

June 1993



British Philatelic Bulletin

Volume 30. No: 10 The Royal Mail Magazine for Stamp Collectors Price 70p

ROMAN



GOLD COIN: FOUND AT BREDGAR



BRITAIN

Royal Mail Stamp Cards



Royal Mail's very popular Stamp Cards reproducing the designs of special stamps were introduced in 1973. Some are now highly-priced collectors' items.

Recently added to the range are cards featuring the 1993 Greetings stamps and the 1992-93 Castle and Britannia High Value Definitives.

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Royal Mail

Note: Civil War cards to be withdrawn from sale on 15 June.

Stamp cards are available from the British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, Edinburgh EH3 5TT. Also on sale at Collections, philatelic counters, and selected post shops and main post offices.

British Philatelic Bulletin

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Editor: J R Holman

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20 Brandon Street
EDINBURGH EH3 5TT.

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Royal Mail also publishes the fortnightly **British Postmark Bulletin** giving details of forthcoming special handstamps and postmark slogans. Available on annual subscription from British Philatelic Bureau (address above) UK & Europe £10, Rest of World £21.75.

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Front Cover: Photographs of the old London City Wall (Top Right) first built by the Romans and (Bottom) the walls of Verulamium a Roman town now known as St Albans.

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Main Feature

The Bureau Today 234

Margaret Barrett looks at a service that provides stamps to over 1/4 million collectors worldwide.



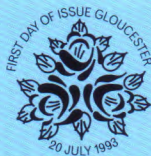
BRITISH
PHILATELIC BUREAU
EDINBURGH 1990



The British Philatelic Bureau, Brandon Street, Edinburgh shown on the 29p stamp in the 1990 Europa issue and on a special day of issue handstamp.

Inland Waterways

20 July 1993



Four stamps commemorating the great “canal mania” of the late 18th century go on sale at post offices, the British Philatelic Bureau, Collections, and philatelic counters on 20 July 1993.

1793 was one of the busiest years of the great age of canals. Right across the country, hundreds of miles of inland waterways were planned, surveyed or under construction. Canals had been operating successfully since the 1740s, but 1793 was important because it saw the granting of parliamentary authorisation for the Grand Junction Canal, the main artery in a system of waterways running from the manufacturing heart land of the Midlands to London and the Thames. Exactly a century later, canal-building in Britain effectively came to an end with the completion in 1893 of the Manchester Ship Canal.

The values cover the inland 1st class and EC basic rates (24p), Europe, non-EC basic rate (28p), world-wide postcard rate (33p), and basic airmail letter rate (39p).

The **24p** stamp shows narrow boats on the Grand Junction Canal, which was authorised by Parliament in 1793 as a new trunk route between Birmingham and London. The **28p** denomination features Humber keels on the Stainforth and Keadby Canal, whose Act was passed in 1793. Via the River Trent, it gave access to the Yorkshire coalfield.

The **33p** value shows horse-drawn boats on the Brecknock and Abergavenny Canal, which was given the go-ahead in 1793 but not completed until 1812. The **39p** stamp features fishing boats and “puffers” on the Crinan Canal, a short cut from Scotland’s west coast that received Parliamentary approval in 1793.



Today the inland waterway system is one of our greatest leisure amenities. These stamps remind us of the importance of canals in the period of Britain’s industrial revolution in the later 18th century, leading to our becoming the “workshop of the world” during the Victorian era.

The Designer

The stamps are the work of Tony Lewery who was born in Brighton in 1941 and studied painting at Brighton College of Art from 1957 to 1961. He was always messing about in boats on the beach from a very early age, but he only discovered the

F

further inland than – up to Ironbridge for instance, and Shrewsbury. But the invention of locks and navigation, rivers and canals were vulnerable to flood and alternative was for these were often and unsuited to heavy vehicles. As the Industrial Revolution gathered momentum, there was a desperate need for a better way of moving bulk commodities such as coal or grain over long distances, where transport costs were high in relation to the intrinsic value of the load. The answer was to build canals.



In their heyday Britain's waterways were busy with commercial traffic of many kinds. This is the Lagan Canal near Belfast, which opened on New Year's Day, 1794.

T

he first canal in the British Isles was authorised by the Irish Parliament in 1729. Carrying Tyrone coal to the port of Newry, it opened in 1742. It took some years, however, for British entrepreneurs to catch up with the rest of Europe and realise that, with man-made waterways to bring in raw materials and take out finished goods, manufacturing could develop in areas away from the navigable rivers. Long-standing regional monopolies would thus

A

drew revenue from tolls imposed on other users. And, at first, the shareholders made a handsome profit. Many of the early canals were engineered by James Brindley, a great pioneer of waterway-building, who followed the contours as much as possible to minimise the expense of civil engineering works. With the expansion of industry, however, faster journey times were demanded, and the later waterways took a more direct line. The new breed of canal engineers, men like Thomas Telford or John Rennie,



built long flights or 'staircases' of locks to change levels. If this was not possible, they might tunnel through a hill or excavate a cutting. Canals would cross valleys on embankments or aqueducts. It is this second generation of canals which has left the most visible mark on the landscape. They were built by the famous 'navigators' or navvies, iron-hard heroes raised on beef and beer. Picks, shovels and wheelbarrows were all they needed. Curiously enough, the

L

Most had families ashore to whom they returned at the end of the trip. But in the 1840s the new network of railways was putting great pressure on the canals. Turn-round times had to be faster, rates (and earnings) were cut, periods away became longer and longer. As an economy measure, many bargemen left their homes and moved on to their boats permanently, taking their families with them. Children worked beside the adults, opening and closing lock gates or leading the horses; there was no time for schooling. Most boatmen worked for the big carrying companies – Fellows, Morton & Clayton was the best known in later years – but many aspired to be 'Number Ones', the fiercely independent owner-operators. It was probably among these that the tradition first began of decorating the boats' cabins with roses and castles, which added further fascinating variety to the styles of boat painting.



Painting the registration number on an FMC motor boat.

D

ifferent kinds of vessel, too, were used around the country – trows



Royal Mail Mint Stamps

• INLAND •
WATERWAYS

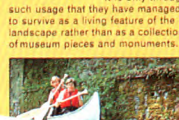


outlook was bleak. Nationalised after the Second World War, the canal carriers struggled on in the face of an ever-lengthening list of closures until the 'big freeze' of the 1962-3 winter finished them off. The canals iced over, locking in boats for weeks; most of the surviving regular customers went over to road haulage and never came back. Although traffic still survives on the river navigations, the kind of bread-and-butter work that brought our canals into being has now been lost to them for ever.



The Engine Arm Aqueduct on the Birmingham Canal at Smethwick.

Britain's 3,000 miles (4,900 kilometres) of navigable inland waterways today form one of our principal leisure resources. It is only through such usage that they have managed to survive as a living feature of the landscape rather than as a collection of museum pieces and monuments.



— Michael Ware (Bart Telford, Rennie, Lock 18 days Arthur, Gloucester, at Museum, Cotswolds and Gloucester, Wotton, Arthur, days Arthur, Gloucester, Cotswolds, Gloucester, Great Park Museum, the British Waterways Trust — © British Museum

Royal Mail First Day Cover

• INLAND •
WATERWAYS

Mrs J Robinson
200 Manorbie Road
ILKESTON
Derbyshire
DE7 4AB

inland waterway system in 1963. He immediately became a totally devoted enthusiast, living and working on the canals, and studying the traditional painted decorations in particular. In 1974 his book *Narrow Boat Painting* came out, and it has remained in print ever since – still the standard work on this traditional art. Since then he has become something of an artistic jack-of-all-trades, and earns a living with a variety of jobs that include painting and signwriting, lecturing, graphic and theatre design and, of course, canal boat restoration and decoration. Recently his research time has been devoted to the broader field of British folk and popular art and he has written two more books, one on signwriting in 1989 and a larger book on popular art in 1991.



The designs for these stamps developed from a series of mural panels he painted for the National Waterways Museum in Gloucester in 1988; these featured some of the regional styles of boat decoration on Britain's inland waterways. The "roses and castles" tradition of the colourful narrow boats of the Midland canals has become the best-known style, as these canals have become popular for pleasure boating instead of trade, but most other barge canals and rivers developed their own localised tradition of decoration as well. Tony's research into these various styles of paintwork still continues, and the intention is to include this work in a greatly expanded version of the boat painting book.

Technical Details

Printers: The House of Questa

Process: Offset – lithography

Size: 41 x 30mm, horizontal

Sheets: 100

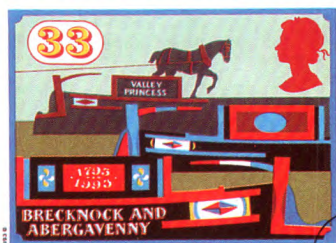
Perforation: 15 x 14

Phosphor: Two bands per stamp

Gum: PVA

Presentation Pack: No 239, price £1.55

Stamp Cards: Nos 154 A–D, price 21p each



First Day Facilities

Unstamped Royal Mail first day cover envelopes will be available from main post offices, the Bureau, Collections, and philatelic counters around a week before 20 July, price 21p.

The Bureau will provide a first day cover service – collectors may order the Royal Mail cover bearing the stamps cancelled with a pictorial "First Day of Issue" postmark of the Bureau or Gloucester, price £1.82 (including VAT) to UK addresses, £1.55 to overseas addresses (no VAT). Orders for first day covers must be received at the Bureau by 20 July 1993.

Collectors may send their own stamped covers, on the day of issue, for the Bureau or

addition the following celebrities have agreed to sign a limited number of covers: David Jacobi (Claudius in BBC, *I Claudius*), Magnus Magnusson, Michael Heseltine, Lord Fawcley, Lord Hesketth and the Italian Ambassador. These will sell at £6.95 and all profits will go to Sponne School Mini Bus Fund. Orders/Enquiries: Sponne School PFA, c/o G Lovell, 76 West End, Silverstone, TOWCESTER, Northants, NN12 8UY. Remittances payable to "Sponne School PFA Mini Bus Fund".



Shown here is one of Bradbury's covers for the Roman Britain stamps. Details were published here last month.

Roman Britain. Benhams are producing a number of covers for the Roman Britain issue:

Fishbourne Roman Palace

The Roman Palace at Fishbourne, dating from the 1st century AD, is the largest Roman residence yet found in Britain and was possibly the palace of the local king, Tiberius Claudius Cogidubnus. Benham worked with Fishbourne Roman Palace for their main cover which features one of the magnificent mosaics found there, reproduced in full colour on "silk" and framed in gold. The special Fishbourne pictorial postmark, shows a "hippocamp", a fabulous beast with a curly fish tail pictured on one of the mosaic floors. Price £4.99.

Chedworth Roman Villa

The Chedworth villa, which dates from the early 2nd century AD, was discovered in 1864 when a gamekeeper noticed that busy rabbits had thrown up quantities of Roman debris during their burrowing. Owned by the National Trust, the villa is now a national monument and tourist attraction. The cover features a specially commissioned painting by archaeological artist Wendy Williams which shows a Roman craftsman at work, creating one of the superb Chedworth mosaics. The illustration is printed on "silk" and mounted into a gold foil frame. The special Cirencester pictorial postmark features the same mosaic and the NT logo. Price £4.99.

Four 'Small Silk' Covers

Benham are offering a set of "small silk" covers. Each carries just one stamp and features paintings by Ronald Embleton, renowned for his reconstructions of Roman army life. Each colourful painting is printed on "silk" and hand-mounted into a gold foil frame. The special pictorial postmarks commemorate some of the most important Roman sites in Britain including Cirencester (featuring the famous hare mosaic), Bath (carved head of Helios from the temple pediment), Caerleon (theatre mask) and Chester (gladiator, from the large arena there). Price £10 per set.

Hadrian's Wall

The massive wall built by Hadrian across northern Britain was the strongest linear fortification constructed in the Roman empire; it ran from Newcastle upon Tyne, ending near Carlisle, a distance of some 73 miles. It is the outstanding monument of the Roman occupation of Britain. Benham is proud to offer a Special Gold Hadrian's Wall Cover, decorated with an atmospheric painting of Roman soldiers on the Wall by artist Ronald Embleton. This has been printed onto a "silken fabric" and hand-mounted into a real 22-carat gold frame. This frame incorporates a hallmark confirming the use of real gold. The Roman Britain stamps are cancelled by a special handstamp, featuring the eagle – symbol of Imperial Rome. The cover and postmark, have been designed by Catherine Buckingham whose miniature works of art have been delighting First Day Cover collectors for many years. Price £8.99.

Postcards

The four postcards are decorated with a collection of Ronald Embleton's reconstructions of Roman army life. Each painting is printed on "silk" and mounted in a gold foil frame. The four special pictorial postmarks feature important Roman sites: Dover, Newcastle upon Tyne, Canterbury and Walbrook, London EC4. Price £10 per set. Order/enquiries: Benham (A Buckingham) Ltd, The Bayle, FOLKESTONE, Kent, CT20 1SD. Postage and packing 50p; all major credit cards are accepted.

Roman Britain. CoverCraft are producing two first day covers in association with the Museum of London and the Museum of Antiquities in Newcastle upon Tyne. Both covers will bear special sponsored handstamps. Covers with full set of Roman Britain stamps are available at £5.75 each. Orders/enquiries: CoverCraft, PO Box 432, BECKENHAM, Kent, BR3 3SZ.

Bulletin Supplement

Commemorative Covers

Information given here is based on details supplied by the cover producers; requests for further information should be directed to the relevant producer and not to the Bulletin office.

Farewell to Florin. After 30 June 1993 the florin and two shilling piece, the last predecimal coins, will cease to be legal tender. A special last day cover illustrating these coins and the old size 10p coin is being produced. This bears informative and historical text and is the latest in the "Philatelic Coin Event" cover series. The cover will bear appropriate 10p stamps cancelled by the Cardiff (nearest to Royal Mint) Philatelic Counter handstamp of 30 June. A pictorial "Britannia" posted cachet will be applied. The collection of four "Philatelic Coin Event" covers including last day of ½p coin (with Halfpenny Green handstamp), new 20p coin, National Coin Week, and last day of the florin costs £7 inclusive of inland postage and packing (overseas add 70p). Orders/enquiries: G Eldridge, 177 Mousehole Lane, Bitterne, SOUTHAMPTON SO2 4TD.



40th Anniversary of the Coronation. A special cover to mark the 40th anniversary of Her Majesty's Coronation will be available on 2 June. The covers bear the set of four stamps issued in 1978 to mark the 25th anniversary – these feature the State Crown, St Edward's Crown, Sovereign's Orb, and Imperial State Crown. These stamps will be cancelled with a special 40th anniversary postmark from London SW1. In addition the covers will bear the 2½d Coronation stamp issued in 1953. Limited to 500 copies, price £9.75. Overseas please remit in sterling and add £1. Orders/enquiries: A G Bradbury, 3 Link Road, LEICESTER LE2 3RA.

Cover Producers win Marketing Award

Congratulations to the well-known cover dealers, Benham of Folkestone, on their recent award as runner up in Consumer Products & Services category in the 1992/93 Kent Marketing Awards. Our photo shows Managing Director Tony Buckingham (left) receiving the award from Edwin Boardman, Chairman of the Kent Messenger Group.



Yugoslavia Peace-keeping. No 32 Squadron has reflown a limited number of military covers to Sarajevo in support of United Nations Peace Keeping Mission (Cover RFDC 85). A limited number of cover JSF 12 have been reflown to Royal Air Force Marham for the Royal Review. The covers bear the following signatures: RFDC 85: Foreign Secretary – £20; Chief of the Air Staff – £10; C in C Strike Command – £10; OC 32 Squadron – £3.50; JSF 12: Prime Minister – £25; Secretary of State for Defence – £20; and Chief of Defence Staff – £12.50. All proceeds from the sale of the covers will be donated to charity. Orders (please specify "alternative" signatures), with remittances made payable to "NON PAS RAF Northolt", should be sent to: Philatelic Officer, No 32 Squadron, RAF Northolt, West End Road, RUISLIP, Middx, HA4 6NG.

Roman Invasion – Lactodorum. To coincide with the Roman Britain issue Towcester's Sponne School PFA will be producing a first day cover commemorating Towcester's Roman origins as *Lactodorum*, a Roman garrison camp on Watling Street. The cover depicts a Roman soldier of the type who conquered and settled in Lactodorum. Each cover will bear a full set of stamps cancelled by a special illustrated handstamp. The cover will cost £3.45. In

Gloucester cancels, to: British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, EDINBURGH EH3 5TT, or Midland Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, BIRMINGHAM B1 1AA. The outer envelope should be endorsed "Pictorial First Day of Issue postmark".

First Day Posting Boxes will be provided at most main post offices for collectors who wish to post covers to receive the standard, non-pictorial "First Day of Issue" handstamps. Details of other special handstamps, sponsored by Royal Mail, stamp dealers and others, will be found in the *British Postmark Bulletin* – the Royal Mail's magazine for postmark collectors. It is available on subscription from the British Philatelic Bureau: £10 UK and Europe, £21.75 Rest of World (Airmail).



Canals 200

Canalside festivals with gatherings of colourful historic narrowboats, country crafts and family entertainments and open days are being organised on canals and at museums throughout the country to celebrate two centuries of canals.

Canals 200 is a nationwide campaign devised and directed by British Waterways, which runs the country's canals, to mark the bicentenary of the "Canal Mania" of 1793.

Canals made the Industrial Revolution possible. Two centuries on, recreation has replaced commerce and the waterways are now treasured for their rich variety of landscapes and historic buildings, and as reserves for wildlife.

For more information
please write to:

Customer Services
British Waterways
Willow Grange
Church Road
WATFORD WD1 3QA

Tel: (0923) 226422



Posting Boxes

141. Scottish Boxes

We feature this month two boxes in the beautiful Highlands and Islands of Scotland. The first illustration, submitted by F T Last of East Lothian, shows a Victorian wall box set in a rock alongside the road at Red Point, south of Gairloch in Wester Ross. Mr Last tells us "it really is in a remote area servicing a number of crofters – sheep far outnumber the human population".



The second illustration shows an Edward VIII box on the quayside at Tobermory on the Isle of Mull. The box bears a sign pointing the way of the town's post office. The picture was submitted by Gilbert Price of Perthshire. Edward VIII posting boxes were featured in Nos 17 and 80 in this series, published in the *Bulletin* of May 1980 and February 1986. About 130 boxes exist with the cipher of King Edward VIII who reigned for less than a year (20 January-10 December 1936).

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.

Golden Jubilee of GB Air Letter with Impressed 6d Stamp

PETER JENNINGS, FRPSL

The Golden Jubilee of the first British Air Letter Form with an impressed 6d stamp occurs on 18 June 1993. A Royal Mail International aerogramme with a special 50th anniversary logo, 1943-1993, went on sale at the British Philatelic Bureau, and philatelic counters, on 1 December 1992. The aerogramme is sold singly at 34p, or in packs of six at a discount price of £1.90.

However, one might query the date chosen, because the Air Letter was issued on 18 June 1943, and not 1 December 1942. The first use of the 6d rate on a Great Britain air letter was 7 December 1942. A 6d adhesive stamp had to be affixed to the air letter, which could only be used for corresponding to members of the Forces serving in East Africa. The service was extended to South Africa on 9 April 1943.

Although 18 June 1943 was the official first day of the new air letter with an impressed 6d stamp, the form was not generally available until July. Examples postmarked in late June, do exist.

Big Demand

A letter from the Post Office Controller to the Printers McCorquodale & Co Ltd, at Wolverton, dated 4 September 1942, headed "Air Mail Letter" (Gumbley), gives an insight into GPO thinking at the time: "With reference to previous correspondence and discussions, I have to inform

you that it has been decided to introduce this item within the next few weeks.

"The first supplies are being obtained unstamped through H. M. Stationery Office, but forms printed with a 6d. stamp are to be introduced at the earliest possible moment and their provision is a matter for the Post Office to arrange.

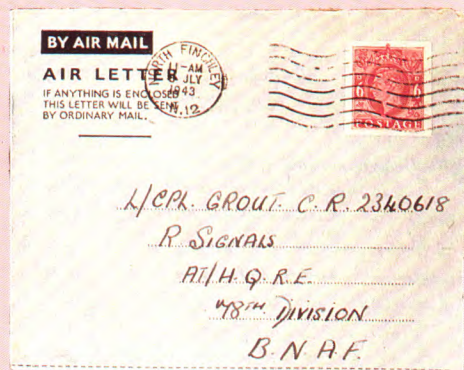
"It is difficult at this stage to estimate the demand for the new form – possibly the initial requirements will be between 1,000,000 – 1,500,000 per week."

The first order on Post Office Warrant for Air Letters, No 163, dated 21 December 1942, was for 500,000 packets of 40 forms. The proofs were approved on 18 January 1943.

The forms were printed by McCorquodales at their Post Office Works in Wolverton, on various letterpress machines, using metal plates, including the sheet fed Wharfedale flatbeds, and reel fed Timsons Rotary, and the old Postal Order machine.

Pure Gum Arabic adhesive was applied to the form before it was cut to shape on a Pellet Gumming machine, originally designed to produce envelope shapes. It was a slow process because the operator had to apply hand pressure to the top of a stack of air letters, and any uneven pressure produced an uneven width of gum.

The Post Office requirements for the new air



letter form soon outstripped the gumming capability of the Post Office Works, which transferred work to McCorquodale's Envelope Factory at Wolverton, and the Newton-le-Willows factory. The impressed 6d stamp was printed at the same time as the form on the reel fed Rotary machines, while on the flatbed machines it was a separate operation.

Early Use

The air letter illustrated in this article was postmarked in London on 6 July 1943. Part of the letter addressed to Lance Corporal C. R. Grout, 2340618, from his wife Jo, (reproduced with her permission), reads "Did you notice the difference in this airgraph? The stamp is now part of the actual letter. It is not stuck on like it used to be. I expect you would like to save this fresh cover." The first civilian use of this form, to South Africa, did not occur until 24 August 1944.

Although this was the first air letter with an impressed 6d stamp, it was not the first time the GPO had issued an air letter bearing an impressed stamp. On 21 July 1941, Great Britain became the first country in Europe to issue a special Prisoner of War Post air letter, with a 2½d impressed stamp, for British prisoners of war in Germany and Italy.

The 6d postage rate on the British air letter remained from 7 December 1942, until 2 October 1966, when it was increased to 9d. During these years, the basic size, shape and design of the form changed very little. However, on 1 July 1968, a new type of aerogramme was put on sale. The impressed 9d stamp designed by David Gentleman and incorporating the profile of The Queen by Arnold Machin, replaced the old stamp showing the Palace of Westminster. The stamp showed representations of two VC-10 aircraft in flight. The blurred effect on the wings was intended to give the sensation of speed. This particular form was often criticized because of its shape.

In order to meet popular demand, the Post Office introduced a new aerogramme on 26 April 1972, which gave nearly one third more writing space than the form of July 1968.

It was an Englishman, Douglas Gumbley, who invented and designed the world's first Air Mail Letter Card with an impressed stamp. His Iraq Air Mail Letter Card issued on 15 July 1933, was adapted for use by British Forces during the War.

© Peter Jennings

In his next article, Mr Jennings writes on the Diamond Jubilee of the Gumbley Iraq Air Mail Letter. Ed.

Gems from the R M Phillips Collection

209. ¼d Stamp Designs

A farthing was a remarkably small amount of money, even in Victorian times. And yet six and seven designs were produced in 1874 respectively by both Perkins, Bacon and De La Rue for postage stamps of that value, although they never came to fruition. All are in the Phillips collection in the National Postal Museum and all are believed to be unique.



The only documentation known is a note in the Perkins Bacon engraving book on a page headed 20 November 1874 – "Drawg 6 postage stamps ¼d. for trial." No date is recorded for the De La Rue designs, though it can be assumed to be about the same period. Perkins, Bacon's designs were composite. The heads were cut from the contemporary ½d. which they printed and the line-engraved backgrounds were cut from stock proofs. The artist added the corner letters and value in pen (or brush) on paper which was superimposed on the background. Two of the designs have the denomination in the slightly strange phraseology of "Quarter Penny". These were intended for the recess printing process.

These designs can be seen in the open display in the National Postal Museum, King Edward Street, LONDON EC1A 1LP. The Museum is open Monday to Friday, 9.30am to 4.30pm. Admission free.

Douglas N Muir
Curator, Philately, NPM

The Bureau Today

MARGARET BARRETT, *Manager Public Relations & Exhibitions, Direct & Overseas Marketing Team*

British
Philatelic
Bureau

As the Bureau marks thirty years of service to its customers this year, it has at the same time undergone some of the most important internal changes in its history.

Frank Langfield explained in his feature in last month's *Bulletin* that the Philatelic Bureau was first established on a small scale in the old Telegraph Office in St Martins le Grand, London, in 1963. The Bureau was first started in response to customer pressure for the Post Office to cater for the collector. Started as a small operation for individual collectors, the Bureau soon grew into a much larger one, and additionally started catering for the needs of stamp dealers. As space was at a premium in London, in 1966 it was decided to move the ever-growing Bureau to Edinburgh.

At the same time Post Office Headquarters began to promote and support philately generally. The Bureau was regarded as one good way, but not the only way, in which the business could help collectors to pursue their hobby by offering them a friendly contact point from which they could purchase all the current British issues.



The Bureau Marketing Team – back row, left to right – Keith MacDonald, Paul Quinn, Richard Skedd, Elaine Henderson, Lynne Kendal, Dave Stevens; front row – Faye Robertson, Sharon Seath, Tam Proudfoot, Jim McLean, Alan McLean

Highly Automated

In the first few years in Edinburgh most Bureau operations were performed manually, as they had been in London. However, in recent years the Bureau has become highly automated, with sophisticated machinery and computers to look after every aspect of a customer's account. Many of the systems used at the Bureau have been purpose-built to meet customer needs.

First Day Covers and Presentation Packs are now made up automatically. Machinery at the Bureau is able to affix and cancel the stamps on FDCs at a rate of 40 covers a minute, and the addresses are added automatically. The component parts of presentation packs – the stamps, carrier, information card and transparent wallet are all brought together by machine. The presentation pack equipment at the Bureau can produce up to 35,000 packs a day.

Even the stamps which go into the packs and onto the covers are torn from the sheet by machine. Royal Mail has developed the world's first "Stampbuster", which is capable of tearing up and storing 250 sheets of stamps an hour.

All customer orders are recorded on computer which means that the processing of orders and payments is carried out efficiently and enquiries and problems can be dealt with speedily. The Bureau's Customer Helpline currently uses each customer's unique personal reference number to call up account details in seconds when a customer phones in. However, in future it may be possible for the computer to bring customer information on to the screen as soon as each call is answered by referring to the telephone number from which the customer is calling. This would mean that customers' enquiries could be dealt with even faster than now.

6.5 million Mailings

All these technological innovations mean that the day to day processing of customers' orders can be carried out quickly and efficiently, and to a more consistent standard than could be achieved by human hand. To give readers some idea of the scale of today's operation, the Bureau currently has more than 250,000 individual and dealer customers in over 130 countries world-



The Bureau – 20 Brandon Street, Edinburgh

wide; 6.5 million items of mail are sent out every year; and every new issue involves the Bureau in fulfilling over 280,000 orders.

Today's Bureau is a mixture of dedicated staff, machinery and internal structures designed to make all the activities work together in harmony. Management of every customer's account is very much a team effort involving staff from Marketing, Customer Services and Operations. The Marketing team is responsible for ensuring that Bureau services as a whole match customer needs, so that existing customers stay with the Bureau and new customers are encouraged to open accounts. Marketing is also largely responsible for communication with customers as a group and produces the Stock Lists and In-Phil publications which account holders receive regularly. The Marketing Team also organises customer promotions, and attends Stampex and overseas stamp exhibitions to wave the flag and meet customers face to face.

The Bureau's Customer Services Team has the very important task of looking after customer's individual requirements, those questions of detail, queries (and sometimes complaints) which require individual attention and "after sales service".

The Operations Team is there to fulfil customer orders quickly and efficiently to ensure the smooth running of accounts. The staff there can also give technical advice on the limits of the computer systems to their Marketing and Customer Services colleagues when new services are being considered or special requests made.

The three teams together ensure that levels of service can be provided for all Bureau customers.

Reorganisation

One of the most fundamental changes in the recent history of the British Philatelic Bureau occurred in April 1992 as a result of reorganisation throughout Royal Mail designed to strengthen the business's focus on meeting

customer requirements. The result was to bring the Bureau even more closely into the core decision-making process and enable it to influence policy-making on philately at a very early stage.

In organisational terms, it means that instead of all staff at 20 Brandon Street being responsible to the Bureau Manager, lines of accountability have been set up for the various work areas – order fulfilment, finance and marketing. The staff in those areas now work much more closely with their colleagues in the same line of work elsewhere in Royal Mail National.

John Wright, who many readers will know well as Bureau Manager, has been appointed to the post of Head of Stamp Production and Distribution. He is responsible for the fulfilment of orders at the Bureau and customer services, as well as taking on the huge new responsibility of ensuring that the stamps are produced on schedule in the first place. His management team comprises: Alistair Sharp (Production), Verne Greger (Operations), Dave McNeill (Customer and Services Manager) and Iain MacMillan (System Services Manager).

Customer understanding

At the same time research conducted with Bureau customers clearly showed that they felt the service they received, in terms of distribution, was excellent, but collectors still wanted more from the Bureau. The key to this was the Marketing Department.

First, the overseas and UK direct Philatelic marketing functions were combined to ensure consistency of approach and better overall understanding of customers. This department is headed by Julie Dunwiddie, who was formerly Overseas Manager, responsible for marketing stamp collecting abroad. Second, new teams in her department were formed in Edinburgh and London. Lynne Kendal heads up the Edinburgh Marketing Team, based at the Bureau, and responsible primarily for ensuring services meet mail order customers' needs. Peter Hopson heads the London Team, responsible for overseas philatelic marketing.

Julie Dunwiddie's job is to build a response to customer needs that will guide the Bureau into the next century, in close co-operation with John Wright's Production and Distribution Team.

The new arrangements will enable the Bureau to build on its traditional strengths of service to its customers while adding new value to its relationships with account holders. The success story will continue.

The Royal Mail Postbus Service

A collector's view of 25 years of activity

MARTIN ROBINSON

1992 and 1993 mark the 25th anniversary of the Royal Mail Postbus service. Four experimental routes were introduced in 1967 and 1968, and since then some 200 further postbuses have been serving mainly rural areas in England, Scotland and Wales by combining passenger services with mail delivery. The postbus's great strength lies in the transport links it can provide for remote communities in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, for example, as well as in villages in Wales and the North-East of England. There are however postbus routes much closer to the larger centres of population in the South-East of England as well.

The very first service began on 20 February 1967 between Llangurig and Llanidloes in Powys. A Commer 7-seater bus was used and fares were prepaid by means of white paper tickets printed by a second-hand TIM bus ticket machine. The same sort of tickets were used at first on the three other pioneer services which began on 23 October 1967 between Honiton and Luppitt in Devon; on 30 October 1967 between Penrith and Martindale in the English Lake District; and on 4 June 1968 between Dunbar and Innerwick in Lothian. All four of these services are still running.

No new services were introduced until 1972, when another 10 routes began operation, all but one in Scotland (the odd one was at Canterbury). Further rapid growth followed throughout the 1970s: by the end of 1975 there were 95 routes in operation and over 160 by the end of 1979. The 1980s saw very much slower growth and although there are now over 200 postbus routes, a handful have been closed as unviable. Several new routes are scheduled for 1993 including the first one in Northern Ireland, which started on 9 February. (A single service has been operating in the Irish Republic since 1982.)

Collectors first began to be interested in postbus services from the early 1970s when different sorts of tickets came into use, mainly pre-printed types in set values on coloured paper, or stamped cards with different values of postage stamps paying the fare cancelled by

means of a named and sometimes dated handstamp. Regional postcards depicting postbuses amidst attractive rural scenery were issued in great number, and these won a great following. Other collectors are interested chiefly in the fleet of vehicles which over the years has included minibuses, Landrovers, saloons and estate cars of many types.

1985 Postbus stamp used on ticket



Postbus tickets – card type (stamped and unstamped) and machine printed

A postbus featured on the 22p value in the 1985 Royal Mail: 350 years of service set (SG 1291). A PHQ postcard of the stamp was also produced.

It would be impossible to review the services and their philatelic aspects in anything like the detail that the late Len Newbury used to do in his articles in *Stamp Collecting* and the *Philatelic Bulletin* (September 1981-January 1982), so the remainder of these notes will be devoted to a

region by region sample, based on the author's exhibit "The Royal Mail Postbus Service" shown as part of the displays of members of the Association of Friends of the National Postal Museum at Autumn Stampex, 1992.

Wales

Going back to the original service in Wales, the TIM tickets were replaced by Almex machine tickets in 1971, then by stamped cards from 1979. It became usual on Welsh routes for there to be a special dated commemorative handstamp on the first day, and thereafter an undated mark showing the route. All the marks, and the tickets themselves, were bilingual. A postcard depicting the Llanidloes postbus was issued as part of a Wales and the Marches set on 7 August 1974, and a further set of six cards, entirely devoted to Welsh postbuses, was issued on 10 January 1979. In the current edition of the *Postbus Guide for England and Wales* 13 routes are listed, most in mid-Wales. Three other routes have not stood the test of time. At one time collectors were very well served by a Newsletter issued by the Wales & The Marches Postal Board which gave details of all the new postbus services.

North-West

In the North-West of England there are only two other services apart from the original one based at Penrith. Both are also in the Lake District: the Duddon Valley route which began operation from Broughton-in-Furness in 1974, and the Grizedale Forest route which began in 1979, based at Ulverston. Whilst the Penrith service used printed roll tickets from TIM, Almex and then Setright machines, the others used printed cards in a range of values and colours, which had to be changed and extended as fares rose. Originally each service had its own tickets, but they were unified as "Northern Territory" from November 1986.

Postbus on Isle of Arran (1979 postcard)



There have been several North West Postal Region postcards showing the postbuses. The first was issued on 1 March 1974 showing the Duddon Valley bus, then the following month another card showed the Penrith to Martindale bus climbing a steep hill with Ullswater in the background. Both these cards were reprinted twice and some of the variations are much sought after, especially with first day cancellations and postbus cachets. On 4 June 1979 a set of three cards was issued, each with five views of one of the buses.



Wadebridge postbus – first in new livery

South-West

The South-West has only other service apart from the original one at Honiton. The second route began on 20 September 1977, running from Wadebridge to Treburrick in Cornwall. The Honiton service has used a variety of printed paper tickets and stamped cards, but the Wadebridge service has only used stamped tickets similar to those used in Wales and the South-East of England. The Wadebridge service was the last in Great Britain to use stamped tickets, until April 1992. It is thought that all now use printed roll tickets. The other distinguishing feature of the Wadebridge postbus is that it was the first to appear in the new Royal Mail livery. This was specially done for it to feature on the cover of the 1990 *England & Wales Postbus Guide*. The Honiton postbus featured on a South-West Region postcard issued on 20 September 1978, together with a presentation pack containing the card, tickets, timetable and a descriptive sheet. The Wadebridge bus appeared on another card showing postal services in Cornwall issued on 17 April 1979.

Scotland

Scotland has 140 postbuses at the time of writing, and there have been a few more over the years, now withdrawn. Most have used

tickets printed on paper rolls with different colours for each value, and with a variety of imprints of the Glasgow Numerical Printing Company. Most of these have now been replaced by Setright machines. It is in Scotland, with its variety of sometimes very demanding terrain, that the collector interested in the vehicles themselves will find his happiest hunting ground. Two series of regional postcards issued on 28 November 1979 and 16 July 1980 have portrayed some of the vehicles and the beautiful terrain they cover. One card in the set of three celebrating the St Andrew's Ambulance Association issued on 23 June 1982 also showed a postbus.

South-East

The South-East of England has twelve postbus services in Kent (at Tunbridge Wells, Canterbury and Sittingbourne), Hampshire (Petersfield), Berkshire (Hungerford and Newbury) and Surrey (Oxted, Reigate, Redhill and Dorking), and another nine have not survived. Most used standard SE Region stamped cards in vertical, then horizontal format, with a variety of handstamps, usually with the route name and dated. Amongst these it is worth mentioning an example from the Tunbridge Wells-Wadhurst-Mayfield route dated 11 June 1985 with the clear misspelling TUNBIRDGE WELLS! The only route not to use these tickets was the Canterbury to Crundale route which used a set of coloured Bell Punch Company omnibus tickets, then a Setright machine. It also celebrated being the first Kent postbus with a special handstamp on 20 October 1972. There have also been cards depicting the postbuses at Dorking (2 August 1973), Oxted (24 September 1973), Canterbury (October 1973), Sittingbourne (two cards issued on 4 March 1974), Tunbridge Wells (two cards on 30 March 1974 and another on 1 December 1978), Hungerford (1 July 1974), Newbury (28 April 1976 and 9 April 1979), Hungerford and Henley (2 October 1978), Redhill (1 October 1979); then a set of nine on 7 July 1980, followed by another set of nine on 6 October of the same year. This undoubtedly makes the South-East region's postbuses the most widely illustrated in the country.

North-East

The North-East of England has nine postbus routes: one in Lincolnshire, two in North Yorkshire and the rest in Northumberland. The first service, Louth to Goulceby, used Bell Punch bus tickets from its inauguration in 1973

until they were replaced by stamped cards in 1977. The other services used similar stamped cards until all were replaced by paper roll tickets. There haven't been any official postcards showing North-East region buses but a special handstamp and cachet commemorated Yorkshire's first service at Ripon on 24 March 1982.



Special handstamps – Last journey Stour Valley (1981) and Honiton postbus 25th anniversary (1992)

Midlands and Eastern

The Midlands had two postbuses operating from the village of Billesdon near Leicester from 7 September 1973 until 28 September 1979. A variety of printed card tickets was used, with a flat rate fare which rose from 5p to 7p! The tickets were cancelled by a rubber handstamp, each bus having a slightly different version; and there were special handstamps on the first and last days of service.

Finally, the Eastern region had two services: Diss-Gislingham (1974–85) and Colchester-East Bergholt (1975–81). Both used preprinted tickets with a crossed posthorns motif, then Setright machine tickets. The Diss postbus appeared on a postcard issued on 25 March 1980 and the Colchester bus on one issued on 30 June 1980.

I hope this brief article has given some indication of the growth of the Royal Mail Postbus Service over the last 25 years and of the wealth of material available for collectors.

© Martin Robinson

Parliamentary Envelopes – Britain's First Postal Stationery

DOUGLAS N MUIR *Curator, Philately – National Postal Museum*

In his series "Philatelic Terms Explained" in the January 1993 *Bulletin* Kenneth Chapman describes the Parliamentary Envelopes first issued on 16 January 1840. These replaced the previous free franking privileges of all members of the Houses of Parliament (both Commons and Lords) which had enabled them to send and receive a certain number of letters free of charge. After describing the history of the items and the various types Mr Chapman then quoted from my book *Postal Reform & the Penny Black* (1990) to the effect that these envelopes were sold at the cost of postage to Members contrasting this with the statement from Robson Lowe and others that it was believed that these were provided free of charge. Perhaps the following might clear up any doubt as to what actually happened.

The details I provided came from Rowland Hill's diary and an article by Edward D Bacon published in *The London Philatelist* in 1934. These established that Rowland Hill had been concerned about inconvenience to Members of Parliament on the cessation of their free franking privilege, when his ideas for prepayment (i.e.

President's Order Book instructions concerning Parliamentary "covers" (Post Office Archives)

stationery and labels) had not yet come into existence. He therefore arranged with the Stationery Office for "a sort of stamped cover" to be prepared and this was approved by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Francis Baring, on 14 January. They came into use on 16 January being sold by Mr Vardon, the librarian, at the cost of the postage, 1d or 2d depending on the weight. As such they were the first items of GB postal stationery prepaying postage. Their use ceased on the introduction of the Penny Black labels and the Mulready stationery in May 1840.

Since publication of my book my attention has been drawn to the "President's Order Book" for 1840. This is a large book of orders and instructions by the President of the Inland Office, William Bokenham, including various instructional notices sent out by him to postmasters, or to him by William Maberly, Secretary to the Post Office.

On page 101 is an instruction dated 17 January 1840 concerning Parliamentary "covers". Not only is it stated there in manuscript that the envelopes were to be sold to Members of

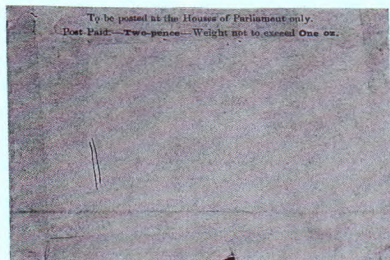
LETTER COVERS, which will pass free through the Post Office, are prepared for the use of Members of Parliament, and may be bought in the Office for the Sale of Parliamentary Papers in the Members' Waiting Room.

These Covers being available for the Houses of Parliament only, will be charged if posted elsewhere.

The last bag from the House of Commons for the General Post will in future be despatched at half-past Six o'clock.

The Covers will pass free by the London Penny Post, if put into the bags after Two o'clock.

Parliament only but there is also a printed statement to that effect. Perhaps the misinterpretation arose because the letter was *then* to pass through the post free – in other words no extra charge was to be raised. Nevertheless, Members still had to pay for them. A close check was kept on the number of envelopes used and the amounts of money which the letter carrier had to obtain once a week from Mr Vardon, the librarian. Only if the envelope was not posted correctly at the Houses of Parliament would a further charge be raised.



Houses of Parliament envelope inscribed "One oz."
(Post Office Archives).

As Kenneth Chapman states these envelopes are quite rare and because of their primitive nature, text printed letterpress in black, come in a number of minor variations. By the very nature of the method of sale, virtually all are in used condition and are only listed in the catalogues as such. In the President's Order Book, however, is an example of the 2d Houses of Parliament envelope *unused* with the inscription "One oz." rather than "1 oz.". A similar unused example is stated to be in the Cole papers in the Victoria & Albert Museum but there may be none on the philatelic market. This is presumably a proof, possibly as shown to Baring by Rowland Hill.

References:

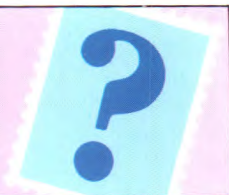
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President's Order Books, 1839/40, Post 14/288, Post Office Archives.

Competition



Win £75 worth of British stamps

Enter this month's competition and stand a chance of winning £75 worth of current British philatelic products of your choice – stamps, stamp books, postcards, albums, etc. Answer the questions below, the answers will be found in this month's *Bulletin*, and send with your name and address on a postcard to: June Competition, British Philatelic Bulletin, Royal Mail National, 76-86 Tummill Street, LONDON EC1M 5NS to arrive by 30 July.

The sender of the first all-correct entry drawn will be invited to order £75 of philatelic products; five runners-up will be sent presentation packs of the Roman Britain stamps. Answers and winners' names will be published in the September *Bulletin*.

1. How many people visited Spring Stampex 1993?
2. Who was the manager of the Royal Mail stand at Spring Stampex 1993?
3. Who was Chancellor of the Exchequer in January 1840?
4. Who designed the Inland Waterways stamps?
5. The first Scottish postbus between Dunbar and Innerwick was introduced on what date?

The competition is not open to staff (and their families) of Royal Mail National and its agents. No correspondence will be entered into; the Editor's decision will be final.

The winners of the March competition were: C Bond of Gladstone, USA (£75 worth of philatelic products); T Lowther of Kirkcudbright, Scotland; E Hook of Surrey; P Hallifax of Surrey; I Carty of Hertfordshire; and F Rowbottom of New South Wales, Australia (Art in 20th Century presentation packs).

The answers were: 1. Royal Caledonian Curling Club; 2. Four; 3. 1934; 4. Harmers of London and British Philatelic Trust; and 5. Frank G Jones.

Our thanks to all who entered.

Eur-Apex '93

This year's Spring Stampex attracted some 14,122 visitors – the best attendance since 1989. An added attraction was the superb "Eur-Apex 93" airmail exhibition which included some fine entries. The Grand Prix award, the Harmers of London Bowl went to Ferdinando Giudici of Italy for his entry "The Siege of Paris 1870-1871". Best in the National Class was Michael Crux's "Swiss Aerophilately".

The Court of Honour displays included three of particular interest to collectors of GB material: "The Coronation Aerial Post 1911 (Dennis Edwards); "Issues Depicting Aviation" (National Postal Museum) and "The Development of British External Services 1907-34" (Alexander Newall).

Mr Edwards's display featured the specially designed covers and cards, in various colours, carried on the first UK air post from Hendon to Windsor (9-15 September 1911). Also shown were advertisement cards, invitations, programmes, way bills, bag labels, etc, relating to this event. Amongst many interesting items in the display by the National Postal Museum and PO Archives were progressive colour proofs of the 1969 4d Concorde stamp, a cover carried on the Hawker flight from Newfoundland to Britain in 1919, and the letter bill showing that some 86 ordinary letters and packages were carried on this flight. The bill was signed by the Postmasters General in Newfoundland and London.

Mr Newall's exhibit documented mail-carrying flights starting with those of private initiative and military air units before and during the First World War, then on the regular RAF service. British and foreign private airlines in Europe, and pioneering flights in the Empire and Imperial Airways' services. It concluded with examples of British contract mail by Zeppelin and SCADTA.

The competitive displays included fine exhibits on "Scottish Airmails 1919-1950" (Eric Tawn), "Douglas Gumbley – from Air Mail to Air Letter" (Peter Jennings) and "Crash Mail: Imperial Airways – British Airways (Harold Wilson).

Dr Alan Huggins put on an excellent display of British aerogrammes, including some startling errors, for example 1981 Christmas aerogramme with red and red and yellow colours omitted. Brian Asquith's display of Concorde material featured some rare covers including

examples carried on the French and British prototype flights on 2 March and 9 April 1969, both pilot signed by Andre Tuscat and Brian Trubshaw.

Our congratulations go to Richard Beith, author of the article "British Internal Night Air Mails" in the March *Bulletin* on his award of a large vermeil medal and Coalport/Wedgwood Plates for his display "The Italian South Atlantic Air Mail Service 1939-41" and a large silver medal and T C Marvin Research Award for his book of the same title. Frank Jones, author of *Etiquettes: Par Avion – By Airmail*, reviewed here in March, received a bronze medal for his book and a silver for his exhibit on airmail etiquettes.



BBC Foreign Affairs Editor John Simpson visited the Royal Mail stand at Stampex. With him is stand manager Keith MacDonald of the British Philatelic Bureau (Photo: Peter Jennings)

A most interesting *Eur-Apex 93 Handbook* was produced by the organisers, providing a catalogue of the exhibition and six worthwhile articles on aerophilately: Handley Page (by Alexander Newall); Lockheed Constellation (George Sinclair); Robert Kronfeld: Gliding Pioneer & Aerophilatelist (Simine Short); New York-Boston Airmail Extension (Don Jones); Sinkiang: The Road to the West (Kurt Goldsmith); and Lufthansa/Lloyd Catapult Service: Interrupted Mail from the S/S Bremen (Roger Stanley-Smith). All six make interesting reading and are well-illustrated. The handbook is available, price £3.50 (including UK postage) from: Peter Little, 45 Cowper Road, BROMLEY, Kent, BR2 9RT. A price list of Eur-Apex souvenirs still available can be obtained by sending a stamped addressed envelope to Mr Little.

Stamp Scene

A Lucky Find

Every stamp collectors' dream came true for a Mr Beckett of Cumbria when out of a boxful of stamps, the majority worth just pennies, fell one of the most famous and romantic of British rarities – the Edward VII 2d. "Tyrian Plum" (SG 266a). Mr Beckett a modest collector of stamps for 20 years, bought the box of stamps from a mail order company. He saw an old torn envelope and was "... about to throw (it) onto the coal fire (when) a stamp fell out onto the carpet ...". At first Mr Beckett did not recognise the stamp and had to look it up in a stamp catalogue. This stamp was prepared for use in 1910 but never issued as the King died before it was distributed. Virtually all the stocks (over 1000,000 sheets) were destroyed and very few survived. How this particular "Tyrian Plum" came to fall out onto Mr Beckett's carpet remains a mystery. It realised £4,370 (including buyer's premium) at Sotheby's auction on 26 March 1993.



Sotheby's © 1993

Great Britain Collectors Club

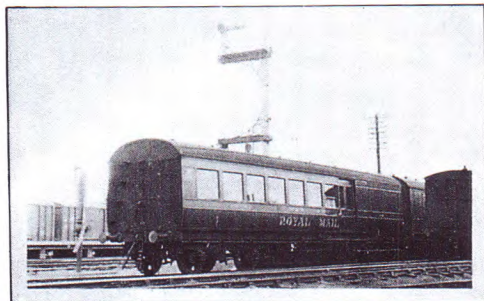
The Great Britain Correspondence Club was formed in 1979, changing to its present title in 1991. The Club has a membership of over 400; although most live in North America, there is a small contingent of loyal and active members in the UK.

The Club publishes a quarterly newsletter – the *Great Britain Collectors Chronicle*, edited by Tom Current; an annual directory; and a *Handbook of British Philately for the Intermediate Collector*.

The interesting 38-page January 1993 issue of the *Chronicle* includes notes and articles on GB

new issues, Penny Postage, Machin prestige and window books, Machin terminology, Edward VII and George V shades, Victorian essays, stamp papers, etc.

Membership of the GBCC costs \$15 in North America, \$22 rest of world. For a sample copy of *Chronicle* write to the Secretary/Treasurer: Frank Kock, PO Box 309, Batavia, OH 45103 – 0309, USA.



TPO Postcard

The North of Ireland Philatelic Society has recently published its eighth postcard, reproducing a photograph of a Royal Mail Sorting Coach at Coleraine in 1938. Mint cards cost 20p, with first day postmark 45p. Postage/packing 25p extra. Orders/enquiries: N Scott, 49 Kingsdale Park, BELFAST BT5 7BZ.

Thematica '93

"Thematica '93" – Britain's thematic stamp exhibition – will be held at Carisbrooke Hall, 63 Seymour Street, London W2 on Saturday 3 July (10.30-17.30) and Sunday 4 July (10.30-17.00). Thematica is supported by the British stamp trade, and the British Thematic Association assisted by the British Philatelic Trust. This highly successful annual event is increasing in popularity each year.

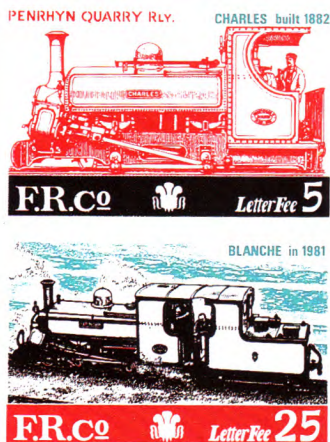
In the Exhibition Hall, the main thematic societies will be represented. The entries for the Grand Thematic Stamp Competition (John Fosbery Trophy) will be on show. Visitors will be invited to vote for the winner; prizes will be awarded to 25 lucky voters.

Present in the Dealers Hall, will be important thematic stamp and cover dealers from all over Britain; also dealers with a wealth of postal history and other material suited to collectors all levels. Meals, sandwiches, tea, coffee and bar facilities will be available.

Enquiries to: B Sole, 3 Stockfield Road, Claygate, ESHER, Surrey, KT10 0QG. Tel. 0372 467652.

Railway Letter Stamps

The Festiniog Railway has recently issued a miniature sheet containing four new railway letter stamps. The stamps feature historic locomotives, "Charles" (5p), "Linda" (10p and 25p) and "Blanche" (25p). They were designed by Michael Seymour and printed by Faulwood & Herbert of Brighton. The sheet is available at face value (65p) plus 30p postage from: Festiniog Railway Company (RLS Dept), Harbour Station, PORTHMADOG, Gwynedd, LL49 9NF. First day covers cost £2.25. The 5p and 10p values in the miniature sheet are intended for use with 20p and 15p stamps to make up the current 25p railway letter fee. Railway letter stamps are issued by several independent railway companies under the Railway Letter Agreement with Royal Mail.



Postal Memorabilia Displays

David Harrop will be providing displays at the following events: Parham Park Steam Rally, Sussex (12-13 June); Morecambe Bay Steam & Country Fair, St Michaels, Preston, Lancs (19-20 June); Sandringham County Show & Horse Trials, Norfolk (26-27 June); Elvaston Castle Steam Rally, Borrowash, Derby (3-4 July); Scottish Transport Extravaganza, Glamis Castle, Forfar, Angus (11 July); Weeting Steam Engine Rally, Brandon, Suffolk (18-19 July); and Pickering Steam Engine Rally, N Yorkshire (31 July-1 August). Further details from: David Harrop, 15 Hawthorne Road, Heaton Mersey, STOCKPORT SK4 3DQ.

Royal Mail News

Country Stamps

To the Late News announcement in March, we can add that the Scottish 39p and Northern Ireland 18p stamps were also produced by Questa with perforation $13\frac{1}{2} \times 14$ instead of the normal 15×14 . All supplies went into general distribution and we regret none are available from the British Philatelic Bureau. Copies may still be available at post offices in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

£10 Definitive

In addition to plate numbers 1A x 10, reported in the February *Bulletin* (p. 124), this stamp has also been printed from plate 2A x 10.

New Machine Books

Two new machine books will go on sale at the British Philatelic Bureau, Collections, and philatelic counters on 6 July 1993; they will be available from post offices as stocks of earlier issues are used up. These books will be number 3 in the Postal History (50p) and Educational Institutions (£1) series. The cover designs show respectively Registered Postmarks and Marlborough College, founded in 1843. The books contain the same stamps as earlier issues, ie. 50p - $2 \times 1p$, $2 \times 24p$ on ACP, printed by Harrisons; £1 - $2 \times 2p$, $4 \times 24p$ on ACP, printed by Walsall.



New Scottish Aerogramme

Shown here is a detail from the second of the 1993 Scottish aerogrammes which goes on sale at post offices in Scotland, the Bureau, Collections, and philatelic counters on 22 June. The aerogramme commemorates the 900th anniversary of the death of St Margaret, Queen of Scotland. Price 44p (includes 34p postage). It was designed by David Driver, and printed by McCorquodale Envelopes Ltd.

St Margaret (c. 1046-93) was born in Hungary

but settled in England. After the Norman Conquest she fled to Scotland and married Malcolm Canmore (King of Scotland, 1057-93) at Dunfermline in 1069. Beautiful, learned and pious, Queen Margaret brought Benedictine monks to Dunfermline, where the Abbey, founded after 1070 is associated with her. Her name is commemorated in North and South Queensferry – the Queen journeyed this way between Edinburgh and Dunfermline. She was canonized by Pope Innocent IV in 1251 and is the only Scottish Royal Saint.

Change to 1993 Special Stamps Programme

The issue of the Channel Tunnel stamps has now been postponed, a new date will be announced in due course. Instead, on 12 October, a set of stamps commemorating the Sherlock Holmes character invented by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle will be issued. *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* was serialised in the *Strand Magazine*, 1891-93. Full details of this interesting set of stamps will be published here nearer the time of issue.

Roman Britain First Day Postmarks

The Bureau and Caerllion handstamps were featured last month. The Bureau postmark features the monogram of Chi and Rho based on a wall painting at the Lullingstone Roman Villa in Kent. Chi and Rho are the first two letters of the Greek *Khristos* (Christ). The Caerllion handstamps shows Capricorn, the badge of the Second Augustan Legion.

Royal Mail Postmark Collecting Books Proposed

Royal Mail are looking at the possibility, with a commercial publisher, of producing books provisionally entitled "Collecting Postmarks in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland". Such books would be an exciting way for people to discover towns and cities in their own counties and throughout the UK, and collect the relevant postmarks.

The books would be produced in A4 size, with four-colour covers, and two-colour text throughout. Each book would contain an introduction followed by a brief history of postmarks, information about today's Royal Mail, a map of the UK and instructions on how to complete the books.

A small map would be included at the top of each page showing the location of the relevant county within the UK. Another county map shows all the towns and cities which have their own machine postmarks. On the left and right-

hand sides of each page, readers will find a list of cities and towns with a brief description of each one and a box for ticking when they have mounted an example of the postmark in its rightful place in the book.

On the main pages, illustrations are provided of each town or city's machine postmarks, arranged in alphabetical order. The object for the reader is to cover each postmark illustration with a real one. Pages will also be allocated in the back of each book for collectors to mount overseas and unusual postmarks.

We would be pleased to hear from readers interested in this proposed series of books. The decision as to whether to go ahead will clearly depend on likely collector demand. All comments will be welcome and should be sent to: Kris Menon, Postmark Manager, Royal Mail National, 76 Turnmill Street, LONDON EC1M 5NS.

Stamp Advisory Committee

The new Chairman of the SAC is Mr Paul Hopper, Marketing and Sales Director, Royal Mail. He replaces Mr David Lane, formerly Director & General Manager, Royal Mail National. Five new members have been appointed to serve for the next three years: television presenter Floella Benjamin; former union leader Brenda Dean; Mrs Gwyneth Dunwoody, MP; Professor Alan Livingston, Principal of Falmouth School of Art & Design; and Mary Lewis, Creative Director of Lewis Moberly design consultancy.

Two members of the Committee have retired – Dr Alan Huggins and Professor Dan Fern.

The full Committee now comprises: Mr Hopper (Chairman); Dr Jean Alexander (philatelist); Ms Benjamin; Lady Casson (art photographer); Ms Dean; Mrs Dunwoody, Ms Lewis; Professor Livingston; John McConnell (design consultant); Richard Negus (design consultant); Eric Ogden (former MP, a consultant on Central European and Balkan affairs); Barry Robinson, Director of Design, Royal Mail; Miss Sybil Smith (representative of the Dept of Trade and Industry); Herbert Spencer (Professor of Graphic Arts, Royal College of Art, 1978-84); and Jean Varga (Chairman of the International Association of Stamp Catalogue Producers).

Mr Colin Pawson, Head of Philatelic Marketing, Royal Mail, is Secretary of the Committee.

Mr Robinson wrote about the work of the Committee in the *Bulletin* of October 1988 (pp. 52-54).

Royal Mail Philatelic Products

BARRY BURKE, *Product Manager, Royal Mail*

As you may have guessed from the public service announcement on the inside front cover, this month I will be wittering on and on about Stamp Cards.

Just in case any *Bulletin* readers are unaware of these, Stamp Cards are postcard-sized reproductions of pictorial stamps. They can, of course, be used as postcards but they seem to appeal mostly to collectors, rather than to people who just want to send a short message to friends or relatives.

Indeed, when they were first launched in 1973, the idea was they should be used as postal stationery rather than become collectors' items, kept pristine and virginal in the postcard enthusiast's album.

I think this is a pity as they can make very attractive cards and can help spread awareness of stamps in general. As more Post Shops open and awareness of Stamp Cards is boosted through wider availability from self-service dispensers, I am sure they will be taken up by more non-collectors as an appealing alternative to the usual "scenes of Nether Wallop" type postcard.

Stamp Cards were at first officially described as "picture cards", later as "picture postcards" or simply "postcards". However, collectors called them "PHQ Cards" because the serial number printed on the reverse of each card began with these initials. The Post Office did not adopt this nomenclature until 1986.

In case you have ever wondered, PHQ stood for Postal Headquarters which, together with THQ (Telecommunications Headquarters) and CHQ (Central Headquarters) comprised the head office of what was then the Post Office Corporation (halcyon days!).

The first "picture card" was produced in association with the County Cricket Centenary stamps, issued 16 May 1973, and featured a reproduction of the 3p stamp from that set. Looking at the latest copy of Stanley Gibbons *Collect British Stamps* (available by mail order from the British Philatelic Bureau, a snip at £4.95), I see that some of the early cards are now quite valuable – three are, in fact, listed at over £100 each in unused condition.

The first full set of PHQ Cards was produced the following year, this time as reproductions of each of the four Great Britons stamps. However, issuing policy remained rather erratic until April 1976 and the issue of a single stamp to mark the Bicentenary of American Independence. From this issue on, PHQ Cards were issued in association with every Special Stamp issue.

Because of the difficulties in promoting a product with the prosaic official title "postcards" or the esoteric collectors' name of "PHQ Cards", the name was changed in 1989 to "Stamp Cards". Since then, the range of stamp issues reproduced as postcards has broadened to encompass Greetings Stamps and High Value Definitives.



Maxi-card for Art in the 20th century issue

Maxi-Cards

The term "unused" when applied to a postcard is fairly self explanatory but does beg the question, what then is a "used" PHQ or Stamp Card? This is usually interpreted as a postcard with a stamp of the same design affixed either to the picture side or to the reverse, cancelled with an official first day of issue postmark. When affixed to the picture side, these are known as "maxi-cards". This seems to be a popular way of collecting Stamp Cards and I would be very interested to know whether collectors would like to see then re-designed so as the stamp and postmark can be accommodated without overlapping onto the illustration. An alternative could be for Royal Mail to offer the option of having Stamp Cards supplied with stamps already affixed and cancelled.

As always, I would be very interested to hear the views and suggestions of *Bulletin* readers, particularly those who collect Stamp Cards, on any aspects of this product. I look forward to hearing from you – preferably on a Stamp Card!

Readers should write to Mr Burke at: Royal Mail National, 76 Tummill Street, LONDON EC1M 5NS.



Encouraging Young Collectors

In September 1992 we published a lengthy article giving ideas on how adults could help encourage more young collectors into our hobby. A number of readers wrote on the matter. Mr G Fraulo of London suggested a stamp theme aimed directly at youngsters, Mr M B Hawke of Wiltshire wrote at length about the problems of ensuring a good supply of used stamps for young collectors. The main points of his extensive letter are published here.

Mr Fraulo writes: "My suggestion in trying to encourage youngsters to philately would be through football, i.e. special issues showing league champions and cup winners at British and European level. The stamps could include a small surcharge to help football clubs to improve the safety at their grounds".

Mr Hawke writes: "I started collecting in the 1940s when I was about 10 years old. Why? Because my friends collected and I wanted to join in. At that level, philately was an intensely social hobby where stamps were swapped and compared with a keenness. We did it every dinner time and once a week at stamp club. Our sources of stamps were various. Mine was, typically I think, off envelopes in the house, the old parcel paper in the cupboard under the stairs, from aunts, uncles, etc., to whom I wrote asking for all their used stamps. Used stamps were our staple diet. Mint stamps were highly prized and usually bought with something like birthday present money from stamp shops.

"Here is the first point to note. For the young collector to be given the thrill of the chase, there must be a good stock of used stamps available in typical houses throughout the land. It opens up the question of the print quantity of each issue and what the face values of each commemorative set should be. I would suggest that we do not do well in these respects.

"Having done our best to see that the basic material is available, the young collector can be encouraged with presentation packs and mint sets as occasion arises but the thing which will ensure that interest is maintained is the thrill of the chase, the hope of finding something new next time he visits a relative or finds some old envelopes.

"Most collectors in my young days started on 'all world' and quickly narrowed their interest to something more manageable. In most cases this was Great Britain, British Commonwealth, Europe or USA. The next step, very often, is that one becomes aware of differences in perforation, watermark, shades etc. One graduates from Gibbons *Simplified* to one of the 'proper' Gibbons catalogues. To many collectors this is a difficult and humbling step but it is one which, in my opinion, has to be made if philately is to become a lifetime hobby. As an example let me quote the GB George V definitive set of 1912. A 'simplified' collector might think that he has a complete set from ½d to 1s. All of a sudden he finds that the stamps come with two different watermarks and other variations. He probably has the cheaper version of each face value. Not only does he have to start all over again, but the problem is more than twice as difficult as was first thought. This sort of problem is spread over all GB reigns and throughout the British Commonwealth. It is quite understandable in a long-running definitive set.

"If all the variations have had a good postal life, the collector has a good chance of knuckling down and filling the gaps in this collection. His initial shock can be turned into greater interest and determination to make a go of it. But if this is not so and many of the variations listed are rare, expensive or virtually unobtainable despair might follow. Royal Mail in constructing a huge mountain, an Everest, of stamp collecting with all the varieties of the present definitives. The 39p with two phosphor bands in the recent Tolkien book is an example. Its postal use will be minimal and collectors trying to track down a genuine used example will find it nigh impossible. What does the newly graduated collector think of that? It is all right for the likes of me, I've grown up with it, but you've got to be a pretty dedicated 14-year old to take that in your stride!

"So here is the second point to note – do not deliberately issue obscure varieties of stamps. If it is postally necessary to produce a variation of an otherwise common stamp do it openly and in large numbers. Do not make the young collectors' task any more difficult than it need be."

I was very pleased to receive a letter from Mr M J Plows of Bristol. I applaud his enterprise and wish him (and others) continued success in starting youngsters (of all ages!) on a worthwhile hobby. Mr Plows writes:

"Having been a collector of stamps for 50 years I decided I wanted to put something back into the hobby. I, therefore, advertised in the Stamp Bug Club magazine that I would send to any youngster starting off collecting a selection of stamps as a gift on receipt of a SAE. I have now sent out some 6000 stamps to as far a field as the Orkneys and even India.

"One youngster of 73, a pensioner, can no longer afford to buy stamps and another had recently had their collection stolen. Although I haven't asked for any acknowledgement, I have had some delightful letters which has made the exercise well worthwhile and I would recommend other collectors doing the same. I still have plenty of duplicates to cover further requests. The average age responding was eight".

Forthcoming Issues

7 Jun	Roman Britain stamp cards (AQ258)
8 Jun	1p Definitive, Enschedé (DS012)
8 Jun	5p Definitive, Enschedé (DS056)
8 Jun	10p Definitive, Enschedé (DS104)
15 Jun	Roman Britain stamps (AS550)
15 Jun	Roman Britain pack (AP114)
22 Jun	Scot Aerogramme (Q. Margaret)
28 Jun	Priority Services envelopes
6 Jul	50p book – Postal History 3
6 Jul	£1 book – Educational Institutions 3



13 Jul	Inland Waterway stamp cards
20 Jul	Inland Waterways stamps/pack
10 Aug	Beatrix Potter prestige book
7 Sep	Autumn stamp cards
14 Sep	Autumn stamps and pack
14 Sep	NPM PO Uniforms cards
5 Oct	Sherlock Holmes stamp cards
5 Oct	Christmas aerogramme
12 Oct	Sherlock Holmes stamps/pack
2 Nov	Christmas stamp cards
9 Nov	Christmas stamps/pack
9 Nov	Christmas stamp books (1st & 2nd)
9 Nov	1993 Collectors Pack
9 Nov	1993 Year Book
9 Nov	NPM Christmas postcards

New Postal Stationery

On 28 June 1993, Royal Mail relaunches its Special Delivery, Registered and Recorded services. Extensive research has identified a number of improvements that customers require including guaranteed delivery, quicker handling of enquiries and simplified access via counters and collections.

The major improvement is that each item will bear a unique bar code number which can be traced through the Royal Mail delivery network. The barcode information is sent to a central computer in order to track and trace items through the network; customers can phone a new enquiry centre in order to confirm that their item has been delivered.

Special Delivery and Registered will be guaranteed next day delivery by 12.30pm. Items sent on a Friday or Saturday will be guaranteed Monday delivery. Special Delivery will be signed for on delivery and Registered will offer a new maximum level of compensation for loss and damage of £500. Recorded will continue to be handled with 1st and 2nd class and obtain a signature on delivery only. The barcode information will only be traced after delivery has been attempted.

New pre-paid envelopes will be a convenient way of using the Special Delivery and Registered services. The envelopes come in 3 sizes: DL (oversize), C5 (oversize), and C4 and are prepaid for Special Delivery and 1st class postage up to 100g, 350g and 500g respectively. The envelopes are marked "Guaranteed Delivery" so that they can be used for Registered and Special Delivery. The price of the new envelopes are £3.30, £3.80 and £4.20. Customers requiring Registered will pay a 30p compensation premium, payment of which will be affixed to the certificate of posting.

A new "Registered Plus" service for customers requiring compensation over £500 and upto £2200 is to be launched. This service will also have three envelopes which will retain the blue cross marking. The price of these envelopes will be £3.90, £4.40, and £4.80 respectively.

All six envelopes will bear a printed postage symbol, comprising the Machin head of The Queen within an octagonal-shaped medallion. The envelopes will be available at main post office counters, the British Philatelic Bureau, and post offices with philatelic service (Collections, Post Shops Plus, and Philatelic Counters).

*Giles Finnermore
Royal Mail Priority Services*

June Digest

Issued in June

8 June: 1p, 5p, 10p Definitives

Printing: Joh. Enschedé en Zonen, Netherlands, photogravure, sheets of 200, PVA gum, perf. 15 x 14 with elliptical perforations on vertical sides. Two phosphor bands; OBA free paper.

Note: Available from Bureau, Collections and philatelic counters; stocks will go on sale at post offices as required. No first day of issue facilities.

8 June: Roman Britain stamp cards, Nos. 153A-D, price 21p each.

15 June: Roman Britain stamps – 24p, 28p, 33p, 39p.

Designer: John Gibbs.

Printing: Harrison & Sons Ltd, Photogravure, sheets of 100, perf 14½ x 14, phosphor coated paper plus two phosphor bands. PVA Dextrin gum.

Pictorial First Day of Issue Postmarks: British Philatelic Bureau, and Caerleon.

Presentation Pack: Price £1.55.

22 June: Scottish aerogramme – St Margaret of Scotland. Price 44p (includes 34p postage).

Designer: David Driver.

Printing: McCorquodale Envelopes Ltd.

28 June: “Guaranteed Delivery” and “Registered Plus” envelopes, three sizes each. Available initially from Bureau, Collections, and philatelic counters.

Withdrawn in June

15 June: Civil War stamps, presentation pack, stamp cards, and souvenir cover.

22 June: Scottish aerogramme – Scots Guards.

Events

until Oct 93. “Forces Sweethearts” exhibition at Imperial War Museum, Lambeth Road, London SE1. Sponsored by Royal Mail International. Enquiries: Exhibitions Officer, Imperial War Museum, 071-416 5323.

5 Jun 93. Kent Federation of Philatelic Societies “Federation Day”, hosted by Maidstone & Mid Kent PS, at Invicta Girls Grammar School, Huntsmen Lane, Maidstone. Opens 10.30. Dealers, Philatelic Counter, Exhibition. Enquiries: B R Stonestreet, 32 Bedgebury Close, Vintners Park, MAIDSTONE, Kent, ME14 5QZ.

12 Jun 93. Annual Bournemouth Stamp & Postcard Fair at Summerbee Secondary School, Mallard Road, Bournemouth, 10.00-17.00. Dealers, displays, refreshments. Admission free. Enquiries: R W J Sharp, “Harcourt”, Cardigan Road, Winton, BOURNEMOUTH BH9 1BG.

12 Jun 93. Yorkshire Philatelic Association Annual Convention, Exhibition and Stamp Fair at Pudsey Civic Hall, Leeds 9.30-17.00. Enquiries: J Calvert, 11 Wesley Close, Winterton, SCUNTHORPE, S Humberside, DN15 9QB.

17-20 Jun 93. Welsh Philatelic Society Annual Weekend Meeting at Plas Tan y Bwlch, Maentwrog, Gwynedd. Enquiries: D Gwynne Morris, 27 Tan-y-Bryn, Llanbedr DC, RUTHIN, Clwyd, LL15 1AQ.

3 Jul 93. SWIPEX-inter-federation exhibition organised by Cornwall, Somerset & Dorset, and Wessex Philatelic Federations, at Great Hall, Exeter University, 10.30-16.30. Dealers, displays, refreshments. Enquiries: Mary Claydon, “Hazelhurst”, Tiverton Road, Bampton, TIVERTON, Devon, EX16 9LJ.

3-4 Jul 93. Thematica '93 exhibition at Carisbooke Hall, Seymour Street, London W2. Enquiries: F B Sole, 3 Stockfield Road, Claygate, ESHER, Surrey, KT10 0QG. Tel: 0372-467652.

NPM Annual Report

The National Postal Museum's *Philatelic Year 1993*, is now available to callers at the Museum, or by post from the British Philatelic Bureau, price £5. Review next month.

