

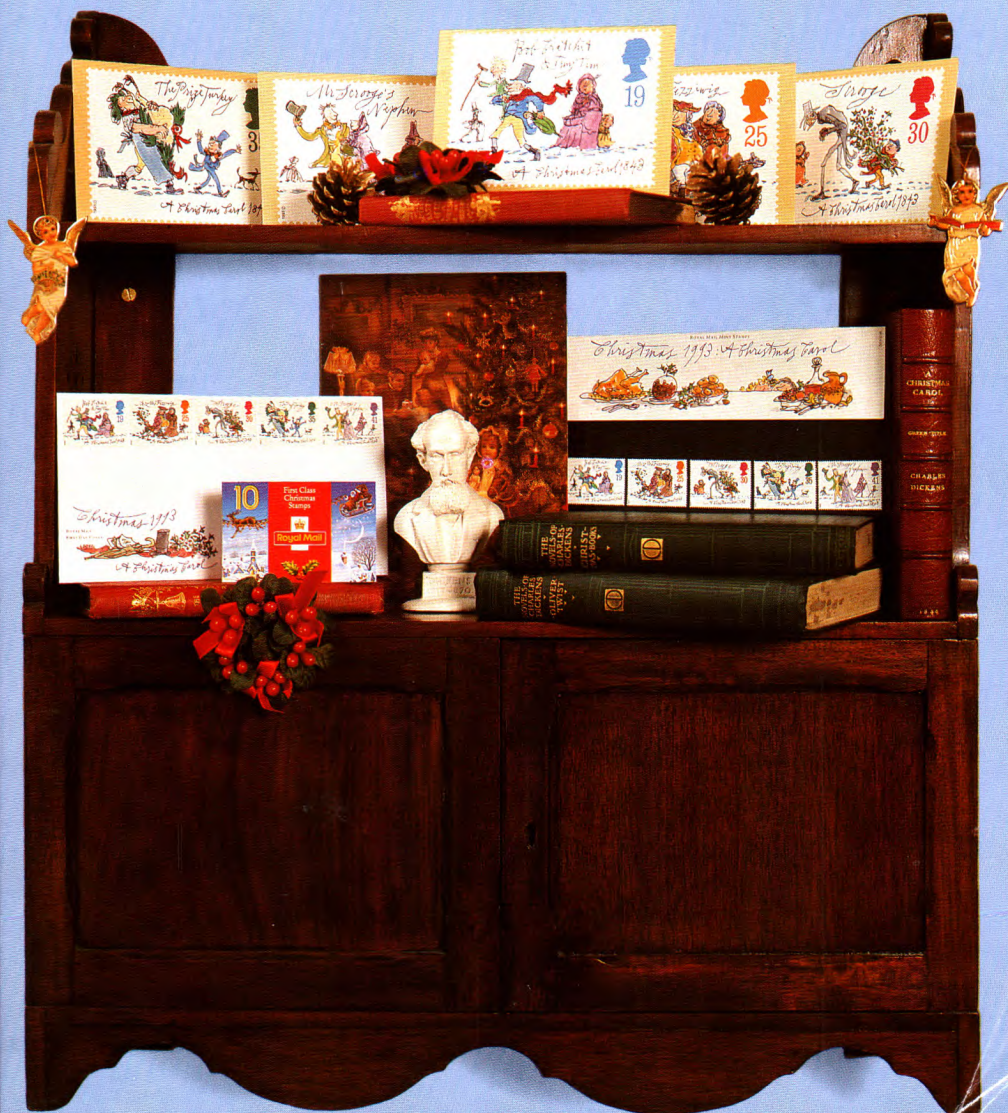
November 1993

British Philatelic Bulletin



Royal Mail

Volume 31. No: 3 The Royal Mail Magazine for Stamp Collectors Price 75p



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Royal Mail

British Philatelic Bulletin

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Contents

The first regular North Atlantic Air Mails from the UK	60
Royal Mail News – 4p, 20p, 50p Enschedé; Bureau Prize Draw	63
Country Stamps – New Values issued on 7 December	66
Royal Mail Special Stamps 1993 Yearbook – A review	68
Stamps of the Four Kings – George V Downey Heads	74
Post Office Archives News – Postcards, Miniature, Maps	76
Posting Boxes – Boxes in USA and Cyprus	77
Stamp Scene – Music stamp awards; Railway letter stamps, etc.	78
Book Reviews – British Special Stamps 1985-86, etc.	80
Competition – First Day & Commemorative Covers from A G Bradbury	82
Events – Exhibitions, fairs & displays	83
Christmas Stamps at Selfridges – Christmas Carol window displays	83
Customer Knows Best – Cartoon fun	83
November Digest – This month's comings and goings	84

Main Feature

Design of British Special Stamps 70

G E Drabble examines the controversial subject of stamp design – what makes a good stamp?



The first regular North Atlantic Air Mails from the UK

RICHARD BEITH

In the October 1992 issue of this magazine the author described direct British air mail links with South America during the 1930s. It was pointed out that in common with the other countries of Europe, the United Kingdom Post Office had to utilise the French and German air services to Brazil, Argentina, etc. The advent of the Second World War put an end to the UK's rather belated decision to develop their own route to South America via Lisbon, Dakar and Bathurst (Ref.1).

Although the distances between suitable stopping off points on any proposed North Atlantic air route were not much different from those on the South Atlantic, conditions for the available planes were much more severe. The frequent occurrence of adverse weather and the strong winds encountered, particularly in the westerly direction, made it inevitable that viable, commercial, North Atlantic air routes took much longer to appear than those on the South Atlantic.

In fact, it was 1939 before the first regular British and American services were initiated,

though there were some earlier services which were not utilised by the British authorities. For example, between 1929 and 1935 Germany operated regular accelerated sea and air services utilising their crack ocean liners *Bremen* and *Europa*. A mail plane was catapulted from the ship as it was approaching either New York or an English Channel port and the mail was landed and processed long before the vessel docked. British mail was not carried on this service as the British PO didn't think the acceleration obtained was of sufficient value. However much mail, mostly of philatelic origin can be found part-flown between the USA and mainland Europe and vice versa, see Stanley-Smith (2). In 1936 the German airship *LZ 129 Hindenburg* was placed in service on the North Atlantic for mail, express freight and passengers. Ten return flights were made between 6 May and 12 October 1936. It was on the first scheduled flight of 1937 that the hydrogen-filled *Hindenburg* was destroyed by fire as it was about to land in the USA..

Once again the British PO had been sceptical



1. First flight cover from England to Canada over Pan American's Northern route at the 1s 3d rate. LONDON FS 30 JUNE 1939 machine cancel, SHEDJAC CANADA JUL 1 1939 cds on reverse.

about the benefits to be gained by sending British mails by this service, although at least one unofficial cover seems to have slipped through. In fact, by 1937, PO officials had changed their mind and they decided to accept mail for flight by the LZ129, starting with the second flight of that year. As the airship was destroyed on the first 1937 flight, that was also the end of the British mail plans. The proposed mail charges had been published: 2s 9d per half ounce for letters to New York City and 3s 2d per half ounce for the rest of the USA. (Postcards 1s 4d and 1s 7d respectively) This proposed service has been well researched from PO Records by Nutley (3).

Imperial Airways and Pan American

Throughout the 1930s the need for a regular North Atlantic air mail service was discussed by representatives of the British, Canadian, Irish Free State and US governments. Although various possible routes were discussed, progress was slow. The main problem was the lack of suitable aircraft with the necessary combination of load carrying capacity and range. Built in to the discussions between the US and British governments was the agreement that the two countries would wait until both parties had suitable equipment. It was July 1937 before the first proving flights took place between Southampton and Port Washington with intermediate stops at Foynes (Irish Free State)



2. The Imperial Airways flying boat G-AFCU Cabot. (Flight photograph).

and Botwood (Newfoundland). For Imperial Airways the Short Brothers Empire flying boat *Caledonia* flew to the USA, for Pan American it was the Sikorsky 42B flying boat *Clipper III* which came to the UK. No official mail was carried.

At last, in January 1939, Pan American took delivery of the first of its mighty Boeing 314 flying boats and a regular North Atlantic service was in sight. Imperial Airways had bigger flying boats on order, but in the end, Pan American didn't wait for their rivals. The first mail flight left New York on 20 May 1939 destined for Marseille, France, with stops at Horta (Azores) and Lisbon. This was Pan American's "Southern Route" The first flight on the "Northern Route" took place on 24 June 1939 from New York to Southampton via Shediac (New Brunswick),



3. First flight cover from England to the USA carried by Imperial Airways at the 1/3 rate. NEWPORT MON. 4.AUG 1939 machine cancel, NEWYORK N.Y. AUG 6 1939 cds on reverse.

Botwood and Foynes. The service was known as FAM 18 (Foreign Air Mail Route 18 of the US Post Office). British mails were first accepted for transmission by Pan American on the flight which left Marseille on 31 May 1939. Figure 1 shows mail from the "Northern" route. These Pan American services are written up in the catalogue published by the American Air Mail Society, but unfortunately the appropriate volume is currently out of print (4).

The first Imperial Airways mail flight left Southampton for New York on 5 August 1939 with stops at Foynes, Botwood and Montreal. The Short flying boat *Caribou* was **not** the ideal plane for the job but the longer range "G" class boats were not yet available. In order to carry the mails over this distance *Caribou*, and her sister *Cabot* (Fig. 2), had all their internal fittings removed and their take off weight increased. Even with these modifications, air to air refuelling was necessary on the Foynes-Botwood stage. With no capacity to carry passengers, or even seats for passengers, and the inherent dangers of early air to air refuelling, these initial Imperial Airways flights can only be regarded as experiments. However, printed souvenir covers were issued (Fig. 3).

The effect of the Second World War

Within weeks of the first Imperial Airways flight, the UK was at war and *Cabot* and *Caribou*, the only British planes adapted for North Atlantic mail operation were taken over by the RAF. Although two other Short flying boats *Clare* and *Clyde* made a number of transatlantic flights with diplomatic and commercial mails between August and October 1940 (5), Pan American became the only serious carrier of commercial (as opposed to military) mails over the North Atlantic during the rest of the war.

With the outbreak of war, Pan American curtailed their routes to avoid any belligerent countries. Hence the "Northern" route terminated at Foynes and the "Southern" route ended at neutral Lisbon. Much research needs to be done on these war-time activities. Certainly Lisbon was the transfer point for mails from all over mainland Europe, but there was also much quiet activity at Foynes, hidden away in the west of the Irish Free State. As far as British civil mails were concerned, the priority was to maintain a link with Pan American at Lisbon. On 1 April 1940 the original pre-war British Airways and Imperial Airways were merged into BOAC and regular BOAC flights to Lisbon were initiated on 4 June 1940 using DH91 landplanes (Fig. 4). These Lisbon flights were interrupted by the fall of France, but were soon resumed. Until the end of the war in Europe, many of these mail and passenger flights from the UK to Lisbon were operated by KLM, using planes and crews who had managed to escape from the Netherlands during the German invasion of their country.

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1. Beith R, "British Air Mail Links with South America During the 1930s", *British Philatelic Bulletin*, October 1992, pp. 37-39.
2. Stanley-Smith R, *The North Atlantic Catapult (Parts 1 & 2)*, Hurstpierpoint, Sussex, Pierpoint Publishing, 1990.
3. Nutley I, "Zeppelin Airmail Services to the US: Proposals for GB Mails, 1937", *Philatelic Magazine*, February 1977.
4. Nahl P C (ed), *American Air Mail Catalogue*, Vol 4, 5th Edition, Cinnaminson NJ, American Air Mail Society, 1981.
5. Baldwin N C, *Bridging the Atlantic*, Sutton Coldfield, F J Field Ltd, 1945.

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Beatrix Potter Book

Stocks of the Beatrix Potter prestige book are now exhausted at the British Philatelic Bureau, having proved the most popular prestige book to date. We regret no further orders can be accepted.



4. Air mail cover England to USA carried on the first BOAC flight to Lisbon to connect with the Pan American Clipper flying boat. NEWPORT MON 3 JUN 1940 machine cancel and pale blue directional label.

Royal Mail News

Autumn and Sherlock Holmes – Colours

The colours and cylinder numbers for the Autumn stamps are as follows:

18p 1A (black) 3B (greenish fluorescent yellow) 1C (cerise) 2D (bright green) 1E (gold) 2F (chestnut) P7 (phosphor).

24p 1A (black) 1B (lemon) 2C (cerise) 1D (myrtle-green) 1E (gold) 1F (bright green) 1G (brown).

28p 1A (grey) 1B (lemon) 1C (emerald) 1D (lake-brown) 1E (gold).

33p 2A (grey-black) 1B (greenish yellow) 1C (rosine) 3D (light green) 1E (gold) 1F (brown).

39p 1A (myrtle-green) 1B (greenish yellow) 1C (rosine) 1D (olive-sepia) 1E (gold) 1F (apple-green) 1G (deep myrtle-green).

The colours and plate number for the five 24p Sherlock Holmes stamps are: 1A (new blue) 1A (greenish yellow) 1A (magenta) 1A (black) 1A (gold).

Shown here is the designer of the Autumn stamps, Charlotte Knox, with local postman Ken Ellis, at the Brogdale Fruit Farm, near Faversham, Kent. (*Photo: Nick Evans Photography, Whitstable*).



New “To Pay” Labels

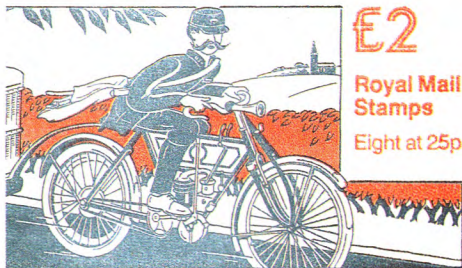
A new set of To Pay labels (“Postage Due” stamps) has been designed, comprising 1p, 2p, 5p, 10p, 20p, 25p, £1, £1.20 and £5 values. These will be issued in February – date to be announced. No first day facilities will be offered. A pack containing one of each value will be available in February. Further details next month.

New Enschedé Printings

The 4p, 20p and 50p definitives printed by Joh. Enschedé En Zonen of the Netherlands will go on sale at the Bureau, Collections, Post Shops Plus, and Philatelic Counters on 14 December. The stamps, like the earlier 1p, 5p, 6p, 10p, 29p,

30p, 35p, 36p, 38p and 41p values, will be printed on OBA free paper in sheets of 200, with two phosphor bands (containing fluor) and elliptical perforations on the vertical sides.

No first day of issue facilities will be available. These new printings will go on sale at post offices as stocks of the Harrison printings are exhausted. Only the 2p value remains now to be printed by Enschedé.



New Stamp Books

Shown here is the cover design for the new £2 machine book which goes on general and philatelic sale from 1 November. The designs of the 50p and £1 books complete the “Postal History” and “Educational Institutions” series, designs by Martin Newton and John Lawrence respectively. The £2 begins a new “Postal Vehicles” series, the work of Debbie Cook who designed the 1987 St John Ambulance stamps and the 1989 £1.40 and £1.90 “Fox Talbot” book covers (SG FM6, FV2).

New Definitives Cylinder & Warrant Numbers

The cylinders and warrants for the 26 October definitives are as follows:

Value	Cylinder	Warrant
19p	3	022
25p	5	023
29p	1	016
36p	1	017
38p	1	018
41p	1	019

National Postal Museum “Christmas Card” postcards

In the mid to late 1800s staff at the General Post Office in London received official Christmas cards from their counterparts in many overseas administrations. Wishing to reciprocate, officers of the Foreign Section had special cards produced at their own expense. After a few years

the cost of producing the cards was taken over by the Post Office. At the same time, c.1880, offices throughout the country were producing their own cards to send to colleagues in other offices.

Portsmouth Post Office recently presented the Museum with an album of official Christmas cards sent to that office from all parts of the country. The cards in this set are taken from this album. Philatelists will notice the incorrect caption below the facsimile Mulready on card 93/19 which claims that the Mulready and Penny Postage was introduced in 1839! The cards bear reference numbers 93/15-19.

93/15 – Official Christmas card of 1883, sent by the staff of Birmingham PO to their colleagues at Portsmouth. Inset picture by H E Heritage of Birmingham.

93/16 – Official Christmas card of 1884, sent by the staff at Southampton PO to their colleagues at Portsmouth. Card designed by J C A Hatherly of Southampton.

93/17 – Official Christmas card of 1884, sent by staff at Manchester PO to their colleagues at Portsmouth. Card printed by C Falkner, art printers of Manchester.

93/18 – Official Christmas card of 1884/5, sent by staff at the GPO, London to their colleagues at Portsmouth.

93/19 – Official Christmas card of 1884/5, sent by staff at the GPO, London to their colleagues at Portsmouth. The design features the Mulready envelope of 1840.

Complete sets, price £1.25, can be ordered from the British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, EDINBURGH EH3 5TT.

A Special Museum handstamp will be available on 9 November 1993. Cards/covers to receive this should bear at least 25p (UK/EC) or appropriate overseas rate and be sent to: Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, KEB, LONDON EC1A 1AA. Please ask for "NPM Special/9 November". The Museum's regular Maltese Cross cancel will also be available.

1994 Stamp Programme

The date of issue for the special issues of 1994 are as follows:

The Age of Steam	18 January
HRH Prince of Wales Investiture	1 March
Pictorial Postcards	12 April
Channel Tunnel	3 May
D-Day	6 June
Golf	5 July
Summertime	2 August
European Medical Discoveries	27 September

Christmas

1 November

The 1994 Greetings stamp book will be issued on 1 February; the 1994 prestige stamp book, on the subject of Northern Ireland, will go on sale on 26 July.

A Scottish aerogramme, marking the centenary of the death of Robert Louis Stevenson will be issued in March.

Philatelic Products – Price Revisions

With effect from 1 November 1993 new prices will apply to the following Royal Mail philatelic products:

	Price (£)
FDC Album	16.50
Pres. Pack Album	16.50
Postcard Album	16.50
FDC Leaves	4.99
Pres. Pack Leaves	4.99
Postcard Leaves	4.99
Small FDC Leaves	3.99
Stamp Keyring	0.99
Stamp Pyramid	34.95
<i>British Philatelic Bulletin</i>	0.75
Annual subscription (UK/EC)	8.50
Two year subscription (UK/EC)	16.00
Annual Rest of World	12.50
Two year Rest of World	24.00
<i>British Postmark Bulletin</i>	
Annual subscription (UK/EC)	10.00
Two year subscription (UK/EC)	19.00
Annual Rest of World	21.75
Two year Rest of World	42.50
<i>Both Bulletins</i>	
Annual UK/EC	16.50
Two year UK/EC	31.00
Annual Rest of World	32.25
Two year Rest of World	62.50



Bureau Prize Draw

Earlier this year the British Philatelic Bureau offered its customers the chance to win a valuable first day cover of the George V Silver Jubilee stamps. Over 30,000 customers entered

the "Details, Details" prize draw; the winner was Mrs L J Webb of Walsall, West Midlands.

Our photograph shows Lynne Kendal, the Bureau's Marketing Manager, with Mr Jim Calder who drew the winning entry. Mr Calder is Director, Sales & Customer Service for Royal Mail Scotland and Northern Ireland. He previously worked with Scottish Power and Ethicon. He is better known however as a Scottish rugby international player – having been capped for his country some 27 times!

For those who want to check their own entries to the Bureau draw, the answers are:

Clues

Piggy Bank: I pinched the penny 'cause I hadn't any. (1p removed from prize stamps).

Typewriter: Missing the key I struck a Pea. (Spelling "magnifying" in last para "mapnifying")

Mirror: In black or red, it turns one's head. (Flipped image on penny black tie).

Flag: The lines of white have taken flight. (Removing the Union Jack from Gibbons).

Artist Palette: So often read, yet blue instead (Blue logo instead of red logo).

Obituary – Stuart Rose

Stuart Rose, who died on 10 September, aged 81, will be long-remembered for his work in the Post Office's design section in the 1960s and 1970s when issues of special stamps became the rule rather than the exception. He took a great interest in this aspect of design and in retirement published his thoughts on the subject – *Royal Mail Stamps* (Phaidon, 1980).

The son of Scottish parents, Stuart Rose was educated at Magdalen College School, Oxford and at the Central School of Arts and Crafts. Before the War he worked for Crawfords Advertising under the guidance of Ashley Havinden. After the War he became a freelance designer and typographer, and later the Art Editor of *Design* magazine. In 1953 he designed the aerogramme marking The Queen's Coronation. In 1960 he was appointed to the Stamp Advisory Committee of the Council of Industrial Design, about which he wrote in the *Bulletin* in May this year. Two years later he was appointed Typographical Adviser to the Postmaster General, becoming Design Adviser in 1968 and retaining that post until retirement in 1976.

In the late 1960s he introduced pictorial covers for stamp books, himself designing the Ships series for the 46d books, English Homes

for the 5s, Birds for the 6s and Explorers for the 10s books. In the 1970s he turned his hand to stamp design with the 1973 British Paintings, 1975 Turner and 1979 Horseracing sets, in each case skilfully composing a design incorporating a painting of a major artist, The Queen's head, value and caption. As he pointed out in his book, this is not as simple a task as might be thought, and if not done properly can result in very disappointing finished products.



Stuart Rose (left) with his successor Peter Shrivs at a reception marking the 20th anniversary of the *Bulletin*, 1983

All who are interested in stamp design should read his *Royal Mail Stamps* – a comprehensive survey of British stamp design from the early days to the 1970s. Rose's view of stamp design was traditional, he was adamant that stamps should have a dignified appearance. In December 1990 he took part in a Stamp Design Seminar, organised by the Netherlands Post Office, at the Design Museum in London. His talk, illustrated by slides of good and poor stamp design, was a *tour de force*, much enjoyed for its authoritative yet witty presentation.

Earlier this year I asked Mr Rose to review in this *Bulletin* the *Stamp Advisory Committee First Review* (for 1992); his assessment was published in May. He was delighted to undertake this task and selected the designs he wanted to illustrate his review, coming into the office to discuss with me the designs chosen and the way he wanted them laid out. Rose was a man for whom style, appearance and good manners meant a great deal – he was always impeccably dressed, spoke with precision and politeness, and sent the most delightful hand-written letters.

Many *Bulletin* readers will join with me in extending sympathy to his wife Dorothea and their two daughters.

John Holman

Country Stamps

7 December 1993



New 19p, 25p, 30p and 41p Country stamps for Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales will be issued on 7 December. They will be on sale at post offices in the respective countries and at the British Philatelic Bureau, Collections, Post Shops Plus and Philatelic Counters. The designs will be the same as previous issues, the colours of the new stamps being as the national definitives: 19p olive green, 25p salmon pink, 30p sage and 41p stone.

independent, the stamps for Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales have been referred to as "Country" issues. Many new values have resulted from postal rate increases and the stamps enjoy popularity with many collectors who have built up specialised collections.

The background story to the introduction of the "Regionals" was given by Jean Ferrugia in a series of articles in the *Bulletin*: August 1978 (Scotland), September 1978 (Wales), October



Only the above were available at the time of publication.

These values cover the basic second class inland rate; the basic inland first class and EC countries rate; the non-EC European rate; and the rate for basic weight airmail letters to the rest of the world. These new rates were introduced from 1 November.

Country stamps, then referred to as "Regional Issues" made their debut in 1958 with 3d stamps for Guernsey, Jersey and the Isle of Man and 3d, 6d and 1s3d stamps for Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Various additions to the range of values followed – 2½d stamps (postcard rate) for the three islands in 1964, 4d and 5d stamps for each region in 1966 and 1968 respectively and 9d and 1s6d stamps for the three main regions in 1967. The stamps for Guernsey and Jersey were taken off sale when the islands became "postally independent" in 1969.

New decimal stamps for the remaining four regions were issued in July 1971. Since 1973, when the Isle of Man became postally

independent, the stamps for Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales have been referred to as "Country" issues. Many new values have resulted from postal rate increases and the stamps enjoy popularity with many collectors who have built up specialised collections.

Technical Details

Printers: House of Questa

Process: Offset-lithography

Size: 20 x 24mm

Sheets: 200

Perforation: 15 x 14, elliptical perfs on vertical sides

Phosphor: 19p one band, 25p, 30p, 41p 2 bands. All bands include fluor

Paper: OBA free (OBA = Optical Brightening Agent)

Gum: PVA

First Day Facilities

First day cover envelopes, price 25p each, will be available from the Bureau, Collections, Post Shops Plus, Philatelic Counters and main post



SCOTLAND
ROYAL MAIL FIRST DAY COVER
NEW DEFINITIVE STAMPS



CYMRU
AMLEN DIFENOD CYNTAF
Y POST BREITHNOL
STAMPAU DEFINITOL NEWDD
WALES



NORTHERN IRELAND
ROYAL MAIL FIRST DAY COVER
NEW DEFINITIVE STAMPS

ROYAL MAIL DEFINITIVE STAMPS



SCOTLAND



WALES



NORTHERN IRELAND

The shield badge has been evermore used since the reign of King James III (1450-88), whereas the saltire was formally recognised as a national badge at least a century earlier. Associated with a crown, they both became royal badges and, as such, have appeared on earlier definitive stamps. The two unicorns featured on the higher value of the earlier stamps are the supporters of the royal arms of Scotland. Each holds a lion; the one on the left is repp'd by a lion banner and the one on the right by a saltire banner.

royal badge for Wales, and a century later, differentiated by a silver label (collar), it was assigned by Edward VII as a badge to be borne by the Prince of Wales. In 1902 Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II approved an augmented version of the royal badge for Wales of the Red Dragon. Other emblem have been used for Wales, Scotland or David, Prince of Wales, the lion has been used since the eighteenth century. The daffodil was first used on the National Health stamp of 1962 and is also on the tree designs of Queen Elizabeth II.

the six counties of Northern Ireland, Antrim, Armagh, Down, Fermanagh, Londonderry and Tyrone. This is the sole heraldic device used on the current series, but before the decimalisation of the currency in 1971 the Northern Ireland stamps also included a reference to Northern Ireland's connection with linen. For although only a small percentage of fax is now grown there, and thus for experimental purposes, the soil of Northern Ireland and the long tradition of fax-growing gave birth to a textile industry of great importance.

Seal of the Courtiers of Scotland after the death of Alexander III, King of Scotland (1249-57)



The Seal of Hugh Renshar O'Neill, King of the Irish of Ulster (1540-60)



Reverse of the Great Seal of Queen Mary II



ROYAL MAIL DEFINITIVE STAMPS



SCOTLAND



WALES



NORTHERN IRELAND

Illustrated here are earlier designs of country definitive stamps. The Scottish stamp featured the saltire, the shield, and two unicorns supporting the royal arms of Scotland - a lion banner and a saltire banner. The Welsh stamp portrayed the Dragon of Wales and also showed a lion. The Northern Ireland stamp featured the Red Right Hand of Ulster and some fax.



offices in the respective countries. Pictorial "First Day of Issue" postmarks will be available at the Bureau and for the three country capitals: Belfast, Edinburgh and Cardiff. First day covers will be provided in sets of three - one set with the Bureau postmark, the other with the postmarks for the three capitals. Application forms, available from the Bureau, should be returned by 7 December.

Collectors preparing their own covers may send them for the pictorial postmarks to: British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, EDINBURGH EH3 5TT (Bureau postmark); Scotland & N Ireland Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, George Square, GLASGOW G2 1AA (Edinburgh and Belfast postmarks - state clearly

which is required) or Wales & West Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, Penarth Road, CARDIFF CF1 1AA (Cardiff postmark).

First day posting boxes will be available at all offices which normally provide them in each of the three countries and at all Collections, Post Shop Plus, and Philatelic Counter offices in England. Covers posted in these boxes will receive the standard, non-pictorial "First Day of Issue" handstamps.

Presentation Pack

A "New Issue" Pack containing all 12 stamps will be available from the Bureau, Collections, Post Shops Plus, Philatelic Counters and main post offices in the respective countries from 7 December, price £3.80.

Royal Mail Special Stamps – 1993 Yearbook

A review by James Negus, FRPSL

Along with the final stamp issue of the year comes the publication of the annual collection complete in book form. The 1993 **Royal Mail Special Stamps** yearbook, tenth in the series, continues in its well established style and is a convenient moment to reflect on all the stamps the year has brought. The 41 special stamps enclosed with the book can be studied against the informative text and then mounted at the appropriate place in the transparent strips provided. The memory is refreshed of a busy but interesting philatelic year.

It began in January with the Abbotsbury swannery featured for its 600-year role in protecting wildlife. Veteran designer David Gentleman speaks of his five stamps as simply “little pictures”, but also of his concern to integrate birds with the Abbotsbury landscape and architecture in his designs. For his work he refers affectionately to the swan’s beauty as being “an absolute gift to a designer”.

The following month brought the Marine Timekeepers set from Howard Brown, who was the *Bulletin’s* Design Poll Winner in 1991 with his acclaimed Ordnance Survey stamps. He returns again to a serial approach, using these four stamps to uncover layer by layer the beautiful “H4” clock invented by John Harrison, the 300th anniversary of whose birth is celebrated. Expert illustration came from the authority on antiquarian horology, David Penney, and the yearbook is informative on Harrison’s lifelong work in perfecting maritime timekeeping.

More beautiful illustrations appeared in March with four stamps for the World Orchid Conference from a designer new to British stamps, the botanical painter Pandora Sellars. Here are explained her methods and approach against a biographical background.

In May Ashted Dastor had the daunting task of choosing just four names for the Europa set to represent the whole of British Art in the Twentieth Century. Downplaying technical problems he says: “I didn’t want to over-design the stamps, flooding them with clever typography and slick graphic devices, because this would have detracted from the images”. With modern art arousing such strong opinions, it was a challenging brief for his first assignment.

John Gibbs in June was given a similarly broad subject to develop, a survey of four centuries of the Roman Occupation of Britain. The designer used helpfully captioned artefact heads, saying “I think we understand history much better when we can relate it to people”.

For July Royal Mail noted that “Canal Mania” was at its height 200 years ago. A leading expert on the traditional decoration of canal boats, A J (Tony) Lewery, designed four boldly coloured stamps that gave a vivid view of the styles of painting in different periods.

The second of the projected Four Seasons sets appeared in September. Last year’s Wintertime topped the Design Poll, with animals set against landscapes: for 1993 a different designer, Charlotte Knox, illustrated Autumn. She speaks of the paintings of fruit as “botanically correct but I hope they are never botanically dull”.

October’s set celebrated a fictional character known worldwide, whom many are convinced actually lived – Sherlock Holmes. Designer Andrew Davidson broke with past visual interpretations; looking at Conan Doyle’s masterly stories anew, he placed Holmes on each of the five stamps in settings with such familiar figures as Dr Watson and the infamous Professor Moriarty. Working in the unusual medium of wood-engraving allowed minute and subtle detail in facial expression to convey atmosphere.

Noted illustrator of children’s books, Quentin Blake, produced the Christmas set issued in November, marking the 150th anniversary of Charles Dickens’s well-loved *Christmas Carol*. Five stamps capture the spirit of the book –



"something decorative and cheerful", in the designer's phrase – but in small details remember that Dickens's work has a social tract on hard times, too.

The edition of the yearbook under review is as lavishly illustrated in full colour as previously. It is intended as a de-luxe volume for the library as well as being a work of permanent reference. The same designers have worked on it as before and they – Carroll, Dempsey & Thirkell Ltd – have seen earlier editions gain design and printing awards. Both the firm itself and an individual partner (Mike Dempsey) have designed stamps and other material for Royal Mail and their affinity for philately is clear. They are well served by fine picture research from Kathy Lockley that adds to the interest of individual pages. I did, however, consider the locating captions weaker than usual and I find text printed over ghostly decorative shapes an unnecessary distraction to reading.



The descriptive text to each issue was once again by Tim Shackleton, who has been the author for all the yearbooks from 1987 (the first three, 1984-86, were written by Mike Barden). Mr Shackleton's work here and, for example, in the Presentation Packs, is notable for its skill in conveying a great deal of factual information in highly readable style. The present edition continues in this fashion: there is all the background on what each issue commemorates, giving an insight into how Royal Mail meets its remit to reflect aspects of Britain through postage stamps.

For the student of design, the yearbooks are valuable documentation on how each of the chosen designers approached their task. The biographical detail shows at once the special talent that is brought to bear for each issue. It becomes very clear how they will all have had a record in their particular field outstanding enough to have brought them to notice.

In all the chapters the designers have been interviewed, giving much new information to supplement that already published in the *Bulletin*. The designers' own words are not only indicative of the meticulous care that goes into their work, but appeal to me from the viewpoint of philatelic history. It can become impossible after even a few years to know all the circumstances of a particular issue and a contemporaneous record of the designer and his or her thoughts is valuable. I applaud the wisdom of including portraits of the designers. This year Lewis Mulatero has attended to this further important detail, with photographs less impressionistic than some earlier ones and hence of greater historical value.

In expressing my pleasure at the publication of another fine volume, I support the idea recently suggested of a companion version each year. In card cover instead of hardback and with stamp specimens replaced by colour photographs, it could be available at lower price. The additional readers this should bring would quickly find the series as addictive as I do.

44 pages, hardbound in slip-case. Price £21. **A deluxe leather-bound edition of the yearbook will be available from the British Philatelic Bureau, price £75. Early ordering advisable.**

Design of British Special Stamps

G E DRABBLE

The columns of the *Bulletin* have always been liberally sprinkled with articles and letters relating to design, varying from discussions between eminent designers, to ordinary subscribers airing their views. I take the liberty of joining this latter band, and submitting some thoughts of my own on this subject. I have no qualification for this other than being a collector, almost exclusively of British commemorative stamps. The composing of a recent series of articles for the *Bulletin* has led me to develop an interest in design. Much of what follows expresses my purely personal view, and is offered as a basis for discussion rather than an attempt to be authoritative.

It seems impossible to set out categorically the requirements of good stamp design. When such eminent designers as Eric Gill and Edmund Dulac could disagree about aspects of design, (see *Bulletin*, June 1970), it becomes clear that much of what is considered to be good or bad design is based on purely subjective judgement. Certain requirements may appear to be self-evident. In the *Bulletin* of January 1978, the late F Marcus Arman suggested that a good design must convey a message clearly. The designer David Gentleman offers a criterion for good design in the words: "...designing is reconciling and organizing a lot of very complicated elements with a small area, without the result looking as if there had been any problem." This is doubtless true, but does not help the non-specialist in judging whether a particular design is good or not. Design has also been defined as problem-solving; again, this is not a great deal of help in judging the quality of a design.

In considering this business of design, we might begin with a glance at the Royal Mail policy in relation to the issue of special stamps. This policy was first formulated in 1964, and has since been augmented (see *Bulletin*, April 1992). Briefly, the policy aims at the following:

1. To commemorate important anniversaries.
2. To celebrate events of national and international importance.
3. To reflect the British contribution to world affairs.

4. To portray the British way of life.

5. To encourage art.

6. To make a positive contribution to the Royal Mail's commercial targets as agreed with the Government.

The final clause is a relatively recent addition. Earlier, the Royal Mail denied that profit was part of its policy. This was perhaps somewhat disingenuous. We may be fairly sure that the Royal Mail would not have embarked on a programme of special issues without a reasonable assurance that it would at least pay its way, and we may be equally sure that if or when special issues fail in this, they will cease to appear.

Digressing for a moment, I believe that in implementing this final clause, the Royal Mail does not rely on the general public, which is little concerned, if at all, with the design of special stamps. The "public" aimed at by Royal Mail in this context is that relatively small sector whose hobby is philately or stamp collecting, and whose disbursements in the interests of their hobby contribute to the defrayment of Royal Mail costs. I think that ordinary people who use postage stamps but do not collect them, have little or no interest in their appearance. Some may glance with passing interest at a particular stamp when it appears, but rarely would they ever see any other stamps of the set. Their real interest is directed less to the stamps themselves than to the steady and inexorable rise in their price. Thus, to earn revenue, sales of special issues would have to exceed the normal sales of the equivalent definitive issues. And this in turn relies on sales to collectors. Only dealers and collectors buy stamps for a purpose other than to send mail through the post. And ordinary people do not mail letters in order to use stamps: only collectors do this.

Art on Stamps

The chief single factor governing a design is probably the subject itself; a factor in which the designer has no say at all. Consider for example, the subject of British Paintings. The stamp can only appear as a reproduction of a particular



1967/8 Paintings – not among the happiest we have seen painting: the designer has little freedom to exercise his or her skill and probably does not even have a voice in choosing the painting itself. Viewed dispassionately, the subject may be considered as the worst possible brief for a designer in the field of minuscule art. A picture painted to hang on a gallery wall is to be photographed and reduced to an absurdly small size, and then may even have to be further assaulted by the inclusion of a value, and a representation of The Queen's head. The issues of July and Christmas 1967 and August 1968 are not among the happiest we have seen. Better results followed when the designer was allowed to separate the paintings themselves from other matter. Ulster Paintings of 1971, British Painters of 1973 and the Turner set of 1975 were much superior. But the paintings may themselves be to



Ulster Paintings and Turner – much superior

some extent controversial. One cannot be happy with a stamp which portrays a painting which one doesn't like. Some misguided people, including myself, are not "turned on" by Turner! The story of a post office customer, who tried to rub off with his finger what he thought to be some dirt from the centre of a Turner stamp is probably a true one.

Paintings as such were abandoned after 1975. They appeared in two further issues: Horseshoeing in 1979 and Dogs in 1991, but were merely a convenient device to feature the real subjects of the issues.

But contrast Paintings with such subjects as the anniversary of the Battle of Hastings; The Spanish Armada, Wildlife, Sir Isaac Newton – indeed, at least half of the special issues of the past 60 years. The designer has freedom to consider a multitude of possible approaches to the subject. There are of course limitations. If your brief is Roses, Birds, Village Churches, Butterflies, Flowers, Horses, or Cattle, then perhaps all you can do is to produce appropriate pictures of Roses, Birds, etc. Despite this constraint, we have seen some very attractive issues under such headings. Some designers consider pictures to be unsuitable material for postage stamps. But the popular taste appears to be in favour of them, and such subjects allow a designer more freedom than does reproduction of a painting. The contrast between, say Spring Flowers of 1979, and Flowers of 1987 shows that the limitations of the subject nevertheless leave considerable scope for the imagination of the designer, and frequently result in some excellent issues.

Integrated Design Approach

The history of harmonious and integrated "sets" with a consistent design imprint has followed a somewhat erratic path. Following the Silver Jubilee and Stamp Centenary issues of 1935 and 1940, both very correct sets, there was a period during which many of the issues were merely stamps with the same subject. Indeed, the separate stamps of an issue were frequently the work of different designers. It was following the appointment of Stuart Rose (1911-93) in 1968 as Design Director that a degree of uniformity began to appear. From around mid-1970, almost every issue achieved some degree of conformity. Three exceptions may be cited. European Architectural Heritage Year of April 1975 contains a single stamp, the 12p, which does not harmonise with the other four. The second Christmas issue designed by school-children, in



Stamp Centenary issue – a very correct set

1981, used paintings by five children. And, perhaps rather surprisingly, as recently as April 1992, the Europa issue of five stamps, two 24p se-tenant, a single 24p and two 39p, with two very highly-contrasting styles, attempts, with a not entirely happy result, to mark three quite different functions.

We should recognise that the harmony of a unified and consistent style in a set is a philatelic criterion, not a functional one. A designer presumably feels that uniformity of style is better than somewhat random variation across an issue, and this view is endorsed by the Royal Mail team responsible for designs. And at the end of the line, so to speak, the collector derives much satisfaction from the contemplation of a page where the individual stamps clearly conform to a pattern. But it is a relatively recent view, and moreover, perhaps rather an arbitrary one. Stuart Rose criticised many early issues on the grounds of “failure to achieve a consistent design pattern”, a legitimate criticism, but leaving open the question of why one needs a consistent design pattern. Clearly, if you are designing a dinner service, or upholstery for a drawing room, this is something that will be needed. But when you know that it is very rarely that any one person will buy more than one of your set at any one time, (leaving out, for the

moment, the collector) and that the stamps are specifically designed for distribution to widely separated places, the need for consistency seems a little more doubtful. It may even be argued that the first five criteria of the Royal Mail policy might be better implemented by a reversion to some randomness in the issues. Certainly, the employment of four or five designers rather than one would give more encouragement to the arts.

Se-tenant Format

Allied to this matter of sets is the device of se-tenant, which enables a single value of a special issue to carry more than one design. Philatelically, of course, it is more than that, and it would need someone with more experience than I can claim to explain the mystique completely. I assume that when we are children, one of the first laws we learn in stamp collecting is, that you must never separate two or more stamps which are together, especially when the stamps are different. It is clearly a case where one and one make a good deal more than two. However, from a design standpoint, se-tenant offers a designer scope for imagination. In the 26 examples found in British commemorative sets, some designers have failed fully to exploit the potential of the device. David Gentleman's Battle of Hastings issue of 1966 was the first to make good use of it. A horizontal strip of six (which undoubtedly created problems for many collectors) was a clever way of evoking the idea of the Bayeux Tapestry. Peter Gauld's Cathedrals of 1969 was the first attempt to design a block of four as a block, and not merely four stamps connected together. Christmas 1973, again by David Gentleman, showing incidents in the Wenceslas story, is an admirable subject for se-tenant. Gentleman's Liverpool & Manchester Railway (March 1980), Keith Bassford and Stanley Paine's Royal Mail (July 1984), Graham Evernden's Armada (July 1988), and Paul Cox's Lord Mayor's Show (October 1989), all comprising horizontal strips of five stamps, exploit se-tenant to enhance a design. Se-tenant “pairs” can also result in a display which is something more than just two stamps together; the best examples are possibly Fritz Wegner's Europa of May 1984, Jeffery Matthews's 60th Birthday of The Queen of April 1986 and Simon Broom's Queen's Award of April 1990.

A design suffers to some extent when some feature needs explanation. The various points along the Lord Mayor's route (October 1989) can only be guessed; the same criticism attends



1992 Europa – highly-contrasting styles

the Liverpool & Manchester Railway (March 1980). The Armada issue (July 1988) solved this problem neatly and unobtrusively. The cable encircling the globe in Peter Gauld's Compac stamp (December 1963) includes four white dots which we were told elsewhere represented Vancouver, Suva, New Zealand and Australia. Probably many collectors would have liked to know the names of the three anonymous Trade Unionists in David Gentleman's TUC Centenary stamp of May 1968.

Confused Message?

I return to the matter of the message of an issue. Two examples come to mind immediately. June 1979 saw the issue dedicated to the Year of the Child. Four stamps appeared, illustrating four very well-known children's books, with easily-recognised and charming drawings of appropriate characters. But the immediate "message" that came across was the celebration of children's literature. Each stamp bore the words "The Year of the Child" in tiny italics, but it could hardly be claimed that the issue highlighted the desperate problems of the United Nations in regard to children. The set was nevertheless a very attractive one; possibly among the best of the year's issues. The fault was that here was a definite message – and the designer failed to put it across.

On the other hand, Social Reformers of April 1976 put a message across with power and skill in what was – for me – one of the finest sets ever of British stamps, although the sombre tones, and the general atmosphere of mourning sparked off some criticism and controversy. Of course, there may not be a message. When a designer is commissioned to produce a set of stamps under, for example, the title "Food and Farming", it becomes difficult to formulate a clear message. Withal, in my opinion, the result is a well-designed and pleasing set. There are occasions, mercifully very infrequent, when any intended message is so obscure as to require reference to the designer's "instructions". The 1991 Stamp Poll brought me some relief to learn that I was not alone in failing to probe the mystery of Europe In Space.

I think the Royal Mail has emerged from the conservative attitudes of the 1920s (which probably reflected the views of the Sovereign) into its present more progressive phase with integrity. To retain its reputation as an internationally respected body, it must be to some extent paternalistic. While giving attention to the views and wishes of its customers, it must

nevertheless continue to appoint designers of skill who may occasionally be prepared to run a risk of disapprobation for promoting what they sincerely consider to be good art. Inevitably this will result in some errors of judgement, but this is a relatively small price to pay for what is arguably among the best of stamp design in the world. The Stamp Poll of the Year is an interesting innovation. It gives us all a chance to air our views, and occasionally to unload a few insults. But it should not be allowed to become more than that. A service which is controlled solely by its public ratings becomes at best a mediocre service. And none of us would want that.

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Barry Robinson, Design Director Royal Mail National, comments:

Mr Drabble in this interesting article, expresses a purely personal view on British stamp design as a basis for discussion. The amount of interest and discussion such small pieces of paper can provoke is amazing. Inch for inch they must be one of the most powerful communications mediums in the world. "Stamp design" in terms of the process of designing a stamp is essentially a problem-solving activity and the success or otherwise of the work can be assessed according to generally recognised principles. "Stamp design" in terms of the actual appearance of a stamp is a totally subjective matter with every collector and member of the public having his or her views on a particular design.

Take for example the 1976 set on Social Reformers. Judged by the first criteria the designer could not be faulted in terms of researching the subject and "distilling" the essence of that research harmoniously within the confines of a stamp format. Judging by the second criteria it is very much a subjective response for each collector as to whether he or she would wish to keep the stamps in a collection. If the answer is no, it is not because the stamp is a bad design but because the collector personally does not find the overall appearance attractive.

Mr Drabble's article raises other questions which I hope to examine in a future article. Meanwhile I welcome debate on stamp design and look forward to reading comments published in the *Bulletin's* "Postbag" column.

Editor's note: Articles on stamp design, and related matters, by Mr Robinson were published here in: August and October 1983, May 1984, October 1988, January, April and May 1989.

Stamps of the Four Kings

3. The George V Downey Heads

JAMES MACKAY

King George V ascended the throne on 6 May 1910, seventy years to the day after the introduction of the Penny Black. I cannot help wondering whether this fact occurred to the new monarch, a lifelong devotee to philately. From the outset of his reign he took a very close interest in every stage of the production of the stamps that bore his portrait. For the time being the Edwardian series continued, only the 2d Tyrian plum being terminated at birth. Within a month Herbert Samuel, the Postmaster General, had selected a three-quarter facing portrait of the King by the Court photographers, W and D Downey, and had consulted the President of the Royal Academy regarding the choice of designers for a new series of stamps. On the advice of the President, Samuel wrote on 1 July 1910 to George W Eve, A Garth Jones, and C W Sherborn, all artists with a strong tradition in the Arts and Crafts movement but also influenced by the Art Nouveau fashion. Each artist submitted three designs, the original artwork now being preserved in the National Postal Museum. The designs by Jones and Sherborn were never used, but elements in the designs submitted by Eve were subsequently incorporated into the final designs of the so-called Downey Heads as well as certain denominations of the 1912-36 definitives.

On the recommendation of the King himself, who was not enthusiastic about any of the designs produced through the good offices of the Royal Academy, the Australian sculptor and portraitist Bertram Mackennal (1863-1931) was also approached. Mackennal, born in Melbourne of Scottish parents, had made a reputation as an architectural sculptor, but he also did portrait busts and bas-reliefs and was at that time engaged in modelling the plaster maquette which served as the basis of the coinage and medal effigy. Undoubtedly he saw the challenge of designing stamps through the eyes of a sculptor and endeavoured to convey a three-dimensional effect in his designs. This is evident in the strong shading of the framework and in the sharp accentuation of the outline of the lion on the penny stamp – not, as we shall

see, a particularly happy decision.

Unlike De La Rue, Harrison and Sons lacked the facilities to engrave the dies and manufacture the plates necessary for the letterpress process, so these stages were farmed out to the Royal Mint. The Mint, already overburdened with work on the new coinage and medal dies, had no previous experience of the dies and plates for postage stamps, and many of the delays in (and subsequent criticism of) the the Downey Heads were due to unforeseen problems at the Mint.

Disaster tinged with farce

Considering the great amount of care and deliberation that went into the design and production of the Downey Heads, the issue was a disaster tinged with farce. The first mistake was to use a "proper" portrait (in the heraldic sense) when the public had been conditioned for 70 years to a stylised profile. The second mistake was to take an actual photograph and attempt to translate this into the pattern of lines used in the relief process. The third mistake was to entrust the work of engraving to a craftsman whose entire experience up to that date had been in the diametrically opposite process of line-engraving. J A C Harrison (1872-1955) a free-lance employed by the Mint, had earned something of a reputation as an engraver of bookplates and banknotes, both of which called for fine lines and cross-hatching capable of great tonal variation. Harrison failed to grasp the fundamental principle of letterpress, that it is an impressionistic process in which lines must be used sparingly.

From the relatively large number of progressive engravings of the master dies now extant, it is clear that Harrison made several attempts before he was satisfied with the dies. Proofs of the completed dies show that he had mastered the technique of relief engraving, without understanding the implications of the process at all. To be fair, the proofs indicate a high ability to produce very fine lines – the hair and beard of the King were faithfully reproduced. But Harrison did not realise what



Top 1911 "fuzzy printings", bottom 1912 amended stamps.

would happen to these fine lines when translated to the printing plate, and how the ink would soon clog these fine lines and result in the blurred mess so characteristic of the issued stamps.

Fuzzy printings

As if to compound this folly, the Board of Inland Revenue conducted some experiments in a bid to find a cheaper method of printing. Essays in a wide range of colours were prepared from Hentschel zincographic blocks between November 1910 and September 1911, while numerous half-tone essays were prepared from 14 December 1910 onwards using the Printex process patented by A H Motley and C A Miller. This resulted in a vast range of essays, colour trials, die and plate proofs, including composite proofs featuring matched pairs of Edwardian and Georgian stamps. It is only fair to state that, had the contract reverted to De La Rue, the acknowledged masters of letterpress, some justice might have been done to J A C Harrison's fine engraving, but instead the contract was given to Harrison and Sons whose fuzzy printings of the Edwardian stamps were an omen of worse to come. The involvement of King George himself, with his strongly held views on proper instead of formal portraiture,

the well-meaning attempts by the Board of Inland Revenue to cut costs, and the inexperience of engraver, plate-maker and printer alike in this deceptively simple process, all combined to produce the Downey Heads of 1911.

The stamps, in denominations of $\frac{1}{2}$ d green and 1d carmine, were issued on 22 June 1911, Coronation Day. The Downey portrait was set in an oval surmounted by an imperial crown. Mackennaf's background in architectural sculpture was revealed by the dolphins on the halfpenny (derived from those embellishments on the lamp-posts along the parapet of the Victoria Embankment) and the lion on the 1d, inspired by Landseer's proud beasts at the base of Nelson's Column in Trafalgar Square. The stamps were roundly condemned: the lion was emaciated and Henniker Heaton denounced the portrait as "a constant source of inextinguishable laughter calculated to undermine monarchy in England". Poor J A C Harrison had to engrave new dies from which came the amended stamps issued on New Year's Day 1912. Despite the clearer, more open lines of the hair and beard, however, the Downey portrait was unflattering, and quietly dropped at the end of 1912.

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Post Office Archives News

New Postcards

The Archives & Records Centre launched a new limited edition postcard set at Autumn Stampex. All four cards feature designs by Grace Golden which are now part of the Archive collection. Reference numbers are as follows:

Post 109/198 – London Chief Office.

Post 109/183 – A London Telegraph Messengers' Despatch Room.

Post 109/508 – A London Loading Platform.

Post 109/374 – Euston Station : Loading the Travelling Post office.

These four designs were used as one of a special series of posters illustrating the work of Post Office staff in London. They were displayed in all Postal & Telegraph buildings in 1948 but were not intended for exhibition in public offices. The cards, a limited edition of 2500 sets, are available from the Archives & Records Centre price £1.

Historical Miniature

Also launched at Stampex was the fourth in a series of high-quality historical miniatures. The *A London Loading Platform*



London Chief Office

new model depicts a London Letter Carrier as he patrols the city's streets; he is shown ringing his bell in one hand and holding his bag in the other. Virtually a "mobile pillar box", the bell notified people of his presence and letters were posted in his leather bag which had two slots on the top, one for pre-paid and the other for unpaid. The miniature is priced at £25.

John Cary Maps

Historians will be interested to know that limited edition reproductions of John Cary's, *Survey of the High Road from London* are still



available from the Archives & Records Centre.

First published as a slim quarto volume in 1790, Cary aimed to provide travellers with a guide to the turnpike gates around London. Cary was an outstanding figure in the history of English map-making, one whose later work, the *New Itinerary* of 1798, was to provide the Post Office with its official measures for all mail coach routes and for postage rates for over 40 years. Cary's distinctive hand-coloured maps showed the location of not only inns, milestones, road junctions, parks and commons but also "every gentleman's seat".



The survey has now been divided into North and South sets, each of which includes general maps and preliminary matter. All of the 13 routes out of the capital and into the Home Counties are shown on A4 sheets. Each sheet shows all the sections of each of these routes, in sequence, from London to its destination.

The maps are reproduced at actual size but have been presented in a loose-leaf portfolio for ease of framing. Originals of Cary's maps are still much prized by collectors and these facsimiles can be seen as a testament to Cary's skill as a cartographer.

Originally available at £12.99 each, or £19.95 for the pair, the Archives & Records Centre have now arranged a special offer exclusive to *Bulletin* readers. Merely by mentioning this feature when contacting the Archives readers will be able to purchase both sets of these highly collectable facsimiles for only £14.95.

All products being available exclusively from:

Post Office Archives & Records Centre,
Freeling House,
Mount Pleasant Complex,
Phoenix Place Entrance,
LONDON EC1A 1BB.

Please add £1.50 p&p for orders under £5.

Posting Boxes

144. Overseas Boxes

Our first photograph this month was submitted by David Young of California, who writes: "In the city of San Clemente – about 70 miles south down the coast from Los Angeles – there is an antique shop by the name of Colby Antiques. At the rear entrance to their premises they have a old 'VR' mailbox of considerable size and I enclose photographs taken of the mailbox together with what's left of the display on the front indicating that the box was apparently located at 'Prince of Wales Crescent' which I assume to have been in London".



The second photo comes from Maurice Sokel of Hertfordshire, "a frequent visitor to Cyprus". His photograph shows a George V wall box in the shopping area of Paphos, on the edge of the Turkish Quarter.

I have on file a considerable number of photographs and transparencies sent in by readers for this "Posting Boxes" feature – enough to last for the next few years. I regret I cannot accept any more and should be grateful if readers would not send any more in. Thank you. Editor.

Readers interested in letter boxes are reminded of the existence of the Letter Box Study Group – details of which can be obtained by sending a stamped addressed envelope to the Secretary: Sally Jones, 43 Miall Road, Hall Green, BIRMINGHAM B28 9BS.

Stamp Scene

Robert Stolz Trophy for Music Philately 1993

Over 100 stamps showing a musical motif were issued during 1992. The designer of the "best" music stamp, set or miniature sheet issued each year, is awarded The Robert Stolz Trophy for Music Philately – now in its 14th year. The Silver Trophy is sponsored by Einzi Stolz, in memory of her late husband Robert Stolz (1880-1975), the famous Viennese composer of operettas, songs and film music. The winner is chosen and the Trophy awarded by the 500-member world-wide Philatelic Music Circle.

The winner of the 1993 award is Austria for the miniature sheet designed by O Steffler, to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, issued 27 March 1992 (SG MS2291). The very close second place goes to Great Britain for the set of five Gilbert and Sullivan stamps designed by Lynda Gray, issued 21 July 1992 (SG 1624-8). In third place is Germany for the single stamp celebrating the 250th anniversary of the German State Opera, Berlin, issued 13 August 1992 (SG 2472).



The Philatelic Music Circle is an international society for collectors of Music Philately, whose magazine *The Baton* has won many prizes. Details can be obtained from: Irene Lawford, 22 Bouverie Gardens, KENTON, Middx, HA3 0RQ, or Mrs C Osborne, PO Box 1781, Sequim, WASHINGTON 98382, USA.

Friends of the NPM

Ray Pottle, Secretary and Treasurer of the Association of Friends of the National Postal Museum, has now retired from full time employment and is, therefore, unable to daily collect the Friends' correspondence from the Museum as in the years past. The Friends have, therefore, opened an office with the postal address: R G Pottle, PO Box 40, UCKFIELD, E Sussex, TN22 2SP and installed a telephone line 0825-766546 for their own use. Using this direct access will ensure all matters relating to the Friends are dealt with the minimum of delay.

Christmas Gift Offer

A much appreciated Christmas Gift for a philatelic or postal historian is a two year subscription to the Association of Friends of the National Postal Museum. Many satisfied Friends have joined us in the past by this route. A bumper gift wrapped package will include your own gift card or dedication and will comprise all of the material which has accrued since the commencement of our financial year, 1 April. This will include two issues of our award winning journal *Cross Post* (Autumn 1992 Stampex silver medal), a copy of the superb *National Postal Museum Review for 1992*, (currently retailing at £5), a mint copy of every postcard issued by the Museum in the current year, plus other very collectable items. The subscription will run through to 31 March 1995. For this festive offer we are reducing the price by £2 to a mere £22. Send your instructions and cheque to Ray Pottle, PO Box 40, UCKFIELD, E Sussex, TN22 2SP.

Dinosaur Stamp Collection

Complete Collections of Ferndown, Dorset have produced a creative and informative collection which contains a 16-page full colour illustrated Dinosaur stamp album, containing useful facts on dinosaurs as well as general information on stamp collecting. Also included in the collection are 26 different dinosaur stamps, together with stamp hinges for mounting them in the album. With the current dinosaur mania, children of all ages will have great fun, identifying the different dinosaur stamps and affixing them in the spaces provided in the album. Price £2.95; available from local stamp shops or direct from: Complete Collections Ltd, 8 Teasel Way, West Moors, FERNDOWN, Dorset, BH22 0PQ.



Railway Letter Stamps

The Nene Valley Railway issued a new 25p definitive stamp on 14 September 1993, this features LNWR and NVR stamps in the design of the 1891 railway letter stamp. The stamp is printed in sheets of nine, price £2.25 or £24 for an imperf proof sheet signed by Rev. R. Paten. First day covers cost £2.50 or £4.95 signed by Sir Bob Reid (Chairman of British Rail) & Rev. Paten.

The cover marks the 25th anniversary of the return of locomotive No. 73050. In 1955 Richard Paten, an engineer, who later became a local clergyman, visited America and was impressed by the number of towns which had placed old steam locos on plinths to commemorate the vital contribution the railway made to the growth of a particular town. He was determined to do the same for Peterborough and in 1968 purchased No. 73050 "City of Peterborough". The loco is now the "flagship" of the NVR. Order/enquiries: Nene Valley Rly, Wansford Station, Stibbington, PETERBOROUGH PE8 6LR.

The North Yorkshire Moors Railway issued a 25p stamp on 2 October to commemorate the arrival of USA Transportation Corps Steam Loco Class 5-160 No. 2253. This stamp comprises an overprint on the 25p stamp issued in April 1991. Available at face value, £1.50 for a sheet of six. The first day cover bears the Royal Mail's 24p Inland Waterways stamp cancelled by the York Philatelic Counter special handstamp, price £1.95. A new stamp on 9 November, will feature loco No. 29 – an O-6-2T Lambton tank built for the Lambton, Hetton & Joicey Colliery Railway. The 25p stamp has been printed by Questa in sheets of eight – two panes of four with central gutter. Price £2 per sheet. The first day cover will bear the Royal Mail's new 1st class self-adhesive stamp (issued 19 October) cancelled at Whitby. Price £1.95.

Orders/enquiries about all NYMR issues to: Mrs M Atkins, 5 Tiber View, Brinsworth,

ROTHERHAM, S Yorkshire, S60 5EA. Postage 35p on all orders.

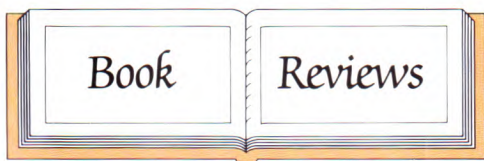
Two new stamps were issued by the Talyllyn Railway on 24 August 1993 to mark the 40th anniversary of preservation of loco No. 6 "Douglas". The stamps comprise overprints and 25p surcharge on the "Douglas" stamps issued on 3 July 1988. Available in sheets of 10 for £2.50 or pair on FDC with special railway cancel for £2.25. Postage 60p per order. Orders/enquiries: Sara Eade, Talyllyn Rly, Wharf Station, TYWYN, Gwynedd, LL36 9EY.

The Mid-Hants Railway issues a 25p Christmas stamp on 27 November, this shows a snowman dressed as a railway guard and a train on an embankment in the background. Available at face value (£1.50 per sheet of six), or £1 on a postcard carried on the day of issue. Postage 30p. Orders/enquiries: Postal Co-ordinator, Mid-Hants Rly, ALRESFORD, Hants, SO24 9JG.



Collectors' Pack Album

For readers who buy Royal Mail's Collectors' Packs, there is now an album available to house these in good order. Produced by Stanley Gibbons, the "Year Pack Album" contains 15 pages to house the large size packs produced since 1977. The pages are held in a strong four-ring maroon – coloured binder with the title "Year Pack Album" in gold lettering on the front cover. The album is priced £14.95, extra pages are available – 10 for £6. Available from: Stanley Gibbons Ltd, 399 Strand, LONDON WC2R 0LX. Postage £3 UK, £5 overseas surface mail.



Volume 2 of Part 1 of the 1993 edition of the **Stanley Gibbons Stamp Catalogue** was published on 27 August (Volume 1 was reviewed in September). This work covers the stamps of British Commonwealth countries from Jamaica to Zululand. The revival of the philatelic market has continued over the past year, reflecting signs of economic recovery. In particular, quality Commonwealth material has remained popular with renewed interest in the issues of George VI. Upward price movements have also been noted for early Elizabeth II definitive sets. Fine used stamps, particularly odd values, have generally moved higher reflecting a scarcity of such material. Commemorative stamps issued after 1988 are showing signs of scarcity reflecting a reluctance by dealers to tie up capital in stock during the recession.

Listings are also now made for the "No Stamps Available" cachets of Pitcairn Islands between 1921 and 1927 and for the New Zealand stamps used on the Island between 1927 and 1940. SG C1 1921 cachet I is priced at £2500, while SG Z16/17 are £45 each. Malaysia remains popular with considerable activity in Japanese occupation issues and Labuan, where the 1880-82 issue (SG 5-10) is now £375 mint £425 used up from £350 mint £400 used. Among price rises for George VI stamps, the Montserrat 1938 definitives are now £48 mint £40 used, up from £38 mint and used. The Kenya, Uganda & Tanganyika 1938-54 definitives (SG 131-150ab) are £70 mint £22 used up from £55 mint £18 used.

Recent discoveries listed for the first time include varieties from Zimbabwe showing the definitives issued between 1988 and 1992 with perforation both 14 and 14½. The long series of K2 provisionals issued by Zambia are now listed.

651 pages, A4 format, hardback. Price £19.95. Available from Stanley Gibbons Strand shop, or by post from: Stanley Gibbons Publications, Parkside, RINGWOOD, Hants, BH24 3SH.

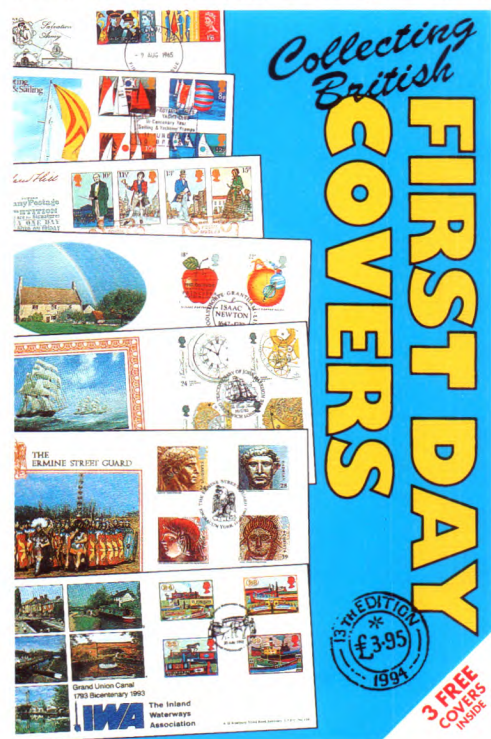
In 1793, the first English provincial penny posts came into operation in Manchester, Bristol and Birmingham. The first receiving houses were opened close to Birmingham city centre, all in grocers shops. These found no public favour

and closed within two years. The "country offices" at locations such as West Bromwich, Wednesbury, Sutton Coldfield and Solihull were an immediate success and between 1793 and 1840 many more offices were opened through the Birmingham area. By 1837, more than 20 receiving houses generated an annual profit of almost £2000 from extra charges levied for the local delivery and collection of letters.

A book to commemorate Birmingham Penny Post and the history of Royal Mail in the Midlands over the last 200 years has been published. Copies are available from Midland (GB) Postal History Society, Dunley House, Cranham, GLOUCESTER GL4 8HQ. Tel 0452 862218. Ringbound copies cost £17.50 plus £4 postage; a small number of hardbound copies may be available at £32 (postage on request). A fuller review will be published here later.

A special handstamp was used at Birmingham on 20 October to mark the bicentenary of the Penny Post. This handstamp was sponsored by Midlands Public Relations, Royal Mail, BIRMINGHAM B1 1AA.

Collecting British First Day Covers, by N C Poster and A G Bradbury, is a recognised work



of reference. The 1994 (13th) edition is now available. This provides a clear, concise listing of the special handstamps, relevant ordinary "First Day of Issue" postmarks, C.D.S. (Circular datestamps) postmarks and appropriate slogan cancels for each issue. The listings are arranged in separate sections for commemorative (special) and definitive issues. Greetings stamps are included in the specials section; definitive includes booklet panes, coils, postage dues, Framas, and regionals (country stamps). The attractive front cover shows FDCs from the 1965 Salvation Army issue to the recent Inland Waterways set. Three free FDCs are included with each catalogue – according to the publisher, these covers "may be worth up to £10 in total". It is interesting to see the prices of some of the FDCs of 1963 when the Bureau and *Bulletin* started life. Nature week covers with Forest Row, Sussex. c.d.s. are priced at £100, as are Red Cross covers with the "Red Cross Centenary: A Century of Service" slogan and West Wellow, Hants c.d.s. (phosphor stamps). 176 pages, card covers. The catalogue is available through all good stamp shops, price £3.95. In case of difficulty, please remit £3.95 plus £1.05 postage to A G Bradbury, 3 Link Road, LEICESTER LE2 3RA. Overseas please add £1 for surface mail and remit in £ Sterling.

The Scottish Post Office Board has sponsored a number of books in recent years, including *The Nature of Scotland: landscape wildlife and people* (reviewed here February 1992). One of the latest publications is **Under Cover: An Anthology of Contemporary Scottish Writing**, edited by Colin Nicholson. This contains work by more than 50 of the best Scottish writers alive today – poetry and short stories, many previously unpublished. Several have been specially written for this collection. The works explore the themes of homelessness, unemployment, isolation and despair. Yet amongst these depressing subjects, the writers express a note of optimism. The book marks the 25th anniversary of Shelter (Scotland), the charity dedicated to helping homeless people, royalties from the sale of the book go towards its good work.

In his preface, Mr Kenneth Graham Chairman Scottish Post Office Board, writes that his Board's involvement in the book "springs from a simple but deeply held belief: that the universal way in which The Post Office touches everyone's life in Scotland – the more so in the lives of the less – fortunate, perhaps – provides a natural stepping stone to modest

support for Shelter in this anniversary year." One of the poems by Derrick Thomson, is entitled "Thursday Morning, in a Glasgow Post Office". 218 pages, card covers. Price £6.99. Available from bookshops, or the publisher Mainstream Publishing Company (Edinburgh) Ltd, 7 Albany Street, EDINBURGH EH1 3UG. ISBN 1 85158 548 6.

In August 1974 the first article in a series entitled "British Special Issues" was published in the *Philatelic Bulletin*. Written by the late James Watson, it dealt with the 1924 Empire Exhibition set. Sadly Mr Watson died in 1986, by when he had covered some 129 issues to the Bicentenary of the Derby set of 1979. The series was then taken over by the present writer, Francis Kennedy. Pressure on space in the *Bulletin* meant slow progress in bringing the series up to date and it has been decided to continue publication in booklet format.

The first volume, **British Special Stamps 1985-86** is now available, dealing with the 18 special issues (73 stamps) of those two years. These included some of the most popular and interesting designs of the 1980s. The Age of Steam was relived in Terence Cuneo's paintings on the "Famous Trains" stamps, the music of Handel, Holst, Delius and Elgar was recalled by the European Music Year set. Four designs by Paul Hogarth celebrated the 350th anniversary of the Royal Mail as a public postal service and British Film Year Stamps depicted some of our greatest stars – Peter Sellers, David Niven, Charlie Chaplin, Vivien Leigh and Alfred Hitchcock.

The Appearance of Halley's Comet was commemorated by four controversial designs by cartoonist Ralph Steadman. A photographic approach was taken for the stamps celebrating the Queen's 60th birthday and illustrated medieval manuscripts inspired the set marking the 900th anniversary of the Domesday Book.

The History of the RAF stamps featured some of our best-known aircraft – the Hurricane, Typhoon. DH-9A. Lancaster and Mosquito, with the relevant chiefs of the RAF. The Christmas stamps featured Pantomime characters and Folk Customs. In this book, Francis Kennedy tells the story of each issue with useful information on the designs; designers, printing varieties, first day covers, postmarks, stamp cards and presentation packs.

40 pages, card covers. Price £3.95. Available from: British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, EDINBURGH EH3 5TT.

Competition

SPONSORED BY:
A G BRADBURY



Win 1994 First Day Covers

This month's competition is sponsored by cover producer Adrian Bradbury who supplies the following prizes:

★ Five 1st prizes of complete sets of 1994 "LFDC" covers each with full set of stamps, sponsored postmarks and limited to 1000 numbered copies. Despatched as and when issued – nine covers. New issue value around £53.

★ Four 2nd prizes of £10 Britannia FDC with Britannia Windsor special handstamp. Beautiful die-stamped covers – each numbered limited editions of just 600. Retail £22.50.

★ Three 3rd prizes of Buckingham Palace Souvenir opening covers. Retail £12.50.



Introducing Adrian Bradbury

Adrian Bradbury developed his love for British first day covers into a business nearly 20 years ago. Initially, working part-time, he specialised in obtaining relevant c.d.s. (counter date stamp) and slogan postmarks, e.g. with the 1974 Fire Engines issue he arranged for FDCs to be franked at Burnt House Lane, Exeter Sub Post Office, and also with the special slogan postmark "The Fire Brigade Needs Men of Courage". Both of these covers are worth well over £300 now after being supplied new issue for around £3!

In 1980, after being employed with Leicester City Council's Treasurer's Department for 16 years, he decided to work full-time designing and marketing his own limited edition first day covers.

His main LFDC series (Leicester First Day Covers) has now reached No.119, whilst the

Victorian Prints series is up to No. 81. The latter features fine Victorian engravings reflecting the theme of each stamp issue. The LFDC series is often for an organisation connected with the stamp issue, e.g. recently: The Inland Waterways Association; The Worshipful Company of Fruiterers; The Sherlock Holmes Museum; and The Dickens Fellowship. Many of his covers are also signed by famous celebrities.

Adrian's love and enthusiasm for the hobby has never waned – this is perhaps reflected in his having won three "Firsts" in the recently introduced Royal Mail Covers of Quality Awards competition.

Each year Adrian also publishes the catalogue *Collecting British First Day Covers* – now in its 13th successful year.

A G Bradbury
3 Link Road
LEICESTER LE2 3RA
Tel. 0533 705367



To enter this month's competition answer the questions below and send your answers with your name and address on a postcard to: November Bulletin Competition, British Philatelic Bulletin, Royal Mail National, 76 Turnmill Street, LONDON EC1M 5NS. Entries should arrive by 31 December

1. Who compiled *Survey of the High Roads from London*?
2. What is the colour of the new 19p stamps, issued 7 December 1993?
3. Who designed the 1992 Gilbert and Sullivan stamps?
4. Which king ascended the throne on 6 May 1910?
5. How many times has Jim Calder been capped for Scotland?

The answers to all these questions will be found in this month's *Bulletin*.

The winners of the August competition were: M Haggard of Suffolk (£75 worth of philatelic products); D Balasingam of Cheshire; T Byrne of Wicklow; J Fraser of W Midlands; C Freeman of Tyne & Wear; and C Chuah of Malaysia (Sherlock Holmes presentation packs).

The answers were: 1. Charlotte Knox; 2. Terry Brown; 3. Iraq; 4. 5 October 1993; 5. 1893.

Our thanks to all who entered.

Events

6 Nov 93. Scout & Guide Stamps Club regional meeting at Wash Common Community Centre, Glendale Avenue, Newbury Berks, 14.00-17.00. Exhibition, talk, Scout & Guide stamps and covers on sale, refreshments, etc. Enquiries: R Pickett, 38 Culver Road, NEWBURY, Berks, RG14 7AR. Tel 0635-41962.

6 Nov 93. CORNPEX '93 - Cornwall Philatelic Federation Stamp & Postcard Exhibition & Fair at Ocean Suite, Cornwall Coliseum, Carlyon Bay, St Austell, 10.00-16.00. Displays, dealers, refreshments, parking, free stamps for children. Admission 30p. Enquiries: Mrs M Morrell, Hendra, Kingston Cross, Stoke Climsland, CALLINGTON, Cornwall, PL17 8PQ.

13 Nov 93. Plymouth Phil Soc Open Day at St Edwards Hall, Peverell, Plymouth, 10.30 onwards. Displays, competition, childrens' corner, raffle, refreshments, etc. Enquiries: Mrs M Griffiths, 17 Berry Park Road, Plymstock, PLYMOUTH PL9 9AG.

13 Nov 93. Midland Philatelic Federation Autumn Assembly at Harris School, Overslade Lane (off Dunchurch Road), Rugby, 10.00-16.00. Admission 50p adults, 25p children. Competition, dealers, display of Rugby Philatelic Society's collection of postal history, special commemorative cover and cancellation, refreshments, etc. Enquiries: D Frost, Gerona, Church Street, RUGBY, Warwickshire, CV23 8DH. Tel. 0788 810867.

Until 13 May 94. "From Post Boy to Air Mail" exhibition, coinciding with "Collectormania" at the Museum of Science & Industry, Liverpool Road, Castlefield, Manchester.

Christmas Stamps at Selfridges

Quentin Blake's five Christmas stamp designs have provided the inspiration for one of the worlds most famous Christmas displays - the Selfridges Christmas windows. Eleven Oxford Street windows will show scenes from Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* with five of the windows based on an interpretation of this year's Christmas stamps. The remainder feature designs from the presentation pack, and specially commissioned work.

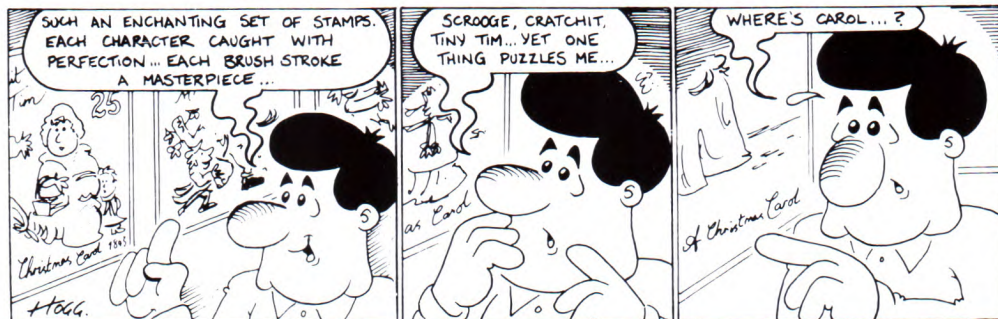
The Selfridges Christmas windows will be unveiled on 9 November, although work on the models began many months ago.



Selfridges chose the stamps theme and style because of the universal appeal and humour of Dickens's characters, Bob Cratchit, Tiny Tim, Scrooge and the ghosts of Christmas Past, Present, and Future. Great care has been taken to emulate Blake's unique illustrative style and to adapt the drawings to three-dimensional models. Animated seven foot high characters will capture the spirit of Dickens's much loved novel.

Selfridges Christmas carrier bags also feature the stamps and the range of Christmas philatelic products will be on sale in the store, including the leather-bound *Special Stamps Yearbook*. Selfridges is situated at 400 Oxford Street LONDON W1A 1AB, near Bond Street tube station.

CUSTOMER KNOWS BEST.



November Digest

Note-Definitive/Country Stamps

Unless otherwise stated all stamps are printed on OBA free paper (OBA = Optical Brightening Agent), perforated 15 x 14, have elliptical perfs on vertical sides and PVA Dextrin gum. Stamps with phosphor band(s) have fluor incorporated in the phosphor. ACP = Advanced Coated Paper.

Issued in November/early December

1 November: £1.40 and £1.64 books containing 4 x 35p and 4 x 41p stamps respectively, plus 4 air mail labels.

Printing: Walsall, lithography, 2 phosphor bands PVA gum.

Note: These two books will be available from the Bureau, Collections, Post Shops Plus, Philatelic Counters, also post offices and retail outlets (35p only) with a demand for airmail rate stamps.

1 November: Stamp Rolls – 500 and 1000 x 19p and 25p (codes BL, CL); 500 x 35p and 41p (codes DL, EL).

Printing: Harrisons, photogravure, 19p one phosphor band, ACP others.

1 November: 50p, £1 and £2 books containing two, four and eight 25p stamps respectively. 50p book also contains two labels adjoining stamps.

Printing: Harrisons, photogravure (50p and £2); Walsall, lithography (£1) ACP Harrison stamps, 2 phosphor bands Walsall. PVA gum Walsall

1 November: 10 x 1st class stamp book. *Printing:* Questa, 2 phosphor bands. First printing in books of 1st class NVI with security features.

1 November: 10 x 1st class stamp book. *Printing:* Walsall, 2 phosphor bands. Greetings advert panel.

1 November: 4 x 1st class stamp book.

Printing: Walsall, 2 phosphor bands.

Note: This book was produced with the old style covers but incorporating the new security features – i.e. elliptical perfs on stamps.

2 November: Christmas stamp cards, Nos. 157a-e, price 25p each.

9 November: Christmas stamps – 19p, 25p, 30p, 35p, 41p.

Designer: Quentin Blake.

Printing: Harrison & Sons Ltd, photogravure, sheets of 100, perf 15 x 14, PVA Dextrin gum. 19p one phosphor band (with fluor), 25p-41p phosphor coated paper. OBA free paper.

Pictorial First Day of Issue Postmarks:

British Philatelic Bureau; Bethlehem, Llandeilo.
Presentation Pack: No. 242, price £1.85.

9 November: 1st class Christmas stamp book containing 10 x 25p, Christmas stamps, price £2.50.

Printing: Harrison & Sons, photogravure, details as sheet stamps.

9 November: 2nd class Christmas stamp book containing 20 x 19p Christmas stamps, price £3.80.

Printing: As above.

9 November: 1993 Royal Mail Special Stamps Yearbook, price £21 (standard edition), £75 (Deluxe edition). Contains all special issues of 1993. Available from Bureau, Collections, Philatelic Counters, Post Shops Plus, main post offices and some sub post offices. Deluxe only from Bureau.

9 November: 1993 Collectors' Pack, price £12.95. Contains all special issues of 1993.

9 November: National Postal Museum postcards five designs featuring Victorian Christmas cards. Price 25p each. Available by post from Bureau and National Postal Museum (callers only).

7 December: 19p, 25p, 30p and 41p Country stamps for N. Ireland, Scotland, and Wales.

Printing: House of Questa, offset-lithography, sheets of 200, PVA gum. 19p one phosphor band, 25p, 30p and 41p two phosphor bands.

Presentation Pack: Contains stamps for all three countries, price £3.80.

Pictorial First Day of Issue Postmarks: British Philatelic Bureau, Belfast, Cardiff and Edinburgh.

Withdrawn in November

9 November: 1992 Christmas stamps, pack, stamp cards, stamp book and souvenir cover. 1992 Year Book and Collector's Pack.

30 November: 50th anniversary aerogramme (issued December 1992).

