

BRITISH PHILATELIC

The ROYAL MAIL magazine *for stamp collectors*

Bulletin

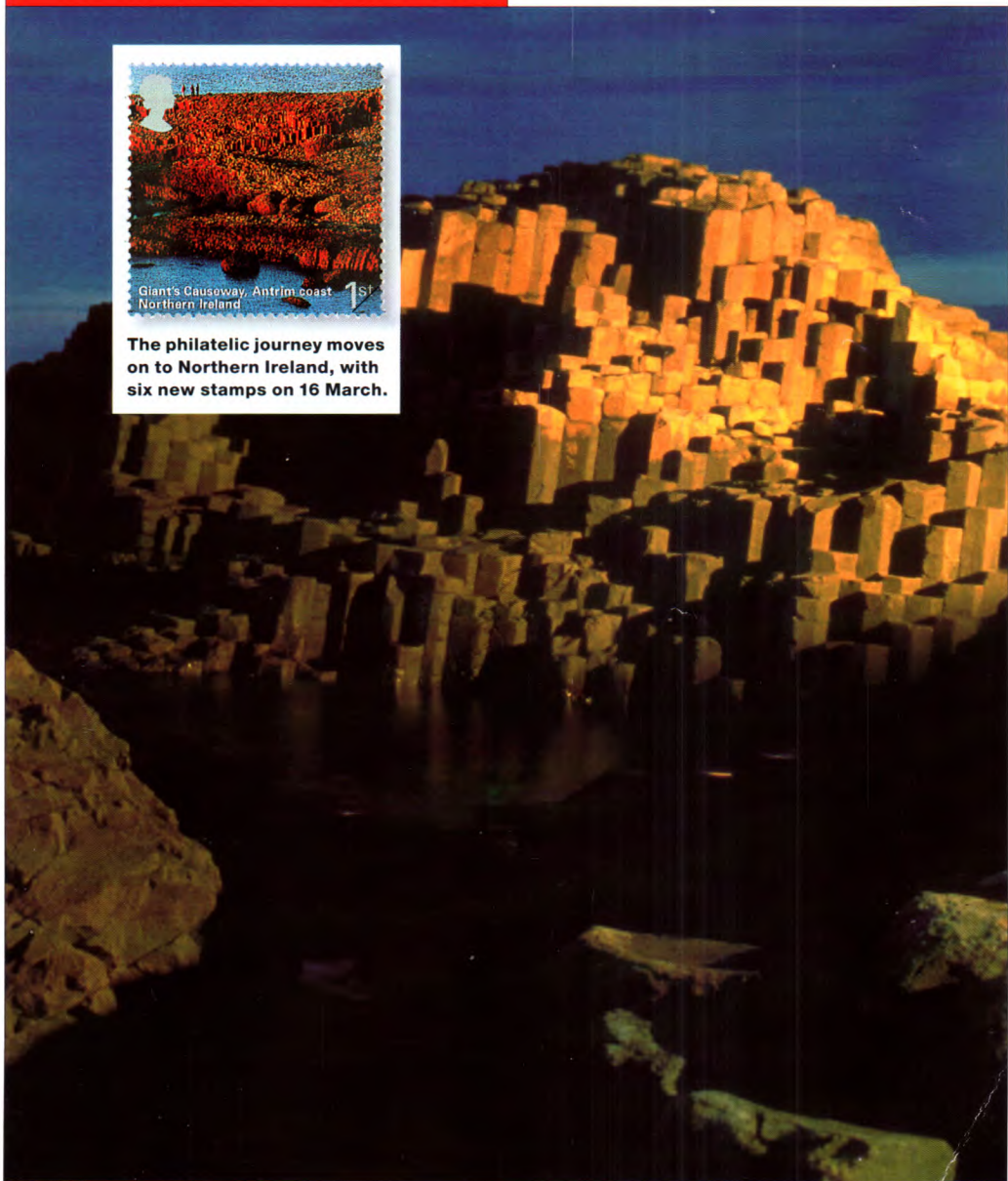
Volume 41 Number 6

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A British Journey: Northern
Ireland • TPO prestige book



The philatelic journey moves
on to Northern Ireland, with
six new stamps on 16 March.



Forthcoming issues and withdrawals



Cover The Giant's Causeway is one of six Northern Ireland locations featured in the next British Journey stamp issue, previewed this month. Cover, p163 and p178-79 courtesy Northern Ireland Tourist Board

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

27 January	Issue Ingot cover for Pillar to Post stamps (last in series) • 2004 Occasions stamp cards.
30 January	Issue Smilers sheet: Hong Kong stamp exhibition.
3 February	Issue 2004 Occasions stamps, presentation pack and Smilers sheet (generic & personalised versions) • Ingot pack (Victorian Ingot No 6).
3 February	Withdrawal 2003 Occasions stamps, presentation pack, stamp cards and Smilers sheet.
19 February	Issue The Lord of the Rings stamp cards.
24 February	Withdrawal Secret of Life stamps, presentation pack and stamp cards; <i>Microcosmos</i> prestige stamp book.
26 February	Issue The Lord of the Rings stamps and presentation pack.
9 March	Issue British Journey: Northern Ireland stamp cards.
16 March	Issue British Journey: Northern Ireland stamps, presentation pack and self-adhesive stamp book • <i>Letters by Night</i> prestige stamp book • TPO souvenir cover.
24 March	Withdrawal Fun, Fruit & Veg stamps, presentation pack and stamp cards.
30 March	Issue Entente Cordiale stamp cards.

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The **British Philatelic Bulletin** is published monthly by Royal Mail, 148 Old Street, London EC1V 9HQ • **Editor** J R Holman • **Price** £1.10 single copies from Post Office Limited philatelic outlets • **Annual subscription** £11.75 in UK and Europe; £16.75 rest of the world. Subscriptions should be sent to Royal Mail Talents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB • **Binders** to hold 24 issues, price £7, are available by post from Royal Mail (Edinburgh address above) • Royal Mail also publishes the fortnightly *British Postmark Bulletin*, which gives details of forthcoming special handstamps. Available on annual subscription from Edinburgh address above: £12.25 UK and Europe, £24.95 rest of the world • **Copyright** Design & text Royal Mail Group plc, unless attributed to a specific author. All requests to reproduce any article should be addressed to the Editor, British Philatelic Bulletin, Royal Mail, 148 Old Street, London EC1V 9HQ • **Design** Robert Maude • **Printed** in Great Britain by White Productions Ltd • **ISSN** 0953 8119 • Royal Mail is a trading name of Royal Mail Group plc. Registered in England and Wales no 4138203, registered office 148 Old Street, London EC1V 9HQ

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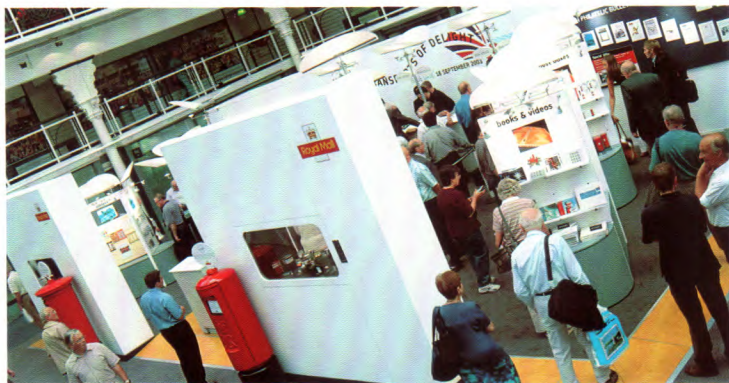
Stamp scene Spring Stampex • Societies • Exhibitions • Publications • Auction news

Stampex opening times

25 February	Noon-19.00
26-28 February	10.30-18.00
29 February	10.30-15.00

Admission is free on all days.

Enquiries Stampex, PO Box 371, Fleet GU52 6ZX.
Telephone 01252 628006.



Spring Stampex at the Business Design Centre, London N1 (25-29 February) will include invited displays by the German & Colonies Philatelic Society, the American Stamp Club of GB, and the Guild of St Gabriel. The GB Philatelic Society's Stampex meeting on 28 February will include a display of George VI High Values by Peter Dawson. The Egypt Study Circle, Concorde Study Circle, Ceylon Study Circle, Polar Postal History Society, British Decimal Stamp Study Circle, and Malta Study Circle will also be holding meetings. The National Youth stamp Group will provide a host of activities for young collectors, including the ever-popular auction.

2004 sees the celebration of 300 years of a British presence in Gibraltar and there will be a display on the mezzanine floor. This will feature material from the official Gibraltar Post Office collection, including proof material which has not previously been publicly displayed, and material from leading collectors of Gibraltar and members of the UK-based Gibraltar Study Circle. David Harrop will again show part of his collection from the Manchester Postal Museum.

There will be the usual range of dealers catering for all kinds of collector, from beginner to specialist, supplying mint and used stamps, old and new covers, accessories and literature. For a list of dealers present see www.philatelic-traders-society.co.uk, the PTS website.

The Royal Mail stand will offer the full range of stamps and philatelic products, including the latest Classic Locomotives (13 January) and Occasions (3 February) stamps. The Lord of the Rings stamps will be issued on 26 February, the second day of the exhibition. There will be two Stampex postmarks – the usual one in use each day of the exhibition and a special 'First Day of Issue' one for 26 February only. Collectors unable to visit the exhibition and post covers in the special boxes on the Royal Mail stand can send covers, bearing at least 1st class postage, to: Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, Mount Pleasant, London EC1A 1BB. Please specify which postmark and date(s) are required.



Once again, Stampex will be giving a free limited edition postcard to the first 7500 visitors. It will feature future issue artwork to be provided by the Gibraltar Post Office. The third Stampex customised sheetlet of 10 stamps will celebrate two events. The Gibraltar Anniversary will be prominent in the vignette and the general background of the sheet and in recognition of the fact that Stampex will be open on 29 February, the stamp used will be the 1st class 'Love' stamp. The first 7500 visitors will receive one of these free; further stamps and complete sheets can be purchased on the exhibition information stand ●

Washington 2006 The 3500 member American Topical Association has announced that its annual 'National Topical Stamp Show' will not be held in 2006. Instead it will hold its annual convention in conjunction with the Washington 2006 international exhibition (27 May - 3 June). The American Philatelic Society has also decided to skip its 2006 Winter Show and hold all winter/spring meetings during Washington 2006. (Stampshow 2006 will go on as planned in Rosemont, Illinois, 24-27 August.) The APS - America's largest stamp collecting organization with nearly 50,000 members - is a major sponsor of Washington 2006 ●

Washington 2006 For details of the exhibition see website: www.washington-2006.org

North East Philatelic Weekend The 28th in this popular annual event will be held at the Swallow Hotel, Gateshead on 14-16 May. Talks and displays will be given on Rugby (by Alex Magowan), Brunei (Mike Oxley), Afghanistan (Dr David Kindley), The Great North Road (Dr Rex Clark), and Machins (Cliff Garside). There will be a 'quick fire auction', dinner and raffle, and a stamp fair on the Sunday. The cost of the weekend will be £138 including Sunday lunch. Bookings should be made by 22 March ●

Enquiries Miss V Beecken, 162 Canterbury Road, Newton Hall Estate, Durham DH1 5XT. Telephone 0191 386 1931.

Rail Mail 2004 The Nene Valley Railway will host this event, 19-20 June 2004. Three Royal Mail TPO coaches will be operating or on display. These are ex Great Western, Southern, and London Midland Railways. Other attractions will include the railway letter service, philatelic collections on display, vintage postal vehicles, steam and diesel locomotives in operation, and a real ale beer festival ●

Enquiries Nene Valley Railway, Wansford Station, Stibington, Peterborough PE8 6LR or see website: www.tpo.org.uk

Publications The Cumbria Postal History Society has produced a second edition of *The Rubber Datestamps of Cumbria* by M.J. Mapleton. When first published in 1994 Mr Mapleton recorded 1286 postmarks - 799 in Cumberland, 263 Westmorland, 183 Lancashire and 31 others and was the first attempt to present a comprehensive listing of the Cumbrian 'Climax' rubber datestamps. The new edition lists some 1660 handstamps (1076 Cumberland, 315 Westmorland, 236 Lancashire, 33 others); but some further recent discoveries are recorded in the Addenda. This information is from a collection of 38 items which was offered at auction just as the book had been finalised. Any further discoveries will be recorded in *Cumbrian Post*, the Society's bulletin. The format of this new edition has been changed somewhat and for each town/village there are now four columns of dates:

Cumbria datestamps book
From D Collins, Blincrake, 34 The Parklands, Cockermouth, Cumbria CA13 0WW, price £12 postpaid UK.

earliest known, latest known date, date of issue, and date in the Post Office proof book. Dates of opening are given for each office, also dates of closure where appropriate. Some datestamps recorded in the proof books are as yet not recorded in use, for example Boot, and Boundary Terrace Carlisle. On the other hand some are recorded in use (eg Brampton Junction) but are not to be found in the proof books. Some 160 offices are listed for Cumbria, (from Aikton to Wythburn), 51 in Westmorland, 42 in Lancashire, and 12 others such as Springfield/Carlisle which is just over the border in Dumfriesshire. The book contains 31 illustrations of datestamps including a postcard of 1922 – the only example revealed by this study bearing two datestamps – for Dockray and Hesket Newmarket. A useful book for all specialists in Cumbrian postal history and for anyone collecting Climax datestamps which continued in use at some offices into the 1930s. Examples are to be found on old postcards and are worth watching out for at stamp and postcard fairs •

ATA For a free listing of available checklists, send a large stamped addressed envelope (or international reply coupon) to: ATA, PO Box 57, Arlington, TX 76004-0057, USA.

During 2003 the American Topical Association has upgraded or added a total of 101 checklists on a wide variety of topics for collectors – from a one-page checklist on the Battle of the Bulge to a brand new 48 page list of Saints on Stamps. There are now 423 checklists. Among the newer lists are some that encompass many of the subjects listed as the most collected by ATA members. Bananas and Botanical Gardens fall under the heading of the most popular topic of 2003, Plants on Stamps. The ATA is seeking additional lists or updates from collectors at large. The checklists are only available to ATA members, but a free listing of all 423 checklists is available as detailed opposite •

British Philatelic Trust For details of the work of the Trust write to British Philatelic Trust, 107 Charterhouse Street, London EC1M 6PT.

British Philatelic Trust The Trust has appointed a new Trustee and two new Associate Trustees. The new Trustee is Brian Trotter, who was born in South Africa in 1943 and worked for multinational companies in Asia and Europe before retiring in 1999. His main interest is in the history and philately of Southern Africa and his collecting interests include revenues, postal history and postal stationery as well as stamps. The new Associate Trustees are Michael Pitt-Payne and Dr Iain Stevenson. Mr Pitt-Payne, a retired chartered accountant, is a noted collector of postal history. Dr Stevenson is a Senior Tutor at the City University, London. His collections include telegraphs, postal stationery and revenues, with special interest in Tonga, France, Belgium and Ecuador. The Trustees are: Francis Kiddle (Chairman), Dr Alan Huggins (Deputy Chairman), Miss Sybil Smith, Brian Asquith and Richard West, with Royal Mail representatives Mick Jeavons and Gavin Macrae •

Criccieth For further details of the Society contact Marion Turner: telephone 01766 590202, e-mail mat.gellilydan@btinternet.com

Society news Members will give five minute displays of stamps and covers at the meeting of the Criccieth Philatelic and Postcard Society on 3 February. On 9 March Ted Bridges shows Scout Stamps; there will be five minute displays on postcards on 6 April; and on 4 May Sid Caplan displays Mail by Rail and Roman Post. Meetings are held at 19.30 in the Bishops Rooms, Criccieth •

Auctions Bonham will be holding auctions of stamps and covers of the world on 17-18 February, 16 March, and 20 April. Cavendish's auction on 5-6 March will include Yorkshire postal history.

Total realizations at Grosvenor's auction on 19-20 November amounted to over £1.5 million. Bidders were not distracted by a protest march against President Bush along the Strand outside; this added to the entertainment value on the first day of the sale and the protesters' noise was manfully ignored by the auctioneer, Andrew Claridge. The GB section totaled over £875,000; collections and mixed lots attracted the usual strong competition. An unused collection on Windsor leaves went for £18,975. The extraordinary range of attempted reconstructions attracted a great deal of interest, the 1d blacks and 2d blues selling for £211,725, and the 1864-79 1d plates made £32,935. The collection of Downey Heads formed by the late Ken Cross attracted spirited bidding, with all but one lot finding new homes. Corner blocks of four of the 1924-26 block cipher ½d to 1s made £6822, and a mint and fine used Silver Jubilee 2½d Prussian blue together went for £5646. Prices quoted include buyer's premium. For details of the Spring auction, which will include a 1d black first day cover, contact Grosvenor (see opposite) ●

Bonhams 101 New Bond Street, London W1S 1SR. Telephone 020 7629 6602 or website www.bonhams.com

Cavendish Philatelic Auctions 153-7 London Rd, Derby DE1 2SY. Telephone 01332 250970 or website www.Cavendish-Auctions.com

Grosvenor 399-401 Strand (third Floor), London WC2R 0LT. Telephone 020 7379 8789 or see website www.grosvenorauctions.com

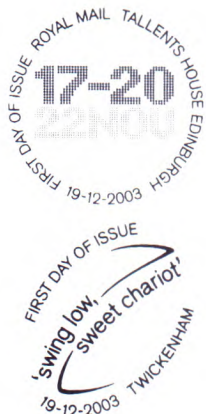
Brazil issue favourite music stamps The Philatelic Music Circle announces the winners of the annual Yehudi Menuhin Trophy for music philately. This international competition is for the most popular music stamps issued in the previous year. Judging is by members of the PMC by post, e-mail, or at PMC meetings. The favourite music stamps of 2002 were issued by Brazil. Designed by Nelson Inocencio, they illustrate musical instruments: atabaque, chimes, trumpet, clarinet, mandolin, tambourine, accordion, rattle, xylophone, and berimbau. Second place went to a Spanish issue, and equal third were stamps from Canada and Finland ●

The Philatelic Music Circle Valerie Molyneux, 14 Talbot Avenue, Orton Longueville, Peterborough PE2 7AT or Cathleen Osborne, PO Box 1781 Sequim, Washington 98382, USA. Website: www.philatelicmusic.com



Penny Black pub Thanks to John B D Jeffery of Gateshead we feature a photograph of the Penny Black pub on the river front in Singapore ●

Royal Mail news Rugby miniature sheet • Ingots • Smilers • 2004 issues • John Wright



WORLD CHAMPIONS

22 NOVEMBER 2003
TELSTRA STADIUM
SYDNEY



The sheets were printed in printer's sheets of 16 (4 × 4). The colours are: black, cyan (blue), gold, magenta and yellow. No plate numbers were shown on the printer's sheet.

Rugby World Cup Shown for the record is the miniature sheet issued on 19 December to mark England's victory in the Rugby World Cup on 22 November. It contains two 1st class and two 68p stamps showing the English flag, team in a circle, the World Cup, and players celebrating. The sheet margin shows the England Rugby emblem set against the St George flag. It was designed by Why Not Associates and printed by Walsall in litho. It is available, price £1.92 from selected Post Office branches and from Royal Mail Talents House. A pack containing the Rugby miniature sheet is also available, price £2.30. There are no stamp cards for this issue. ●

Ingot covers and pack The last in the series of covers incorporating silver ingots of the Pillar to Post stamps is now available. The cover, featuring artwork relating to the postal and social history of the time of the postbox shown on the ingot, bears a pair of the 68p stamps cancelled by a special Edinburgh postmark. Price £29.95, available only from Royal Mail Talents House. The sixth pack bearing ingots reproducing Victorian stamps will be available from 3 February and will feature the 'Jubilee' 1s stamp. Price £26.95 from Talents House, Edinburgh. For details of this series see the back cover of the September 2003 *Bulletin*. ●

Hong Kong Smilers A new Smilers sheet for the Hong Kong 2004 Stamp Expo (30 January - 3 February) is now available. Printed by Walsall, it contains 20 1st class 'Hello' stamps with labels bearing the Hong Kong exhibition logo. Available from Royal Mail Talents House, price £6.15. ●



2004 Special stamp issues The Occasions and Lord of the Rings stamps were previewed in last month's *Bulletin*, and the Northern Ireland stamps and the *Letters by Night* prestige book in this issue. The Ocean Liners stamps (to be issued 13 April) feature: *Queen Mary 2*, *Canberra*, *Queen Mary*, *Mauretania*, *City of New York*, and *Great Western*. Three of these are shown above, at proof stage. The complete issue will be previewed in next month's *Bulletin*, together with the two stamps commemorating the centenary of the Entente Cordiale. These will show paintings by two prominent artists – Sir Terry Frost (British) and Sonia Delaunay (French) •

John Wright retires John Wright, well-known to the philatelic trade and to many collectors as the Manager of the British Philatelic Bureau (Tallents House) in Edinburgh, retires this month. John, who joined Royal Mail in 1981 as Deputy Manager to Tony Parton and took over from him in 1991, has seen a huge amount of change in his time at the Bureau. The changes that gave him most satisfaction were the computerisation and growth of the Bureau in the 1980s and 90s, and the introduction of Royal Mail Retail and Royal Mail Direct in 1987. Since their introduction around 10 million orders have been despatched to shops and businesses from the Edinburgh offices. John has been fortunate enough to travel to meet some overseas postal administrations, and attend some exhibitions. He most remembers the Beijing exhibition, where hundreds of thousands of people mobbed the show, and Melbourne where personalised stamps were introduced to the world and where there were long queues for the whole show. Although based in Edinburgh, he is a regular visitor to Royal Mail Stamps & Collectibles headquarters in Old Street, London, and since handing over responsibility for Tallents House to Greg Wilkie last year, has been heading a special project to improve the ways Royal Mail offers its philatelic products to its customers. For a time in the early 1990s, John's responsibilities also included stamp production. Although he is not a philatelist, John probably knows as much about stamp printing and the needs and whims of the trade and collectors as many who call themselves philatelists. He takes pride in the services provided by Tallents House, and its official opening by David Gentleman in March 2001 was one of his proudest moments. We wish John well in what we suspect will be a busy 'retirement' gardening, walking, running and on the golf course. He will continue to live near Edinburgh and will no doubt follow developments in Royal Mail, and Tallents House in particular, with his usual canny interest •



John Wright, Manager of the British Philatelic Bureau in Edinburgh, retires this month.

The introduction of regular stamp perforations, 1854



ON 24 FEBRUARY 1854 the first stamps to be regularly perforated went on sale to the public. This was the penny red-brown with the original (Die 1) effigy of Queen Victoria. The first of the two-penny stamps, from plate 4, followed about two weeks later. They were perforated 16 all round, which was too fine a gauge as the stamps tended to fall apart, but soon a perforation gauging 14 was adopted and would remain standard till 1911, with the exception of the high values of 1867.

This was a major step forward, enabling the public to purchase blocks or even entire sheets and tear off individual stamps at will instead of having to cut them apart with scissors. Hitherto counter clerks in post offices had cut up sheets of imperforate stamps into horizontal strips so that individual stamps or pairs could be snipped off when a customer required them, and it is for this reason that blocks of the imperforate stamps are so very elusive in used condition.

Furthermore, postal staff often tried to save time by cutting through several sheets of stamps at a time, and the slipping effect of the scissor blades often resulted in stamps cut into at an angle. Perforation, virtually at a stroke, did away with the stamp box or case, an item of writing-

desk adornment which had been immensely popular in the era when the well-to-do kept a stock of stamps ready cut for their correspondence.

Forerunners Examples of British stamps, roughly perforated or punctured, have been recorded on actual letters from 1841 onwards – not effected by means of a sewing machine (which had not then been invented) but probably by means of a fine spur rowel or the toothed wheels commonly used by book-binders to produce an ornamental effect on leather. There are examples of stamps laboriously perforated by hand using a pin, said to have been a pastime of ladies with too much time on their hands. In fact, it was observing a railway booking-clerk perforating a bundle of large paper tickets by this method that put the idea into Henry Archer's head in the first place.

Be that as it may, devices for perforating the counterfoils of cheques were certainly in use by banks by 1840, the punctures being produced by a guillotine whose cutting edge terminated in tiny close-set spikes. Such an implement, however, was only capable of cutting fairly large pieces of paper, one stroke at a time. It could not be adapted to the separation of postage stamps because

A convenience for the public (and clerks), by James Mackay



Opposite page Eight 1d reds with Archer perforations, plate 98, on cover to Prussia, August 1853.

Left Trial separations.

The official adoption of perforation brought to an end a seven-year campaign by the brothers Charles and Henry Archer, which also involved Thomas De La Rue (who had his own agenda).

These examples are from the Phillips Collection, Heritage, Royal Mail.

they were very small, printed in large multiples and, more importantly, set close together.

The problem was aggravated by the fact that the paper, dampened before intaglio printing, tended to shrink unevenly as it dried, and this explains the high proportion of badly-centred perforated stamps produced by Perkins Bacon – one of the arguments that favoured De La Rue's letterpress process.

Clever and useful invention By October of 1847, Henry Archer had not only solved the problem but also had a machine constructed for the purpose. When examined by senior officials of the Post Office, it was pronounced 'a very clever and useful invention'. This machine operated on the roulette principle of puncturing the paper without removing tiny discs of paper as in later forms of separation. Penny stamps from plates 70 and 71 were used for this purpose. Archer had a second machine produced by Messrs Smith & English and supplied to Perkins Bacon early in 1848.

In a letter to Thomas Keogh of the Board of Stamps and Taxes on 26 November that year, Archer stated that this did not come up to his expectations and that he had now had a 'new

machine made upon a totally different principle, which, I am happy to say, has succeeded beyond my most sanguine expectations'.

In fact, this machine, which punched out tiny discs of paper, leaving rows of holes between the stamps, had been given a trial at the end of July 1848, but it was found that when several sheets were perforated together they stuck to each other, and it took several months to overcome this problem. On 16 May 1850 the Inland Revenue reported to the Treasury that Archer's perforation machine, 'after several alterations', was about to be brought into work at the Stamping Department. For this purpose, penny stamps with the small crown watermark and Alphabet 1 corner lettering, from plates 90 to 101, were employed. They are much more common mint than used, while a large premium is paid for examples used on cover prior to February 1854 when perforation became official.

Very much rarer are penny stamps with the same perforation but applied to stamps from Alphabet 11. These belong to the government trial of 1853. Why such a relatively long time should elapse between Archer perfecting his machine and the official adoption of perforation may be

explained by the long wrangle between Archer and the authorities (the Post Office, the Inland Revenue and the Treasury) over his remuneration. At the same time, Perkins Bacon dragged their heels when they realised that problems in perforating stamps arose because of the irregular layout of their sheets due to shrinkage.

When the business reached stalemate in April 1851 Archer wrote to Keogh, stating that he was entering a partnership with Robert Branston, not only to perforate stamps, but to engrave, print and gum them as well. In this connection, Archer and Branston then produced the famous Prince Consort essay, a letterpress version of the penny stamps with the portrait of Prince Albert in place of Queen Victoria. The Inland Revenue used Archer's allegations to force Perkins Bacon to reduce their charges, a matter which the printers agreed to with indecent haste. Once that deal was done, the Inland Revenue rejected Archer's proposal to take over stamp production.

Parliamentary redress Archer now petitioned Parliament for redress of grievances, and as a result the Select Committee on Postage Label Stamps was convened to examine the matter. It met six times in March and April 1852 and delivered its report to Parliament on 21 May. The problems with Perkins Bacon were thoroughly ventilated and one outcome was the award of a contract to De La Rue to print fiscal stamps by the letterpress process. These were perforated by Archer machines and made their debut in October 1853, shortly after the 'government' trial with the Alphabet II postage stamps. These, incidentally, were also an outcome of the Select Committee, Joshua Butters Bacon being compelled to improve the technique for transferring the engraving from the die to the printing plate.

Of course, Alphabet II stamps were included in the official release of 1854-55 and the only way one can distinguish the perf 16 version of February 1855 from the government trial perforation of 1853 is if the latter are found on covers with clearly dated postmarks of that year. For this reason these stamps (SG 16c) are not listed in mint condition •

2003 definitives checklist

We hope this list will prove helpful to collectors in completing their collections. Please read the following notes carefully. We quote Royal Mail order numbers (prefixed TB, DS, etc) as given on Tallents House stock lists. Some stamps were issued only in books and can be bought from Royal Mail only in complete books.

Printers Printers are designated D (De La Rue), E (Enschedé), and W (Walsall).

Unless otherwise stated, the definitive and country stamps are gravure printed, have PVA gum, perforation gauge 15 x 14 (with ellipses at lower left and right sides). Dates quoted are those the stamps were first available at Tallents House; in some cases they may have been available at post offices earlier, for postal needs. 2nd class, 1st class and E (European rate) stamps have Non Value Indicators (NVI) rather than a face value. All 1st class stamps are printed in gold.

Machin definitives

21 January 2nd and 1st class stamps, E. From rolls of 500. (DC907, DC906). First printing of gummed 1st class stamp in gold by E.

27 March Undenominated 'Europe' and 'Worldwide' stamps (for airmail letters, 20-40g weight), ultramarine and red, self-adhesive, from books, W (sold as pair, US001). The current postal value of these stamps is 53p Europe and £1.12 Worldwide.

6 May 34p lime green, D (DS345).

28 May 1st class from rolls of 500, D (DC909).

1 July £1.50, £2, £3 and £5 printed in gravure, D (previously recess (intaglio) by E and D) (FS159, FS028, FS306, FS058) • 1st class, D (previously printed by W in 1997) (DS284).

During the year reprints of the 1p, 2p, 4p, 5p, 8p, 10p, 20, 33p, 37p, 41p, 42p, 47p 50p & 68p stamps were made by De La Rue on the ATN machine at their new



The Wilding definitives collection II ~ 1953 - 1959



Wildings II miniature sheet; 47p and 68p Wildings with £1 'Coronation' stamp, from A *Perfect Coronation* PSB; and new 34p and gravure printed high values.

premises at Byfleet. Formerly these were printed on the Jumelle press at their High Wycombe works. Single stamps from the two printings are, for most purposes, identical and the stamps were not given first day of availability. They went into use, as needed, at post offices from March onwards. Specialist collectors may detect some differences, as explained in Douglas Myall's 'Mainly Machins' articles.

Wilding definitives

20 May 4p, 8p, 10p, 20p, 28p, 34p, E (38p), 42p and 68p in miniature sheet, D (MZ011). Stamps in designs and colours of former 3d deep lilac, 4d ultramarine, 6d reddish purple, 7d bright green, 9d bronze-green, 11d brown-purple, 4½d chestnut, 10d Prussian blue and 1s6d grey-blue stamps of 1953-59.

2 June 47p bistre-brown and 68p grey-blue, W, in A *Perfect Coronation* prestige book (YB022).

Country stamps

25 February Northern Ireland 2nd and 1st class stamps, E (previously printed by W) in *Microcosmos* prestige book (YB020).

4 March Wales 1st class D (previously printed by W) (WS270).

28 May Wales 2nd class, D (previously printed by W) (WS203).

14 October New printings in current designs, but with white borders (instead of the designs bleeding off the stamps). 2nd, 1st, E and 68p for England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. D (Litho Northern Ireland, gravure others). (ES200, ES280, ES380, ES681; IS203, IS283, IS381, IS681; SS203, SS283, SS380, SS681; WS204, WS283, WS380, WS681).

During the year De La Rue reprinted the England 2nd class, 1st class, E, and 68p stamps and the Scotland 2nd class stamp on the ATN press at its Byfleet premises (previously printed on the Jumelle press at their former High Wycombe works). Single stamps are, for most purposes, identical, and no first day of availability was given. The stamps went into use at Post Office branches in England and Scotland as needed from July onwards. For further details see Douglas Myall's *Mainly Machins* article in the October *Bulletin*.

Mixed value stamp panes and miniature sheets

25 February Pane of 4 × 1st class and 4 × E (European rate) definitives with central label showing DNA sequencing, E. From *Microcosmos* prestige book (YB020) ● Pane of 4 × 2nd class and 4 × 1st class Northern Ireland country stamps, E. From *Microcosmos* prestige book (YB020).

4 March Pane of 4 × 1st class and 2 × 2002 'Hello' Occasions, all self-adhesive, D (UB227).

29 April Pane of 4 × 1st class and 2 × Extreme Endeavours 1st class, all self-adhesive, D (UB234).

2 June Pane of 4 × 2nd class and 4 × 1st class definitives with central label showing Crown and dates '1953/2003', W. From *A Perfect Coronation* prestige book (YB022) ● Pane of 2 × 47p and 2 × 68p Wilding definitives and £1 stamp in design of 1953 Coronation 1s3d value. Stamps on uncoated, watermarked paper. From *A Perfect Coronation* prestige book (YB022).

15 July Pane of 4 × 1st class and 2 × British Journey/Scotland 1st class, all self-adhesive, D (UB238).

18 September Pane of 4 × 1st and 2 × Transports of Delight 1st class, all self-adhesive, D (UB239).

Stamp books

25 February *Microcosmos* prestige book containing panes of definitive, country and Secret of Life stamps, E (YB020).

4 March 4 × 1st definitives and 2 × 1st class 'Hello' Occasions stamps, all self-adhesive, D (UB227).

27 March 4 × Europe and 4 × Rest of World NVI stamps, D (UB228, UB229) ● 6 × 1st, 12 × 1st and 12 × 2nd books with 'The Real Network' added to Royal Mail logo on front cover. Stamps unchanged from previous issue, W (UB233, UB231, UB232).

29 April 4 × 1st definitives and 2 × 1st class Extreme Endeavours stamps, all self-adhesive, D (UB234).

28 May 4 × E (European rate), 4 × 42p and 4 × 68p books with 'The Real Network' added to Royal Mail logo on front cover (stamps same as previous issues), W (UB235, UB236, UB237).

2 June *A Perfect Coronation* prestige book containing mixed panes of Machin and Wilding definitives, Coronation Anniversary stamps and £1 stamp in design of 1953 Coronation 1s3d, W. (YB022).

15 July 4 × 1st class definitives and 2 × 1st class British Journey/Scotland, all self-adhesive, D (UB238).

18 September 4 × 1st class definitives and 2 × 1st class Transports of Delight stamps, all self-adhesive, D (UB239).

Business sheets (self-adhesive)

18 March 100 × 2nd and 1st class, with matrix (stamp paper) removed between stamps, W (DP035, DP034).

Presentation packs

27 March Definitives containing Europe and World-wide stamps (for airmail letters 20-40g weight). These stamps were 'punched' from stamp books and are therefore still attached to part of the book cover. D (DP033).

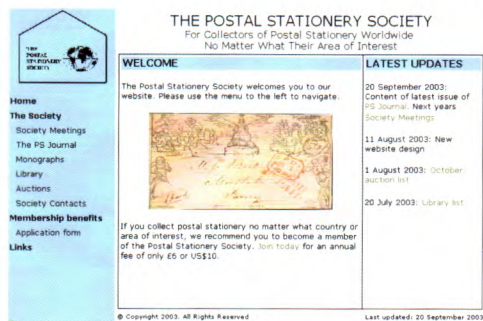
20 May Wilding definitives miniature sheet (DP036).

1 July Definitives containing £1.50, £2, £3 and £5 printed in gravure. (FP013).

14 October Country stamps, containing England 2nd, 1st, E, and 68p stamps with white borders of England (EP002), Northern Ireland (IP017), Scotland (SP018), and Wales (WP018).

Royal Mail thanks D G A Myall for his help with this listing. The Editor regrets that neither Mr Myall nor himself is able to engage in correspondence regarding its contents.

Philately on-line A look at postal stationery, by Ron Negus



www.postalstationery.org.uk The Postal Stationery Society's secretary, Colin Baker, can be reached at 4 Greenhill Gardens, Sutton Veny, Warminster, Wiltshire BA12 7AY, or by e-mail on bakercsandr@lineone.net

THE MULREADY ENVELOPES issued by Great Britain in 1840 are normally considered to be the first postal stationery designed for public use. Other countries soon copied the idea, however, when they started to issue adhesive stamps themselves. Although some philatelists do not include these 'envelopes, letter-sheets, cards, wrappers, and similar items bearing officially applied non-adhesive postage stamps' in their collection, many others consider them to be part of the total postal picture.

For the latter type of collectors, the Postal Stationery Society was formed in 1992. Their aim is to further the study of, and to develop postal stationery collecting into a more readily accepted branch of philately. Its web site (address as above) gives full details of the Society's current activities, and includes an application form that can be printed out and used to join the group.

The Society produces a Journal, three times a year, and this includes a mix of articles, queries, news, discussions and opinions. It is written by members and covers as many categories as possible. The website lists the contents of the latest issue, and has the front cover and a couple of inside pages illustrated to show the style of the magazine.

The need for detailed studies relating to postal stationery has led the Society to begin promoting the publication of a series of handbooks. The first four of these deal with material from Great Britain, and cover 'Victorian Private Stationery with Embossed Stamps', 'Mulready Envelopes', 'The Real Cost of the Penny Post', and 'The

Development of the Acrogramme'. The fifth booklet considers Canadian election stationery. Prices and ordering instructions are given on the website. More titles are in preparation.

Members can also make use of the Society's library, which is operated on a postal basis. The current holdings are shown on the website, and are arranged alphabetically by countries. Both English and foreign language books are included. The existence of a specialised library of this type is very useful, because many of the better known 'standard' catalogues do not list postal stationery at all.

The Society holds its AGM in October, and this is followed by an auction. The catalogue for the last auction is retained on the website. This is useful as it gives prospective members an excellent idea of the type of material on offer at these sales, and the prices asked, should they choose to take up membership.

As well as adequately covering all the relevant information needed to describe the activities of the Society, this site is also an impressive example of good web design. Its pages are clean, of a consistent layout, with clear typefaces making them easy to read. There is no clutter or extraneous use of animated graphics or garish colour schemes. The navigation menu is repeated on each separate page, so that moving from one topic to another is simple. The date the site was last updated is shown, with details of the amendments made, and full contact details are given. I commend it to other societies to use as an excellent model ●

A British Journey: Northern Ireland The



Technical details

Printer Joh Enschedé

Process Gravure

Stamp size 35 × 35mm

Sheet size 25 and 50

Perforation 14.5

Phosphor One band 2nd, two bands others

Gum PVA

Gutter pairs Vertical

Cylinder numbers & colours

All values E1 silver ● E1 black
● E1 cyan (blue) ● E1 magenta
● E1 yellow ● E1 phosphor

SIX STAMPS featuring the beautiful scenery of Northern Ireland – the second in the ‘A British Journey’ series – will be available from Post Office branches and philatelic outlets and from Royal Mail Tallents House Edinburgh from 16 March. They feature: 2nd class Ely Island, Lower Lough Erne; 1st class Giant’s Causeway, Antrim Coast; E (European rate) Slemish, Antrim Mountains; 42p Bann Road, Mourne Mountains; 47p Glenelly Valley, Sperrins; and 68p Islandmore, Strangford Lough. The location shown on the stamp appears as a caption at the foot of each design, with The Queen’s head and value in silver in the top left and bottom right corners respectively. The stamps are the work of Phelan Barker Design Consultants, using photography by Geray Sweeney (2nd), Joe Cornish (1st), Michael Diggin (E and 47p), John Scovell (42p) and Chris Hill (68p).

The British Journey series started with the Scotland stamps last July and will continue with a set showing Welsh scenery on 15 June. Further sets will be issued in 2005.

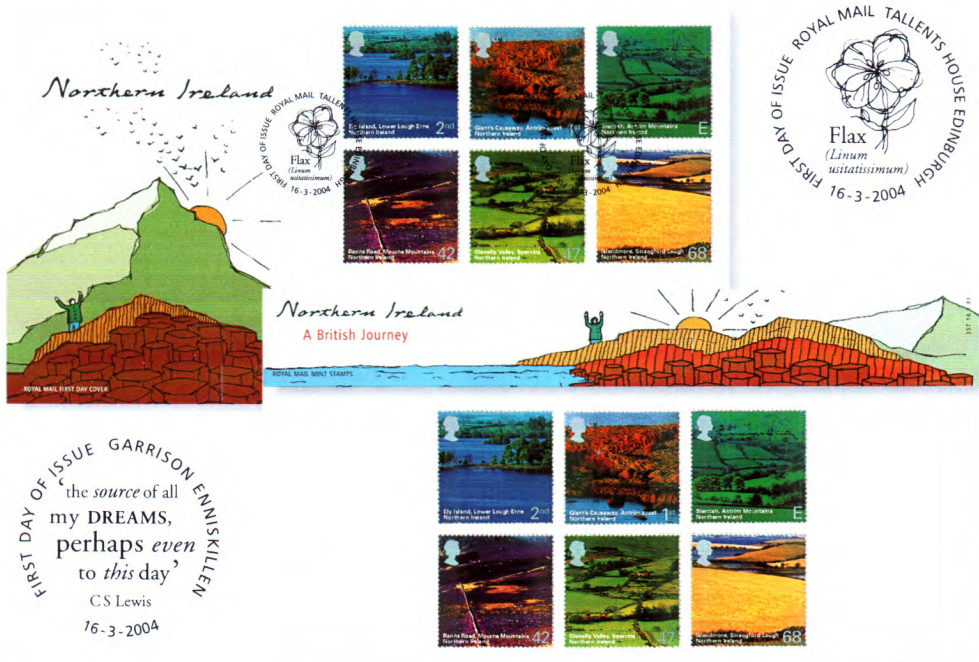
Sheets of 25 will be supplied to Post Office branches; sheets of 50 (with gutter margins) will be available from Royal Mail Tallents House and Post Office philatelic outlets.

FIRST DAY FACILITIES Unstamped Royal Mail FDC envelopes will be available from main Post Offices and philatelic outlets about a week before 16 March, price 25p. Orders for serviced FDCs with the stamps cancelled by a pictorial first day postmark of Royal Mail Tallents House Edinburgh or Garrison, Enniskillen must reach Tallents House (address below) by the day of issue. Price £3.27 UK, £2.79 overseas. Garrison was chosen for the alternative postmark as it is the most westerly Post Office branch in the UK.

Collectors may send stamped covers on the day of issue to: Royal Mail, Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB (Tallents House postmark), or Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, Rutherglen DO, Duchess Place, Rutherglen, Glasgow G73 1BT (Garrison postmark), marking the outer envelope ‘FDO409’ (Tallents House), or ‘FDO410’ (Garrison). Covers can be posted or handed in at main Post Office branches for the Garrison postmark. Details of other handstamps for 16 March will be announced in the *British Postmark Bulletin* – available on subscription from Tallents House (£12.25 UK/Europe; £24.95 elsewhere).

British Postmark Bulletin For a free sample copy, write to: The Editor, British Postmark Bulletin, Royal Mail, 2-14 Bunhill Row, London EC1Y 8HQ.

second set in the series of philatelic journeys



SELF-ADHESIVE STAMP BOOK The 1st class Northern Ireland stamp will also be issued as a self-adhesive in a retail stamp book. This will contain two of the Northern Ireland stamps plus four 1st class Machin definitives, price £1.68. The Northern Ireland stamp will be shown on the front cover.

PHILATELIC PRODUCTS A well-illustrated pack containing the six stamps (price £2.95) and stamp cards (30p each) will be available from Tallents House, main Post Office branches and philatelic outlets. The pack, designed by Rodney Miller Associates, includes text by Mike Barden. The text includes a Northern Ireland factfile (population, land mass, highest peak, etc), the recipe for Soda Farls, and Seamus Heaney's poem *Bogland*.

Among the many interesting illustrations in the presentation pack (above) are: the Carrick-a-Rede rope bridge, Antrim coast; the Wellbrook Beetling Mill, Co Tyrone; Marble Arch caves, Co Fermanagh; and an historic engraving of the Giant's Causeway.



The Northern Ireland landscape The attractive scenery of Northern Ireland features on several special issues as well as on the current 2nd and 1st class Northern Ireland country stamps. The first depiction was in 1966 when the 6d stamp in the Landscapes set showed the Antrim coast. The Ulster Paintings set of 1971 reproduced works by three well-known Northern Ireland painters. The 3p featured T P Flanagan's *A Mountain Road*, one of a set of paintings of Irish bog landscapes which inspired Seamus Heaney's *Bogland* poem which is reprinted in the pack for the new stamps. Thomas Carr's *Deer's Meadow* (7½p) depicted a beautiful corner of the Mournes on a bright March day, and the 9p stamp shows *Slieve na brock* by Colin Middleton, from a series of paintings in the Tollymore Forest Park on the north slopes of Mourne Mountains in Co Down.

The Mourne Mountains also feature on the 30p stamp in the 1994 set reproducing paintings by the Prince of Wales. The Mountains lie in the south of Co Down, extending from above the town of Newcastle to Carlingford Lough. Several of the mountains are over 2000 feet, the highest, Slieve Donard, being 2796ft.

Northern Ireland was the subject of a prestige book issued in July 1994. In addition to panes of definitive and Northern Ireland country stamps it included a pane of Prince Charles's Mourne Mountains stamp and a tear-out, pre-stamped postcard bearing a reproduction of the Giant's Causeway stamp of 1981, revalued at 35p to cover the then airmail postcard rate.

Reed beds on the River Braid featured on the 2nd class stamp of the Millennium Life and Earth set of April 2000, and a view of the coast at Portrush, Co Antrim on one of the 10 stamps showing aerial photographs of the UK coastline by Richard Cooke issued in March 2002. Three other aerial views by Mr Cooke – Strangford Lough, near Benbane Head and



Northern Ireland on stamps

Ulster thatch, British Architecture 1970; Giant's Causeway, National Trust 1981; Mourne Mountains, Prince of Wales paintings 1994; Antrim coast, Landscapes 1966; the Giant's causeway and patchwork fields in the current Northern Ireland country stamps.



Ballycastle in Co Antrim – were reproduced on postcards in the Coastlines postcard book issued in October 2002. (This is still available from Tallents House, price £5.99, order code PB366.)

The Giant's Causeway, now a world heritage site, is one of the most important landforms in the world, a unique part of Northern Ireland's geological heritage. In the course of tertiary igneous activity, the lowest layer of lava cooled slowly with a uniform pattern creating thousands of hexagonal basalt columns. One of many myths about the origins of the causeway says it was built by a giant, Finn McCool, in order to confront a bad tempered Scottish giant who intimidated the locals. The Causeway features on the 1981 National Trust 22p stamp, the current Northern Ireland 2nd class country stamp, and on the 1st class in the forthcoming set.

Northern Ireland is noted for the diversity of its landscape. Its patchwork fields are a distinctive feature of the countryside. Another distinctive rural feature – the five-barred gate with circular stone pillars – was included in the design of the 153d and 156d regional stamps of 1958 and 1967.

Farm buildings in Northern Ireland feature on a 10p stamp book of May 1978. The Temple of the Winds, in the grounds of Mount Stewart, and the imposing house of Mount Stewart itself, feature on 50p stamp books of 1982 and 1987. Northern Ireland scenery featured on five of the six 1989 'Landscapes of Britain' aerogrammes: White Rocks, Co Antrim (Coastlands); Mount Stewart (Gardens); Lough Erne, Co Fermanagh (Lakes); Giant's Causeway (Landmarks); and Mountains of Mourne (Mountains). The delightful drawings on these aerogrammes were by Ronald Maddox.

Unlike Scotland, which boasts many postbus routes, Northern Ireland has just one service based on Enniskillen in Co Fermanagh. The service started in February 1993 •

Letters by Night New prestige stamp book

Letters by Night PSB panes

Pane 1 Top and bottom rows: 68p English country stamp and 2nd class Scottish country stamp; middle row: 2nd class Scottish and 68p English.

Pane 2 Classic Locomotives stamps (vertically arranged) 28p, E rate, 42p.

Pane 3 Four 1st class Pub Signs (The Station) stamps.

Pane 4 Top and bottom rows: Two 37p definitives separated by a 1st class definitive. Middle row: Two 1st class definitives separated by a label showing 1936 Night Mail poster.

A NEW PRESTIGE BOOK, produced as a tribute to the Travelling Post Office service, will be available from 16 March, priced at £7.44. This will contain four panes, all with illustrations in the margins from the *Night Mail* film.

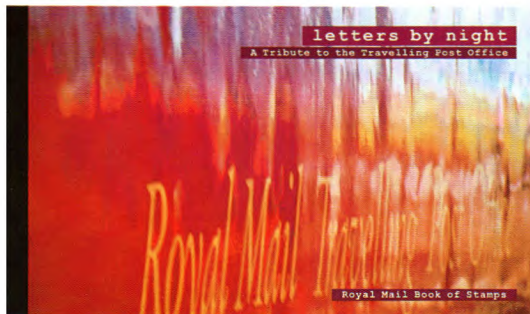
The book has been printed by De La Rue with panes 1, 3 and 4 printed in gravure, pane 2 in lithography. The book includes an introduction by Peter Johnson, the author of *Mail by Rail: The History of the TPO & Post Office Railway* (1995), and a specially written poem by Simon Armitage.

Royal Mail wanted to commission a leading British poet to compose a poem based around the TPO experience and be respectful of the famous W H Auden poem for the *Night Mail* film of 1936, but not to compose a complete update. Simon Armitage is one of the leading poets of his generation and was recently awarded both a BAFTA and an Ivor Novello award. Shortly before Easter 2003 we arranged for him to travel on the overnight TPO from Willesden to Newcastle. He took the train to York (near where he lives) and spent time talking to the sorters and staff and absorbing the atmosphere. His resulting poem is actually a love poem, interweaving ideas about letters, communication and the immediacy of the written word and making references to the night time journey of the mail in the TPOs.

A cover carried on the Liverpool-London TPO in 1887 is reproduced on the inside back cover of the book. Other images are by Royal Academician Brendan Neiland (his painting of the Lloyd's Building was used on a Millennium stamp in 1999). Neiland worked on the TPOs as a young man before becoming a full-time artist.

FIRST DAY FACILITIES Unstamped Royal Mail FDC envelopes will be available from main Post Office branches and philatelic outlets about a week before 16 March, price 25p. Orders for serviced FDCs with the label pane cancelled by a pictorial first day postmark of Royal Mail Tallents House Edinburgh or London NW10 must reach Tallents House (address below) by the day of issue. Price £3.47 UK or £2.96 overseas.

Collectors may send stamped covers on the day of issue to: Royal Mail, Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB (Tallents House postmark), or Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, Mount Pleasant, London EC1A 1BB (London NW10 postmark), marking the outer envelope 'FDO411' (Tallents House), or 'FDO412' (London). Covers can be posted or handed in at main Post Office branches for the London postmark. Details of other handstamps for 16 March will be announced in the *British Postmark Bulletin*. Any stamps from the prestige book can be used, singly or in combination, for all first day, philatelic and sponsored handstamps in use on 16 March ●



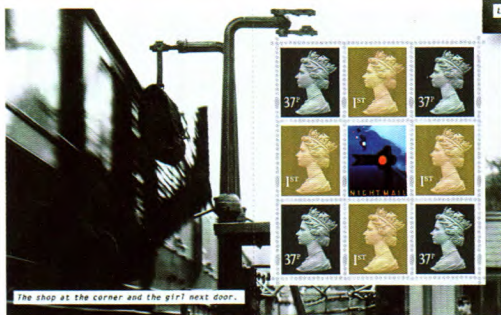
This is the Right Mail crossing the border



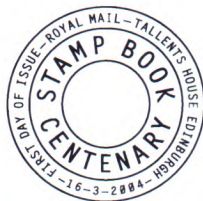
Bringing the cheque and the postal order



Letters for the rich, letters for the poor



The shop at the corner and the girl next door



Letters by Night PSB Above: front cover, four stamp panes and postmarks. Left: the first day cover envelope.



Royal Mail Talents House 21 South Gyle Crescent Edinburgh EH12 9PB

A win-win situation Richard West discovers how charities



IN 1997, Tony Buckingham sold the highly successful first day cover business of Benham, which he had built up with his wife Cath over 30 years. Then, in 2000, they were back, once more in the cover business. So why? In the intervening three years Tony had written three books, there being publisher interest shown in one. He had been asked to produce a first day cover catalogue by the new owners of Benham: this re-kindled his love of covers. He had also been writing a regular feature for *Gibbons Stamp Monthly*, centred around day trips that would take in as many stamp shops, and other attractions to please the rest of the family, as possible. He enjoyed meeting the dealers and realised how being a part of the trade gave a real meaning to their lives.

A perfect lifestyle Tony has always had a yearning to be a 'gentleman dealer'. He recalls when he and Cath were in the early days of their trading, attending stamp fairs held in a hotel. One dealer would arrive with his wife in their Rolls Royce; porters would unload, and subsequently reload, the stock; they would be brought comfortable chairs on which to sit; and food and drink would be there when required. Of course, they tipped well. But come the time of actual



trading, they were as ruthless and shrewd as any other dealer. That, to Tony, seemed the perfect lifestyle.

So, the facts had to be faced: although the stamp world may not be large, it is his world, and he cannot escape. As Cath says, Tony is never happier than when he has his hands in a box of covers. It is like an addiction. He started buying rare covers, and became involved with the Folkestone Stamp Shop.

Something completely different was considered: offering training on building up a business, particularly developing team work, but that did not prove successful. So it was back to stamps and covers. Their new operation, Internetstamps, includes the stamp shop, opened in Folkestone 25 years ago, and Buckingham Covers, dealing in older covers and producing covers linked with GB special issues and other major events.

Working with others Both Tony and Cath enjoy the involvement with organisations and charities. Producing official covers means working with others to create something which is more than just an envelope. A donation to a worthy cause can mean so much, particularly to many smaller charities for whom the money is all-important. The result is often the perfect win-win situation.

benefit from covers produced by Tony and Cath Buckingham



The charity benefits; the collector gets something of which to be proud; a celebrity signing covers has contributed something valuable in exchange for a little time; and hopefully the new company Cath and Tony have set up makes a profit.

However, all does not always go smoothly, and in the first two years their company made a loss of around £200,000. However, Tony's philosophy is that the charities will not suffer, whatever the outcome of a cover project: he always guarantees the money. Not for him the principle of so much for every cover sold. He disapproves of the situation where if the full quantity of covers prepared does not sell, the remainder are sold at a reduced price. Often the charity does not benefit from such lower price sales, while collectors who have paid the higher price are alienated.

Not all signatures come cheap, but Tony has come to realise that collectors are quite prepared to pay a high price, knowing that a charity will benefit.

Charity link Finding the right organisation or charity to link with each issue is not always easy. Naturally the most logical connection is explored first, but this often does not prove to be feasible. Nevertheless, a connection is always found, and a charity or organisation does benefit. When asking a celebrity to autograph covers, Tony will send them a cheque which is then passed on to

charity (celebrities invariably have a good cause which they particularly wish to see supported).

Since Buckingham Covers has been producing covers in 2001 over £100,000 has been raised for some 54 charities. One of the most successful has been that for the Great Ormond Street Hospital, which so far has received nearly £20,000 from the sale of covers. Other beneficiaries have included the Royal Navy Submarine Museum (£10,000), British Airways' charities (£10,000), the Bader Foundation (over £6,000), and the National Trust (nearly £6,000). Over his 'cover' career Tony believes that he has so far raised around £500,000.

Discerning collectors Tony has found that these days collectors are especially selective and discerning in their requirements, making it more essential than ever to listen to their concerns and wants, and for dealers to provide what they require. He finds it amazing how people are attracted to the hobby. Tony ensures he goes that extra mile to provide the collector with something different: the comments he receives from collectors tell him his efforts are appreciated.

These efforts have resulted in many 'highs' for Tony. He and Cath get a buzz when people appreciate their covers (Cath does all the design work, for both covers and postmarks). He was proud to have an audience with The Queen at

Buckingham Palace for his services to local businesses in Kent. He has been presented with the Kent Company, Small Business and Business Personality of the Year awards. He is pleased to have been involved with, and helped, The National Trust, since 1981. And he feels privileged to have met so many famous people over the years, not least many war heroes.

So does Tony have any remaining ambitions? There are two: to reach the £1 million mark for charity, and to have those books he has written published.

Plans for 2004 Buckingham Covers has agreed with the following organisations and charities to link with the 2004 special issues: National Railway Museum (Steam Locomotives issue); Northern Ireland National Trust (Northern Ireland); Cunard (Ocean Liners); the Royal Horticultural Society (Royal Horticultural Society); National Trust of Wales (Wales); the Royal Society of Arts (Royal Society of Arts); Born Free Foundation and the National Trust (Woodland Animals); and the National Army Museum (Crimea) ●

TONY BUCKINGHAM FACT FILE

How Tony and Cath met It was at teachers' training college in Brighton, on 18 September 1963. We sat on the same table, and quite frankly did not like each other. Later we started going out together, and married in 1966.

Hobbies outside business We enjoy the theatre and go quite a lot. We also like concerts, particularly of jazz. I am a Dave Brubeck fanatic. Also enjoy riding and reading. Cath used to sing in a choir, while I was very keen on cricket.

Collecting interests I used to collect, at first everything, and then Great Britain and Commonwealth. I started 'dealing' when I was 11, with a friend, Christopher Davis. We called our business ABCD stamps (our initials). But I have always loved first day covers.

Favourite cover This one is for Cath, being her design for the 2002 Christmas stamps featuring Coventry Cathedral.

Favourite British stamp issue The railway paintings of Terence Cuneo from 1985.

Least favourite set The Toys and Games issue.

Home We love England, and live at Hythe in Kent.

Holidays We always go to New Zealand.

Sporting allegiance England, of course.

Favourite food We both love our food, but particularly enjoy duck or pheasant.

Eminent early collectors Robert B Earée, by Ron Negus

IN THE EARLIEST DAYS of philately, the Victorians added examples of as many stamps as they could find to their albums. The origin of any particular specimen was of little concern to them, provided that each had a different design, or was printed in a different colour where the design was the same. As a result, numerous firms began to produce facsimiles of the current stamps to satisfy the demand. Prominent amongst these suppliers were the Spiro Brothers of Hamburg. Their productions of bogus stamps were to be found in almost every collection in the 1860s. The person who devoted a lifetime to exposing them was an English vicar, Rev Robert Briscoe Earée, who had been born in South Kensington, London on 20 September 1846.



Robert B Earée was a 15-year-old schoolboy when he began collecting stamps. His interest in the subject was sparked by seeing the mail received from Baden addressed to his German governess. Following the trends of the day, he added anything that came his way to his collection, but eventually he concentrated upon the British Empire issues. After completing his basic education, he decided to study for Holy orders. He was ordained as a deacon in 1870, and given his first post as a curate at Moseley, a suburb of Birmingham.

At that time, a renowned stamp dealer had his premises in Birmingham. He was Edward Loines Pemberton, who had been in business for nearly a decade and in 1869 had been one of the prime movers in the foundation of The Philatelic Soci-

ety, London, which later became the Royal Philatelic Society. Pemberton was a serious student of the hobby, as well as a dealer, and had written many articles about stamps. He was very opposed to the production of facsimiles.

It was inevitable that Earée and Pemberton should soon contact one another, and the two men became close friends. Because of his limited knowledge, Earée had accumulated some forgeries within his collection and Pemberton brought these to his attention. As a result, Earée determined that he would try to educate other collectors about the dangers of the forged specimens swamping the market.

Spud Papers Edward Pemberton was also keen to denounce these facsimiles and had written a letter to *The Stamp Collector's Magazine* in 1864 expressing his disquiet at their appearance. By 1871, so many counterfeits were in circulation – particularly those created by the Spiro Brothers – that another stamp journal, *The Philatelist*, began a series of articles outlining how they could be differentiated from the genuine issues. This famous set of 67 articles, entitled ‘The Spud Papers’ was written initially by W Dudley Atlee, the first Secretary of The Philatelic Society, London. He passed the authorship over to Pemberton, and after the latter's premature death in 1878 at the age of 34, Robert Earée undertook the task. The articles were notable because they contained actual specimens of the bogus Spiro ‘stamps’ being described. The publishers, explaining this action, which some thought was giving credence to Spiro's work, said it was necessary to allow proper identification of the false stamps, and that ‘the end justifies the means’.

Earée had moved from Birmingham in 1871 to take up a new living at Coggeshall in Essex, but retained his close working relationship with Pemberton. After two years there, he transferred to another parish on the Essex/Suffolk border: this time at the small village of Belchamp Walter, and remained there from 1873 to 1880. During this time he was still writing ‘The Spud Papers’, but added to his workload in 1875 by becoming the philatelic correspondent for a popular general

interest magazine called the *Bazaar*. He also edited the ‘*Bazaar Philatelists' Supplements*’.

He decided to collect the information that had already been published in ‘The Spud Papers’ and edit it to form a book. To show his contempt for the items he was describing, he titled this work *Album Weeds* and gave it a sub-title *How to Detect Forged Stamps*. The first edition of the book ran to 560 pages and was published in 1882. It became immediately popular, sold out quickly, and is now a rarity of philatelic literature.

Beyond his philatelic interests, Earée was also a talented musician, and played both the piano and the cello. As a young man, he was often complimented upon his beautiful baritone voice. He concentrated upon playing church music, but also compiled a chant book for which Sir Arthur Sullivan (of Gilbert & Sullivan fame) contributed an original work. This is thought to be the only composition of this type produced by that great composer.

Chaplain in Berlin The year 1880 was a very significant one for Earée, as he was appointed by the London Society for the Propagation of the Gospels in Foreign Lands to become its Chaplain in Berlin. At this time, the Crown Princess Friedrich Wilhelm, who was the eldest daughter of Queen Victoria, was living in that city, having moved there with her husband after their marriage in 1858. Her father-in-law, Kaiser Friedrich Wilhelm IV, had allowed a room in his Monbijou Palace to be used as an Anglican church and the Crown Princess used to worship there. This was the location in which Robert Earée took up his ministry on arrival in Berlin, and that enabled him to become acquainted with the Crown Princess, her brother, the Prince of Wales (later King Edward VII), and her nephew, the Duke of York (later King George V).

In 1883, Earée set up a Church Building Fund to commemorate the silver anniversary of the wedding of the Crown Prince and Princess. A great part of the money for this Fund was obtained by the efforts of the Prince of Wales in London, and the work was put in hand quickly. By November 1884 the new building was com-

pleted: it was named St George's Anglican (Episcopal) Church. When Rev Earée had arrived in Berlin, the Anglican church there had just 187 communicants. By 1889, this number had grown to just over 2000, in the new St George's church.

Despite this heavy involvement in church activities, Earée's association with stamps continued. In 1889 we find him writing an article in an Australian magazine, Vindin's *Philatelic Monthly*, in which he wonders if there is any future for 'whole world general collections'. He states that 'so many new stamps have been issued and so many new countries have been added to the list of stamp-issuing states, that the young people just commencing to collect are apt to feel rather frightened at the task which they have set themselves.' Later in the same piece, he makes a reference to the subject so close to his heart with the words 'The proportions already assumed by our pursuit are so great, and the demand of collectors so constant and so pressing, that even great governments have found it worth their while to reprint their obsolete stamps, solely for sale to philatelists; and smaller governments have, I am sorry to say, even manufactured (forged, I call it) new dies to print obsolete stamps of which the original dies have long since been destroyed. Of the former category I would take the United States as an example; and of the latter, Moldavia.'

In 1890, Earée completed his work in Germany and returned to England. His time in Germany had been shared between clerical duties and the continuing hunt for Spiro forgeries, and in 1892 this resulted in the appearance of a second edition of *Album Weeds*. This edition ran to no fewer than 726 pages. Upon his return, he was appointed Rector of Miserden, a small parish near Cheltenham, and retained this position until his retirement in 1921. In 1906, he published the third and final edition of *Album Weeds*, and it had grown so large by this time that it ran to two volumes. The first had 587 pages and the second 709.

In May of 1921 Earée attended the 8th Philatelic Congress of Great Britain at Harrogate. This meeting was notable as the Congress at which the Roll of Distinguished Philatelists was inaugurated, and the first 25 signatures of current col-

lectors were added. Rev Earée was amongst this elite band who were now entitled to add RDP to their name.

Proudest moment On that occasion, the first signatory on the new Roll was King George V. When the King had been Duke of York he was President of the Royal Philatelic Society, London and thus knew Earée well. He had graciously accepted the dedication of both the second and third editions of *Album Weeds*, and Earée was invited to view the Royal Collection at Buckingham Palace. When he arrived, the King asked him what he would like to see first. 'The blue, twopenny Mauritius, Sir' was Earée's response. The King said 'I guessed you would say that, and I have it ready for you here'. He opened the album at the relevant page and then reached up and took down a copy of *Album Weeds* to show he had that by him as well. Earée explained that whilst he had described how to detect forgeries of this famous Mauritius rarity, he had never seen a genuine one. This incident was often recalled by Earée as his proudest moment.

Earée had married in 1876 and had four children – three daughters and a son. His wife, Florence, died in 1902. Towards the end of his life, Earée began to lose his sight, and it was thought this could have resulted from the close study he had made of forgeries over the years. He died at his home in Cheltenham on 12 November 1928, at the age of 82.

His name will always be associated with his master work on forgeries, which is still consulted by philatelists today who wish to know about the numerous fakes of classic issues produced in the earliest days of stamp collecting. An amusing story is told, however, of the collector who also had an equal passion for gardening. When the man died, his solicitor, who had been appointed executor, had the task of sorting out the deceased's large library. He decided to separate it into two distinct categories: philately and horticulture. Unfortunately, he was not a collector himself and *Album Weeds* finished up amongst the gardening volumes! ●

Cover corner An unauthorised slogan, by Robert Phillifent



This cover was surcharged due to its overprinted 'ulster says no' slogan.

THE 18P STAMP ON THIS COVER sent from Cookstown to Coagh, Northern Ireland is overprinted with the unauthorised slogan 'ulster says no' – probably made by one of the Protestant paramilitary groups in protest at the Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1985.

The Post Office regarded the 18p stamp as invalid and surcharged the cover 23p (second class postage 13p + surcharge fee 10p). The 20p and 3p dues are cancelled 3 March 1987, three months after posting, probably because the item was impounded for investigation ●

Posting boxes 218

THE THREE BOXES FEATURED this month were photographed by P J Lynch of Middlesex. The first (clockwise from top left) is of a style of lamp-box first introduced during the reign of George V and produced into the reign of George VI, finally ceasing in 1947. The GVIR cipher has, unusually, been masked by the wide steel strip that binds the box to its wooden post. This box is sited just inside the garden of a private house in north-east Scotland. The second photograph is of a large Type D wallbox standing by a busy main road in Hampshire. Manufactured by Allied Ironfounders, Falkirk in the 1950s, it was intended for use at a post office and lacks the words Next Collection above the aperture – as on boxes for general use. The final photograph is a small Type B Edward VII box in Buckinghamshire. It has been fitted with a George V door of the style used for exported pillar boxes. Note that the letters of the GR cipher differ in size ●



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

Postbag Letters to the Editor



Bute post offices I was surprised to see the front cover of the November *Bulletin* featuring 'Post Offices on the Isle of Bute' and delighted to see the Ardbeg Road cancellation stamp and photograph of the office inside. My father, Russell Darling, was the Sub-postmaster at Ardbeg Road po from 1947 to 1968, when he retired. I enclose a scanned photograph of him in front of the post office around the late 1950s (a guess as the original is not dated). The phone box in your picture was there at the time of my photograph as the shadow just shows. There was also a pillar box at the junction of Wyndham Road, the postal address of the office, and Ardbeg Road with a sign pointing to the post office. The stamp machines seem to have disappeared. I also enclose scanned images of two first day covers with the Ardbeg Road cancellation. It looks as if it is the same one as featured in your article. Interestingly, the day and month are swapped around compared with the older ones and those of the other Bute ones that you feature! I have been a subscriber to the *Bulletin* for some 15 years, and always enjoy its articles. RUSSELL DARLING, HADDINGTON, EAST LOTHIAN ●

Coronation Anniversary stamps The first complete ascent of Everest was commemorated in the Extreme Endeavours set, but would it not have been imaginative and appropriate to use a striking image of the mountain as a backdrop on one

stamp in the Coronation Anniversary issue? The timing and Britishness of the achievement causes it to be inextricably linked in our minds with the Royal event. Coronation Day (2 June 1953), also triggered something else – the launch of mass, and now obsessive, television-watching in this country. But it was perhaps wise not to attempt to commemorate this descent from Coronation to Coronation Street! DAVID MUNRO, OLD KILPATRICK, WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE ●

Christmas stamps The 2nd and 1st class Christmas stamps exist from three sources: sheets of 50, books (folded sheetlets) of 24 (2nd class) and 12 (1st class), and Smilers sheets of 20. All were printed by De La Rue, the Smilers in litho, the others in gravure. There is, in my view, no appreciable difference between the stamps in sheets and books but the 2nd class from Smilers sheet appears brighter than those from other sources; most notably, the snow has a more pinkish tinge about it. On my supply the Queen's head is positioned slightly higher on the Smiler printing and the phosphor band goes almost to the right edge of the stamp. The band is also quite thickly applied and feels rough to the touch compared with that applied by the gravure process.

I like the designs of these Christmas stamps – they are rather unusual, and one of the best sets of Christmas stamps you have issued. G LANE, LONDON SW19 ●



Postal pubs John Meek sends a photograph of 'The Queen's Head' in Acton Street, London WC1, whose sign is based on the Victorian 10s stamp of 1884. Roy Wood submits a photo of 'The Post Office Arms' in Hemel Hempstead. He writes: 'This establishment is known from as early as 1870, and, as far as I know, is the only pub of this name in the country. It is a charming little aside to know that it was known affectionately for some time as "The Patch", which some believed to be a reference to the postage stamp. However, it was because the landlady of the time, being without sufficient funds, hung patchwork quilts at the windows in place of curtains' •

Dropping the mail A number of readers wrote to us about this story in the September *Bulletin* (p6). Frank Tanner wrote: The illustration is extremely interesting. Like you I suspect much of it comes from the artist's imagination. However in 1919 a number of Handley Page o/400 aircraft which looked vaguely like the illustration were modified to carry bundles of newspapers to be released using static line parachutes. For reference see pp148 et seq of *Handley Page Aircraft Since 1907* by C H Barnes (Putnam, 2nd edn 1987).

P Fowke commented: I read with interest the 'Dropping the Mail' in September. When serving in the Royal Navy, on board the aircraft carrier *HMS Eagle* in 1969-70, we sailed for Boston, Mass, after having completed exercises in the Mediterranean. En route, in mid Atlantic, the RAF dropped mail by parachute, I believe, on two occasions. This was recovered by aid of the ship's boats. I seem to remember that the aircraft was a Shackleton, and needless to say the mail was received by the ship's company in a most welcome manner.

Sqn Ldr (Rtd) J H Witherow writes: The delightful and, may I say, typical drawing of the aircraft dropping the mail is exactly how these (still) new, great wonders were seen by the layman! Whether it was a 'Bristol' aircraft, I cannot say, these many years by! However, the artist clearly had some basic knowledge of observation (ex-1914-18?). RAF aircraft, right up to the Second World War, certainly displayed the red, white and blue roundels, edged with white on such camouflaged, green surfaces. They also had lettering with numbers such as shown, but only on the undersides of the wings, reading one way on one wing, one way on the other, so that they could be read by a person on the ground with the aircraft approaching or withdrawing overhead! There were no letters on top; smaller ones on the rear of the body (fuselage); and certainly never roundels on the tailplanes! All very quaint! Such aircraft were frequently so drawn in those days; one is reminded of airmail stamps from many countries – eg India 1929, SG 220, 258, etc. The toys adverts/boxes, particularly on page 13, certainly took me back – see my attic! •

Prize draw Win forthcoming *Letters by Night* prestige book

WE HAVE six of the new book, to be issued on 16 March, to give away – to the senders of the first six cards drawn on 12 March. To enter the draw, simply write your name and address on the back of a postcard and send it to: Prestige Book Draw, British Philatelic Bulletin, Royal Mail, 148 Old Street, London EC1V 9HQ •



Letters for the rich, letters for the poor

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



FIRSTLY, identify the stamp from the detail above. Send your answer to February *Identify* Competition. Secondly, test your philatelic knowledge by answering the questions below. Send your answer to February *Knowledge* Competition.

- 1 In which year did the Travelling Post Office start?
- 2 Who designed the 1996 Christmas stamps?
- 3 What was the colour of the George VI £1 definitive stamps?



November identify The detail is from the 1987 Heraldry 22p stamp (Arms of the Duke of Rothesay). The winner was J Holmes of Suffolk.

November knowledge The answers: 1) Black; 2) Izaak Walton; 3) Spain. The winner was J Fryer of Lancashire.

Ten runner-up prizes were also sent for each competition. Our thanks to all who entered.

Send your answer (addressed to either February *Identify* competition or February *Knowledge* competition), name and address on a postcard or back of a sealed envelope to: British Philatelic Bulletin, Royal Mail, 148 Old Street, London EC1V 9HQ. The senders of the first cards drawn in each competition on 19 March will each receive £100. Ten runner-up prizes of presentation packs or first day covers will be awarded in each competition. The competitions are not open to Royal Mail employees •

Events

7 February Streetley PS Stamp Fair at Collingwood Centre, Collingwood Drive, Pheasey, Birmingham B43 7NF, 10.00-16.30. Car parking near centre. National stamp dealers, displays, light refreshments. Admission 20p (children 10p). **Enquiries** M Chapling, 0121 329 2487.

17 February North of Ireland PS Grand Auction at Huntershouse College, Upper Lisburn Road, Finaghy, Belfast, 19.45 (viewing 17.30-19.30). **Enquiries** N Scott, 028 90 795530.

21 February Scout and Guide Stamps Club Annual Exhibition at Baden-Powell House, Queen's Gate, South Kensington, London SW7, 10.30-16.30. Displays, Scout stamps, covers, etc on sale. Admission free. **Enquiries** G Osborne, 01256 328831, or see website www.sgsc.org.uk

25-29 February Spring Stampex, at the Business Design Centre, London N1. For full details of events and opening times, see p164. **Enquiries** Stampex 01252 628006.

26-28 February Philatex at Royal Horticultural Hall, London SW1. **Enquiries** C Rainey 01793 513431 or T Davis 020 8946 4489.

28 February GB Philatelic Society display – George VI High Values by Peter Dawson – at Spring Stampex, 14.00. **Enquiries** C Harman, Greylands, Melton, Woodbridge IP12 1QE.

28 February Welsh Philatelic Society meeting at Aberystwyth. **Enquiries** P Gaywood, 2 Fairways, Fulwood, Preston PR2 8FX •

Late news

Royal Mail update Some postal rates will rise from 1 April. For example, the basic UK 2nd class rate will be 21p (1st class remains 28p), and the basic rate to Europe will be 40p. Details of new definitives, including a book of overseas postcard rate stamps, will be given in the March *Bulletin*.

After 31 March 2004, retail stamp books affixed to covers by the backing card will no longer qualify for the postmarking service. This is a return to the situation before 2003, after which postmarking rules were relaxed to assess viability and, as stated at the time, Royal Mail reserved the right to review the service. Royal Mail cannot provide the service to an acceptable level of cancellation as the nature of the product is not designed to bear a handstamp. Further information next month.

The Lord of the Rings stamps were printed from plates w1w1w2w2w2w2 as well as w1w1w1w1w1 reported last month ●

Auction news The sale of the Marcus Samuel collection of GB Specimen Stamps at Spink on 3 December realised £737,846. Prices ranged from £43 to over £40,000. A half sheet of 1855-57 4d carmine with type 2 (vertical) overprint made £25,300 (est £10-12,000), and a pane of 20 of the 1867-80 2s cobalt with type 5 overprint realised £16,100 (£4-5000). A marginal Edward VII 2d Tyrian plum with type 17 (horseshoe) overprint went for £26,450 (£5-6000), with a pane of 20 of the 1867-83 5s rose (very deep shade) with type 6 overprint achieving £40,250 (£10-12,000). Spink's auctions on 4-5 February include quality Penny Blacks with red and black Maltese Cross cancels, £5 orange with SPECIMEN overprint, Victoria £1 I.R. OFFICIAL, 1841 2d strip of six of violet-blue shade used on cover, and stamp boxes and related items at estimates ranging from £50 to £100,000 for a Fabergé desk set. Enquiries: Spink, 020 7563 4000. Website: www.spink.com ●

Harmer's auction on 18 December included 51 examples of the Penny Black on envelopes which made £3294 (est £1500), and a valuable surface printed selection went for £8234 (£5500). A selection of 21 English stamp cases, including two

in the form of books, achieved £706 (£550) and a rare brass, four compartment stamp case with each side showing a bust of Queen Victoria sold for £471 (£350). A specialised airmail auction will be held in February. Enquiries: Harmers, 020 8747 6100. Website: www.harmers.com ●

People news Congratulations to Jeffery Matthews for his MBE in the New Year's Honours for 'services to graphic design, especially postage stamps'. Jeffery has designed many fine stamps, notably Royal and Heraldry issues, and has done extensive work on definitives and country stamps ●

The Julian Chapman Memorial Scholarship for 2003 has been awarded to Dr David Stotter, Chairman of the GB Overprint Society and Vice President of the Woking Philatelic Society. He is writing a book on the postal history of the British Morocco Agencies 1907-57 and will visit countries in order to study original sources ●

The GB Philatelic Society has announced the death of Dr Kenneth Statham (1928-2003), a research chemist, well-known for his 19-volume *Essential Guide* to GB 1d red and 2d blue line-engraved stamps. Dr Statham was also interested in gardening, railways, and classical music ●

The 1993 *Christmas Carol* Christmas stamps were designed by Quentin Blake. An exhibition of his work is at the Gilbert Collection, Somerset House, London WC2 until 28 March ●

Picture Postcard Annual The 2004 edition of this popular reference work includes a postcard dealer directory, feature articles, review of 2003, lists of fairs and auction houses, fair dates, and much else. The profusely illustrated, 96 page annual is an excellent read. Price £4.50 (postage UK £1.25, Europe £2, elsewhere £4) from: Reflections of a Bygone Age, 15 Debdale Lane, Keyworth, Nottingham NG12 5HT (telephone 0115 937 4079). Reflections has produced six cards for the Rugby World Cup. The England card shows Martin Johnson, Jonny Wilkinson, and Sir Clive Woodward. Price 50p each, £2.50 set, (postage 30p UK, 60p Europe, £1.20 elsewhere) ●

Royal Mail albums A new album for the new year

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