7PP.

Dealer price lists Rushstamps has released RushExpress catalogues 58 and 59 which comprise 96 pages each. Number 58 covers basic stamps from 1840 to date, plus booklets, errors, cylinder blocks, Smilers sheets and the like; while number 59 lists anything that is not basically stamps, such as FDCs, covers, packs, cinderella items, strike mail, etc •

Dr Alan K Huggins, Honorary Secretary to the RDP Board of Election, Briar Lodge, 134 Berkeley Avenue, Chesham HP5 2RT. Telephone 01494 772359.

RDP update A reminder that The Roll of Distinguished Philatelists board of election invites nominations for 2007 signatories by 31 December 2006. The Roll was established in 1921 by the Philatelic Congress of Great Britain with the approval of King George V, who was the first signatory.

To receive details regarding qualifications for possible candidates and a copy of the nomination form, write to the address given opposite •

Royal Mail news New issues and products



ROYAL MAIL TALLENTS HOUSE EDINBURGH
 "We look
 to Scotland
 for all our ideas
 of civilization"
 Francois Voltaire
 1694-1778
 30-11-2006
 FIRST DAY OF ISSUE

FIRST DAY OF ISSUE - ST ANDREWS - FIFE
 "To the
 memory of
 St Andrew and
 Scotland yet!"
 30-11-2006

Celebrating Scotland A new miniature sheet goes on sale on St Andrew's Day, 30 November – the first in a series of country sheets. It bears the current 1st class Scottish country stamp (Lion Rampant), a 1st class with a new Saltire flag image (both at definitive stamp size) and two special stamp size 72p stamps featuring an illustration of St Andrew and a night view of Edinburgh Castle. Price £2.08 or £2.60 in presentation pack. The sheet size is 123 × 70mm, the two 72p stamps are 60 × 24mm; it was designed by Silk Pearce and printed in gravure by De La Rue Security Print. The 1st class Lion stamp was designed by Tayburn using a sculpture by Frank Pottinger, and the new Saltire stamp illustration is by Peter Crowther. The St Andrew stamp illustration is by Clare Melinsky (designer of the 1997 Saints Columba and Augustine stamps) and the photograph of Edinburgh Castle is from Corbis. The sheet background features an antique print of Edinburgh.

The presentation pack includes a map of Scotland depicting its scenery, architecture and industries, surrounded by quotations about the country by Voltaire, Andrew Carnegie, Sir Walter Scott, Hugh MacDiarmid, Alexander Gray and Dr Louis B Wright. Other illustrations include St Andrews Cathedral, the David Hume monument in Edinburgh, and a young rugby fan. The pack was written by Alexandra Morgan and printed by Walsall.

The first day cover envelope (30p) features a view of the countryside near St Andrews. Serviced covers with Tallents House or St Andrews first day postmark will cost £2.92 (UK customers), or £2.49 overseas. Orders for serviced FDCs must be received at Tallents House by the day of issue. The postmarks feature a quotation from Voltaire and a traditional toast ●

The Beatles stamps The announcement in September of our forthcoming Beatles stamps (9 January) was widely reported by the press, both in the UK and across Europe, many newspapers prominently featuring the designs of the stamps. We are expecting unprecedented demand for the stamps, pack, miniature sheet and stamp cards from Beatles fans as well as stamp collectors. Early ordering is advised to avoid disappointment ●

Christmas airletter Standard and Welsh versions available from 7 November.



November issues This month's special issue is our annual Christmas set, this year featuring a Snowman, Father Christmas, and Reindeer. As well as the stamps, there is a miniature sheet, stamp books (containing 12 1st class or 2nd class stamps), Generic sheet (10 × 1st class, 10 × 2nd class), and stamp cards. There is a new Christmas airletter, produced in standard and Welsh versions. The stamps and related products go on sale on 7 November. For further details see the September *Bulletin*.

As well as the Christmas miniature sheet, there will be two further sheets this month: *Lest We Forget*, marking the 90th anniversary of the Battle of the Somme (9 November) and 'Celebrating Scotland' on St Andrew's Day (30 November). Both contain unique stamps and existing country stamps •



Orders and enquiries Royal Mail Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB. Order line: 08457 641 641 (UK), or +44 131 316 7483 (overseas). Handling charge: £1.45 UK, £1.55 Europe, £2.15 Rest of World.

Stamp ingots The ingots featuring stamps of the reigns of Victoria, Edward VII and George V have proved popular, and we are continuing the series with six new ingots reproducing stamps from the reigns of Edward VIII and George VI. The first of these, featuring the Edward VIII 1d stamp, is now available, price £27.95. The next, featuring the George VI 1d definitive, will be available from 20 February.

The six Victorian stamp ingots (Penny Black, Embossed Green Shilling, Halfpenny Red, Penny Lilac, £5 Orange and Jubilee Shilling), and the Edward VII/George V ingots (Edward VII Penny & Pound, George V Mackennal Penny, Seahorse Ten Shillings, Empire Exhibition, Postal Union Congress £1) are all still available, price £26.95 each or £161.70 for each complete set, including a storage box •

Collect British Stamps The 2007 (58th) edition of Stanley Gibbons' ever-popular *Collect British Stamps* colour checklist will be published in November, price £9.95. It will be available from Royal Mail Tallents House as well as from Stanley Gibbons, and stamp and book shops •



Generic sheet Shown at left is the sheet containing the six new definitive-size Smilers stamps.

Generic and Smilers sheets New sheets next March will contain 20 1st class Wales country stamps on self-adhesive paper. On the Generic sheet, stamps will be adjoined by labels depicting Welsh scenes and symbols. Customers can have their own images printed on the labels on the Smilers sheet •

Christmas Smilers Two new Smilers sheets for Christmas, available from 7 November, will contain 20 1st class or 20 2nd class Christmas stamps, price £14.95 and £9.95 respectively. For details of how to order these customised versions (with your own image on the labels), pick up a leaflet/order form at a post office, phone 0845 074 2000, or see www.royalmail.com/smilers •

2007 issues Dates of issue and number of stamps per issue are as follows. Miniature sheets are denoted MS, and prestige stamp books PSB.

09.01 The Beatles: 2 × 1st, 2 × 64p, 2 × 72p, MS (4 × 1st)
 01.02 Sea Life: 10 × 1st
 13.02 The Sky at Night: 2 × 1st, 2 × 50p, 2 × 72p
 01.03 World of Invention: 2 × 1st, 2 × 64p, 2 × 72p, MS & PSB
 22.03 Abolition of the Slave Trade: 2 × 1st, 2 × 50p, 2 × 72p
 23.04 St George: MS
 15.05 Beside the Seaside: 6 stamps
 05.06 40th Anniversary of the Machin: MS

03.07 Grand Prix: 6 stamps
 26.07 Scouts: 6 stamps
 04.09 Endangered Species – Birds: 10 × 1st
 20.09 British Army Uniforms: 6 stamps & PSB
 16.10 Queen's 60th Wedding Anniversary: 6 stamps & MS
 06.11 Christmas: 6 stamps & MS
 08.11 Lest We Forget: MS

Like the Sky at Night issue, the World of Invention stamps (1 March) will also be self-adhesive and with printing on the reverse. Using comic designs, they feature: bridges, railway locomotive, telephone, television, the internet, and space travel. The set to mark the Abolition of the Slave Trade portrays people connected with the campaign: William Wilberforce, Olaudah Equiano, Granville Sharp, Thomas Clarkson, Hannah More, and Ignatius Sancho. Both sets will be previewed here next month •

ROYAL MAIL SPECIALS

A BOXFUL OF ROYAL MAIL STAMPS FOR YOU TO ENJOY
In this book you'll find everything you'll ever need to know about the great heroes of the past alongside the movers and shapers who have defined the dynamic world of today. It's a real treasure trove of ideas and inspiration – go back with us into the Ice Age, join in the fun with The Queen's 80th birthday and tip till you topple with the nation's funkiest, most unceasing sound. There are over ten exclusive interviews with celebrities like Rocky Bervais, David Dimbleby and Privy Counsellor Barrington, the first man in the 21st century to receive the Victoria Cross. And it doesn't stop there. This book also includes eleven complete sets of Royal Mail Special Stamps issued during the course of the year together with full philatelic information on each and every issue. They are presented here in mint condition and ready for you to place in their designated position alongside our feature articles which show how they were created by Britain's world-famous stamp designers. This limited collection of 34-page all-colour book is packed with photographs of the famous and the obscure – it's the definitive story behind an entire year of birthdays, anniversaries and other celebrations. Now that they've gone, **ISSUE 23 2006** is perfect for recalling the last twelve months.

Year Collections The 2006 Yearbook and Yearpack, containing all the year's special stamps, will go on sale on 9 November and will remain available until the end of 2008. Both contain all the special stamps of 2006, and the Lest We Forget miniature sheet. The standard version Yearbook costs £44.95, and the de-luxe, leather-bound version is £75.

The colourful Yearpack, price £39.55, includes concise background information on each of the special issues, with technical details of the stamps and illustrations of alternative 'First Day' postmarks for each issue.

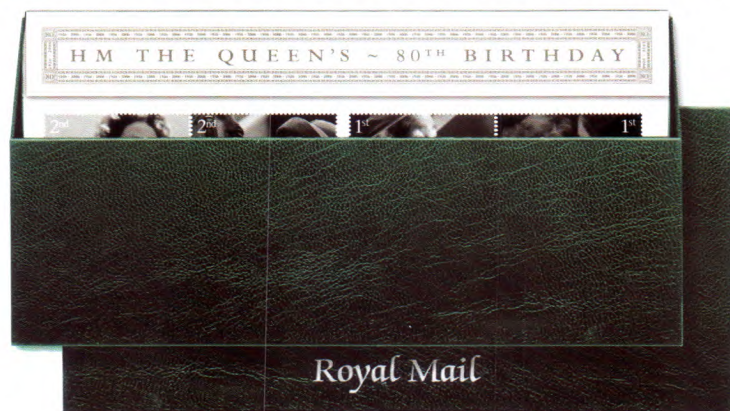
Two further Year Collections will be available from 30 November. The 2006 Miniature Sheet Year Pack (price £22.50) contains Brunel, Welsh

Assembly, Year of Three Kings, Victoria Cross, Christmas, Lest We Forget, and Celebrating Scotland sheets. Brief details are included about the subjects of the sheets. The 2006 Presentation Pack Collection (£44.95) contains packs for the 11 special stamp issues plus Smilers and the Lest We Forget and Celebrating Scotland miniature sheet packs.

The 2004 Yearbook and Yearpack will be withdrawn from sale on 27 December – order now if you need these for your collection. The 2005 book and pack will remain on sale, unless sold out earlier, until December 2007 •

Prize draw Four 2006 collections to be won

The 2006 Presentation Pack collection.



WE HAVE two of the new 2006 Presentation Pack Collection for our main prizes this month, also two 2006 Yearpacks for the runners up. To enter, simply send you name and address on a postcard or back of a sealed envelope to: 2006 Draw, British Philatelic Bulletin, Royal Mail, 148 Old Street, London EC1V 9HQ by 30 November •

A fiction addiction

Concluding her feature on 'fiction' as a theme, Karen Foy looks at some much-loved children's tales and how they have been portrayed on stamps



A STUDY of a fiction theme wouldn't be complete without a look back at the books we all loved as children. The discoveries and adventures we read about gave us a window onto a world we wanted to explore, and the feelings felt by the characters involved mirrored our own experiences as a child. The books were part of our past, and they helped to shape our future, so... are you sitting comfortably? Then we shall begin.

International celebration In 1979, the British Post Office decided to celebrate the Year of the Child by dedicating stamps to four of the best loved children's books of all time. The work of Beatrix Potter found its way onto the 9p stamp with Peter Rabbit, Jemima Puddleduck and Squirrel Nutkin flying the flag for the younger readers.

Beatrix was born in July 1866 but it wasn't until 1902 that her *Tale of Peter Rabbit* was published by Norman Warne. Going on to write 23 books in a small, easy-to-read format, her animal adventures have been loved by generations of children.

Toad of Toad Hall was the second character to feature in this set, with Mole, Ratty and Badger – his companions – at his side. When Kenneth Grahame wrote *The Wind in the Willows* in 1908, little did he know that this novel, written after his retirement from banking, would become established as a literary classic.

Addicted to honey, Pooh Bear was the brain-child of Alan Alexander Milne. His early writing career began at school, where he may have been influenced by one of his teachers, science fiction

writer H G Wells. Work on the student magazine led to a career as assistant editor with *Punch* magazine, but it is for his Winnie the Pooh stories that he is best known. The bear's adventures with a little boy called Christopher Robin (named after Milne's own son) and his assortment of friends, from Piglet to Eeyore, have become legendary, with the animation giant Walt Disney buying the rights to the characters after Milne's death.

Illustrated by the artist John Tenniel, Alice, the Mad Hatter and the Cheshire Cat, from Lewis Carroll's fantasy tale *Alice in Wonderland* complete this celebration of the International Year of the Child.

Classic characters In 1993 Royal Mail issued a set of greetings stamps under the theme of 'Gift Giving'. Featuring well-known characters from children's novels sharing gifts, this colourful set is a great addition to any collection. Included are William Brown, from Richmal Crompton's much loved novel *Just William* (shown above left), and Raymond Briggs' Snowman, from the book published in 1978, who makes an appearance with Father Christmas (above centre).

Roald Dahl contributed greatly to popular 20th century fiction but it is the BFG, or Big Friendly Giant (above right), who was chosen to appear in this particular collection. First published in 1982 and illustrated by Quentin Blake, an adapted film was released seven years later, with actor David Jason providing the voice of the giant. As the world's only friendly giant, he helps children



to have happy dreams, and destroys their nightmares. His gift of a 'bottled' happy dream was chosen to illustrate this first class stamp.

Although not strictly classed as fiction in the 'novel' sense, the *Beano* has always been essential reading matter. First appearing on 13 February 1954, the comic strip entitled the Bash Street Kids was an instant hit. Revolving around the escapades of Class 2B, Danny, Erbert, Fatty and Plug get into numerous scrapes with other pupils and their teachers. The illustration used on this stamp is of the character Wilfred, hidden in the depths of his green jumper, and the Head master wearing his traditional mortarboard.



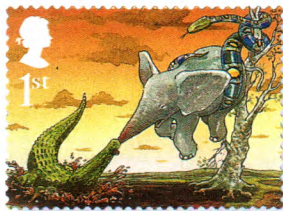
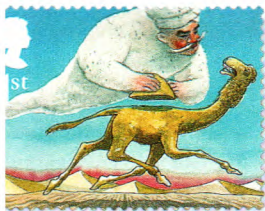
Top row: Rupert and Paddington from the Messages greetings issue (1994) and Alice in Wonderland from the Magical Worlds issue (1998). Above: Noddy and the Famous Five, two of five stamps in the Enid Blyton issue (1997).

The right message A sequel to this set was issued on 1 February 1994, on the theme of 'messages'. Mary Tourtel's Rupert Bear first appeared in the *Daily Express* in 1920. His red jumper and yellow check trousers soon became his trademark, but by 1935, Alfred Bestall had taken over the role of illustrator, improving plots and storylines. Such was his appeal that a Rupert Annual was produced, with rare editions now very collectable.

Another bear – Paddington – also appeared in this issue. Written by Michael Bond, the plot unfolds when a duffle coated bear, a stowaway from Peru, is found by the Brown family at Paddington Station. His adventures begin as he is taken to live at the family home in Windsor Gardens and they discover his love of marmalade sandwiches. This simple storyline has stood the test of time and there is even a bronze figure and special merchandising stall dedicated to the bear at Paddington Station. All 10 stamps were issued as 1st class, and a set of 20 labels was included with the original set. A presentation pack in mint condition can now command in excess of £20.

The famous five Celebrating the centenary of the birth of author Enid Blyton, it was undoubtedly a difficult task to decide which five of her many novels were considered the best. Those eventually chosen to grace this 1997 stamp set, illustrated by Christian Birmingham, demonstrate just how successful her books were. Noddy and Big Ears continue to be young children's favourites to this day, while the Faraway Tree is a place we would all like to visit. For older children, The Famous Five and Secret Seven opened up a world of mystery and suspense while *Malory Towers* attracted girls to the adventures experienced at the Cornish boarding school.

Enid Blyton was born on 11 August 1897 and achieved a prolific output in her writing career. It is believed she has had an estimated 600 titles published – not including numerous magazine short stories. Her books have been translated into over 40 languages and she even has a day named after her every year to celebrate her life and contributions to children's fiction. The five stamps have different letter rates from 20p to 63p.



The Tale of Mr. Jeremy Fisher
by Beatrix Potter



Kipper
by Mick Inkpen



Above: The Elephant's Child and How the Camel Got His Hump, from the Just So Stories set (2002), and two of the eight stamps in the Animal Tales issue (2006). Left: Winnie the Pooh on a 1982 Anguilla issue, and a Maldives stamp featuring the white rabbit from Alice in Wonderland.

Fantasy 1998 saw the issue of a set of stamps featuring fantasy novels, which had the dual purpose of commemorating the birth of C S Lewis and the death of Lewis Carroll. After the success of *Bedknobs and Broomsticks*, which was adapted into a Disney musical, Mary Norton wrote the imaginative tale of *The Borrowers* about a family of 'little people' who lived behind the skirting boards in an old house near Leighton Buzzard. Awarded the Carnegie Medal in 1952, *The Borrowers* is featured on the 43p stamp.

Edith Nesbit wrote over 60 books for children. One of her most famous was *The Phoenix and the Carpet* published in 1904 and featured on the 37p.

The Hobbit, by J R R Tolkien, was also included in this set but with the success of the film adaptations of *The Lord of the Rings*, the author was honoured with his own stamp issue in 2004, featuring details from his mysterious illustrations from the trilogy, and by a prestige stamp book in 1992.

Just so Rudyard Kipling was born in 1865 and wrote enduring novels for both adults and children, including *The Jungle Book* and *Kim*, culminating in him being the youngest ever recipient of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1907. But it was by using images taken from his *Just So Stories* that Royal Mail decided to remember this talented author. The ten self-adhesive stamps mirror the questions asked in the stories from 'How the

leopard got his spots' to 'How the camel got his hump'. Swathed in rhinos, kangaroos, crabs and whales, the watercolours of Izhar Cohen really bring the stamps to life. PHQ postcards show enlarged images of these scenes which really do the artwork justice.

Up to the minute Even in 2006 we still appreciate the interest and joy that children's fiction brings, and the recent Animal Tales issue of eight stamps features colourful images of The Very Hungry Caterpillar and Mick Inkpen's Kipper.

When you think you've exhausted Britain's philatelic contribution to children's fiction, why not investigate what the rest of the world has to offer. Anguilla has featured Winnie the Pooh at Christmas in 1982 whilst the Maldives captured Alice in Wonderland's White Rabbit as part of a selection of nine stamps and a mini sheet.

With reading actively encouraged, it would be unfair not to mention the books that have today's children addicted – J K Rowling's Harry Potter series. A Mauritanian miniature sheet features Hogwart's School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, and Harry Potter stamps have also been issued by the Isle of Man.

So there really is no excuse not to capture your youth in the pages of your stamp album. Start with Britain's marvellous selection, and then go global – the world really is your oyster! ●

Sea Life Ten new stamps capture the wealth



Technical details

Designer Andrew Ross

Printer Cartor Security Print

Process Litho

Stamp size 35mm square

Sheets PO branches will hold sheets of 30. Sheets of 60, with gutter margin, available from Tallents House and from selected PO philatelic outlets

Perforation 14.5

Phosphor Two bands

Gum PVA

Gutter strips Horizontal

THE FIRST of two special issues in February will feature Sea Life. The set to be issued on 1 February (brought forward from the originally announced April date) comprises 10 1st class stamps printed as a se-tenant block. The stamps depict: Moon Jellyfish, Common Starfish, Sea Anemone, Bass, Thornback Ray, Octopus, Mussels, Grey Seal, Shore Crab, and Common Sun Star. The name of each subject and the year '2007' are positioned on the left side of each stamp.

FIRST DAY FACILITIES Orders for serviced FDCs must reach Tallents House (address below) by the day of issue. Collectors may send stamped covers on the day of issue to: Royal Mail Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB (Tallents House postmark) or to their nearest Royal Mail Special Handstamp Centre (Seal Sands, Middlesbrough, Cleveland postmark), marking the outer envelope 'FD0703' or 'FD0704'. Covers can be posted or handed in at main Post Office branches for the Seal Sands postmark.

For details of sponsored handstamps and addresses of the Handstamp Centres see the *British Postmark Bulletin* – available on subscription from Tallents House (£12.25 UK/Europe, £24.95 elsewhere). For a free sample copy write to: The Editor, *British Postmark Bulletin*, Royal Mail, 148 Old Street, London EC1V 9HQ.

PHILATELIC PRODUCTS A well-illustrated pack was written by Jack Sewell and Steve Hawkins of the Marine Life Information Network and designed by Andrew Ross. Amongst the creatures featured are Limpets, Basking Shark, Lion's Mane Jellyfish, and Gannets.

of species to be found living in British waters



Sea Life prices

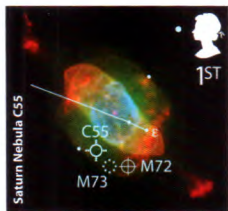
Set of stamps	£3.20
Presentation pack	£3.70
FDC envelope	£0.30
Serviced first day cover (UK customers)	£4.24
Serviced first day cover (overseas customers)	£3.61
Stamp cards set (set)	£3.00



Mrs J Robinson
200 Manorbie Road
Ilkeston
Derbyshire
DE7 4AB

SEA LIFE ON STAMPS This is the first issue devoted to this topic, but earlier issues are relevant to this theme. The 1988 Linnean Society 18p features a Short-spined Sea scorpion ('Bull-rout'), and a starfish is shown on a 1992 greetings stamp. Marine Life featured on 50p and £1 stamp book covers in 1988-89: Parasitic Anemone on Common Whelk shell and Umbrella Jellyfish; Common Hermit Crab, Bladder Wrack and Laver Spire Shell; and Edible Sea Urchin, Common Starfish and Common Shore Crab •

The Sky at Night Celebrating half a century



Technical details

Designer Dick Davies

Printer Walsall Security
Printers

Process Gravure

Stamp size 32 × 30mm

Sheets PO branches will hold sheets of 30. Sheets of 60, with gutter margin, available from Tallents House and from selected PO philatelic outlets

Perforation 14 × 14.5 die-cut

Phosphor Two bands

Gum Self-adhesive

Gutter pairs Vertical

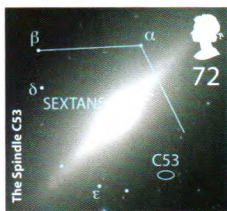
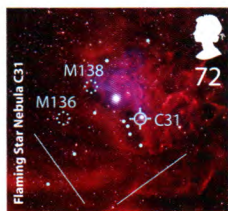
THE SECOND SPECIAL ISSUE in February comprises six stamps featuring nebulae, to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Sir Patrick Moore's TV programme *The Sky at Night*. They go on sale at Post Office branches and philatelic outlets and from Royal Mail Tallents House Edinburgh on 13 February. The stamps feature nebulae, defined in the dictionary as clouds of gas and dust, sometimes glowing and sometimes appearing as a dark silhouette against other glowing matters. Those depicted are: Saturn Nebula C55 and Eskimo Nebula C39 (1st class); Cat's Eye Nebula C6 and Helix Nebula C63 (50p); and Flaming Star Nebula C31 and the Spindle C53 (72p). (The names are from a classification system devised by Sir Patrick Moore.) The stamps will be printed in se-tenant pairs on self-adhesive paper and will have a brief description of each subject printed on the reverse. The year of issue '2007' is reversed out of the phosphor bands at bottom right.

FIRST DAY FACILITIES The FDC envelope, designed by Dick Davies, is shown opposite. Orders for serviced FDCs must reach Tallents House (address below) by the day of issue. Collectors may send stamped covers on the day of issue to: Royal Mail, Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB (Tallents House postmark), or to the nearest Special Handstamp Centre (Star, Glenrothes, Fife postmark), marking the outer envelope 'FDO705' (Tallents House) or 'FDO706' (Star). These postmarks will be applied in silver ink owing to the dark background colour of the stamps. For details of other special postmarks see the *British Postmark Bulletin*.

PHILATELIC PRODUCTS A presentation pack will be available, as described opposite. Details of a medal cover will be published later.

SKY ON STAMPS These stamps will add to a fairly substantial astronomy collection, beginning with the Jodrell Bank Telescope (1966, 4d), and followed by: the 150th anniversary of the Royal Astronomical Society (1970); Greenwich Meridian (1984, featuring Earth as seen from Apollo 11, Greenwich Observatory and Sir George Airy's Transit Telescope); Halley's comet (1986, four stamps); centenary of the British Astronomical Association and bicentenary of the Armagh Observatory (1990); Millennium Scientists' Tale (1999, Saturn); Solar Eclipse miniature sheet (1999, Saturn); Millennium National Space Science Centre, Leicester (2000); and the Astronomy miniature sheet (2002, galaxies and nebulae) ●

of Sir Patrick Moore's popular TV programme



The Sky at Night prices

Set of stamps	£3.08
Presentation pack	£3.60
FDC envelope	£0.30
Serviced first day cover (UK customers)	£4.10
Serviced first day cover (overseas customers)	£3.49
Stamp cards set (set)	£1.80



THE SKY AT NIGHT
1957 ★ 2007
ROYAL MAIL FIRST DAY COVER

Mrs J Robinson
200 Manorbie Road
Ilkeston
Derbyshire
DE7 4AB

ROYAL MAIL TALLENTS HOUSE 21 SOUTH GYLE CRESCENT EDINBURGH EH12 9PB



First day postmarks: Talents House and Star, Glenrothes, Fife. These will be applied in silver ink.



I sometimes find it hard to believe that
The Sky at Night is half a century old!

The first programme went out on the air in April 1957. We were ushered in by a comet – Arend-Roland, the brightest comet for many years and we have not missed a month since.

In fact the idea of the programme came not from me, but from Paul Johnstone, a senior BBC producer. He was not an astronomer – he was an archaeologist – but he wanted a programme of the kind not actually tried before. He had read a book of mine and asked me to come and see him. I went down to Lime Grove and we worked out a plan. *The Sky at Night* would be shown every four weeks for three months, just to see how it was received. Of course all television was 'live' in those days, and I well remember that first programme!



Well, we have been lucky enough to live through probably the most exciting period in the history of astronomy. We have seen the beginning of the space age, probes to the planets and the first men on the Moon. We have been to the great observatories in places such as Hawaii and the Atacama Desert in Chile. We have shown total eclipses of the Sun and we have visited Russia's Star City where the cosmonauts are trained. We have been joined by several of the leading astronomers from all around the world, as well as by many of the American and Russian spacemen, most notably the first men on the Moon, Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin.

What we have tried to do is to bring astronomy to everyone, and I hope we have succeeded; others must be the judge of that. But it has been immensely enjoyable, and I hope that *The Sky at*

The presentation pack (left), written by Sir Patrick Moore, explains his classification of nebulae and recalls the early days of his TV programme *The Sky at Night*, which was first broadcast in April 1957. The 1966 Jodrell Bank stamp is shown, along with pictures of Sir Patrick, Charles Messier, John Flamsteed, and Sir John Herschel. Pack design is by Dick Davies, and printing by Walsall Security Printers.

40th anniversary of the Bureau's move to Edinburgh

AS MANY *Bulletin* readers will know, the original Philatelic Bureau was set up in a building near GPO headquarters in London in 1963. A couple of years later consideration was given to moving the Bureau as part of the government plan to relocate as many civil servant jobs as possible away from the crowded capital. Two sites were considered – Morecambe, Lancashire and Edinburgh. The Scottish capital won the day, and the move was announced in the *Bulletin* in July 1966. The following month the *Bulletin* noted that a temporary Philatelic Sales Point had been set up in the Edinburgh Head Post Office for the Edinburgh International Festival (21 August - 10 September), and that mail orders for stamps should be sent to the new Edinburgh Bureau from 20 September. First day covers for the Battle of Hastings stamps (14 October) would be handled in Edinburgh and be given a Philatelic Bureau Edinburgh postmark for the first time. In October the *Bulletin* reported that transfer of the work to Edinburgh was nearing completion and the Bureau would be 'in full operation' by the beginning of November. There were said to be some 10,000 account customers. A feature on its new home – the Head Post Office in Waterloo Place in Edinburgh – was published in the December 1966 *Bulletin*, and an illustrated article about the Bureau itself followed in November 1967. There were then 17,000 deposit account customers and up to 50,000 FDGs were being processed for some stamp issues. With the closure of the Bureau in London a Philatelic Counter was opened at the Chief Post Office in King Edward Street and remained a popular venue for philatelists until that office closed in April 1994.

The Bureau stayed at Waterloo Place for eight years, moving to Lothian Road in Edinburgh in 1974, and then to 20 Brandon Street in 1981. The fine frontage of this building was featured on the 29p Buildings stamp of March 1990. The title was changed from 'Philatelic Bureau' to 'British Post Office Philatelic Bureau' in 1970, and to 'British Philatelic Bureau' in 1982, but to most collectors it was simply 'the Bureau'. (The *Philatelic Bulletin* became *British Philatelic Bulletin* in March 1983.)

With the volume of work ever increasing, bigger premises were required, and the Bureau moved to its present home in South Gyle Crescent, west of the city centre, in August 2000. The new building, named Tallents House after Sir Stephen Tallents, was officially opened by stamp designer David Gentleman in March 2001. To reflect the diversity of work carried out there – the despatch of stamps for businesses and for retail sale as well as supplying the philatelic community – it was decided to drop the term Philatelic Bureau, and the name Tallents House is now used. The wording on First Day of Issue postmarks was changed from British Philatelic Bureau to Tallents House from the Hats issue of 19 June 2001.

Today the staff at Tallents House handle millions of individual orders a year from collectors, retailers and businesses. The loyalty of their customers is demonstrated by the fact that half of the philatelic customers have used the services of Tallents House for more than 11 years. As well as customers who collect for themselves, there are a sizeable number of 'gifters' who order stamps and products as gifts for others. New customers are, of course, always welcome, and in the past year around one-third of new customers made a purchase of 'fast-track' issues (Royal Wedding, London 2012 Host City, and the Ashes). One of the most popular products in the last year has been miniature sheets, followed by first day covers, packs for special stamps, and mint stamps and stamp books.

Royal Mail remains proud of Tallents House and the work done there by its Manager Joe Gallagher and his staff, processing over 4.5 million orders every year. When Tallents House opened six years ago, the then Post Office Chief Executive, John Roberts, stated that 'from its modest beginnings nearly four decades ago, the Bureau has grown, harnessing new technology, to become the world leader in the field of philately.' ●

For further information on the history of the Bureau, see Bulletin articles in November 1967, May and June 1993, and May 2001.

The GPO Building in Waterloo Place, Edinburgh. Below: David Gentlemen at the opening of Tallents House; a 1966 stock sheet; an early compliment slip; and processing an order at Tallents House.



Philatelic Bureau

GPO 2-4 Waterloo Place, Edinburgh, 1
Telex 70492 Philpost, Edinburgh
Telephone (01) 556 8661

With the Compliments
of the Manager



CUSTOMERS ORDER FORM

When completed, this form accompanied by the appropriate remittance, should be forwarded to: THE MANAGER, G.P.O. PHILATELIC BUREAU, 2-4, WATERLOO PLACE, EDINBURGH, 1.

CUSTOMERS NAME & ADDRESS-USE BLOCK LETTERS PLEASE

NAME:

STREET:



Treasures of the BPMA Letter boxes, by Martin Robinson



THE British Postal Museum & Archive holds a large collection of letter boxes, at the Museum's store at Debden, Essex, which is open to visitors on several days a year. In due course it would be good to see the collection more easily available, like BT's national telephone kiosk collection at the Avoncroft Museum near Bromsgrove. Meanwhile most of the boxes are catalogued and illustrated on the BPMA website (see below), and they and other items in the collection are sometimes on loan at venues round the country.

The comprehensive collection covers the history and development of letter boxes from one of the first pillar boxes, erected in the Channel Islands in 1852 at the suggestion of the novelist Anthony Trollope, who was also a Post Office Surveyor, to the earliest mainland boxes of 1853 and the fluted boxes of 1856, through subsequent reigns right up to prototypes and unadopted versions of modern boxes. There are also wall boxes, including the 'Ludlows' with their distinctive enamel plates, lamp boxes and various private and non-standard boxes.

My own favourites are the Ludlow letter boxes, manufactured by James Ludlow of Birmingham between 1885 and 1965 for use at sub post offices. One newly catalogued Ludlow box in the BPMA's collection is of particular interest.

Ludlows were made in two sizes, and shown at left are two large Ludlows of the reign of George v. On the left is a photo from my own collection of a box at Sunderland Street post office, Macclesfield, and on the right a similar example in the BPMA's collection. The Macclesfield box is a common type, with a collection plate holder set into the door. It has a tablet showing the next collection set into the top right-hand corner of the collection plate. The BPMA's box has a different collection plate and a separate tablet holder in the door at top left. This style is found in Ludlow boxes of Edward VIII, George VI and Elizabeth II, and I believe this box was made late in George v's reign. Smaller Ludlow boxes changed late in the reign, being made two inches taller (29in from 27in), with a collection plate of different proportions and a separate tablet holder, and these are listed in the Letter Box Study Group's catalogue. However the larger box, like the one in the BPMA collection, is not yet listed. As far as I know there is only one other like it, at Stoneclough post office in Radcliffe, Manchester, and the smaller boxes, too, are quite rare, which supports the argument that they were made only at the end of the reign.

Concerning the larger box with separate tablet holder, the Letter Box Study Group is currently discussing three possibilities: (1) they are earlier boxes with a later replacement door; (2) they are later boxes with an earlier GVR replacement enamel plate; or (c) they are as manufactured, and represent a newly-discovered sub-type. The author would be glad to hear from anyone who can throw further light on the matter ●

The British Postal Museum & Archive For information about the BPMA and open days at Debden telephone 020 7239 2570 or visit www.postalheritage.org.uk

Letter Box Study Group For information write to Val Scott, 38 Leopold Avenue, Handsworth Wood, Birmingham B20 1ES, or visit www.lbsg.org

Philately online Ron Negus reviews a site for collectors of GB presentation packs, cards, photographs and ephemera



www.packsandcards.com GB collectors may be surprised at the amount of material which has been released by the British Post Office over the years to promote its issued stamps, and which is featured on this site. A price list is also available by post from Packs & Cards Ltd, Oaklands House, Reading Road North, Fleet, Hampshire GU51 4AB.

Welsh, and there are also Private Packs, Souvenir Packs, and Special Editions. Finally, this section of the site lists all the Year Books produced by the Post Office from 1984 to date.

Under the Stamp Cards heading, all the normal PHQ cards are listed by individual issue and also as year sets. Maximum cards (with postmarks on back or front shown separately) are also given, plus cards with a First Day of Issue cancellation. Post Office books of postcards, and Regional and Postal Museum Cards appear within this section of the site.

The final category, designated in the search boxes as 'Others' covers ephemera. The group starts with Grille Cards, which are the A4 posters supplied to Post Offices for counter displays to promote new issues of stamps. Then come Post Office press photographs, which were sent out to newspapers and magazines to publicize the new issues. Other headings found here are Miniature Sheets, Encapsulated stamps, and Printer's packs and cards.

Design of the individual pages which the user finds via the Search indexes is similar in all cases. They contain a picture of the item, a brief explanation of its origin, date of issue and the price at which it can be purchased. If a catalogue price is available for the item this is quoted as well. The quality of the illustrations on all these individual pages is of a particularly high standard.

As mentioned above, many of the items listed here were issued in very limited numbers. For this reason, the site is valuable as a reference listing, as well as a source of supply. Any serious GB collector will benefit from a visit and may well locate some items which would enhance their collections that they were unaware of previously •

In 2000, a stamp dealer in Fleet in Hampshire, named Ian Andrew, found a gap in the marketplace. He saw that the trade was not adequately meeting the large and increasing demand for the presentation packs and PHQ cards produced by the British Post Office. He decided to specialise in this area, and his mail-order business – Packs and Cards Ltd – was started.

The business is a full member of the Philatelic Traders' Society, and specialises in providing the packs and PHQ cards, as well as miniature sheets, maxicards, stamp posters and Post Office photos. These items are attractively shown and described on his website (address above). Some of the items available here were issued in very small quantities, and having them all listed on a single site is an advantage, since many dealers ignore them.

The home page provides alternative ways to access the site contents. For users seeking a specific known item, the easiest approach is to type that item into the 'search' box. For more general enquiries, a subject or a person can be entered instead. The results will list all items in the database with matches for the entered keywords. For a fuller listing of the available items in a particular category, there are three other search boxes, which are titled Presentation Packs, Stamp Cards and Others respectively.

The Presentation Packs listing contains much more than the simple commemorative and definitive packs with which all GB collectors are familiar. Also available here are the packs that contain language inserts in German, Dutch, Japanese and

James Mackay at 70 The Editor meets a remarkable writer



ST KILDA

A World Heritage Site
WESTERN ISLES

21 MAY '06

Jim Mackay with a part of his St Kilda display to the Scottish Postal History Society, and his St Kilda postmark.

TEN YEARS ago (*Bulletin* November 1996) I interviewed James Mackay, almost certainly the most prolific writer on philatelic subjects in the UK, and possibly even worldwide. Since 1961 Jim has written some 207 books and an estimated 10,000 articles. The books are not just on stamps and postal history – titles include works on coins, biography, antiques and travel. He is 70 this month yet shows no signs of slowing down, and is still busy on his word processor each day. When I spoke to him for this article, he had just completed a substantial book on coins and one on St Kilda steamers. For the first time in many years, he was not working on another title, but probably not for long.

He started collecting stamps at the age of five or six, and must be one of the very few collectors who still collects worldwide – in fact everything – stamps, postmarks, postal stationery, and postal labels of every country! This vast reference collection is in daily use when writing articles and is much appreciated by editors who need illustrations for the articles Jim has written. How many other collectors could lay hands on, say, a 1930s postmark from a Scottish island, a 19th century stamp from Rumania, a modern issue from Sierra Leone, an item of Danish postal stationery, a postal history cover from Siberia, and of course modern GB stamps? What is even more remarkable is that most of the collections are mounted, and those still in file boxes are clearly labelled and

carefully arranged so that items can be retrieved quickly. Like everyone else, Jim sometimes misfiles or mis-lays items but this is rare and if a specific item cannot be found, a close substitute is normally available.

Any writer needs a good reference library, and Jim certainly has this, although these days he says he uses the internet more for background information. His book collection is spread over several rooms in his house, and his stamp room is home to nearly 500 albums plus a number of large filing cabinets. Space is becoming a problem!

He is still a keen collector of Royal Mail issues, purchasing cylinder blocks of each new issue of definitives and specials. He regularly writes about the issues in various stamp publications, and in October 1998 took part in a televised debate on new Scottish country stamps. Some years ago he disposed of his main collection of Scottish postmarks, but is now building up a new collection, adding to duplicate material from the main collection. Even this duplicate collection contains some scarce and rare material.

Since the 1996 interview, Jim has spent much time on a number of specialist collections, in particular a thematic study of the Vikings and of his beloved St Kilda, a lonely island off the west coast of Scotland where Jim was stationed whilst serving in the army in 1959-61. He is interested in all things connected with Scandinavian history, and

he once took me to the Viking Centre at Largs in Ayrshire, which is a good place to find out about the domestic life of the Vikings in Britain. Since 1996, he has gone on various trips to the Faroes and Spitzbergen, and has recently returned from a cruise to Scandinavia, the Baltic, and St Petersburg. The cruise was somewhat of a working holiday, as Jim had been recruited to deliver lectures on antiques. Another of the guest lecturers was Henry Sandon, of Antiques Roadshow fame; he and Jim last met at an antiques weekend back in the 1970s. Jim has more bookings for lectures on cruise ships – adding more work and preparation to his hectic days at an age when most people are taking it easy. Jim says he has no plans to retire, and hopes to keep writing and lecturing for many more years. He keeps fit by hill-walking with his wife Renat , who ensures he takes regular short breaks away from his office to enjoy the Scottish countryside.

Island revisited In 2001 Jim returned to St Kilda for the first time since 1961, and this visit renewed his interest in this remote and fascinating place – an interest now shared with his son Alastair, who is a keen ornithologist and photographer. Since 2002 Jim has sponsored an annual St Kilda postmark, applied at the Special Handstamp Centre in Glasgow, the designs based on photographs by himself or Alastair. In addition, he has produced special handling fee labels which can be used on mail sent from the island to the SHC for the special St Kilda postmark. These labels have proved popular with visitors to the island and with members of the summer work parties who help in the restoration of the island's buildings. In 2005, Jim took part in a conference on the Isle of Lewis to mark the 75th anniversary of the evacuation of the civilian population from the island. He wrote a book about his days on the island as a lieutenant in the Royal Artillery (reviewed in the *Bulletin* August 2002), and has recently written another on the ships that carried the mail from St Kilda in past years (see page 92).

His collection of St Kilda postal history and related ephemera now occupies around 24 lever-arch files and includes some of the earliest known

items of postal history and a part sheet of the St Kilda registration labels, which was illustrated in the November 1996 article. The collection is also augmented with numerous postcards featuring puffins (the 'national emblem' of St Kilda), many of which Jim has had cancelled by his sponsored postmark.

Society duties In recent years, Jim has become more involved with organized philately, and has served as President and Secretary of the Glasgow Philatelic Society and is currently President of the Old Eastwood Philatelic Society. He has given talks to various societies, and amongst the most popular of these are displays of worldwide stamp issues of the previous year. As most collectors now specialize rather narrowly, they are often amazed at the range and designs of the stamps from other countries. During the past year he has given displays on the evacuation of St Kilda to the Aberdeen & Bearsden societies and the Scottish Postal History Society.

Jim was also involved in the successful Glasgow 2000 exhibition and not only wrote a book – *Scotland's Posts* – to coincide with this exhibition, but also provided an excellent display of Glasgow's postal history shown at the same time in the city's Mitchell Library. His single disappointment was the low award he received for his social philately entry at the exhibition, which has rather put him off competitive philately.

Biography and family history Away from philately, Jim is a noted authority on Robert Burns and author of a major biography, which has earned him a Doctorate from Glasgow University as well as the Saltire Society's Scottish Book of the Year Award. Other biographies have followed on famous Scots such as Andrew Carnegie and William Wallace, and of the Irish leader Michael Collins, who at one time worked for the GPO (see *Bulletin* November 1996). However, Jim has now moved away from the somewhat fractious world of biographical writing and is concentrating his efforts elsewhere, such as in his two books published last year about the city of Glasgow. He is also keen on family history, and has spent a great deal of

time working on his wife's family story, with links to Albert Einstein, and hopes to devote time in the future to Mackay history – he was born in Inverness but his ancestors hailed from Sutherland. Who knows one day these researches might be published, but Jim tells me he has no plans for an autobiography as such.

In between all this detailed research, he writes regularly for *Stamp Magazine* and *Stamp & Coin Mart* (some issues are almost all his own work!), but he has written less for this *Bulletin* for a while. I hope to rectify this next year. He was voted the *Bulletin* readers' favourite writer in 1999 and won the Rowland Hill Award for Research in 1997 and for Journalistic Excellence in 1999. It is a pity that the Rowland Hill Awards have now been discontinued, as Jim must otherwise have been a strong contender for the Lifetime Achievement Award. He has written more than anyone I know given the accolade RDP (Roll of Distinguished Philatelists), and certainly has broader philatelic interests. It would be pleasing to see his name added at some time. Meanwhile he is a signatory to the Book of Scottish Philatelists (1997). In another walk of life, this prodigious body of written work would surely have earned him a national honour, but sadly philatelic endeavour is largely ignored by the establishment.

One collection which I haven't mentioned is his '1936' study of stamps issued in the year of his birth. This of course includes relevant postmarks and postal history material but still lacks a cover posted on his birthday, 21 November. Hopefully it will not be too long before he acquires one. I am sure that *Bulletin* readers will join with me in wishing Jim well on his 70th birthday, and for good health so he can continue to write. There can be few serious collectors who have not benefitted at some stage from a book or article from his pen. Like Melville and the Williams Brothers, his writings will be his legacy, and will ensure his place in philatelic history. Jim once told me that he wished he had stayed in the Army to pursue a military career; I have no doubt he would have risen to senior rank, but the Army's loss has been philately's gain and I for one am glad he returned to civvy street ●

Competition for the young

WE ARE ALL AWARE that stamp collecting is no longer an automatic hobby of the young, but fortunately there are still many youngsters around who find stamps fascinating.

As with any pursuit there are those who just sit back and enjoy, while others have a more aggressive streak, and are keen to show their competitive spirit. This can be contentious in the minds of some adults when it comes to encouraging the young. Which is more important: that the young should just enjoy their stamps and do with them as they wish, or that they should be more disciplined by being encouraged to compete? The fact is that only a tiny percentage of young collectors enter competitions.

A few will be evident at this year's Association of British Philatelic Societies (ABPS) exhibition, at the Riviera Centre, Torquay, 24-25 November. On display will be the entries in the British Youth Stamp Championships. These 'championships' see their origin with Fred Melville, the celebrated collector who created the Junior (now National) Philatelic Society. Melville was keen to encourage young people to collect, ensuring that the JPS was present at the annual Schoolboys' Exhibition, and even publishing his own, albeit short-lived, magazine, *The Young Stamp Collector*. In Melville's days competitions for the young took on a different guise from those today: the criteria was the number of the stamps in the collection – over 5000; between 3000 and 5000; and under 3000. It was in 1912 that the young were first encouraged to start specialising in a country, and then in 1920 the idea was suggested that they collect by subject rather than country.

Fred Melville died in January 1940, and as the war naturally took a toll on the hobby, it was not until after the war that The Philatelic Congress of Great Britain (PCGB) was able to discuss what to do in his memory. Among other ideas, it came up with the Melville Memorial Competition for young collectors, with entries to be shown and the awards presented at the annual Congress. The competition was first staged as part of the Congress held at Tunbridge Wells in 1950.

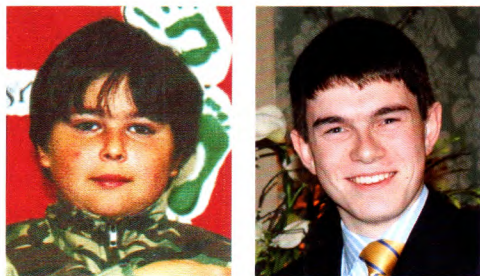
Richard West on the opportunities open to young collectors

Its organisation was in the hands of the Melville Memorial Committee, which gradually decided it should widen its remit beyond simply arranging the competition. The amalgamation of the PCGB with the British Philatelic Association to form the British Philatelic Federation brought the opportunity to take the competition out of the fairly restrictive arena of the Congress, to venues where the entries might be enjoyed by a wider audience.

The Philatelic Traders' Society, the organiser of Stampex, has always been keen to encourage the young, and at its first exhibition in 1953 there were youth exhibits, albeit in only two frames. In 1965 Stampex introduced a section for competitive entries from those aged up to 17. Following the amalgamation of Stampex with the British Philatelic Exhibition, the new Autumn Stampex became the venue for the annual competitions, for many years with a separate youth section.

However, finding venues for the Melville competition was proving a problem; the number of youngsters entering was declining. One view was that the name 'Melville Memorial' was unlikely to encourage the idea that stamp collecting was an exciting hobby. The competition was just one of many activities its organisers now undertook, not the least being the Stamp Active initiative to support those organising groups for the young. What was needed was a two-level competition – the 'Melville', for the more advanced in the hobby, would become known as the British Youth Stamp Championships; to encourage more onto those first rungs of the competitive ladder there would be a new Stamp Active competition. Where to show the entries in both competitions? A happy solution was to use Autumn Stampex, replacing the Stampex youth competition. Melville's memory is not neglected, as the major award in the 'Championships' is the Melville Cup, appropriately donated by the National Philatelic Society.

The outcome was startling; while the number who aspire to enter the 'Championships' has remained fairly low, the number who ventured into the Stamp Active competition was immensely encouraging, with around 200 entries each year.



Two young British collectors who will exhibit at Belgica '06: Jade Needs (left), who recently won a gold medal in Australia, and Simon Moorcroft, who was a runner-up in the Rowland Hill Awards last year.

One must never be complacent, and questions were still being asked. Was it ideal for the showcase of the efforts of the young to be only in London once a year? Did holding both competitions at the same time provide sufficient opportunity for young collectors to advance? It was decided to separate the two competitions, and in 2004 the Stamp Active competition entries were shown at the ABPS exhibition in Basildon. Since then these entries have featured as part of Spring Stampex.

Now the British Youth Stamp Championships are on the move. Following the decision to take the national 'adult' competitions away from the Autumn Stampex, to be shown as part of ABPS events, so the 'Championships' entries will move with them.

Thus in November the 'Championships' will be shown in Torquay, and in 2007 and 2008 the venues will be Croydon and Harrogate respectively. Ironically, the ABPS has decided that from 2007 as far as possible the national competitions will be staged in conjunction with the annual Congress. So the youth entries will, once again, form part of Congress.

The team that organises the annual 'Championships' is now called Stamp Active Network, and the competition would not be possible without the sponsorship of Stanley Gibbons. Over the years, many of the youngsters who have entered have progressed by representing Great Britain at international exhibitions. ►

International youth exhibitions Young collectors have been able to enter international exhibitions for many years – in 1969 Luxembourg hosted the first youth international. The intention at that time was to have an exhibition every two years, and Norway was the host in 1972. Unfortunately, internationals primarily for the young did not attract the needed dealer participation to make them financially viable. Luxembourg again led the way, with Juvalux 98, overcoming the problem by including a few ‘adult’ classes, in addition to the youth.

Belgica 2006, to be held at the Brussels Exhibition Centre in Heysel, 16–20 November, will be an international exhibition aimed primarily at youth, although thematic, open and one-frame classes are also included. Thus the organisers have been able to attract entries from 47 countries, and over 80 dealers and 60 postal administrations. A full programme of activities has been arranged to appeal specifically to young visitors, with Belgian sports personalities and other celebrities attending, including those from the Belgian version of the popular television show ‘Strictly Come Dancing’.

The first such event at which British youngsters competed was held in Bulgaria in 1984. The strongest team from GB was in 1992 in Canada, with 14 competing, and Matthew Clough being the joint contender for the Grand Prix. Regrettably the minimum age for young collectors competing internationally is 13; the current trend in the UK is for youngsters to take up the hobby when they are about 8, and by the time they reach 12, with the pressures of education, the hobby is put on the back-burner. Consequently, only two are going forward to Belgium, Jade Needs and Simon Moorcroft. As Belgica takes place just prior to Torquay, hopefully their entries will be seen at the ABPS exhibition as part of the British Youth Stamp Championships (incidentally, Jade Needs recently won a gold medal at an exhibition in Australia).

Thus hopefully the ideals of Fred Melville are still very much alive, through the British Youth Stamp Championships and with British youngsters competing internationally •

Books St Kilda steamers and the Night Mail TPOs

The St Kilda Steamers – A History of McCallum, Orme & Co, by James Mackay Until the advent of the helicopter, the only way to visit St Kilda (off the west coast of the Outer Hebrides) was by sea, and two companies made the trip their own. John McCallum and Martin Orme owned the ships *Hebridean*, *Hebrides*, and *Dunara Castle*, and these made the regular mail visits to St Kilda from the 1880s until the late 1930s. They brought trade and tourists to the islands, and were, apart from the infrequent calls by fishing boats and whalers, the only contact with the outside world. Once a week in the short summer, one of the steamers would be in Village Bay, discharging cargo, collecting tweed and bringing tourists to view Britain’s most remote inhabitants. Author James Mackay, who was based on St Kilda from 1959 until 1961, has carefully researched the history of the steamer company McCallum, Orme & Co, and records details of the sailings and the importance of the visits to the island’s economy. There is much on the postal arrangements and some excellent illustrations of the vessels, the island’s buildings and inhabitants, and also some items of philatelic importance from the time of the island’s evacuation in 1930 and cachets applied to visitors’ mail from the deserted islands after 1931. The poignant tale of the evacuation is well told; shown is the back of a postcard signed by all the passengers on the evacuation voyage. Each had paid £10 for the voyage, and wanted to mail postcards from the island on the last day. Supplies of 1d stamps ran out and the poor postmaster was berated for having to sell letter rate stamps for use on the cards. Many of the cards mailed on 27–28 August 1930 bear 1½d stamps. Illustrations include company posters advertising trips to St Kilda – one declaring that ‘Nobody should fail to visit this lonely and romantic little spot in the Atlantic’. James Mackay’s book recalls a long-gone age and sheds new light on the relationship between the people who lived on St Kilda and those who fleetingly visited them. *John Holman* ►

A LOOK AT THE NIGHT MAIL**TRAVELLING POST OFFICES - A HISTORY**

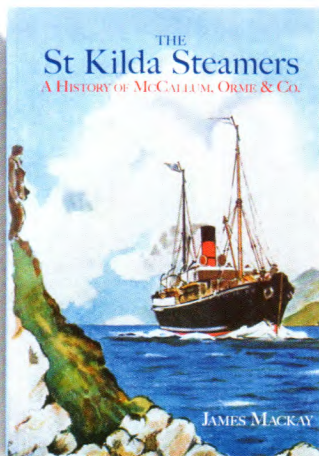
by Brian White

192 pages, 150 illustrations. Price £16.99, plus UK postage £2, from Tempus Publishing Ltd, The Mill, Brimscombe Port, Stroud GL5 2QG. e-mail info@tempus-publishing.com

James Mackay's book *Soldering on St Kilda* was reviewed here in August 2002 •

A Look at the Night Mail: Travelling Post Offices – A History, by Brian White

Relatively little has been written about the erstwhile travelling post offices (TPOs), and most of that by enthusiasts. Brian White spent 28 years working for Royal Mail, spending most of his service on TPOs so he brings the insight of a user to the subject. He shines new light on the early TPOs, despite being contradictory about dating of the experimental services, and weaves a fascinating tale around the intrigue that surrounds the development of the exchange apparatus. He brings the benefit of his own experience when describing both TPO and apparatus operation and particularly brings the primitive working conditions on the earliest services to life. Chapters on the impact of the Great Train Robbery, the unions, incidents and accidents, the Datapost operation and personnel are particularly interesting. The chapter on circulation should be read by anyone interested in how the mail system works. However, the chapter entitled 'The history of the Post Office and its TPOs' is incomplete, effectively ending in the mid-19th century, with no mention of the 1885 mail accel-



A Look at the Night Mail: Travelling Post Offices – a History Brian White spent 28 years working for Royal Mail, spending most of his time on TPOs, so he brings a user's insight to his subject.

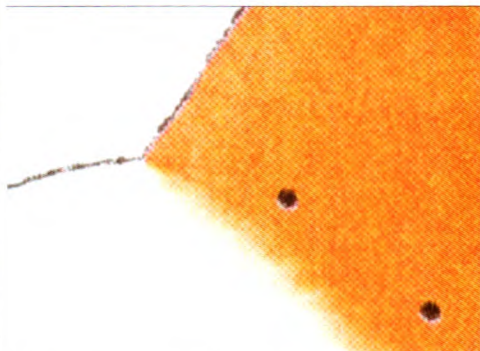
The St Kilda Steamers – a History of McCallum, Orme & Co James Mackay's book recalls a long-gone age, and sheds light on the relationship between the people who lived on St Kilda and those who fleetingly visited them.

eration to Scotland, the effects of the World Wars or late 20th century developments, or even the end of the service in 2004. There is no list of services, which might be expected in a book of this size. Philatelic coverage is minimal although there are some comments on the use of datestamps. 150 pages are given to appendices, the value of some being questionable. The book's design uses some unusual conventions. A book this size would also justify the cost of casebinding, and a premium on the sale price in consequence; despite my best efforts, some of the review copy's pages are becoming detached from its spine after one careful reading. It's my view that *A Look at the Night Mail* would have benefited from stronger editorial control. However, these criticisms should not overwhelm the book's good points; this is a worthwhile book and will be enjoyed and appreciated by all who read it. The *Bulletin* Editor wants the review copy back, so I will have to buy my own; I'll be pleased to have it on the shelf. *Peter Johnson*

360 pages, 43 photographs, 81 line diagrams, paperback. Price £24.95, plus UK postage £5. Available from Moorside Publishing Ltd, 2 Ringley Meadows, Bempton, Bridlington YO15 1JR. e-mail moors.pubg@virgin.net

Peter Johnson is the author of *The British Travelling Post Office* (1985); *Mail by Rail – The History of the TPO and the Post Office Railway* (1995); and *Bulletin Publication no 10 The Travelling Post Office 1838-2004* (2004) •

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



August identify The detail is from the 2003 Pub Signs E stamp. The winner was P H Palmer of Florida, USA.

August knowledge Answers: 1) Waterlow & Sons; 2) 1984; 3) Roll of Distinguished Philatelists. The winner was A Laxon of Wiltshire.

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 were the colours of the 2d and 6d Machin stamp issued in 1968?
- 2 Where is the Belgica international stamp exhibition being held?
- 3 Which noted philatelic writer is 70 this month?

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 15 December will each receive £100. Runner-up prizes of presentation packs, FDCs or stamp cards will be awarded in each competition. Royal Mail employees are not eligible •

Events

28 October North West Federation Convention & Annual Stamp Fair at Canon Slade School, Tonge Moor Road, Bolton, 10.00-16.00. Free entry, easy access for disabled persons, free parking, refreshments. At least 15 dealers. **Enquiries** Brian Fielding, 01204 307252.

7 November BPMA Lecture – GPO London, by Neil Johannessen at Freeling House, Phoenix Place, London WC1, 19.00. **Enquiries** 020 7239 2570.

11 November Maidstone & Mid Kent PS Stamp Fair at Grove Green Community Centre, Maidstone (near Junction 7 M20), 10.00-16.00. **Enquiries** Mrs E Gardner, 01622 762740.

16-20 November Belgica 06 international stamp exhibition at Brussels Convention Centre, Brussels, Belgium. **Enquiries** info@belgica2006.be

18-19 November Thematica at Carisbrooke Hall, Seymour Street, London W2. Friday 10.30-18.30; Saturday 10.00-17.00.

18 November Bolton PS All Day Auction at Masonic Hall, Bolton/Radcliffe Road, Bolton. Viewing from 09.30, auction starts 12.15. 1200 lots. **Enquiries** Brian Fielding, 01204 307252.

24-25 November Torquay 2006 (6th ABPS National Philatelic Exhibition) at the Riviera Centre, Torquay. **Enquiries** B Horne 01392 273012, or visit website www.torquay2006.org.uk

8-9 December Royal Philatelic Society 'Centenary' exhibition at 41 Devonshire Place, London W1. Admission by free ticket only – apply Royal Philatelic Society London, 41 Devonshire Place, London W1G 6JY, telephone 020 7486 1044 •

Late news

New stamp roll Rolls of 500 of the standard size 1st class definitive in PIP (Pricing in Proportion) design will be available from Tallents House and selected Post Office philatelic outlets from 14 November. Collectors may request singles or strips from the roll •

Royal Collection display The Queen's display at the National Stamp Exhibition in Torquay (24-25 November) will comprise one frame of GB Treasury Essays, one frame of GB 1870 ½d, four frames of GB Edward VII ½d & 1d and one frame each of Barbados first issue, Tasmania first issue, Falklands Centenary selection, Falklands George VI 1938 selection, St Lucia 1960 Commemoratives, and GB Coronation. The item to be displayed in the Monaco exhibition in December will be the VR Penny Black on cover – probably one of only two or three which survive intact •

Autumn Stampex The exhibition attracted 5300 visitors, some 600 short of the previous year. The first three days were busy, but there were fewer visitors at the weekend. It was the first exhibition without the competitive displays, their place on the Village Green being taken by the stands of the British Postal Museum & Archives (and the Friends of the BPMA) and the Forces Post Office.

The BPMA displays featured the postal services during wartime, and included the VC medal won by Sergeant A J Knight of the Post Office Rifles in 1917. (Another VC medal, won by Private W Mariner, killed in action in 1916, was on display on the Spink stand; this medal will be auctioned on 23 November, estimate £70,000-80,000.) The BPMA demonstrated their new website, featuring the Phillips Collection on-line – collectors who cannot get to the Museum to see the Collection will find this very useful.

The Forces Post Office provided a field post office tent and facilities for visitors to send an 'e-bluey' – an electronic version of the forces air-letter (aerogramme). Many Forces covers were on sale, including a new one for the VC stamps issue (to be featured in the December *Covers Review*).



BFPO cover £6.50 each (postage £1.50) from British Forces Philatelic Bureau, Inglis Barracks, Mill Hill, London NW7 1PX. Remittances payable to Central Bank (BFPO).

A cover featuring Sgt Knight, serviced in 2002 (above), was on sale and a limited number remain with a choice of signature: Lt Col Hughes, Lt Col Ward or Col G McGarr. Features about the BFPO, e-bluey and the Phillips Collection were included in the exhibition catalogue, together with a free postcard showing Sgt Knight.

The Royal Mail stand was busy, especially on the Thursday, when the VC stamps and related products went on sale. As always, collectors were searching for cylinder blocks and booklets, and there were strong sales of Royal Mail albums •

Auction The last sessions of the sale of the extensive collections of Sir Gawaine Baillie will include stamps of the British Empire and Jean De Sperati forgeries of the world. Auctioneers Sotheby's advise that members of specialist societies will undoubtedly find exceptional items for inclusion in their collections. The sale will take place on 13-15 December. Details of Sir Gawaine's collection were published here in September 2004; realisations from the auctions so far have been almost £14 million. Sotheby's enquiries: 020 7293 5000 or www.sothebys.com •

Back issues Mr A E Burroughs is offering a run of the *Bulletin* from December 1987 to the present to any reader who can collect from him in Hampshire. Phone him on 01264 352779 •

Clarification Page 6 of September's *Bulletin* refers to an illustration of an international reply coupon in the August *Bulletin*, but does not give the page number; it was shown on page 361 •

Britain in Miniature: a new Royal Mail album



Britain in Miniature Royal Mail launches an innovative new album this month, aimed primarily at collectors in the 7-15 years age group. The album makes an ideal Christmas or birthday present, especially if combined with a year's subscription of stamps.

Each issue for 2007 can be mounted on specially prepared fold-out pages providing details of the issue, websites and venues to visit, and colourful illustrations. The pages are housed in a stout and contemporary case so the first page, for the Sea Life stamps, is clearly visible.

The album is supplied with fold-out pages for the first quarter of 2007 issues and includes a reply card to send for the subsequent three update packs.

Price £14.95 plus handling charge: £2.95 UK, £5 Europe, £14 overseas.

Royal Mail

Tallents House, 21 South Gyle
Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB
Telephone orders: UK 08457
641 641; overseas +44 131 316
7483



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