

BRITISH PHILATELIC

The ROYAL MAIL magazine *for stamp collectors*

Volume 36 Number 6

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Bulletin

Millennium Patients' Tale •
British travel and transport



Forthcoming issues and withdrawals



Cover photograph Nursing care is featured on one of the new Patients' Tale Millennium stamps from Royal Mail. The issue is previewed this month on page 176. Photograph by Terence Donovan.

An omission *A History of the Post in England* by Philip Beale was reviewed last month. The price was unfortunately omitted: it costs £35.

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

1 February	Withdrawal 10 × 1st Disney promotion book
2 February	Issue Millennium Travellers' Tale stamps and presentation pack
2 February	Withdrawal Diana, Princess of Wales stamps and presentation packs (English and Welsh versions)
16 February	Issue Profile on Print prestige stamp book
23 February	Issue Millennium Patients' Tale stamp cards
23 February	Withdrawal The Queen's Beasts stamps, presentation pack and stamp cards
1 March	Withdrawal 37p & 63p coils, issued July 1996
2 March	Issue Millennium Patients' Tale stamps and presentation pack
9 March	Issue Definitives (Machin head) £1.50, £2, £3 and £5 and presentation pack
16 March	Issue Retail books (10 × 1st by Questa and Walsall and 4 × 1st Walsall) and Flowers Greetings book, all with inner cover copy change relating to European postal rate
23 March	Withdrawal Lighthouses stamps, presentation pack, stamp cards and aerogrammes
30 March	Issue Millennium Settlers' Tale stamp cards

Please note that the Definitive portrait prestige stamp book (issued 10 March 1998) will not be withdrawn after one year but remain on sale until further notice

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British travel and transport

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This month The Editor previews this issue

THE SECOND of our 12 sets of 1999 Millennium stamps, Travellers' Tale, go on sale on 2 February – they were previewed last month. We include this month a feature on earlier British stamps on the theme of travel and transport, and preview the third Millennium set – Patient's Tale, to be issued on 2 March. It is evident from comments in the national press, and your letters, that these Millennium issues are generating a lot of interest and attention. I hope that they will also generate interest in stamp collecting – the hobby can certainly do with some new recruits.

Douglas Myall provides his regular specialist update on new stamp books and Derek Williams, of the Association of British First Day Cover Collectors, writes on this ever-popular aspect of philately.

The National Postal Museum has now closed its doors at King Edward Building, and the staff are now busy packing for the temporary move to Mount Pleasant. John Roberts, Post Office Chief Executive, has stated 'We remain fully committed to... our heritage. We are exploring ways in which we can continue to provide wide access to our philatelic history.' Along with many other collectors, I look forward to learning the NPM's new permanent location before too long. JOHN HOLMAN •

Stamp scene Exhibitions • Society news • Spring Stampex • Railway letter stamps

Opening times

3 March	12.00-19.00
4-6 March	10.30-18.00
7 March	10.30-16.00

Stampex 0171 490 1005

National Philatelic Society
0171 336 0882

Spring Stampex The first of this year's Stampex exhibitions, organised by the Philatelic Traders' Society, takes place at the Business Design Centre, Upper Street, London N1, 3-7 March. Admission will be £3 on the opening day, £1 other times. A free ticket (valid all days) is enclosed with this *Bulletin*. Further tickets are available from the Stampex office, 107 Charterhouse Street, London EC1M 6PT.

Amongst the many attractions will be a major display by the National Philatelic Society to mark its centenary. The National Youth Stamp Group will be providing a Kids Corner for the amusement of younger visitors.

The Design Centre is well-served by bus and underground services – Angel (Northern Line) station is about five minutes walk. For details of bus services phone 0171 222 1234. Car parking is available at the exhibition centre and nearby. Refreshments are available at the Design Centre, and there are plenty of eating places in the vicinity.

Royal Mail will have a stand at the exhibition, selling its full range of stamps and philatelic products, including the first three issues of Millennium stamps. A special handstamp will be applied to mail posted at the Royal Mail stand or sent to Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, Mount Pleasant, London EC1A 1BB requesting Stampex postmark and stating date(s) required. Covers, bearing at least 1st class postage, should be submitted by the date of the postmark required •

Forthcoming international exhibitions The organisers of the Australia '99 exhibition (Melbourne, 19-24 March) have set up a website which provides a comprehensive guide to the exhibition, its special attractions, links to other philatelic sites, and a competition with Penny Blacks to be won. Supported by Australia Post, this prestigious exhibition will bring together some of the rarest, most valuable and visually exciting exhibits of stamps and postal memorabilia, valued at approximately A\$150 million. The exhibition will be opened by the Governor-General of Australia, Sir William Deane.

The Smithsonian Institute's RMS *Titanic* exhibit retraces the last hours of the ship's mail and telegraph room; there were more than 3400 bags of mail on board the ship and the exhibit will feature, among other things, the last telegrams despatched, and a replica lifeboat from the recent film. The official International Olympic Committee exhibit highlights the Games from 1896 to 1956 through posters and Olympic stationery. A series of Australian maritime stamps will be officially launched during the exhibition; these feature historic sailing ships, including the *Polly Woodside*, *Enterprize*, *Alma Doepel*, and *Lady Nelson*. Visitors will see limited edition stamps being printed on a six-metre long Heidelberg colour press. There will be a Family Day on Sunday 21 March when children will be admitted free.

MONACO '99 Following the successful Rare Stamps exhibition in Monaco (see *Bulletin* November 1997), a second exhibition – Monaco '99 – will be staged at the Museum of Stamps and Coins of Monaco on 12-14 February. This marks the 50th anniversary of the accession of Prince Rainier. Each exhibitor is being invited to show one item, the rarest one in his or her collection. The exhibitors chosen participated in the 1997 exhibition or are members of the 'Club of Philatelic Elite'.

IBRA '99 For collectors interested in visiting the IBRA '99 international exhibition (Nuremberg, 27 April-4 May) a useful *IBRA Compass* guide giving details of hotels, events, package tours, etc is available. A competition was staged to design the exhibition postmarks. The winner, responsible for three designs – 150 Years of Stamps, American Day, and Day of Youth – was Wilhelm Kamitter of Bonn.

The WIPA 2000 international exhibition (Vienna, 30 May-4 June 2000) will have 11 competitive classes: Traditional, Postal History, Postal Stationery, Thematic Philately, Maximaphilie, Aerophilately, Astrophilately, Revenue, Youth (ages 4-21), Open Class, and Philatelic Literature. Bulletin 1 and an entry form are now available from the address opposite ●

Congress Awards The Association of British Philatelic Societies invites nominations from local, national and specialist societies, associations and federations for the annual awards of the Congress Medal and Awards of Merit. The Medal is for outstanding service to British philately at national level, the Awards are for service at regional, specialist and local level. Candidates must be members of an organisation affiliated to the ABPS ●



Australia '99 website

<http://www.Australia99.com.au>

Postal enquiries Australia '99,
GPO Box 1999, Melbourne,
Vic 3001, Australia

Monaco '99 enquiries

Office des Emissions de Timbre-
Poste, 23 av Prince Hereditaire
Albert, MC 98050,
Monaco, Cedex

IBRA Philatelie GmbH Mainz-
er Landstrasse 221/223, D-
60326 Frankfurt, Germany

IBRA Compass guide IBRA-
Geschäftsstelle, D-91301
Forchheim, Aeusere Nuuern-
berger Strasse 1, Germany

The British Commissioner

Brian Sole, 3 Stockfield Road,
Claygate, Esher KT10 0QG.
Please enclose three 26p
stamps.

Awards nomination forms

from N M Russell, 59 Granby
Avenue, Harpenden AL5 5QP,
to be returned by 27 February.
Telephone 01582 768094

For details of the NYSG and its activities, contact John Davies, 3 Longfellow Road, Banbury OX16 9LB.

For details of Kidstamps send SAE to George Gibson, Old Builder's Wharf, Honey Street, Pewsey SN9 5PS.

National Youth Stamp Group The Group reports continuing support and progress during 1998. Sponsorship and donations from Patrons and friends amounted to over £15,000 which enabled the Group both to maintain and improve its core activities – National Youth Stamp Competition, Stamp Active, Youth Workshops, Kids Corner, displays, and youth conferences. 1998 saw the introduction of a new national competition, a Network newsletter, expanded events at Stampex, and Kidstamps, sponsored by Cavenish Philatelic Auctions, assisting members of school or junior stamp clubs to enter NYSG promoted competition.

The third youth conference, organised for the Federation Youth Offices, was held in Birmingham in October, supported by the British Philatelic Trust. Michael Sefi, the Trust's Philatelic Development Consultant, outlined the BPT's position regarding youth philately, highlighting the importance of creating a database of youth collectors and exhibitors. This need is being addressed by the Kidstamps programme. Delegates were told of Royal Mail's plans for the Millennium, including a new education pack. Youth Officers were well aware of the difficulty of starting clubs from scratch and were encouraged by reports of successes from two speakers.

The Bill Hart Memorial Award for outstanding contribution to Youth Philately has been awarded to Paul and Christine Blakey who have set up a series of youth clubs attached to adult societies in the North East. They have had particular success in encouraging young collectors to enter national competitions ●

Collectors offered suspicious material should contact Brian White, Nene Valley Railway, Wansford Station, Stibbington, Peterborough PE8 6LR or Margaret Atkins of the NYMR, 5 Tiber View, Brinsworth, Rotherham S60 5EA.

Railway letter stamps The Railway Letter Service Managers of the Nene Valley and North Yorkshire Moors Railways have issued a joint statement concerning suggested tampering with some of their 1998 issues. They have information suggesting that some of their material has been used irregularly and passed off as originating from their respective railways. The items concerned are imperforate proof sheets and perforated sheets. It would seem that such sheets have been irregularly numbered and in some cases overprinted. With regard to imperforate sheets none have ever been numbered by either railway and certainly not by any of the printers. The only numbers applied are in manuscript when such sheets have been signed and appear as 1/60, 2/60 and so on. Perforated sheets have sequential numbers and only nine such sheets ever appear with single digits, usually described as 0001-0009. Items that have appeared with colour shifts or other colour variations have not been issued knowingly by either railway as sheets are checked before despatch and it is very unlikely such sheets are genuine ●

Entries To be submitted by 28 February to Brian Lockyer (BPB), 21 Exford Close, Weston-super-Mare BS23 4RE from whom details of the Society are available

Astro Space Stamp Society Readers are invited to enter a competition to design a commemorative cover/cachet to celebrate either the Apollo 17 project or man returns to the Moon in 2020 or the 2040 manned flight to Mars. Please add your name, full address and age if under 21. Entries should be accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope (UK) or two international reply coupons. All entrants will receive mint stamps supplied by the Crown Agents ●

Royal Mail news New definitives • Profile on Print • Stamp books • Aerogrammes

New definitives Royal Mail will issue new £1.50, £2.00, £3.00 and £5.00 stamps on 9 March. These will be in the same size as the 1p-£1 stamps showing the Machin head of HM The Queen but printed in recess (intaglio).

They will replace the Castles stamps first introduced in October 1988. After the first day of issue, post offices will sell stocks of the Castle stamps to exhaustion. The Castle stamps will be available from the British Philatelic Bureau for a further year or until stocks are exhausted within that period. It will be almost exactly 30 years since the 1955 2s6d, 5s, 10s and £1 Castle stamps were replaced by Machin high values, on 5 March 1969. Decimal versions were introduced the following year and the method of printing changed from recess to photogravure in 1977. These vertical format, two-colour high values were never entirely satisfactory and the change to horizontal format, recess-printed Castle designs in 1988 was generally welcomed.

Linda Norris, Royal Mail National's Head of Consumer Marketing, in charge of definitive stamps, explains that the main reason for changing the high value designs to carry the Machin head is to have a consistent image across Royal Mail stamps on permanent sale, that is stamps whose primary purpose is as a method of payment for posting rather than collecting.

Sheets of the new stamps bear a master engraving number (1 or 1 dot) and a boxed individual plate number, both in the left margin opposite the first stamp of the bottom (10th) row. The individual plate numbers noted at time of going to press were: £1.50, 1 and 5; £2.00, 6 and 8; £3.00, 3 and 4; and £5.00, 3 and 5. The 'Joh Enschedé Stamps' imprint appears in the left margin opposite row 8.

FIRST DAY FACILITIES Unstamped Royal Mail FDC envelopes will be available from main post offices and philatelic outlets about one week before 9 March, price 25p. Orders for FDCs with the stamps cancelled by pictorial first day postmarks for the Bureau or Windsor must reach the Bureau by 9 March. Price £13.93 UK (including VAT), £11.71 overseas (no VAT).

Collectors may send stamped covers on the day of issue for these pictorial cancels to: British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, Edinburgh EH3 5TT, or Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, Wexham Road, Slough SL1 1AA (Windsor postmark), marking the outer envelope FD DEF 9903 (Bureau) or FD DEF 9904 (Windsor). A non-pictorial Windsor first day postmark will be available from the Slough Handstamp Centre, please quote reference FD DEF 9904NP.



The new £1.50 stamp is rust. Colours of the other values remain the same: £2.00 blue, £3.00 purple, and £5.00 brown.

Joh. Enschedé Stamps



Joh. Enschedé Stamps



1

4

1

5



Technical details**Printer** Joh Enschedé

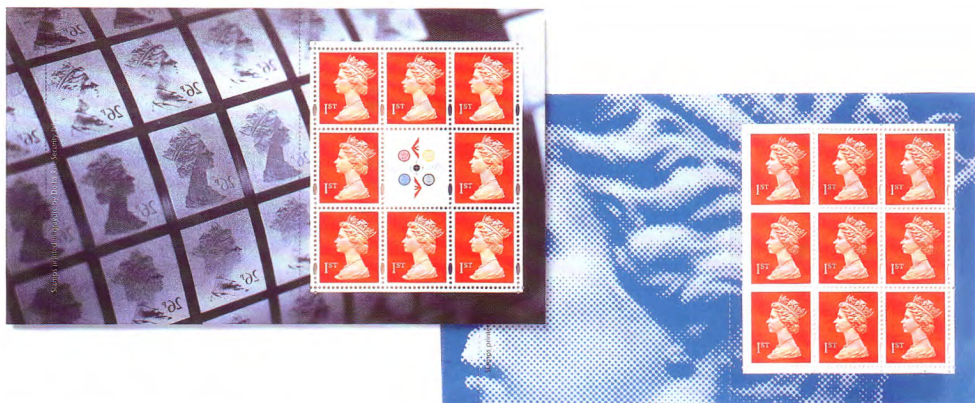
Stamps

Process Recess (intaglio)**Size** 20 × 24mm**Sheets** 100**Perforation** 15 × 14**Phosphor** None**Gum** PVA

In accordance with Royal Mail's policy on the 'Welsh Language Scheme', bilingual Welsh/English versions of the Windsor postmarks will be available from the Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, Penarth Road, Cardiff CF1 1AA, please quote FD DEF 9904 Bil (pictorial) or FD DEF 9904 NP Bil (non-pictorial).

Details of any sponsored handstamps will be announced in the *British Postmark Bulletin*, available on subscription from the Bureau (£10 UK/Europe, £21.75 elsewhere).

A presentation pack containing one of each of the new stamps will be available from philatelic outlets and main post offices, price £11.85 •



The lithography pane printed by The House of Questa, left, and the gravure pane printed by De La Rue. *Profile on Print* was reviewed in last month's *Bulletin*.

Profile on Print prestige book A new prestige book containing 29 1st class NV1 stamps, printed by five different processes, will be issued on 16 February. The small-sized stamps printed by De La Rue (gravure) and Questa (litho) are perf 15 × 14, with elliptical perfs. The larger-size recess stamps (Enschedé) are perf 14 × 14½ and the embossed (Walsall) and letterpress (Harrison) stamps 14 × 15. The larger-size stamps do not have elliptical perfs. The embossed stamps are on self-adhesive paper •

New stamp books Four revised books will be available from the Bureau and philatelic outlets on 16 March: 10 × 1st NV1 books, printed by Questa and Walsall, 4 × 1st Walsall and the 10 × 1st Flowers greetings stamp book. Each will include additional copy on the inside cover of the book: please note that the First Class rate is no longer valid to Europe. The stamps are the same as in earlier books. The revised books will go on sale at post offices and retail outlets as required •

Aerogramme news The three aerogrammes issued with the Lighthouses stamps last March will be withdrawn from philatelic sale on 23 March 1999. Three new aerogrammes, for sale in England and Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales will be issued with the Millennium Workers' Tale stamps on 4 May. Further details will be published in April •

Italia '98 world stamp exhibition Report by Richard Beith



The single L800 stamp was issued 23 October, opening day of Italia '98.

Many of the visiting postal administrations had prepared suitable philatelic souvenirs; the Italia '98 cachet shown at left is from a postal stationery card available on the stand of the Czech Post Office.

THIS *Esposizione Mondiale di Filatelia* was held in a number of pavilions at the Milan Fair complex from 23 October to 1 November 1998. It was a most impressive and well displayed 'World' exhibition organised by the Italian Post Office, *Poste Italiane*. Apart from the stands of the dealers and postal administrations, meeting rooms had been prepared bearing the names of eminent philatelists of yesteryear such as Diena, Ferrary, Gibbons and Scott. The competitive part of the exhibition concentrated on aerophilately, postal history and thematic collecting, plus literature and 'Open' classes. There was no class for 'Traditional Philately'. The exhibits, which occupied just less than 4000 frames, contained 12 sheets per frame (three rows of four) rather than the normal 16 sheets (four rows of four). Initial reaction to this arrangement by those preparing their exhibits tended to be adverse as it meant rethinking layouts, but it has to be admitted that the displays worked very well in practice; no stiff necks from looking up and down at four eye levels.

The Italian Post Office had organised a new stamp issue for each day of the show, single stamps, sets and miniature sheets including one honouring the centenary of car designer Enzo Ferrari. All ticket holders were given a free bilingual 144 page catalogue to the exhibition, but there was also a very detailed 272 page catalogue devoted solely to the exhibits. All exhibitors had been asked to provide one or two quality colour copies of star items from their exhibit and these were reproduced, in colour, together with a short

description of each exhibit in English and Italian. This made a valuable reference document and at L25,000 (just over £9) it was a good buy for the bookshelf.

In the main competitive classes, British exhibitors received a total of 25 medals. Large Gold medals were obtained by Gavin Fryer (Western Europe 1840-1871: a comparative study of postal rates and tariffs), Michael Jackson (The early postal history of the British Isles), Jane and Michael Moubray (Transatlantic mail 1840-1882) and Gerald Satin (Soldiers privilege rates of the British Empire to 1898). Gold medals went to Brian L Asquith, Bernard Berkinshaw-Smith, John Duggan, Christine A Earle, James Grimwood-Taylor, Otto Hornung, Barrie Jay and Gavin Littaur.

British exhibitors also gained five medals at Large Vermeil level, four Vermeil, three Large Silver and one Silver medal. In the Literature Class, British exhibitors obtained another seven medals, one each at Large Vermeil and Large Silver level, two Silvers and three Silver Bronzes.

Three British exhibitors, all members of the Italy & Colonies Study Circle (ICSC), showed Italian material to the Italian public: Alan Becker with 'Disinfectant mail of Italy' (Large Vermeil), Richard Harlow with 'Italian Maritime Mail in the 19th Century' (Large Vermeil) and this writer with 'The Italian South Atlantic Airmail Service 1939-1941' (Vermeil). A fascinating exhibition which was well worth visiting •

Acknowledgement Grateful thanks to Brian Sole, the British Commissioner for Italia '98



Jet travel George Hardie's design for the 20p Travellers' Tale, top, shows a humanoid airliner encircling the globe with its wings.

Epic flights across the Atlantic and to Australia were commemorated in the Anniversaries series of 1969. Earlier in that year, a set of three marked the first flight of the Anglo-French *Concorde*.



Jet Engine - Whittle

British travel and transport As Travellers' Tale stamps go on sale, James Mackay looks at the legacy of British innovation

THE BRITISH CONTRIBUTION to exploring and shrinking the world is second to none and the task of conveying this in a mere four stamps is virtually impossible, yet the Travellers' Tale quartet, released on 2 February, gives a hint of the range and diversity of this immense subject.

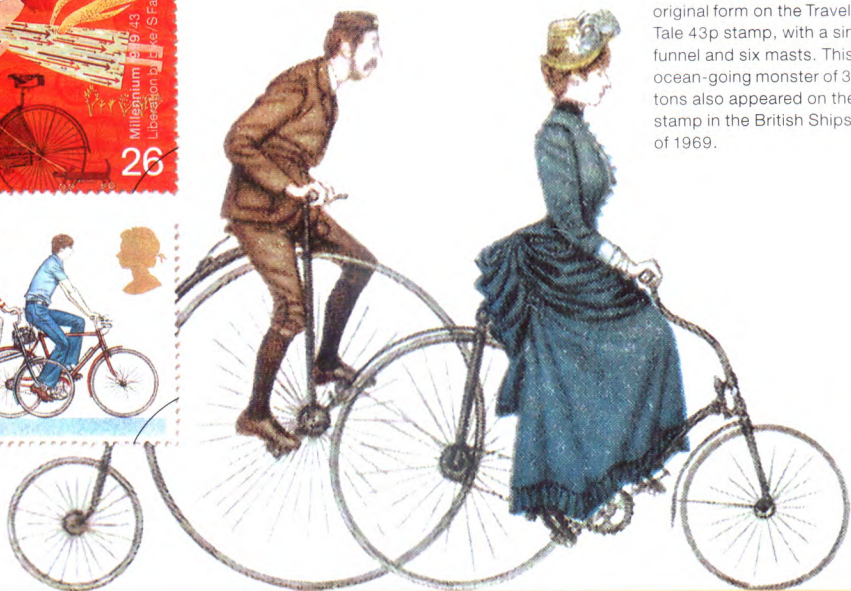
Jet travel Wilbur and Orville Wright will forever be remembered as the men who first achieved powered flight by a heavier-than-air machine, in December 1903, but the roll-call of British inventors who made this possible is a long one, stretching back to Sir George Cayley who produced his first model glider in 1796. Later models became progressively larger and by the 1840s Cayley had perfected a triplane which carried a boy aloft. In 1853 his New Flyer, piloted by his reluctant coachmen, flew a distance of 200 yards. Both Cayley and John Stringfellow experimented with steam-powered aircraft but the weight-power ratio defeated them. Cayley prophesied that 'When we can get a hundred horsepower into a pint pot, man will be able to transport his family and possessions as readily by air as he now does by railway.' Not until the invention of the internal combustion engine in the 1880s did this become feasible.

Nor should we overlook the pioneering work of Percy Pilcher of Glasgow in what are now called hang-gliders. Tragically, he was killed in 1896, the same year in which the much better known Otto Lilienthal was killed in similar circumstances. By their experiments with stable aerofoils both men made the achievement of the Wright brothers possible. Such was the dramatic progress of aviation, especially during the First World War that, within 16 years of that first faltering flight at Kittyhawk, British airmen were crossing the Atlantic and even flying all the way to Australia, epic flights honoured on the 5d and 1s9d stamps of the 1969 Anniversaries series. Earlier that year, a set of three marked the first flight of the Anglo-French *Concorde*, the world's only successful supersonic airliner to date.

Incredibly, more than 70 years ago, Frank Whittle, then a technical cadet with the RAF, propounded his theory of jet propulsion which was robustly dismissed by the Air Ministry as a flight of fancy. Whittle persevered and by 1930, while still at Cranwell RAF College, had designed and patented his first jet engine. A prototype was built by 1937 and a flying version commissioned two years later. In May 1941, the Gloster E28/39 made its first flight, and would lead to the Gloster *Meteor*, the only Allied jet of the Second World War, which went into action in 1944 against the V-1 flying bombs and remained in RAF service till 1955. Britons are good at inventing things, but so often the appropriate official backing is either lacking or extremely tardy, so it is not surprising that the Germans were the first to utilise jet engines in an aircraft, the Heinkel He 178 which first flew in 1939.



Frank Whittle Whittle has not appeared on a stamp, but his invention was marked by the 37p stamp of 1991, opposite, and alluded to in the British Discovery and Invention 1s9d of 1967, showing the engines of a VC-10 airliner. The VC-10 itself was featured on 1968-72 aerogrammes. Photograph: National Portrait Gallery.



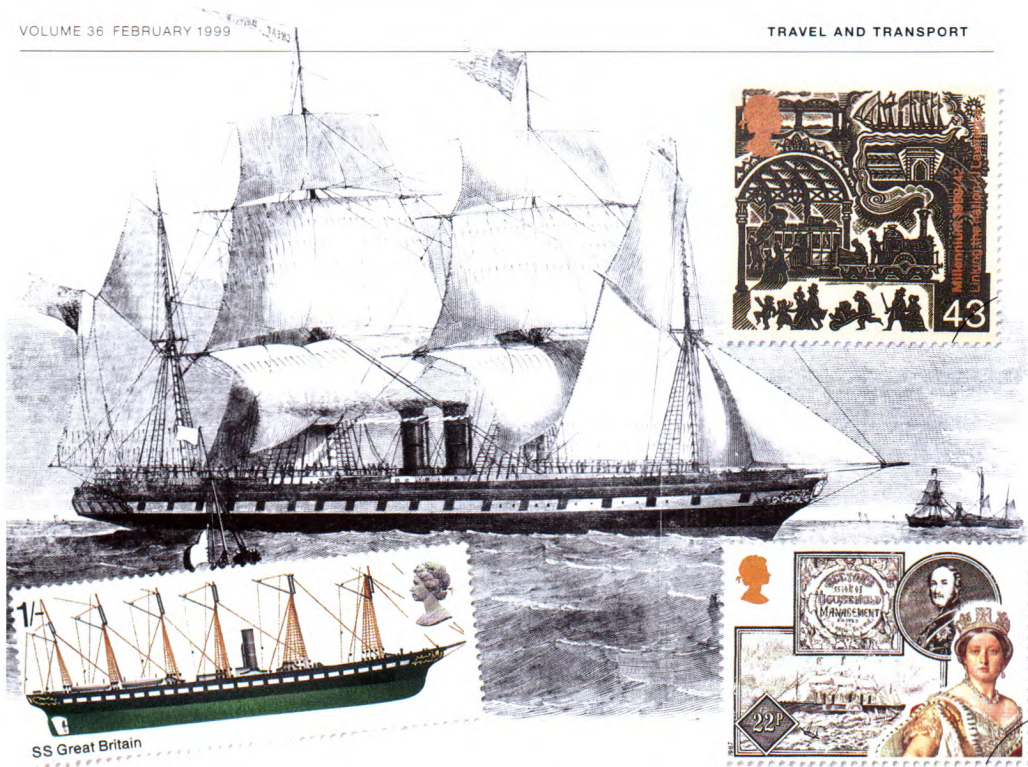
The Travellers' Tale 26p, top, with 1960s Moulton bicycles in the Cycling issue of 1978. The penny-farthing and 1885 chain-driven Safety bicycle appeared on the 9p stamp in this set. The others showed 1920s roadsters (10½p), and 1970s racing bikes (13p).

Liberation by bike Sarah Fanelli's 26p stamp symbolises the manner in which travel over short distances was revolutionised by the bicycle, with a whimsical motif of a girl, sprouting wings, balancing on the handlebars of a safety bicycle. Rudimentary bicycles, known as velocipedes, draisienues or dandy-horses, were developed in Europe in the early 19th century but relied on the rider's feet for propulsion as they skimmed along the ground.

Kirkpatrick Macmillan, blacksmith of Courthill near Dumfries, fitted pedals to a tricycle as early as 1834 and six years later produced the world's first pedal bicycle which he rode 70 miles, all the way to Glasgow and back, on its first run. Bicycles developed rapidly thereafter, and by the time the Cyclists Touring Club and British Cycling Federation were founded in 1878 the penny-farthing was all the rage. This appears on the 9p stamp marking the centenary, alongside the chain-driven Safety bicycle patented by John Starley of Coventry in 1885. Three years later John Boyd Dunlop, a Scottish vet working in Belfast, invented the pneumatic tyre which brought the bone-shaker era to an abrupt end.

Out of bicycles came motor-cycles and motor-cars, and it is significant that many of the motor pioneers were originally bicycle manufacturers. While numerous British stamps have extolled the motor vehicle in many forms, from the Jaguar E-type (1966) to the great record-breakers (1998), the motorbike has so far appeared on only one stamp – the 17p of 1985 in the set celebrating 350 years of the public postal service, which showed a Datapost rider in the City of London.

SS Great Britain Shown in the engraving following a re-fitting in 1852, she appears in her original form on the Travellers' Tale 43p stamp, with a single funnel and six masts. This ocean-going monster of 3270 tons also appeared on the 1s stamp in the British Ships set of 1969.



Linking the nation John Lawrence, the celebrated book-illustrator, has used a wood-cut technique for the 43p stamp with the theme of Brunel's role in linking the nation in the mid-19th century. Isambard Kingdom Brunel (1806-69) was arguably the most versatile civil engineer of his era. He served his apprenticeship under his father, working on the Thames Tunnel (1823), the world's first underwater tunnel. Six years later, he designed the Clifton Suspension Bridge, completed in 1864. In 1833 he became the engineer of the Great Western Railway, being responsible for all the tunnels, bridges and viaducts on that rail network. The design shows the last and greatest of his railway works, the Royal Albert Bridge over the Tamar at Saltash.

Brunel was not content with creating the Great Western Railway network; he had a vision of carrying passengers all the way from London to New York, and from this came the first of his trans-Atlantic passenger steamships, the *Great Western* (1838), which revolutionised ocean travel. Next came the *Great Eastern*, but in 1845 he built the *Great Britain*, the first large iron ship and the first screw steamer to cross the Atlantic.

Below the *Great Britain*, the 43p stamp shows an early steam locomotive emerging from a Victorian station with a curved roof of glass and iron girders. The entrance to the famous Box Tunnel and fanciful patterns of rails and wreaths of steam complete this decorative composition. Many previous stamps have featured railways, from the set of 1975 marking the 150th anniversary of the public rail system onwards, including issues in 1980, 1985 and 1994.

Great Britain had a long and distinguished career but ended up in 1937 as a coal-hulk in the Falkland Islands (which featured her on the 1952 £1). An epic campaign to bring her back to Britain for restoration culminated in 1970, marked by five Falklands stamps.

Brunel's earlier *Great Eastern* appears on the 22p stamp in the series marking the 150th anniversary of the accession of Queen Victoria, above.

The liner *Queen Elizabeth*, on the 1988 stamp below, shows how far Brunel's vision has been realised.



Andrzej Klimowski's stamp design adapts a detail from a portrait by Nathaniel Dance, of a tattooed Maori warrior. The portrait appears on stamps of the Cook Islands, Australia, Canada and USA.

Cook's two ships are shown anchor in William Hodges' painting *The Resolution and Adventure in Matavai Bay, Tahiti*. Many hundreds of fine paintings and drawings were produced during the course of the voyages, a remarkable record of the places visited.

Cook's endeavour By contrast, the 63p stamp, designed by Andrzej Klimowski, celebrates the dawn of scientific exploration which began with the three epic voyages of James Cook, between 1768 and his untimely death at Hawaii in 1779. The son of Scottish farmworkers, he was born at Marton-in-Cleveland, Yorkshire and worked on Whitby colliers before enlisting as an able seaman in the Royal Navy. By sheer ability he rose through the ranks. At the age of 40 Lieutenant Cook was given command of the *Endeavour*, a converted collier, to convey scientists from the Royal Society to Tahiti to observe the transit of Venus across the sun.

In a single decade Cook charted much of the Pacific, surveyed the coasts of Australia and New Zealand, explored the Pacific seaboard of America as far north as 71 degrees and charted the South Sandwich Islands and South Georgia for good measure. He pioneered the use of lime juice to counteract scurvy (hence the nickname given to British seamen of 'lime juicers' or 'limeys', often used by Americans of Britons in general). Had he survived his last expedition, he would have been promoted to admiral and created a baronet, such was the esteem in which he was held.

Cook has appeared on the stamps of many countries, but was conspicuous by his absence from the two sets of five British stamps portraying Explorers, 1972-3.



This is Captain Cook's first appearance on a British stamp, but his first voyage as commemorated in 1968 on the 1s9d stamp, right.



lr.

The portrait of Capta
painted by William H.
regarded as one of th
talented artists to sai
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London.



The Patients' Tale

The third of 12 sets of Millennium stamps to be issued this year is on the theme of patients and health.

Florence Nightingale put her ideas into practice during the Crimean War when she took a team of nurses to a hospital at Scutari, on the Black Sea. Her work reduced the death rate, and when she returned to Britain the first Nightingale School of Nursing was set up at St Thomas's Hospital in London.

Below, *The Mission of Mercy: Florence Nightingale receiving the wounded at Scutari*, by Jerry Barrett, c1856-58.

Patients' Tale stamps go on sale at post offices and philatelic outlets on 2 March. The **20p** stamp (basic inland 2nd class letter rate) shows Dr Jenner vaccinating a child. Edward Jenner (1749-1823) was born in Gloucestershire and studied medicine at St George's Hospital, London where he saw at first-hand victims of smallpox. One of the most virulent killer diseases of the time, it affected rich and poor alike and caused the death of Queen Mary II in 1694. Jenner knew from folklore and his own observations that milkmaids who had been infected with cowpox never caught smallpox. After investigation he developed a vaccination containing cowpox and inoculated an eight-year old boy in 1796. In the presentation pack, historian Jeremy Black tells us that Jenner, being a brilliant naturalist, was invited to accompany Captain Cook on his voyage of discovery. Cook features on the 63p stamp in the Travellers' Tale set issued this month.



ROYAL MAIL
MILLENNIUM STAMPS
6666



The 20p stamp shows Edward Jenner vaccinating a child in the patterning of a black and white cow. With the success of his smallpox vaccine, vaccination became one of the first modern methods of preventive medicine.

The 26p value features nursing care. Florence Nightingale (1820-1910) sought to make nursing an acceptable profession for women, and held strong convictions in terms of hygiene, ventilation and nutrition.

The important work of Sir Alexander Fleming (1881-1955) is recalled by the 43p value, which shows penicillin mould. In 1928 Fleming made a discovery which led to one of the main medical advances this century. By the 1940s penicillin was being produced in large quantities.

The 63p stamp features a sculpture of a test-tube baby by Antony Gormley. History was made at Oldham District Hospital in 1978 with the birth of Louise Brown – the world's first 'test-tube baby'.

Below, (and p163) courtesy National Portrait Gallery, London



Peter Brookes, designer of the 20p stamp, was born in Liverpool in 1943 and studied at art colleges in Manchester and London. He has been political cartoonist for *The Times* since 1993, and has worked for *Radio Times*, *New Statesman*, *The Listener* and *Spectator*.

Susan Macfarlane, designer of the 26p stamp, was born in Brighton in 1938 and trained at the Winchester School of Art. In recent years she has concentrated on painting and drawing connected with health matters. Her work has been displayed in many 'one man' shows.

Mike Dempsey (born 1944), designer of the 43p value, is known to philatelists for the 1987 Victorian Britain, 1988 Transport & Communications, and 1994 Pictorial Postcards stamps. He wrote about his work on the first two of these sets in the *Bulletin*, September 1987 and May 1988.

Antony Gormley, designer of the 63p, is best-known for the massive and controversial 'Angel of the North' sculpture near Gateshead.

The **26p** value (basic 1st class inland letter rate) features nursing care. Before the days of Florence Nightingale the British nurse had a poor reputation, but she sought to make nursing an acceptable profession for women, and is regarded as the founder of the modern profession. Florence Nightingale featured on the 9d stamp in the 1970 Anniversaries set.

The important work of Sir Alexander Fleming (1881-1955) is recalled by the **43p** value (basic airmail letter rate). Fleming went on holiday from St Mary's Hospital, Paddington leaving a Petri dish containing staphylococcus open to the air. The dish became contaminated with the fungus *Penicillium notatum* and part of the bacterial colony had been destroyed by it. Fleming had, by accident, stumbled on to one of the main medical advances this century. His work was taken up by pathologist Howard Florey and biochemist Ernst Chain, and penicillin became generally available in 1946. The three pioneers shared the Nobel Prize for Physiology or Medicine in 1945. Penicillin featured on the 1s stamp in the 1967 Discoveries set. Fleming was shown on the first day cover and a special handstamp was used at St Mary's Hospital, where Fleming made his discovery, on the day of issue.

The **63p** stamp (second step airmail letter rate) recalls techniques developed by British gynaecologist/obstetrician Patrick Steptoe (1913-88) and physiologist Robert Edwards. The popular term 'test tube' is inaccurate, the treatment – in vitro fertilization (IVF) involves combining egg and sperm in a glass dish with the resulting embryo being replaced in the womb. Initially developed to treat infertile women, it is now used to help men who produce few or defective sperm. It is estimated that about 7000 IVF babies have been born in Britain over the past five years.



proof: the concept of vaccination

– the use of one disease as a preventative measure to confer immunity to another – had come into being

Jenner's book on the subject caused controversy, but eventually vaccination became accepted. By 1812 more than one million people had been vaccinated. Yet nineteenth-century urbanization and population growth had created major problems. Most people lived in squalid conditions; in cities only half of all children lived beyond the age of five. Nevertheless, there were major improvements in medical knowledge and public health, especially in the provision of clean water. Improved nursing also helped, not least by altering the image of care. The founding of the patient-centred nursing

conditions and poor food. Following the introduction of Nightingale's reforming ideas, in a five-month period in 1855 the mortality rate of soldiers entering her hospital plummeted from 10 to 5 per cent. She returned to Britain to spread her reformation.

As Jenner and Nightingale were to preventive medicine, so Alexander Fleming (1881-1955) was to curative medicine, with his laboratory discovery of the antibiotic properties of the penicillin mould. First used during the Second World War, penicillin proved to be a powerful weapon in the doctor's armoury, and death rates from post-operative infections fell dramatically, as they did from other infections such as pneumonia and meningitis. However, our continuing health depends on constant effort and vigilance. Some bacteria rapidly developed resistance to penicillin, necessitating the development of new drugs.

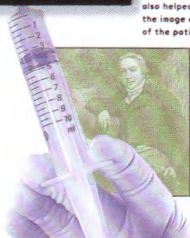
Antibiotics have become commonplace, a reminder of the dramatic, accelerating pace of change in our lifetime. More recent medical developments have also become common – many people now regard hip replacements as quite ordinary, for example. Other

our families, our futures. The dramatic nature of laboratory medicine and surgery has tended to overshadow the crucial developments in fields such as pharmacy, understanding disease and mental health, which contribute to the high state of medicine today. Perhaps in reaction to the 'high-tech', complementary and alternative treatments have gained in popularity in recent decades.

Improvements have touched the lives of countless millions. But not all illnesses and disabilities are in retreat. The work continues; we live in still momentous times for medicine.



Robert Edwards
and Patrick Steptoe
– the pioneers
of in vitro
fertilization
techniques





FIRST DAY FACILITIES Unstamped Royal Mail FDC envelopes will be available from main post offices and philatelic outlets about a week before 2 March, price 25p. Orders for FDCs with the stamps cancelled by a pictorial first day postmark of the Bureau or Oldham must reach the Bureau by 2 February. Price £2.20 UK (including VAT) or £1.88 overseas (no VAT).

Alternatively, collectors may send stamped covers on the day of issue, to: British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, Edinburgh EH3 5TT, or Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, Forth Street, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 1AA (Oldham postmark), marking the outer envelope 'FD9905' (Bureau), or 'FD9906' (Oldham). Collectors can post or hand in covers at main post offices – all covers will be given the Oldham postmark. A non-pictorial Oldham postmark will also be available, by sending covers to the Newcastle Handstamp Centre, requesting 'FD9906 NP'.

In accordance with Royal Mail's policy on the 'Welsh Language Scheme', bilingual versions of the Oldham pictorial and non-pictorial handstamps can be obtained by sending covers to the Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, Penarth Road, Cardiff CF1 1AA quoting reference FD9906 Bil (pictorial) and FD9906 NP Bil (non-pictorial).

Sponsored handstamps will be announced in the *British Postmark Bulletin* – available on subscription from the Bureau (£10 UK/Europe; £21.75 elsewhere). Covers may be posted bearing just the 20p Patients' Tale stamp for any philatelic postmark in use on 2 March.

MILLENNIUM PHILATELIC PRODUCTS A well-illustrated pack (price £1.85) and stamp cards (25p each) will be available from main post offices and philatelic outlets. The pack, written by Prof Jeremy Black of Exeter University, was designed by Silk Pearce.

A Royal Mail Millennium Stamps Album, now available, contains an introductory page, 12 double page spreads with subject information facing a page on which to mount each set of stamps, and three FDC and three presentation pack pages. The album, with slipcase, costs £19.99; sets of pages only £9.99 •

Technical details

Printer and process The House of Questa, gravure

Size 37 x 35mm

Sheets 100

Perforation 13.5 x 14

Phosphor One band 20p • two bands others

Gum PVA



Decimal stamp books 44 Specialist report by D G A Myall

European NVI Because, like all NVIs, these stamps will be valid even if rates rise, they will have a permanent colour, dark blue. This will not be the first time an NVI has been issued in this colour, as shown on the opposite page.



New method of book closure at Walsall The new method of bookmaking at Walsall, using a Bickel machine exhibits some interesting new features. This machine is used in conjunction with the gravure printings on the Chesnut presses (a second press was installed during 1998). All lithographed panes, including the latest label pane issued to commemorate Prince Charles' 50th birthday, are made up on the former machine. Panes printed by gravure have appeared in books made up by both methods. So how can you tell one kind of book from another?

Taking the stamps first, those printed in gravure have the enhanced image produced by computer-controlled (electro-mechanical) engraving, which I have dubbed head B₄ in my *Machin Handbook*. The details, especially in the hair, are particularly clear, there is a distinct spot on the lower lip and the base is rounded as with all B-type heads. The lithographic head is most easily distinguished by the flatter base; it is known as A₂. The lithographed stamps are comb perforated, with clean holes when viewed from the back. The gravure stamps are perforated on the web by an APS machine and have traces of powdered gum and paper below the holes. (A few gravure stamps were comb perforated; see my article in the June 1998 *Bulletin*.) Walsall gravure cylinder numbers on panes intended for the former method of bookmaking appear at the bottom of the pane margins; those for the new method are at the top, opposite the first row of stamps. However, you do not need a cylinder book to tell by what method the books were made.

The covers of books made on the new Bickel machine are a different size, being only 48mm high instead of the 50mm of books made up by the former method. All retail (window) books have a curved slit in the yellow strip which is designed to enable the public to seal the books while in use. The printers do not use this; they employ a temporary gumming seal. In Walsall books made by the old method, this takes the form of a spot of gum on or near the yellow strip. The gum used is very tenacious and collectors have experienced difficulty in opening the books without damage. The new books have a smaller spot of what appears to be a different glue, placed about an inch in from the right-hand edge of the covers. This is easier to open and can even be re-sealed for a time. These two features are enough to enable plain books to be distinguished.

At the time of writing, all Walsall books with four gravure-printed value stamps for overseas mail (4 × 30p, 4 × 37p and 4 × 63p) are still made by the former method and have the wider covers etc. The same is true of their books of 10 × 1st NVI stamps. (Walsall do not currently print books of 10 × 2nd class NVIs.) Books with panes of four NVIs, both classes, exist in both forms. It can be only a matter of time before new cylinders are required for the panes of value stamps and books containing these are likely to be made by the new method. It is worth keeping a lookout.

Early use of A2 phosphor In a previous article, I mentioned the new phosphor now in use by all printers except De La Rue, which has an after-



The 2nd class NVI was issued in dark blue on 7 August 1990 in booklets printed by Walsall and Questa. About a year later, the colour reverted to the light blue formerly used and which has been used ever since.

glow when irradiated with long-wave ultra violet and which I have named A2 phosphor. It is used on all Walsall's gravure definitives and on lithographed ones since about the end of 1996. Until recently, it was thought that the panes of 4×37 printed by lithography did not exist with A2 phosphor but a small quantity have recently come to light. Because the left and right phosphor bands on these panes are narrow, they produce two new single stamps for the specialist, one from positions 1 and 3, with the left bar inset and one from positions 2 and 4 with the right bar inset. Dealer's prices are around £10 per stamp.

Cartoons reprint with A2 phosphor The flowers greetings stamp books have been with us so long, with various covers, that one would be forgiven for thinking that they are the only greetings stamps on sale. In fact, the Cartoons books, first issued on 26 February 1996, are still on sale as well. The first issue was on paper with all-over printed phosphor. In November 1996, the stamps were issued with two phosphor bars. Toward the end of last year, they were re-printed from new plates and were overprinted with the new phosphor. The plate combinations, which exist only in this form, are: w10 w8 w8 w7 w8 w8 and w11 w9 w9 w8 w9 w9. Other combinations may exist.

European NVI Books containing panes of four new NVIs to pre-pay the pan-European letter rate which came into effect last April and which is currently 30p, were issued on 19 January.

The four books with stamps printed in gravure

by Questa had not been received by the time this article had to be submitted; I will cover them in my next article.

Dates of issue From time to time I mention a date of issue for a stamp book which is queried by a reader. Dates of first issue can be contentious. It is not uncommon for a book to be released to sales outlets before the official date. In such cases there is competition among specialist dealers to provide a first day cover for those who collect them and these may differ. Quite often no official date is given, mainly because Royal Mail do not recognise the stamp content as being new. In some cases Royal Mail announces a date of first availability – the date that the Bureau expects to get supplies. Even then, the actual date may be later than announced. Then there are the promotional books which have an official date for availability in stores of the firm paying for the promotion with a later date for a philatelic distribution. I usually adopt the official date, if there is one but if the book is released to normal sales outlets by more than a week or so, I adopt the actual date since stamps from it can appear on posted items. Where no official date is announced, I adopt the date the book was first seen on sale. This is usually the date it was first reported but one has to be careful; sometimes books are reported in stock before they are released.

Mea culpa In December I stated that the stamps in the Holiday currency book were flame; I was wrong; they were gold. Oops, sorry! ●

GB official first day covers Derek Williams writes about the endless possibilities in the covers produced every year

Readers of the *British Philatelic Bulletin* know from the *Commemorative Covers Review* there are many firms, organisations and individuals producing covers for many reasons. Some are for charity, some for profit, some even just for pleasure. Many are not produced on the first day of a stamp issue and are therefore not first day covers and cannot be included in this article, as collectors of first day covers are only interested in those that are postmarked on the first day of issue.

To be a first day cover, the postmark can be a counter date stamp, a slogan, a sorting office cancellation or whatever, as long as the date is the first day of issue of the stamps. The stamps themselves can be commemorative or definitive, and there should be a full set. There are a small number of collectors who include single-stamp FDCs in their albums, but they are few and far between (and for the mercenary minded, a single stamp FDC would be very difficult to sell except in very rare cases).

As a general rule FDC collectors are not very interested in the stamps themselves as long as they are in perfect condition, and although a stamp misprint on a first day cover would certainly make it a bit special, it is not something that FDC collectors look for. Watch a collector

going through the FDCs in a dealer's 'bargain box' and you will find that he is more likely to be looking at the postmarks than anything else. That is where the main variations lie.

One of the favourite first day covers in my collection was sent by W Paling who was Postmaster General from April 1947 to March, 1950, to Sir Raymond Birchall, Director General of the Post Office from 1946 to 1949, explaining the 1949 Postal Union stamp issue to dignitaries including the Prime Minister, ex-Director Generals of the Post Office, members of the PO Advisory Council, two grandsons of Sir Rowland Hill and the 2nd Assistant Postmaster General of the USA.

With it there is one of the original official handouts that were given to the media by the GPO at the time, and which is worded very similarly to the letter. You just can't get more official than that, yet believe it or not, it does not come under the generally accepted heading of 'Official First Day Cover'.

The vast majority of first day cover collectors who specialise in official covers use the term as it was coined by Adrian Bradbury in *Collecting British First Day Covers*, to mean that the envelope and the handstamp used were specially designed for that particular issue of stamps.

This cover bears a full set of 10.10.1949 Postal Union stamps, the envelope and handstamp are official GPO HQ and it includes the letter signed 'W Paling'. The letter itself is one of only thirty sent out at the time, explaining the stamp issue to dignitaries.





This cover, produced by the Leicester Synagogue on its 100th anniversary is a good example of an organisation featuring itself on an envelope with no connection at all to the stamp issue.

My UPU cover, although eminently official, was not designed for that stamp issue, neither was the handstamp, so it doesn't fit into the generally accepted category of 'official cover'. None of this is very important, 'a rose by any other name' as the Bard put it, but it does explain exactly what the rest of this article is all about. Namely, 'official covers' as generally accepted.

They range from envelopes with simple printed messages to exceptional ones, sometimes hand painted, that can only be described as beautiful works of art. The cost also varies enormously, from the 'value for money' Royal Mail FDCs which cost very little more than the value of the stamps they bear, to very small limited editions that sell for £20 or more.

The first GB official cover was the one produced by Harners for the 1924 exhibition, although no-one thought of calling it an official cover in those long-ago days. For the first few years after that they were rarely produced, but gradually more and more appeared on the collecting scene.

Commemorative issue first day covers are much more popular than definitive, and most of the cover designs for them are based on the theme of the set of stamps. Cover designs based on the theme of an individual stamp are rare, and it will be very interesting to see what producers come up with in 1999, when there will be a new commemorative stamp issue every month, each stamp by a different artist illustrating a different aspect of the overall theme.

One of the most fascinating things about Official Covers is the great variety available from different producers for the same stamp issue. They can range from the totally subjective approach with an organisation featuring itself on the envelope with no connection at all to the stamp issue, to a cover based on the theme of one specific stamp.

A good example of the former is the attractive envelope above, produced by the Leicester Synagogue to raise money on its 100th anniversary. Committee meetings were held, a date was chosen that fell roughly between the original laying of the foundation stone and the opening of the synagogue for religious worship, and an envelope and handstamp were designed with a beautifully simple picture of the synagogue on both.

None of the committee were first day cover collectors, so no-one was aware that the date they chose just happened to be the same day that the Lighthouse issue of stamps was due to be released. In fact they decided to use The Queen's Golden Wedding stamps that had been issued four months before in November 1997 on their envelope, as those stamps also commemorated an anniversary. It was also decided to sell any surplus envelopes for £5 each, and they went to a few lucky collectors who happened to have heard about them. There weren't all that many sold, in the end only 103 were produced altogether with the full set of Lighthouse stamps on them and the Synagogue handstamp. This made them a very collectable cover indeed for the few collectors who managed to get hold of one, and all by accident!



The Magical Worlds stamps above (originally called Children's Fantasy) dated 21 July 1998 gave enormous scope to envelope designers.

The cover at right, entitled *Fast and Fantastic*, was designed for double dating, with Magical Worlds and Speed stamps.



A double dated first day cover designed specially for the above two stamp issues. GBFCovers 102 Regal Way, Kenton, Harrow, Middlesex HA3 0RY.

Derek Williams is Hon President of GBFDC (the Association of Collectors of GB First Day Covers). For details of this organisation write to him at 102 Regal Way, Kenton, Harrow HA3 0RY.

In complete contrast to the Leicester Synagogue cover is the one illustrated above left. It was produced for the Association of Collectors of GB First Day Covers, and is very strongly based on the theme of the stamps. Each of the five stamps illustrated a different book and author, so there were covers about books, covers about authors, covers about characters from the books and just as many varieties of sponsored handstamps.

The illustrated cover is also a good example of a designer using the whole envelope as his canvas. It includes scenes from several of the books featured in the stamp issue from an original painting commissioned especially for the cover, and the handstamp was designed so that the butterfly in it formed part of the picture. As a point of interest, there are also lots of butterflies on the back of the envelope.

Another kind of first day cover variation is the series of double-dated official covers started by the same Association in 1997. Collectors have for many years been interested in covers bearing two issues of stamps, sometimes years apart, each set of stamps cancelled with the first day handstamp on the day of issue. But they were not official covers as the envelopes were always designed for the first stamp issue only. Collectors had to find a first

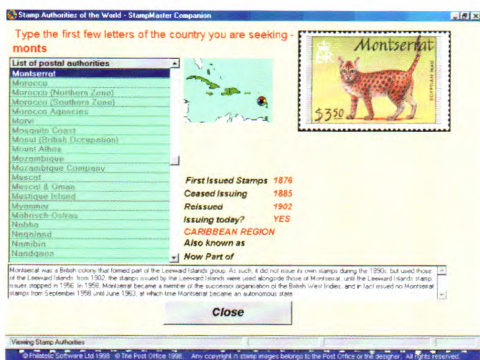
day cover with enough space on it for an additional full set of stamps, and then wait for an issue that had some relevance to the one already on the cover and with not too many – or too large – stamps in it to fit onto the envelope. These could only be done in very small quantities, very often just one or two were produced.

But the cover illustrated above right was designed with double dating in mind and an issue of 50 was produced. The stamp issues concerned were Magical Worlds, 21.7.98 and Speed, 29.9.98. It was entitled *Fast and Fantastic* and just a small square in the centre was used for the illustration leaving plenty of room for all ten stamps and the appropriate postmarks.

Another interesting point is that the cover embodies two different approaches to the postmark design. The butterfly in the Magical Worlds postmark was taken from the design of the envelope, while the car in the Speed postmark was taken from one of the stamps in the issue.

The few covers mentioned here are only a tiny example of the enormous variety produced every year. The possibilities for even one issue of stamps are endless both for the designer and for the collector, which is what makes first day cover collecting so fascinating ●

Product review StampMaster Companion CD-ROM



StampMaster Companion Postal Authority screen, Montserrat

ROYAL MAIL has worked again with Philatelic Software Limited to produce this Companion CD-ROM, which is designed to be of interest to all GB collectors regardless of their level of expertise, and follows on the success of its StampMaster programs, which first appeared in 1994. Full loading instructions are supplied and the suggested machine configuration to run the software is a Pentium processor computer, with 16mb of RAM and 95mb of free hard disk space, and a good colour monitor. It will run under either Windows 95 or 98.

Claimed to be suitable for collectors from 8 years to adult, this new CD-ROM, which runs independently of the 'StampMaster GB' program, contains five different sections. These options are selected from the main screen. They are described as: GB Stamp Guide, Where in the World, International Pot Pourri, What does that mean? and Stamp Quiz. Clicking on any one of these brings up different screen images for the viewer. A large 'Exit' button on this opening screen allows the user to leave the program at any time.

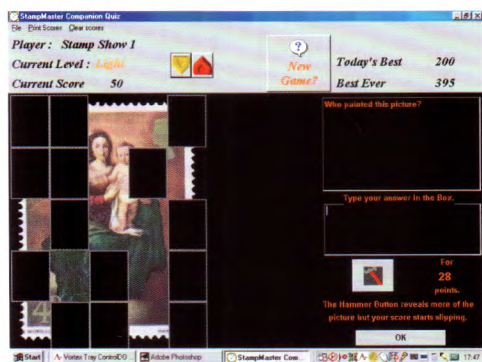
The main section of the program, entitled 'GB Stamp Guide', provides a visual database to all issues since 1840 which have different face designs. Issues having no visible differences to the naked eye, such as Machin definitives with different gums or phosphors are not included. All issues are arranged in chronological order, using the Nation-

al Postal Museum's own numbering system as employed in the companion 'Stampmaster GB' computer program. The screens displayed from the database come in two formats. The first shows 16 stamps at a time in chronological order, with a user option to select the starting number that then becomes the upper left-hand stamp on the screen. The alternative is to display the designs by issue, so that all values of a chosen set appear together on the screen. The last set included on the CD-ROM is the Speed issue of September 1998.

A major feature of the program is its ability to allow the creation of what are termed 'viewing lists'. These are listings of the stamps displayed on the screen which have been selected by the user according to some specific characteristic: for the GB Stamp Guide section, for example, this might have been all the stamps which the collector already had in their collection. These lists, but not the images of the selected stamps, can be printed out or transferred to a spreadsheet program for further analysis, if required. Two different viewing lists can be constructed at the same time, using different sets of characteristics, and the program can compare stamps on the screen by selecting the individual items from one or both lists.

Any stamp on the screen can be enlarged to examine its details more closely, and the option is provided to list fuller details of the stamp being viewed. These extra details show the exact date of issue, a description of the design, a picture of the watermark, if any, and contain an estimated mint and used value. These latter values are described as current market buying prices which have been set up by an 'expert', but no further details are given. One suggested use for the viewing list facility is to value a given collection, by creating separate lists for mint and used specimens and summing each of them. A suitable warning is given about these being buying prices and stating that collectors should expect to obtain much less than this total if trying to sell via a dealer.

The 'Where in the World' section gives details



A StampMaster Companion Stamp Quiz screen

of more than 1,000 postal authorities both past and present. Selection of the country from the alphabetic index, or by typing the first few letters of a country name, brings up a screen with a small map indicating its geographical position. In many cases, one specimen stamp from the chosen country is illustrated. The standard text on the page gives the year on which the country started and stopped issuing stamps, with details of any later periods when re-issues began. This is supplemented with a note if the country is still issuing today, and giving any alternative names by which the stamp issuing authority has been known during its life. This summary detail is supported with a more general note on the philatelic activity of the country concerned where needed. The coverage in this section will be valuable to collectors who are unsure of the exact location of the more obscure stamp-producing states, particularly of those which have ceased to issue stamps of their own.

The International Pot Pourri module displays full colour stamp images giving representative designs from all the major stamp issuing countries of the world. These are intended to show the type of stamps any particular country produces, and the emphasis is laid on the thematic designs that can be found. It is recommended that browsing through the illustrated sets will allow a viewing list to be constructed relating to any given thematic subject, and an example list using the 'Space' theme is included.

The selection of 'What does that mean?' reveals two sub-sections. The first is a series of brief articles giving background information on stamp collecting as a hobby. The second part is a short glossary of major philatelic terms, where the definitions are written in plain English rather than jargon. Both of these sections will be useful for new or beginner collectors.

The 'Stamp Quiz' provides a break from the more serious work of list building and is confined to questions on GB stamps. Three grades of difficulty can be selected, which are called Light, Middling, and Serious, to indicate the level of the player's knowledge. Many of the questions can be answered from a multi-choice list, which is a help, but others require a response to be typed in. The latter type can be confusing. In one example, the question asks 'What anniversary is being commemorated?' by a specific British stamp that is illustrated on the screen. Typing the answer as 'Centenary' is given as being incorrect, because the response '100th' is what is sought, even though there is no indication of how the answer should be phrased. Each question is given a points score, and the program accumulates each player's total of correct answers as the game progresses. At the end of the game, these totals are displayed in a table in descending points value order, so that the winner appears at the top. The questions set in this section are not trivial, and at the 'serious' level require an in-depth knowledge of GB stamp issues from 1840 onwards. Even the 'light' level questions can be challenging, but overall the Quiz is good fun.

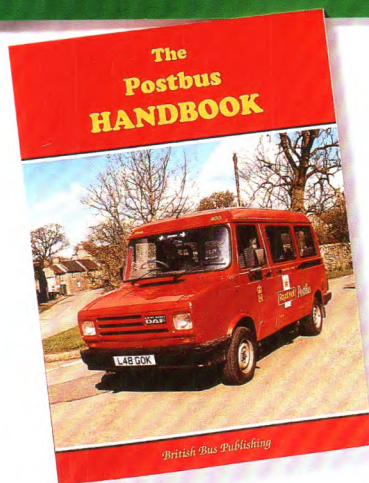
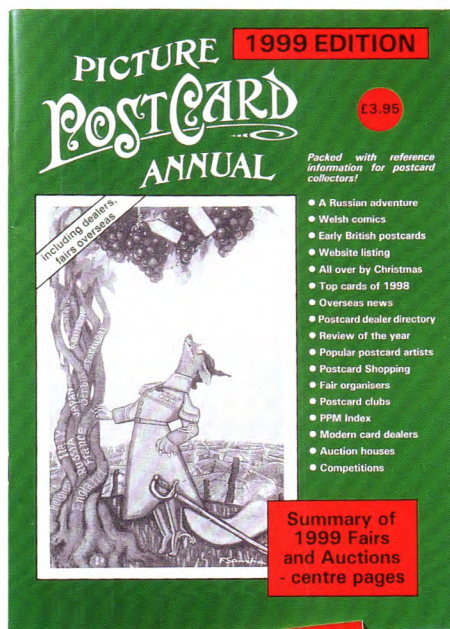
The CD-ROM also contains an extensive set of Help screens, and these can be printed out if required. These details explain how the program can be used to maximum advantage, although the simple design means the user can operate each section without the need to rely upon Help very often. The program is well constructed and achieves its objectives – it will be welcomed by GB collectors •

StampMaster Companion Available from Philatelic Software Ltd, Valley View, Coleman's Lane, Nazeing, Essex EN9 2EA, or from the Philatelic Bureau, at £49.95 to UK addresses. Overseas post and packing is extra at £2.95.

Books Postcards • Postbuses • Stanley Gibbons • Air mail

Picture Postcard Annual 1999 This 19th edition of a popular reference work, skilfully edited by Brian and Mary Lund, contains essential information for all serious postcard collectors – addresses of postcard clubs, dealers, auction houses, fairs, etc. The three-page 1999 Postcard Events Diary is particularly useful – there are shows and fairs in most parts of the country virtually every week with the major event – 1999 Picture Postcard Show (formerly called BIPEX) in London on 1-4 September. There are good feature articles on Russian and early British cards, Christmas issues, modern cards, and Welsh comics. As always there are reviews of the last year's postcard scene in the UK and around the world, and 10 dealers select their favourite postcard artists, illustrated with examples of their work. In his review of modern cards (since 1950), Pete Davies notes an increase in interest in these, after a few years in the doldrums, due mainly to the issue of some important new series and the publication of the 3rd edition of *Collect Modern Postcards*. The *Annual* is well-produced, profusely illustrated and good value for money •

The Postbus Handbook Royal Mail postbuses were introduced in 1967 and over the years have attracted quite a following; people record and photograph the vehicles, travel on the buses through some of the finest countryside in Britain, and collect postbus postmarks, tickets and other memorabilia. In his foreword, David Gibson, of Royal Mail Road Transport Strategy, reminds us that there is now a fleet of 220 vehicles, pays tribute to drivers past and present whose commitment ensures that the mail gets through, and looks forward to the continued development of the postbus network, particularly new challenges set by the Government's Integrated Transport policy. This well-produced book provides a background to the setting up of the postbus services, a year-by-year history of the vehicles and routes, a chronological listing of routes (with dates of commencement and cessation), and many excellent photos of the buses. A handsome production •



Picture Postcard Annual 92 pages, card covers. Available from Reflections of a Bygone Age, 15 Debdale Lane, Keyworth, Nottingham NG12 5HT. Price £3.95, postage £1.

The Postbus Handbook 136 pages, card covers, published by British Bus Publishing Ltd. Available from Post Office Vehicle Club, 124 Shenstone Avenue, Norton, Stourbridge DY8 3EJ. Price £12.50 postpaid.



456 pages, card covers. Available from Stanley Gibbons Strand shop, or from Stanley Gibbons Publications, Parkside, Ringwood BH24 3SH. Price £24.95.

Stanley Gibbons Great Britain Specialised Stamp Catalogue: vol 3 Queen Elizabeth II pre-Decimal Issues

The 10th edition of this work, first published in 1970, will be welcomed by all serious collectors of the Wilding and early Machin definitives and the interesting and innovative commemorative stamps of the 1950s and 1960s. In their preface, editors David Aggersberg and Robert Oliver refer to the re-issue of the Wilding design in the 'Definitive Portrait' prestige book of March 1998, expressing the opinion that in re-issuing them 'Royal Mail considers them to be representative of a Golden Age of stamp design.' For many collectors, the first 18 years of The Queen's reign were a 'golden age' and the plethora of issues since decimalisation do not have the same charm or philatelic interest. It was not only a period of generally good design but of change. David and Robert remind us that 'the years between 1952 and 1970 certainly contain more than their fair share of postal innovation, many aspects of which have continued into today's high-tech environment. Phosphor bands are still with us, as are presentation packs, prestige stamp booklets and Regional (now Country) stamps. There is much to attract specialist collectors to the Queen Elizabeth II pre-Decimal era – even its own Machins!'

The Wilding series is every bit as complicated and worthy of study as the Machins although it was in use for less than half the time. As well as changes in watermark, there were graphite, phosphor-graphite and phosphor stamps, the latter applied by different methods and in different 'colours' (green, blue and violet). Some variations are extremely scarce – as catalogue prices indicate. For example the 2½d phosphor with inverted watermark is priced at £160 with green phosphor and £170 blue. Another 2½d – Type 2, whiter paper with blue phosphor band at left applied by typography is listed at £190 mint/£75 used compared to just 50p/£1 for the same stamp with the band applied photogravure. The Wilding 'Castle' high values are also a rich area for study, with different printers, papers and watermark inverted varieties – some of which exist in tiny quantities; only three used examples have been confirmed of the 10s Bradbury Wilkinson printing on whiter paper, catalogued at £50.

The pre-decimal Machins are nowhere near as numerous as their decimal cousins but there is still much of interest there, with different heads, shades, gums, phosphor omitted errors, etc. The rarest single item is the 4d brown, gum arabic, Head B, valued at £140. This reviewer has always liked the shades on the 6d value, and to a lesser extent, those of the 4d and 5d. Booklet panes are worth close scrutiny, for example panes of six of the 4d vermilion with gum arabic are catalogued at £130 compared to just £1 for the normal pane with PVA gum. If your gum arabic pane also has missing phosphor, the price rises to £500!

The commemoratives have much to recommend them, with numerous constant varieties to look out for – the more significant of these are illustrated and priced, minor varieties are listed but not valued. Some issues, such as the 1962 National Productivity Year and the 1964 Shakespeare Festival, yield some nice shade variations. Many commemorative issues are still cheaply available – some not having kept up with inflation. The quality of the 3000 black & white illustrations is generally good but on some the illustrated variety is difficult to see, for example the 1965 Battle of Britain stamps •

Aerogrammes Air Mail Letter Cards Air Letters, 1998 Supplement Compiled by P R Aaby. The original book was reviewed here last February. The supplement results from further research and response from collectors – with a further 360 new entries as the end product. The listings are divided into Great Britain and Forces Mail, the former encompassing GB Prisoner of War Post, Civilian GPO Air Letters and Forms, Forces Stamped Air Letters and Forms, Forces Stamped Air Letters, Definitive Aerogrammes, *sto* Private Aerogrammes, Pictorial & Commemorative, Regional Aerogrammes, and Isle of Man and Ireland. There are a further 14 sections under

the Forces Mail heading. The new listings of Royal Mail aerogrammes include the new thicker paper standard aerogramme, the Scottish, Welsh and English Lighthouses and Magical Worlds issues and the bilingual Welsh standard aerogramme. Numerous variations to Irish aerogrammes are now listed and specialist collectors of the Forces issues will welcome the considerable number of new entries in this section. Page numbers run on from the original work •

1998 supplement, Aerogrammes Air Mail Letter Cards Air Letters 40 pages, card covers, spiral bound. Available from QB Software, 4 Haslewood Close, Smarden, Ashford, Kent TN27 8NY. Price £4 postpaid. Original book with supplement £12.50.

Posting boxes 184

THIS MONTH'S PHOTOGRAPH, submitted by R L Wilson of Wirral, shows a British box in France. Mr Wilson reports seeing several such boxes in the 'Welsh/Breton-speaking' area of Brittany in April 1998. The one featured is a George VI wall mounted box in the town of Plouescat, Finistere Department. It remains in use, with collection times clearly displayed on the usual panel •



For details of the Letter Box Study Group send a SAE or IRC to the Membership Secretary, Mrs V Scott, 38 Leopold Avenue, Handsworth Wood, Birmingham B20 1ES. The Group produces many interesting publications and postcards.

Cover corner

THIS MONTH'S ITEM is a postcard of the Coronation of King George V and Queen Mary in 1911 – submitted by David Wellman of Hampshire. We should be pleased to hear from any reader who can supply a translation of the message •



Postbag

Architects of the Air As the son of R J Mitchell, designer of the Spitfire, I was understandably delighted that the set and the 20p stamp honouring my father and his Spitfire, did so well in the 12th annual stamp poll (*Bulletin* April 1998). Having the face of each aircraft designer formed by clouds was a truly brilliant idea and it is only right that Turner Duckworth, the designer of the stamps, should have received the top Royal Mail Innovation award for his designs.

Over the last eight years I have presented lectures about my father, now totalling 103, some 30 of these being given after the 20p stamp was issued on 10 June 1997. In these lectures I now always show a coloured slide of the 20p stamp and ask the audience whether they can see my father's face. Usual reaction is complete silence! I then point out the face with my laser pointer and immediately there are loud cries of 'Oh yes'! In other words, this quite extensive evidence together with a lot of other evidence I have obtained by questioning people, shows that without doubt, a high proportion of the population failed to spot the faces on these five stamps unless they were pointed out to them.

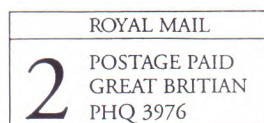
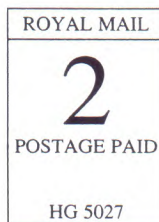
This unfortunate situation could so easily have been prevented if, in the quite extensive TV advertising of the Architects of the Air stamps which Royal Mail commissioned, one of the stamps was

shown filling most of the screen, and the face on it carefully pointed out. Unfortunately, the TV advertising that was nationally put across was totally ineffective in highlighting Turner Duckworth's brilliant designs. DR GORDON MITCHELL, Barn Close, Lower Slaughter, Cheltenham GL54 2HT •



Dr Mitchell has published a biography of his famous father – R J Mitchell: Schooldays to Spitfire. Mitchell designed no less than 24 aircraft during a working life of only 17 years, including the 1925 Southampton flying boat, the Walrus Amphibian of wartime fame, and the world-beating Schneider Trophy seaplanes. He no doubt would have achieved even more had he not suffered cancer in his last years, leading to his early death age 42. The book contains much previously unpublished material and provides an account of Mitchell the man as well as one of the greatest aeronautical engineers. Signed copies of the book are available from Dr Mitchell at the above address. Price £16.55 postpaid.

Printed Postage Impressions Following the recent interest shown in PPIS and other non-stamped postal methods, I enclose a photocopy of three PPIS which may arouse some interest. I have only been collecting these for about two years and the different print styles, sizes and colours employed provide a fascinating hobby, albeit not as interesting as stamps themselves. The examples at right show printing errors. The right-hand example of HQ 1290 has a frame line missing at right; the upright PP1 is wrongly inscribed HG 5027 instead of HQ; and the horizontal format example has BRITAIN spelt incorrectly! I look forward to more articles and notes on PPIS in the *Bulletin* in the future. W H DAVIES, PRESTON •



Competition Identify the stamp from the detail and win £100

SIMPLY IDENTIFY the 1998 stamp from the detail shown at right and send your answer, name and address on a postcard (or back of a sealed envelope) to: February Competition, British Philatelic Bulletin, Royal Mail, 22 Finsbury Square, London EC2A 1NL. The sender of the first correct answer drawn on 22 March will receive £100, twenty runner-up prizes will also be awarded. The competition is not open to Royal Mail employees •

The winners of November's competition were N M Newton, Oxford; J & D Gill, Warwick; and B Martindale, Ontario, Canada

The answers 1) 76; 2) Association of British Philatelic Societies (ABPS); 3) North Lowestoft; 4) Post Office. Our thanks to all who entered.

The winner of the 1982 Christmas FDC with Bethlehem cds (November *Bulletin*) was A Dobson of Staffs. Ten other winners were sent 1998 FDCs.



Events

The National Postal Museum, King Edward Street, London EC1A 1LP is now closed to the public. There is limited access to some of the collections – by appointment. **Enquiries** 0171 776 3636

Until 6 April Scarfe at the NPG – exhibition of works of Gerald Scarfe, including original artwork for 1998 Comedians stamps. At National Portrait Gallery, St Martin's Place, London WC2H 0HE. **Enquiries** 0171 306 0055

Until further notice Postal Memorabilia displays at Museum of Lincolnshire Life, Burton Road, Lincoln. **Enquiries** D Harrop, 15 Hawthorn Road, Stockport SK4 3DQ

2 February North of Ireland Phil Soc Auction from the Collection of Robert Scott at Hunterhouse College, Lisburn Road, Belfast, 19.30 (viewing from 17.30). **Enquiries** N Scott, 01232 795530

12-14 February 100 Letters & Philatelic Documents among the Rarest in the World exhibition at the Monaco Museum of Stamps, Monte Carlo, Monaco.

3-7 March Spring Stampex at Business Design Centre, London N1. Includes major display marking centenary of National Philatelic Society. **Enquiries** 0171 490 1005

3-6 March London Stamp and Cover Show at Royal Horticultural Hall, Greycoat Street, London SW1

6 March Display 'GB Airmail Etiquettes, 1920-52' by Frank Jones, GB Philatelic Society, at Spring Stampex, 14.30. **Enquiries** A J Lajer (GBPS Membership Secretary), 01189 344151

19-24 March Australia '99 at Melbourne Exhibition Centre. **Enquiries** UK Commissioner A Brander, 10 Garden Close, East Grinstead RH19 4JS

20 March Displays '1879/80 Tenders', and 'British Mail to Overseas Destinations' by Simon Kelly and Jane Moubray, GB Philatelic Society, at British Philatelic Centre, 107 Charterhouse Street, London EC1, 11.00 and 14.30 respectively. **Enquiries** A J Lajer (GBPS Membership Secretary) 01189 344151 •

THE PROFILE ON PRINT PRESTIGE STAMP BOOK



Royal Mail's prestige stamp book for 1999 tells the story of the development of the Machin head definitives – now one of the longest-running and most complicated of any definitive series with a large following of specialist collectors.

This book will be of great interest not only to Machin collectors, but anyone interested in stamp printing, as it includes 1st class Machin stamps printed by no fewer than five different processes! Three panes contain large size Machin stamps printed in black by recess (intaglio) and typography (letterpress), and embossed on white self-adhesive paper. The two other panes con-

tain normal sized stamps, in flame (orange) printed in gravure and lithography. This is a unique opportunity to compare the different methods and reproduction of the Machin head by the five processes. Issue date 16 February, price £7.54. The book is the second in a series of three related to the Stamp Show 2000. The first, issued in March 1998, contained unique Wilding design stamps in decimal currency. This is still available from the Bureau and philatelic outlets, at £7.49.

The British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, Edinburgh EH3 5TT



Reference 98 QPA

