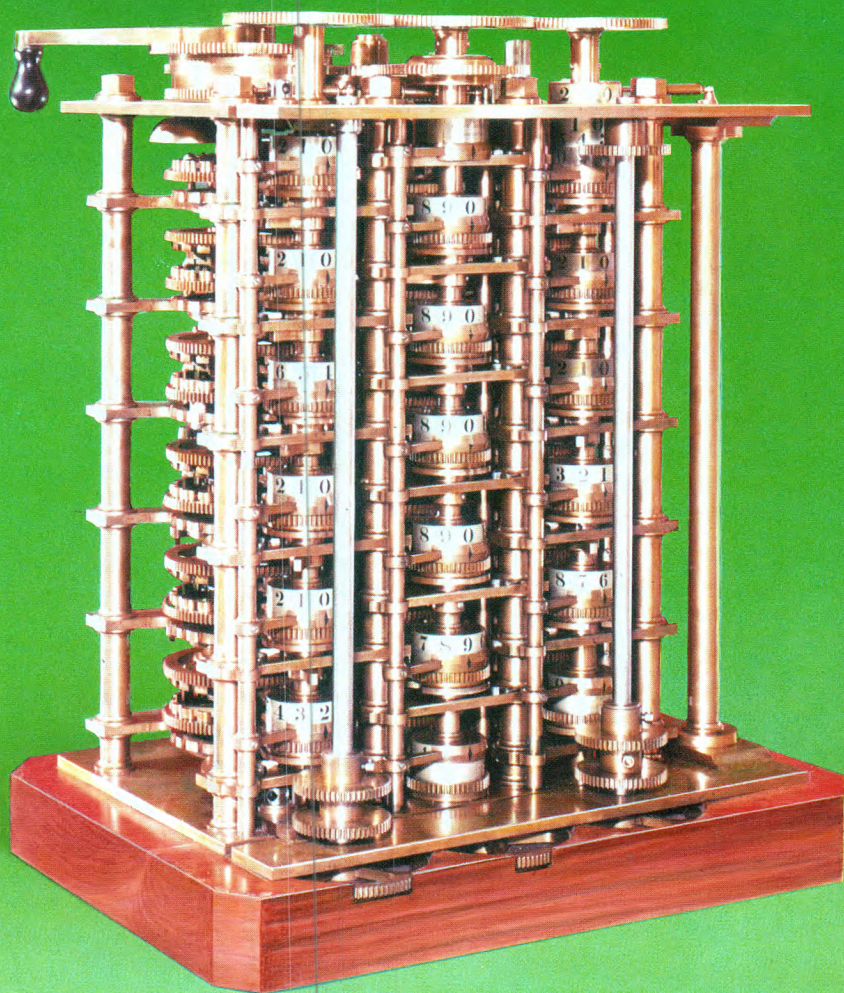


British Philatelic Bulletin

Volume 28

Number 6

February 1991



Contents

- 123 Scientific Achievements
- 124 Royal Mail Canterbury Visits
- Greetings Stamp Books
- 126 Agatha Christie Prestige Book
- 127 Student Stamp Designs
- 128 Greetings Stamps – Smiles
- 129 Dogs stamps cylinders
- New Archives Cards
- 130 Postbag
- 131 Events
- Quantities Issued
- 132 Twenty Years Ago – Decimalisation
- 136 Six Month Digest
- 137 Northeast Philatelic Week-end
- BFP Congress Souvenir
- Competition
- 138 Penny Blue – Fact and Fiction
- 140 Friends of the NPM
- Walsall Perforation Error
- 141 Posting Boxes
- Railway Letter Stamps
- Gems from the Phillips Collection
- 142 Commemorative Covers
- 143 Books
- 144 February Digest
- Royal Mail boost for Stamp Collecting

A Major Event

On 27 November the then Chancellor of the Exchequer, John Major, opened Nomura House, the former Post Office Headquarters Building in St Martin's-le-Grand. Later that day Mr Major was elected Leader of the Conservative Party and next day appointed Prime Minister. The restored Headquarters building was featured in the September 1990 *Bulletin*, page 19. Nomura is a leading Japanese stockbroking company.

FEBRUARY CAPTION

Our front cover shows Charles Babbage's Difference Engine of 1833, courtesy of the Science Museum, London.

1992 Special Stamps Programme

Royal Mail Stamps are pleased to announce preliminary details of the 1992 special stamps programme. A new departure will be stamps on the theme of **Winter**, the first in a set of "Seasons" stamps to be issued in 1992-5. The designs will represent various natural aspects of life in Britain.

The second issue will commemorate the **40th anniversary of HM The Queen's accession** to the throne, on 6 February 1952.

The CEPT **Europa** theme for 1992 is the 500th anniversary of the discovery of America. The theme of Expo '92, the international exposition to be held in Seville (20 April-12 October 1992) will be incorporated into this set.

British Poets is the theme for an issue which will be based on the centenary of the death of Alfred, Lord Tennyson (6 October 1892).

A set of stamps will be issued to commemorate the 350th anniversary of the **English Civil War**, which began with the Battle of Edge Hill on 23 October 1642.

A set on the subject of **Music** will prove popular with the growing number of Music thematic collectors.

Stamps will commemorate the introduction of the **Single European Market** which comes into force on 31 December 1992; Britain takes over the presidency of the European Community in September 1992.

A "green" set of stamps will be issued, based around the theme of **Conservation**.

The final set of the year will be the usual **Christmas** issue in November.

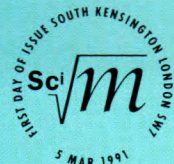
Dates of issue and further details will be published in due course.

NPM Penny Red Display

The 150th anniversary of the Penny Red is being marked by an open display of Penny Red stamps from the Phillips Collection in the main gallery of the National Postal Museum; the stamps were previously only to be seen in the pull-out display frames. This open display can be seen until the end of 1991. Included are the famous "Rainbow Trials" of 1840, matched pairs of Penny Blacks and Penny Reds, experimental cancellations and near complete sheets of the Penny Red and Twopence Blue with added white lines. The Museum is open Monday-Thursday 9.30am to 4.30pm and Friday 9.30am to 4pm, admission free.

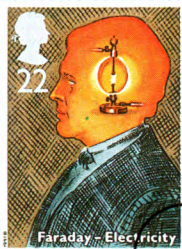
Scientific Achievements

5 March 1991



Four stamps honouring British scientific achievements will be issued on 5 March. The stamps commemorate the bicentenaries of the births of Charles Babbage and Michael Faraday and the 50th anniversaries of the first flight of Sir Frank Whittle's jet engine and the use of radar in the Second World War.

The two 22p stamps (basic inland first class and EEC rate) feature profiles of Faraday and Babbage with representations of their inventions. The 31p stamp (airmail postcard rate) depicts radar and the 37p stamp (airmail Zone 2) features the jet engine.



Michael Faraday was born in London in 1791 and was apprenticed to a bookbinder. Interested in science, he was engaged in 1813 by Sir Humphry Davy to assist him at the Royal Institution in Albemarle Street, London. Twenty years later Faraday was appointed the Institution's Professor of Chemistry. In 1821 he developed an electric motor based on electromagnetism followed, a decade later, by a dynamo, generating electricity through mechanical power. His experiments with electricity continued into the early 1850s; most were written up as "Experimental Researches on Electricity" in the *Philosophical Transactions*. Faraday died at Hampton Court, where he had lived in retirement, in 1867.

Charles Babbage was born at Totnes, Devon in 1792 and was educated at Cambridge where he became Lucasian Professor of

Mathematics in 1823. He is noted for his work on the theory of logarithms and for his calculating machine which is regarded as the forerunner of the modern computer. His unfinished machine can be seen in the Science Museum in London. He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1816 and died in 1871.

The jet engine is always associated with **Sir Frank Whittle** who was born in 1907. Educated at Cranwell and Cambridge, Whittle patented a turbojet engine at age 22 and in 1936 set up Power Jets Ltd. In the late 1930s he worked, initially part-, later full-time, for the Air Ministry on jet engines and in 1941 his Gloster jet engine flew at 350 mph. In 1946-8 he was technical adviser to the government on engine design and was knighted in 1948. His work was recognised by his election to a fellowship of the Royal Society in 1947 and the award of the Order of Merit in 1986.

The key man in the development of radar, **Sir Robert Watson Watt** was born in Brechin in 1892 and educated at Dundee and St Andrews. As early as 1919 he took out a patent for a radio direction finding device and after 1935 he headed a team researching radar. He became Scientific Adviser to the Air Ministry in 1940. The importance of radar was appreciated during the Battle of Britain and he was knighted for his work in this field in 1942. After the war his research continued into the use of radar for more peaceful purposes; he died in 1973.

Technical Details

The stamps were designed by Peter Till (22p stamps) and John Harwood (31p and 37p values) and printed by Harrison and Sons Limited in photogravure on phosphor-coated paper. They are of vertical format, 31 x 40mm, printed in sheets of 100 with PVA Dextrin gum. Perforation measures 14 x 15.

Presentation Pack

The pack (No. 216) will cost £1.40; it was designed by Giant, with text by Neil Ardley, printed by Raithby, Lawrence.

Royal Mail Stamp Cards

Cards, featuring enlargements of the stamp designs, will be available approximately two weeks before the stamp issue, price 19p each. They are numbered 133A-D.

First Day Cover

The Royal Mail first day cover will be available from the British Philatelic Bureau, "Collections" centres, philatelic counters and main post offices approximately two weeks before 5 March, price 19p. Two pictorial postmarks will be used for the first day cover service — one for the Bureau, the other for South Kensington, SW7 (location of the Science Museum).



A first day cover service will be provided by the Bureau with the official Royal Mail cover addressed to the destination required with the stamps cancelled with the requested postmark. Application forms, available from the Bureau and main post offices, should be returned not later than 5 March.

Collectors may send their own cards/covers for the pictorial postmarks; these should be sent on the first day of issue in a stamped outer envelope endorsed "Pictorial First Day of Issue Postmark" to: British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, EDINBURGH EH3 5TT (Bureau postmark) or London South Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail London South West, 53 Nine Elms Lane, LONDON SW8 5BB (South Kensington postmark). Collectors wanting their cards/covers returned under cover should enclose a suitable addressed envelope. This need not bear additional postage stamps, the postage being already paid by the stamps affixed to the covers for postmarking.

First Day Posting Boxes will be provided at most main post offices for those collectors who

wish to post covers to receive the standard, non-pictorial "First Day of Issue" handstamps.

Pictorial First Day postmarks, showing the City coat of arms and the Cathedral will be used respectively by the London North SHC, Royal Mail City and International, King Edward Street, LONDON EC1A 1AA and the Pictorial First Day of Issue Postmark Duty, Royal Mail, 33 Silver Street, DURHAM DH1 3RE. These handstamps were introduced in January 1989 and March 1988 respectively.

A number of special handstamps sponsored by stamp dealers and others, will be used on 5 March - details of these will be found in the *British Postmark Bulletin*, available on subscription from the British Philatelic Bureau.

Souvenir Cover

A souvenir cover, of similar design to the first day cover, will be available from "Collections" centres and philatelic counters from 6 March, price 19p. This will be on sale for one year.

Royal Mail Canterbury Visits

Royal Mail Canterbury have recently produced a postcard showing one of the District's latest 17 ton Leyland Freighter vehicles bearing the new Royal Mail logo. The card has been produced as a souvenir for visitors to Royal Mail Canterbury's Mechanised Letter Office. Readers in-



terested in visiting the office should contact: Business Customer Care Manager, Royal Mail Canterbury, Military Road, CANTERBURY, Kent, CT1 1AA. Please note that this card is only available to visitors and is not being sold to collectors.

Greetings Stamp Books

Both 1991 Greetings stamp books - Good Luck Symbols (5 February) and Smiles (26 March) will be available with cylinder numbers; one in nine books will contain the numbers.

ROYAL MAIL
FIRST DAY COVER



Mrs J Robinson
200 Manorbier Road
ILKESTON
Derbyshire
DE7 4AB



ROYAL MAIL MINT STAMPS



of us the summit of our
the passage through the skies at
ventions, but prime among
electrical power supply, the
INDICES that drive it through
gress along invisible
ups commemorates some of
but led to these achievements
munity of the scientists and
ey came about.

Alias Agatha Christie



Royal Mail First Day Cover

Mrs J Robinson
200 Manorbier Road
ILKESTON
Derbyshire
DE7 4AB



BRITISH PHILATELIC BUREAU
OF ISSUE
15 MAR 91
15 MAR 91
15 MAR 91
15 MAR 91
15 MAR 91
15 MAR 91

Agatha Christie

£6 Prestige Stamp Book

19 March 1991



The 1991 Prestige Stamp Book will be issued on 19 March and will feature the life and times of Agatha Christie. The book, designed by Trickett and Webb Limited and printed by The House of Questa Limited, contains four new stamp panes and three new single stamp variations.

The book contains details of a competition to win a trip for two to Paris on the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express, the train made famous in one of Agatha Christie's works.

Stamp Panes

There are four panes of Machin definitive stamps, each with an illustrated stub: (1) 6 x 17p; (2) 9 x 22p; (3) 6 x 22p, 2 x 33p and 1 label; (4) 6 x 17p. Panes 1 and 4 will contain stamps with a central phosphor band; panes 2 and 3 will be on phosphor coated paper. All stamps cover basic inland postal rates: 17p and 22p – second and first class letters up to 60g, 33p – first class letters between 60 and 100g.

All panes have selvedge, giving a miniature sheet effect, and also have a vertical column of rouletting near the binding margin for ease of removing the complete stamp pages from the book if desired.

Stamp Variations

The book will yield three new stamps:

1. 17p Litho, centre band
2. 22p Litho, PCP
3. 33p Litho, PCP

First Day Cover

A Royal Mail first day cover envelope will be available from the British Philatelic Bureau, "Collections" centres, philatelic counters and most main post offices approximately two weeks before 19 March, price 19p. The usual facilities will be provided on 19 March at offices with first day posting boxes.

The British Philatelic Bureau will provide its usual first day cover service and there will be two pictorial postmarks, one for the Bureau and one for Marple, Cheshire. The Royal Mail cover, addressed to the destination required, bearing the mixed value pane cancelled with the

Bureau or Marple pictorial postmarks will be serviced by the Bureau. Application forms, available from the Bureau and main post offices, should be returned not later than 19 March.

Customers requiring only the special pictorial postmarks may obtain them under the reposting facility by sending on 19 March covers bearing the new stamps/panes under a stamped outer cover endorsed "Pictorial First Day Post-



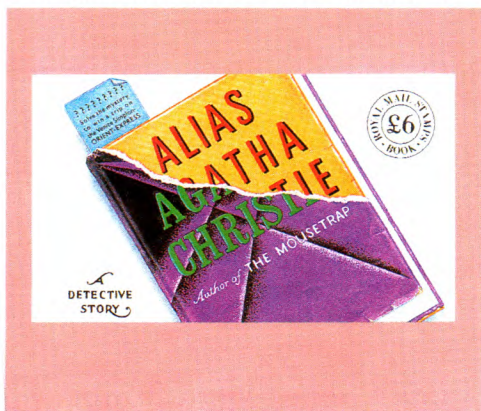
mark - Agatha Christie" to: British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, EDINBURGH EH3 5TT (Bureau postmark) or Northern England Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail House, Forth Street, NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE NE1 1AA (Marple postmark). Collectors wishing their first day covers to be returned under a protective cover should provide an addressed envelope of suitable size. This need not bear additional postage stamps, the postage being already paid by the stamps affixed to the covers for postmarking.

Agatha Christie

Agatha Christie, Britain's best-known and most-loved crime writer, was born Agatha Mary Clarissa Miller at Torquay, Devon on 15

September 1890. As a young girl she lived in something of a "world of her own" and she remained a very private person to the end of her days. She rarely gave interviews and when she did gave very little away. Her first marriage to Colonel Christie ended in divorce in 1928 but her second marriage (in 1930) to the archaeologist Max Mallowan was happier and she accompanied him on many of his explorations.

Under the name Agatha Christie she wrote over 70 mystery novels and nearly 20 plays, becoming the best-selling author ever. Her first book *The Mysterious Affair at Styles* was published in 1920 and a two-hour film version was shown on London Weekend Television to mark the centenary of her birth. Television and cinema keep Agatha Christie's work in the public eye. Successful films have been made of *Death on the Nile* and *Murder on the Orient Express* and the television plays featuring her best-known characters Miss Marple and Hercule Poirot, attract huge audiences. Her most famous play *The Mouse Trap* is still running at the St Martin's Theatre in London - the longest running play in the west end, having started at the Ambassadors Theatre on 25 November 1952. Her books are never out of print and although sales dwindled after her death, the TV series and centenary celebrations have increased sales and interest.



Agatha Christie was awarded the CBE in 1956 and created a Dame in 1971; she died in 1976. She would no doubt be amazed by the interest her centenary has aroused but pleased that her books and plays still give so much pleasure to millions. With the vogue for nostalgia - the charm of village life, steam railways and detective work without the aid of computers - her works look like giving that pleasure for many years to come.

Student Stamp Designs

The Royal Society of Arts travelling exhibition of student designs will be at the Bournemouth & Poole College of Art & Design, Wallisdown Road, Poole, Dorset, BH12 5HH from 18 February to 8 March and at the Staffordshire Polytechnic Flaxman Gallery, College Road, Stoke-on-Trent ST4 2DE from 18 to 29 March. Details of the 1989-90 RSA Student Design Competition and exhibition were published in the July 1990 *Bulletin*.

Shown here are 1989-90 competition designs for World Student Games stamps by Emma Wiegold of Croydon College.



Shakespeare will be the theme for the Postage Stamp section of the 1990-91 design competition sponsored by Royal Mail Stamps. Students may interpret The Bard in any way they wish; they might bear in mind that the Shakespeare Globe Centre, Bankside, London is to open in 1993 - the 400th anniversary year of *Titus Andronicus* and *The Taming of the Shrew*. The winners of the competition will be announced at the award ceremony in London in May and it is hoped to illustrate some of their work in the *Bulletin*.

Correction

In the preview of the Country stamps in the November *Bulletin* we stated that the colours are as the equivalent values of the national definitives. In error we referred to the 19p flame instead of 22p flame. The current first class rate is of course 22p; 19p was the first class rate from September 1988 to October 1989; 19p stamps were also of flame colour.

Greetings Stamps – Smiles

26 March 1991



The “Smiles” Greetings stamps issued in February 1990 proved very popular with the general public and the design world. The stamps beat strong competition to win the Graphics section of the BBC Design Competition last June. This popularity has encouraged the Royal Mail to reintroduce these stamps for long-term use. Thus the stamps will be reissued, this time bearing a first class indicator in place of the 20p rate, on 26 March.

The stamps will be issued in a book rather than a pack and will have 12 Greetings labels attached to the pane of 10 stamps. The book will measure 95 x 69.5mm and there will be margins at the top and bottom of the stamp pane, into which the stamp designs will extend. The new book will sell at £2.20.

The designs remain the same: Teddy Bear, Dennis the Menace, Punch, the Cheshire Cat, the Man in the Moon, Laughing Policeman, a Clown, the Mona Lisa, The Queen of Hearts, and comedian Stan Laurel. The 12 labels carry the following greeting messages: Congratulations (1 label), Keep Smiling (2), Happy Anniversary (1), Best Wishes (2), Happy Birthday (3), With Love (2), and Thank You (1).

Technical Details

The stamps and labels were designed by Michael Peters and Partners Limited and printed by Harrison and Sons Limited by photogravure on the Jumelle press. The stamps, horizontal in format – 41 x 30mm, are printed on non-

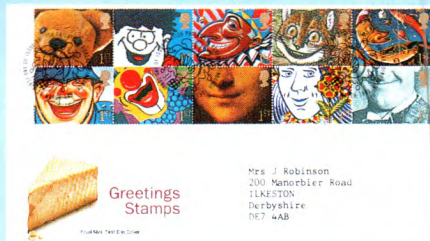
phosphor paper overprinted with two phosphor bands, perforation 15 x 14, PVA Dextrin gum. Cylinder numbers will appear in one in nine books.

First Day Facilities

Royal Mail first day cover will be available from the British Philatelic Bureau, “Collections” centres, philatelic counters and most main post offices approximately two weeks before 26 March, price 19p. Pictorial First Day of Issue postmarks will be provided for the Bureau and Laughterton, Lincs. Application forms for the Bureau first day cover service using these postmarks will be available from the Bureau and main post offices and should be returned to the Bureau by 26 March. Collectors wanting the Bureau or Laughterton postmarks on their own cards/covers should send them, on the day of issue, under a stamped outer cover to: British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, EDINBURGH EH3 5TT (Bureau postmark) or Northern England Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail House, Forth Street, NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE NE1 1AA (Laughterton postmark). Collectors wishing their cards/covers to be returned under cover should enclose a suitable addressed envelope. This need not bear additional postage stamps, postage being paid by the stamps on the covers for postmarking.

First Day posting boxes will be provided at most main post offices for collectors who want to post covers to receive the standard, non-





pictorial "First Day of Issue" handstamps.

Pictorial handstamps showing the City of London Coat of Arms and Cathedral will be used respectively by the London North Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail City & International, King Edward Street, LONDON EC1A 1AA and Pictorial First Day of Issue Postmark Duty, Royal Mail, 33 Silver Street, DURHAM DH1 3RE. These handstamps were introduced in January 1989 and March 1988 respectively. Details of sponsored handstamps to be used on 26 March will be published in the *British Postmark Bulletin*, available on subscription from the British Philatelic Bureau.

Collectors should note that only the pane of 10 Greetings stamps will fit on the Royal Mail first day cover and that collectors who want to affix the stamps with the margins or stamps and labels should provide their own covers.

Souvenir Cover

A Royal Mail souvenir cover, of similar design to the first day cover, will be available, for one



year, from "Collections" centres and philatelic counters from 27 March, price 19p.

David Dale, Manager - Definitive Stamps, Royal Mail Stamps, writes:

This reprint of a recent stamp design is a new

departure for Royal Mail, but is consistent with the nature and purpose of Greetings stamps.

They meet a customer demand for stamps to complement social mail and they give Royal Mail a product which can be sold to retailers and which encourages people to buy more stamps. As such it makes sense to keep them on sale for as long as the public want to buy them and if necessary to reissue them with new values as with other definitive stamps.

In fact these may be the first and last Greetings stamps to be reissued because non-value indicators make this unnecessary. Non-value indicators were trialled for the first time on definitive stamps in the summer of 1989, but there were some problems and we did not feel confident enough to use them for the first issue of the Smiles designs in February 1990. The 1990 issue of non-value indicators was much more successful and it now seems they are here to stay.

We will now have two Greetings products, the Good Luck and the Smiles books, on long term sale. More may follow, but there are no plans to issue more than one per year.

The stamp pack of February 1990 has been replaced by a book to make the product more compact. Some of the largest UK retailers did not take up the first Greetings issue because the packs were difficult to store at the point of sale. The new book will be easier to keep in shop tills and also in purses and wallets.

Dogs stamps cylinders

The cylinders and colours used for the Dogs stamps were:

22p 1A (gold) 1B (greenish-yellow) 1C (magenta) 3D (new blue) 2E (black) 1F (drab)
 26p 1A (gold) 1B (greenish-yellow) 1C (magenta) 1D (new blue) 1E (black) 1F (drab)
 31p 1A (gold) 1B (greenish-yellow) 2C (magenta) 1D (new blue) 1E (black) 1F (drab)
 33p 1A (gold) 1B (greenish-yellow) 1C (magenta) 3D (new blue) 2E (black) 1F (drab)
 37p 1A (gold) 1B (greenish-yellow) 1C (magenta) 1D (new blue) 2E (black) 1F (drab)

New Archives Cards

Post Office Archives will issue four new cards showing Second World War posters on 26 February; available, price 25p each, from Post Office Archives, 23 Glasshill Street, LONDON SE1 0BQ or the Archives stand at Stampex where a Stampex cachet will be applied on request.

Postbag

The article on "Postmark Postcards" by James Negus in the October *Bulletin* resulted in a number of letters from readers which have been forwarded to Mr Negus from the Bulletin office. He is grateful for the information supplied and a follow-up article will appear in due course. Meanwhile readers might be interested to know of seven cards showing Worthing postmarks in the collection of John E O Hobbs, FRPSL who has supplied details. The cards comprise: Handstamps of Worthing – 1. 1806-1905 (shows 8 postmarks); 2. 1840-1981 (8); Handstamps of Worthing Sub Offices (10); Handstamps of Worthing Sub Offices 1-4 (4 cards each showing 7 handstamps from all 28 sub offices in the Worthing area). The cards are available price 15p each unused or 65p each with special handstamp marking 60th anniversary of Chapel Road PO (19 November 1990); postage 25p. All orders/enquiries to: John E O Hobbs, 12 Orphir Road, WORTHING, W Sussex, BN11 2SR.

A number of readers still seem puzzled about the validity of the first issue of Non Value Indicator (NVI) stamps. The first and second class stamps, in black and bright blue, first



issued in August 1989 remain valid for postage at the basic first and second class rates, i.e. 22p and 17p for letters of up to 60g to UK addresses. These stamps would have cost 19p/20p or 14p/15p depending when the books containing them were purchased but it is not necessary to add stamps to make up the current rates. Please note that NVI stamps (first or second issue) should not be used on overseas mail. The new

Greetings stamps, to be issued this month, will also bear first class indicators so they can continue to be used after the next postal tariff revision. Such indicators were first introduced in 1982 on the now obsolete Postnote and are still found on the stamped envelopes, registered envelopes and aerogrammes. Stamped stationery, although not so popular with collectors as adhesive stamps, is both convenient, and economic, for correspondence. It should be remembered that Rowland Hill envisaged that stamped stationery would be the main form of prepaid postage, the success of the adhesive stamp somewhat surprised him.

In the July *Bulletin* mention was made of the addition of the copyright symbol alongside the date 1990 on the Thomas Hardy stamp. A number of you have asked when such dates were introduced on British special stamps. The answer is the Flowers issue of 20 January 1987.



The date is incorporated to make life simpler for collectors sorting stamps (kiloware for example); having put the stamps in year order, it is then relatively easy to find them in a catalogue. The date is not incorporated on stamps on which the inscription clearly indicates the year of issue, for example the Birds stamps of January 1989 which were clearly inscribed RSPB 1889-1989. In most instances the date is easy to find which is often not the case with Canadian stamps where the year is usually hidden and takes some finding – I refer readers to the letter from G R Mackie of Ontario in the July 1987 *Bulletin*; the illustrations accompanying his letter show what I mean! As a footnote to this subject, it is interesting to note that the name of the designer and printer were included at the foot of some British stamps in the 1960s, beginning with the Post Office Tower issue of 1965. The *Bulletin* at the time described this addition as experimental, the names were last given on the Concorde stamps of 1969.

Events

Spring Stampex 1991 will be held at the Royal Horticultural Society halls, 26 February to 3 March. Details were given in last month's *Bulletin*. There will be a Royal Mail sales counter, a Stamp Bug area for young collectors and National Postal Museum and Post Office Archives stands where postcards, books and souvenirs will be available. A special cachet will be applied to cards purchased at the NPM and Archives stands. A special handstamp will be used on mail posted at the Royal Mail stand. Collectors unable to visit the exhibition may obtain the postmark by sending stamped,



The National Postal Museum and Post Office Archives stands at Autumn Stampex/BPE, October 1990

addressed covers to: London South Special Handstamp Centre, 53 Nine Elms Lane, LONDON SW8 5BB. Please ask for the Stampex handstamp and state the date required.

Stampex will be open from noon to 7pm on 26 February, 10.30am to 7pm on 27 February-2 March and 10.30am to 6pm on 3 March.

The Bath Postal Museum's main exhibition for 1991 is entitled **Pen to Paper: the story of letter writing, pens and stationery**. On display will be vintage pens from some of the most important manufacturers, including Sheaffer, Parker, Cartier and Conway Stewart. The display will also include letterhead design which often involves fine judgement on such matters as size of image, colour, choice of type face, etc. Examples of work in the fascinating process of designing letterheads will be on show. The Museum is situated at 8 Broad Street, Bath BA1 5LJ, Tel. 0225 460333.

The **Scout & Guide Stamps Club** will hold its annual exhibition in the library (second floor) of Baden-Powell House, Queen's Gate, South Kensington, SW7 on 23 February. Opening hours: 11am to 5pm, admission free. Enquiries about the Club and exhibition to: Peter Duck, 256 St Margaret's Road, TWICKENHAM TW1 1PR, Tel. 081-891 5746.

Quantities Issued

Numbers are given here of machine, counter and window books issued October 1988-July 1989:

50p	Gil./Sullivan 2 (24/1/89)	4,535,950
50p	Gil./Sullivan 3 (25/4/89)	3,685,225
50p	Marine Life 2 (18/7/89†)	1,999,675
£1	Chas. Dickens 3 (24/1/89)	4,687,225
£1	Chas. Dickens 4 (25/4/89)	1,904,000
£1	Marine Life 3 (18/7/89)	916,675
£1.40	Fox Talbot (24/1/89)	539,200
£1.90	Fox Talbot (24/1/89)	758,950
£1.90	Greetings (31/1/89)	2,705,225
£5	Scots Connection (21/3/89)	286,775

56p	Type 3 (11/10/88†)	3,131,225
76p	Type 3 (11/10/88†)	5,326,725
£1.08	Type 3 (11/10/88†)	424,700
£1.40	Type 3 (11/10/88†)	8,502,100
£1.90	Type 3 (11/10/88†)	13,777,700

† = includes reprint 8/8/89

‡ = includes subsequent issues of January 1989 (50p & £1) and May/July 1989 (£1.40 & £1.90); separate figures not available.

Twenty Years Ago – Decimalisation

JOHN HOLMAN

Twenty years ago this month Britain “went decimal”. Although a decimal based currency had been considered during Queen Victoria’s reign, it was not until 1963 that a government committee, under Lord Halsbury, recommended its introduction in its present form. The Decimal Currency Act was passed in 1967 and the first decimal coins (5p and 10p) were introduced the following year. The 50p coin followed in 1969. Decimal Day was set for 15 February 1971 when new ½p, 1p and 2p coins would go into circulation. The Post Office spent a lot of time and energy in ensuring a smooth transition of its operations from the £sd to the decimal currency. However it did not foresee that D-Day would fall in the middle of a protracted postal strike – not only were national mail collections and deliveries suspended but most post office counters (other than sub offices) were closed. The preparatory work was not wasted and once services resumed on 8 March the change-over went smoothly.

Preparation

In preparation for decimalisation, the ½d coin was demonetised from 1 August 1969 and the ½d Machin stamp was withdrawn from general sale on 30 June 1969. Although the half-crown

100 instead of £sd sheets of 40. Decimal Postage Due (To Pay) stamps were also issued on 17 June 1970. All £sd stamps were withdrawn from general sale (theoretically) on 12 February 1971; those offices open for business on Monday 15 February sold the new decimal low value stamps issued that day, as well as the decimal high values. The £sd stamps remained valid for postage and could still be purchased from the Philatelic Bureau and philatelic counters.

The first Decimal Low Values

Twelve stamps went on sale on D-Day – ½p turquoise, 1p crimson, 1½p charcoal grey, 2p green, 2½p pink, 3p bright blue, 3½p grey green, 4p light sepia, 5p pale violet, 6p light green, 7½p light brown and 9p orange & black. All were printed on coated paper with PVA gum in sheets of 200 by Harrisons, and with the exception of the 2½p value had two phosphor bands. The 2½p second class stamp had a central band. The 50p stamp book yielded one additional stamp – the 2½p with a phosphor band at left. It is interesting to note that this set of 13 stamps has now grown to about 150. Whilst we still have 1p, 2p, 3p, 4p and 5p stamps on sale, only the 1p and 2p remain in their 1971 basic colours.

When normal postal services were resumed on 8 March, collectors could buy a presentation pack (No 26) containing one of each value (50p) and special sealed packets containing 14 stamps – one of each value (face value 45½p) plus one additional 2p and 2½p stamps to make a 50p selling unit. These packets, it was explained in the *Bulletin* at the time were to “reduce philatelic pressure at counters on D-Day”.

Four new decimal stamp books were issued – 10p containing two each of the ½p, 1p, 1½p and 2p stamps; 25p containing 9 x 2½p and 5 x ½p; 30p – 10 x 3p and 50p – 10 x 3p, 7 x 2½p and 5 x ½p. There were various interesting set-tenant arrangements and some panes included advertising labels. Some of these panes are now quite scarce. The covers of the 10p books featured letter boxes (designs by Ronald Maddox); the 25p showed Veteran Transport (David



Last day of halfpenny coin – 31 July 1969

coin was similarly demonetised on 1 January 1970 the 2s6d stamp remained on sale. The first decimal stamps – 10p, 20p and 50p high values – were issued on 17 June 1970; the £1 Machin stamp continued but printed in decimal sheets of



Gentleman); the 30p Birds (Harry Titcombe) and the 50p Wild Flowers (Rosalie Southall).

Coils were produced containing 1p, 2½p and 3p stamps and a mixed value roll of five stamps (2p, ½p, ½p, 1p, 1p). Machines outside post offices dispensed either 1p stamps or the mixed value 5p strip. This strip yielded three new singles of interest to the specialist collector – ½p, 1p and 2p with Gum Arabic as opposed to PVA.

In addition to the postage stamps, new low value (½p–5p) Postage Due (To Pay) stamps were introduced on 15 February. Unpaid or underpaid inland mail was then subject to double the (second class) postage deficiency on delivery. Thus an unstamped letter of basic weight would have been charged 5p on delivery (2 x 2½p). The present system of the deficiency plus surcharge fee was not introduced until 1983.

First Day Facilities

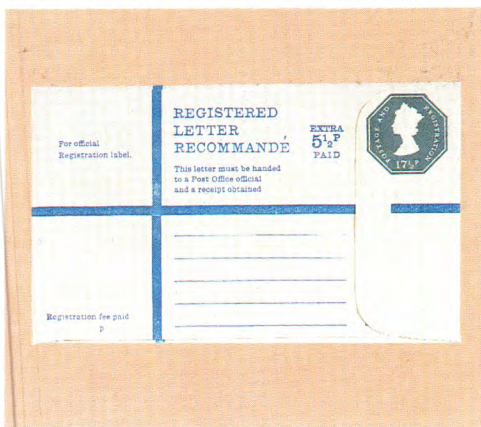
As most crown offices were closed and letter boxes sealed on 15 February it was impossible for most collectors to post themselves first day covers. A few offices were open and stamps could be used on mail to local addresses as deliveries continued to be made within that area. A list of offices providing such local services is given in the appendix to this article. It is not claimed that this list is complete and I should be pleased to hear from readers who can add to the listing. Such mail received ordinary operational postmarks and these “local” first day covers are worth searching for.

When offices reopened, first day boxes were provided on 12 and 13 March for collectors to post their covers. All covers were given the 15 February 1971 First Day of Issue handstamp and most received an additional cachet worded

POSTING DELAYED BY THE POST OFFICE STRIKE 1971. These cachets were made locally and there are thus many variations. Readers interested in these are referred to the detailed study by Roger M Bloomfield published in James Mackay's *Postal History Annual* for 1981, 1982 and 1984 and Chapter 6 of *Twenty Years of First Day Postmarks* by Brian Pask & Colin Peachey (published by the British Postmark Society, 1983.) (The *Twenty Years* book is available from Mr Peachey, 19 Moorland Road, HEMEL HEMPSTEAD, HP1 1NH; the *Annuals* may still be available from Vera Trinder Ltd, 38 Bedford Street, LONDON WC2E 9EU.) The First Day of Issue postmark used on covers serviced by the Philatelic Bureau included the Maltese Cross in its design; this style of postmark was used at the Bureau from September 1970 to the end of 1971.

Postal Stationery

New items of postal stationery were officially issued on 15 February but may not have been available at all offices open on that day. The items comprised a postcard with 2½p stamp and lettercards and envelopes (2 sizes) with 2½p or 3p stamps. The postcard was sold at ½p over the postage (i.e. 3p); the lettercards and envelopes at 1p over the postage (i.e. 3½p or 4p). In addition there were three new inland registered envelopes bearing a 17½p embossed



stamps in grey plus a 5½p “uprating symbol” to make up the new 23p rate. These envelopes came in three sizes – G, H and K, sold at 1½p, 2p and 4p respectively over the combined postage and registration fee. As the registration fee for overseas mail was not increased until 1 July, a H2 envelope bearing a 15p embossed stamp in cerise was also available, price 17p. A

G2 envelope with 15p stamp in cerise, for use by forces serving overseas, was available at Forces Post Offices.

In May the large K size envelope bearing the old 35d embossed stamp and a 6p uprating symbol went on sale: this was to use up old stocks and was, to the best of my knowledge, the only dual-currency item actually sold by the Post Office. Registered envelopes bearing a new 23p embossed stamp in grey went on sale on 26 July. A new G2 registered envelope bearing a 20p embossed stamp coloured cherry red was available from 1 July; collectors could obtain copies from the Bureau.

A new 4p aerogramme was issued on 15 February; this was of the same basic design as its 9d predecessor. The rate was increased to 5p and a new aerogramme of that value was issued on 1 July.



Postal Rates

The basic inland rates were increased on decimalisation, the second class rate going up from 4d to 2½p (6d) and the first class from 5d to 3p (7d). The recorded delivery rate was merely decimalised from 9d to 4p, but the registration fee for letters was increased from 3s to 20p (4s). The minimum parcel rate (up to 1½lb) was 15p for "ordinary parcels", 10p for "local parcels".

Basic weight letters to Europe and Surface Mail outside Europe were charged 2p or 4p depending on whether the destination country qualified for "British Commonwealth" or "Foreign" rate. Airmail letters outside Europe were subject to the Zone A, B or C minimum rates of 5p, 7½p or 9p respectively. Postcards to Zone A were charged 2½p, to Zones B and C 4p. Overseas rates were increased from 1 July:

European and Surface Mail letters were charged 3p (Commonwealth) or 5p (Foreign), postcards 3p. Basic airmail rates for letters outside Europe remained the same but the rates for postcards to Zones A and C were increased by ½p and 1p respectively.

Stamp Changes Later in 1971

The 10p stamp changed from a large size, recess-printed high value to a small size, photogravure-printed low value from 11 August 1971. Like the 9p, the new 10p was printed in two colours – described as orange-brown & chestnut in the Gibbons catalogue although officially designated "orange" in the *Bulletin* at the time. The contents of the 10p booklet remained the same but the stamps were repositioned in the panes from the fourth issue, dated August 1971, which went on sale on 14 July. The ½p and 2p and 1p and 1½p stamps were now horizontally as opposed to vertically se-tenant. The 25p, 30p and 50p books with August 1971 date onwards had the perforation arrangement of certain panes altered so that the label could not be confused as a stamp by blind or partially-sighted people.

The stamps issued on 15 February were printed on what is now known as "Original Coated Paper" (OCP). Late in 1971 stamps began to appear on "Fluorescent Coated Paper" (FCP). The OCP, according to the Gibbons *Specialised Catalogue* is off-white, the FCP gives a clearer impression, is much whiter and reacts clearly under ultra-violet light. Such differences are really only of importance to the specialist collector and not found listed in the standard S.G. catalogues.

The presentation pack of low value stamps issued on 15 February was replaced from 25 November by a new pack, No.37, including the new small-size 10p stamp, price 60½p. Likewise the high value decimal pack, No.18, containing 10p, 20p and 50p stamps issued on 17 June 1970, was replaced by pack No. 38 containing the 20p, 50p and £1 stamps.

New Regionals

The Regional stamps for Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, Jersey, Guernsey and the Isle of Man were not altered when the Machin design was introduced in 1967. Jersey and Guernsey "went their own way" in 1969. The stamps for the remaining four "regions" continued in use until decimalisation whereupon the standard decimal definitives came into use. New decimal regionals, bearing the Machin head and



appropriate regional symbol went, on sale on 7 July 1971 – 2½p and 3p values for inland mail, 5p for letters to Europe and Zone A countries and 7½p for Zone B airmail.

End of £sd

When arrangements were being planned for decimalisation the government decided on a maximum 18 month “transition period”. The change over went more smoothly than expected and the transition period ended on 31 August 1971 when the old 1d and 3d coins were demonetised. That left just the old 6d, 1s and 2s coins in use as 2½p, 5p and 10p equivalents. Now just the 2s coin remains in circulation, legal tender still as 10p.

Remaining stocks of £sd stamps were withdrawn from sale at the Bureau and philatelic counters on 24 November 1971 but remained valid for postage up to and including 29 February 1972. A non-pictorial special handstamp was



Last day of validity of £sd stamps - 3 x 2d making 2½p (6d) second class rate postmarked Bristol, 29 February 1972

provided at Windsor on that day for collectors who wanted a last day cancel on the outgoing £sd stamps. From 1 March 1972 covers bearing £sd stamps (other than the Elizabeth II £1 black Machin) were subject to surcharge but covers bearing pre-decimal stamps did escape detection and were

delivered without postage due being collected.

During the year from February 1971 to February 1972 many covers travelled through the post bearing “mixed franking” (e.g. 4d and 1p to make 2½p second class rate) or with old 6d and 7d stamps as equivalent of the 2½p and 3p rates. I wonder how many readers now have examples in their collections? I wish I had kept more at the time.

I hope readers will enjoy this trip down memory lane. To jog my memory I have referred to various 1971 issues of the *Bulletin* and to the Stanley Gibbons *Great Britain Specialised Stamp Catalogue: Vol. 4 Queen Elizabeth II Decimal Definitive Issues* (5th edition, 1988). I am obliged to Lionel Jones, my colleague at the NPM, for help in allowing me to examine his copies of Post Office leaflets relating to decimalisation. Perhaps its a sign of middle age, but it doesn't really seem 20 years ago...

Appendix – Post Offices operating local delivery services during the 1971 strike

The following offices are known to have post-marked mail for local delivery: Aldershot, Hants; Aldridge, Walsall, Staffs; Alton, Hants; Ampleforth, York; Ascot, Berks; Balfon, Glasgow; Balfon Station, Glasgow; Barrington, Ilminster, Som; Brenchley, Tonbridge, Kent; Bromyard, Herefordshire; Camberley, Surrey; Cheddar, Som; Clogher, Co Tyrone; Colyton, Ayr; Datchet, Slough, Berks; Fareham, Hants; Farnborough, Hants; Faversham, Hants; Fleet, Hants; Heathfield, Sussex; Highworth, Swindon, Wilts; Hindhead, Surrey; Horley, Surrey; Horsmonden, Tonbridge, Kent; Hythe, Kent; Ilminster, Som; Liphook, Hants; Muirhead, Troon, Ayrshire; Paisley (Wellmeadow Street); Petersfield, Hants; Polegate, Sussex; Portmadoc, Caernarvonshire; Reydon, Southwold, Suffolk; Roslin, Midlothian; Rothie-Norman, Aberdeenshire; Southwold, Suffolk; Tayinloan, Argyll; Thurgarton, Nottingham; Ventnor, Isle of Wight; Walberswick, Suffolk; West Meon, Petersfield, Hants; Windsor, Berks; and Woburn Sands, Bucks.

Bulletin Back Issues

Back issues are available for one year from the British Philatelic Bureau and the National Postal Museum. Price 50p each February-September 1990, 55p each thereafter.

Binders, price £6, are available by post from the Bureau and to callers at the NPM.

Six Month Digest

Listed below are the issues of the past six months and the proposed dates of issue for stamps until July 1991. Any change in these dates will be notified in the Bulletin. British Philatelic Bureau order codes are quoted where known.

H = Harrison; Q = Questa; W = Walsall, printers
NVI = Non-Value Indicator stamps

2 Aug	Queen Mother stamps (AS419)
2 Aug	Queen Mother pack (AP089)
7 Aug	4 x 2nd NVI book, W (UB021)
7 Aug	4 x 1st NVI book, W (UB022)
7 Aug	10 x 2nd NVI book, W (UB023)
7 Aug	10 x 1st NVI book, W (UB024)
7 Aug	10 x 2nd NVI book, H (UB025)
7 Aug	10 x 1st NVI book, H (UB026)
7 Aug	10 x 2nd NVI book, Q (UB027)
7 Aug	10 x 1st NVI book, Q (UB028)
24 Aug	New Zealand exh. card (EQ023)
28 Aug	Gallantry stamp cards (AQ129)
4 Sep	10p definitive – lt. tan (DS103)
4 Sep	17p definitive – dark blue (DS170)
4 Sep	22p definitive – flame (DS222)
4 Sep	26p definitive – stone (DS262)
4 Sep	27p definitive – mauve (DS271)
4 Sep	31p definitive – ultramarine (DS312)
4 Sep	33p definitive – emerald (DS330)
4 Sep	New Definitives pack (DP013)
4 Sep	50p book (3 x 17p) (TB005)
4 Sep	£1 book (3 x 22p, 2 x 17p) (TB006)
11 Sep	Gallantry stamps (AS424)
11 Sep	Gallantry pack (AP090)
11 Sep	NPM Postal Reform cards (NQ905)
17 Sep	£1.24 book (4 x 31p) (UB029)
17 Sep	17p UL (500) roll (DC043)
17 Sep	17p UL (1,000) roll (DC045)
17 Sep	22p WL (500) roll (DC044)
17 Sep	22p WL (1,000) roll (DC046)
1 Oct	Astronomy stamp cards (AQ135)
16 Oct	Astronomy stamps (AS430)
16 Oct	Astronomy pack (AP091)
16 Oct	Autumn Stampex exh. card (EQ025)
29 Oct	Christmas stamp cards (AQ140)
30 Oct	Our World Book – 2 (PA117)
1 Nov	ASDA National exh. card (EQ027)
13 Nov	Christmas stamps (AS435)
13 Nov	Christmas pack (AP092)
13 Nov	Christmas stamp book (UB030)
13 Nov	Christmas aerogramme (QX012)
13 Nov	1990 Collectors' Pack (AR020)
13 Nov	1990 Year Book (AY020)
13 Nov	NPM Xmas Posters cards (NQ906)

27 Nov	Mixed Value Roll (DC849)
4 Dec	N Ireland 17p (IS170)
4 Dec	N Ireland 22p (IS220)
4 Dec	N Ireland 26p (IS260)
4 Dec	N Ireland 37p (IS370)
4 Dec	Scotland 17p (SS170)
4 Dec	Scotland 22p (SS220)
4 Dec	Scotland 26p (SS260)
4 Dec	Scotland 37p (SS370)
4 Dec	Wales 17p (WS170)
4 Dec	Wales 22p (WS220)
4 Dec	Wales 26p (WS260)
4 Dec	Wales 37p (WS370)
4 Dec	Country stamps pack (CP009)



24 Dec	Dogs stamp cards (AQ146)
8 Jan	Dogs stamps (AS441)
8 Jan	Dogs pack (AP093)
14 Jan	NPM Edwardian PO cards (NQ907)

Forthcoming

5 Feb	Greetings (Good Luck) stamps
18 Feb	Science stamp cards
26 Feb	Spring Stampex exh. card
5 Mar	Science stamps & pack
12 Mar	Scot Aerogramme (Rugby)
19 Mar	Prestige stamp book
26 Mar	Greetings (Smiles) stamps
8 Apr	CEPT/Space stamp cards
23 Apr	CEPT/Space stamps & pack
14 May	NPM Stamping the Mail cards (4)
27 May	Sport stamp cards
11 Jun	Sport stamps & pack
2 Jul	Roses stamp cards
16 Jul	Roses stamps & pack
July	Scot Aerogramme (Gaidhealach)

Note: The eight books issued on 7 August contain Non-Value Indicator (NVI) stamps in new colours – flame (1st) and dark blue (2nd).

Northeast Philatelic Week-end

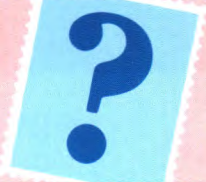
Souvenir books of stamps were produced to commemorate the 14th Northeast Philatelic Week-end at Newcastle upon Tyne last June. The front cover features the Wyon head of Queen Victoria and the Penny Black is shown inside. Books containing 15p stamp cost £3 a pair; with 20p stamps £3.50. The covers were printed by The House of Questa. A few souvenir books from previous week-ends are still available; all these books are private productions and have no connection with the Royal Mail. Orders/enquiries: Mrs Dorothy Martin, 46 Briardene Crescent, Kenton Park, NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE NE3 4RY. Remittances payable to "Dorothy Martin".



BPF Congress Souvenir

A souvenir sheet illustrating four Cambridge college stamps of the 1880s was produced to commemorate the 72nd BPF Congress held at Cambridge last September. The sheet is available imperf or rouletted, price 25p each. A cover bearing the four "labels" from the sheet tied by a College Post postmark costs 50p. Postage 25p on all orders. Proceeds from the sales go to the Invalid & Lone Collectors Society, an honorary member of the BPF. The sheet was designed by John Gilbert and produced by Victor Short. Orders/enquiries: V T Short, Hunters Lodge, Cottesmore Road, Ashwell, OAKHAM, Leics, LE15 7LJ.

Competition



Win £50 worth of British stamps

Enter this month's competition and stand a chance of winning £50 worth of current British philatelic products of your choice — stamps, stamp books, postcards, albums, etc. Answer the questions below, the answers to some will be found in this month's *Bulletin*, and send with your name and address on a postcard to: February Bulletin Competition, National Postal Museum, King Edward Street, LONDON EC1A 1LP to arrive by 31 March.

The sender of the first all-correct entry drawn will each be invited to order £50 of philatelic products; five runners-up will be sent presentation packs of the Europe in Space stamps. Answers and winners' names will be published in the May *Bulletin*.

1. In which city was Michael Faraday born?
2. The 1990 Greetings stamps won which section of the BBC Design Competition?
3. Which 1987 set of special stamps was the first to incorporate the year of issue in the design?
4. On what date was the railway letter post introduced?
5. The first definitive stamps of the present reign included a portrait of The Queen by which famous photographer?
6. A used example of the Penny Blue exists in which important stamp collection?

The winners of the November competition were:

J Knight of Middlesex; K Jansen of Germany; E Hancock of Staffordshire; M Hogarty of New Zealand and N Foley-Fisher of Ireland (1990 Yearbooks); F Codd of Australia; J Whitworth of Humberside; L Joumees of Estonia; A Aris of Oxfordshire and D Powell of Worcestershire (Christmas presentation packs).

The answers were: 1. 1964, 2. Gordon F. Huntly; 3. Painswick; 4. Greenwich; 5. 3s 3½d; 6. 1967.

Our thanks to all who entered.

Penny Blue – Fact and Fiction

KENNETH R LAKE

We are always being lectured about the need to research our stamps, but all too often “research” is taken to mean nothing more than looking back on what the great names of the past have written. Knowing – I confess it – little of early GB printing trials, I was more than a little perplexed by a short article and a letter in a philatelic magazine of 1914, and turned to Douglas Muir (Curator Philately, National Postal Museum), for enlightenment. It’s just as well that I did, for this revealed a thorough mishmash of misinformation amounting to a perfect example of Shakespeare’s “tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing”.

Still, it’s a lovely story and deserves retelling, if only to keep alive some of the strange misapprehensions that so misled our forebears. First, the facts: on 15 December 1840, four sheets of 240 stamps from Plate 8 of the Penny Black were printed in each of these colours: red-brown, full deep blue, and Prussian blue.

The purpose was to supply Rowland Hill with suitable examples so that he could select the best colour for the stamp to replace the unsatisfactory Penny Black. Somehow or other, some copies reached the public and were used postally, thus creating what we must call “The Legend of the Penny Blue”. Gibbons’ *GB Specialised* catalogue, by the way, prices these at £20,000 each, so not many can have escaped from captivity.

Now we turn to the second of our 1914 informants, Mr L W Crouch of Aylesbury. Keen to correct the Legend of the Penny Blue, which he described as “a mere ‘yarn’”, he informs us that:

“There were two printings of these colour trials, one in April 1840, in almost the exact colour of the 2d and the other in October 1840 in blue-black ... the second lot were printed during the course of experiments, which had the object of discovering a suitable fugitive blue ink. Copies are well-known used postally by mistake; they are not errors of colour but the error was on the part of persons who had

somehow come into possession of some of these proofs.”

Here I should stress that we are talking about penny stamps with all the normal appurtenances – no quarter-circles cut out of the corners as in the Rainbow Trials, no voided corners as on the 2d stamps with postmarks found in the R M Phillips Collection (see “Gems” No. 154).

So we see that even the expert got it wrong – and he cited as his own source of information the then respected study by Wright & Creeke. But these are mere matters of detail – important, but not such as to make the hair stand on end or the mouth split in a series of hearty guffaws. For those reactions, we must turn to the tale that Mr Crouch was trying to correct.

As even the veriest tyro knows, all our early stamps were printed at the Whitefriars Street works of Perkins, Bacon & Petch. We also know – as a Treasury Minute dated 19 December 1840 tells us – that the famous white lines on the 2d Blue were inserted to distinguish these (plates 3 and 4) from the earlier issue, as they were printed in the new and more fugitive ink.

Having got those simple facts in our minds, it’s time to turn to the magnificent Legend revealed, under the heading “Great Britain: An Unknown Rarity” by a certain Mr T. Hugh Bryant, writing in 1914. After telling us that the Penny Blue exists, he avers that just three of these actually passed through the post “in error for 2d ones”. It’s *how* he claims this occurred that gave me such great merriment that I wish to share it with you.

“At the end of the year 1840, when the stamps were printed in the basement of St Martin’s le Grand by candle light, the printer was one day ordered to strike off a certain number of 1d stamps, and in getting the ink ready for the purpose accidentally coloured the plate with blue instead of black, probably owing to the bad light. It was not discovered by him until a sheet had been struck off, and as every sheet had to be accounted for, he immediately took it to the Comptroller of the Stamp

Department – Mr William Bokenham – who placed the same in his drawer, and ordered the plate to be immediately cleaned.”

Note the careful description of this poor little overworked, half-blind printer working by candle light in the basement of St Martin’s le Grand – it’s suchlike touches of verisimilitude that make all the best legends live on. More precise details and famous names follow.

“Some days after this, in the usual course of business, he wrote three letters upon which he inadvertently placed these errors of colour, which were posted.”

Let’s take another brief pause, to ask whether such an august figure as the Comptroller would in fact keep a stock of stamps in his drawer and affix them himself, and whether in so doing he would need to use 2d stamps (as we are led to believe he thought them to be) when the inland postage rate was a penny. The plot thickens.

“The next morning he discovered his mistake and wrote to the persons to whom they were addressed to return the stamps. Two were sent back, but the third was stated to have been passed unnoticed and was torn up or burnt.”

This bit I like: it takes him 24 hours to spot his mistake, he takes the leisurely way out of dropping another line to his three correspondents – apparently the only three letters he wrote in a whole day — and he then happily accepted an excuse that one had been “torn up or burnt”. In his shoes — assuming the gentleman ever existed — I think I’d be a lot more concerned than this, don’t you? However, we are now to learn what happened to the two unique returned items.

“One of these rarities was sent by the Comptroller either to the Duke of Edinburgh, or Judge Philbrick, and was exhibited in one of these collections at an exhibition in Baker Street some years afterwards.”

Oh wonderful – we’re not sure to whom he gave it but the names are prestigious enough, and both were philatelists in those early days. And we aren’t given an inkling of an idea why the Comptroller, having chased around to get his mistakes back, then decided to reveal them to the world. What happened to the second copy? Let me tell you – it’s a real delight.

“The remaining stamp now belongs to a friend of mine, who is a grandson of the above-mentioned Comptroller, the latter having given it to him and explained the whole affair.”



A used example of the Penny Blue, now in the Royal Philatelic Collection at Buckingham Palace. Reproduced by gracious permission of H.M. The Queen.

All right, you’ve had your laugh. Now we come to the clever tying-in of a known philatelic fact, the insertion of the white lines on the later printings of the 2d Blue, with this farrago of nonsense.

“In March 1841 a white line was placed on the 2d stamps in order that, in case of further accidents, they could be more easily recognised.”

Doesn’t that gem of inventiveness really put the final seal of authenticity on the matter? In case you are still the weeniest bit worried, Mr Bryant produces his final proof — by holding up expert dealers as fools incapable of recognising the real thing when it’s shown to them.

“Several well-known dealers were shown this stamp some time ago, and not knowing its history, declared that it was either a forgery and (*sic*) had had its colour changed by some chemical process.”

There you are: everyone knows dealers are ignorant. It’s only novice collectors and the grandsons of possibly non-existent Comptrollers, who employ printers in the bowels of St Martin’s le Grand, who know the truth when they hear it. Q.E.D., I suppose.

References:

T. Hugh Bryant: “Great Britain: An Unknown Rarity”, *Stamp Collecting*, 28 February 1914, p.386.

L.W. Crouch: “Great Britain: An Unknown Rarity”, Letter to the Editor, *Stamp Collecting*, 21 March 1914, p.10.

E D Bacon: *The Line-Engraved Postage Stamps of Great Britain printed by Perkins, Bacon & Co.* Vol. 1 (1920), pp.82-87 "The One Penny Blue Colour Trial".

H E Wright & A B Creeke: *A History of the Adhesive Stamps of the British Isles* (1899), pp.22-23.

Stanley Gibbons *Great Britain Specialised Stamp Catalogue: Vol. 1 Queen Victoria*, 9th edition, 1989, p.22.

Editor's Note: In March 1857 Mr Bokenham forwarded an example of the Penny Blue to Ormond Hill for his comment. The reply is now in the Royal Philatelic Collection and a photocopy has kindly been supplied to me by the Keeper of the Collection, Mr John Marriott. The letter, written from Somerset House on 1 April 1857 gives the opinion that the stamp sent was one "from some experimental sheets taken 16 or 17 years ago". With the letter, Hill sent Bokenham "an envelope bearing another such which came here addressed to one of my father's men and which passed safely through your department..." The sender of this stamp had been questioned, he claimed that Penny Blue stamps had been purchased from the son of the late H Goulburn (Chancellor of the Exchequer from September 1841). Hill ended the letter by saying that "as the number of such stamps must be very small we shall not take any further steps in the matter unless more such should be discovered in your Office."

The stamp submitted by Bokenham is also in the Royal Collection and is illustrated here. It is on blued paper, watermarked small crown and has the letter G in the right lower corner, the left corner is missing. It is cancelled by the 17 in diamond postmark used at the General Post Office, London.

Friends of the NPM

The Friends of the National Postal Museum were entertained to interesting talks by David Aggersberg and Hugh Jefferies, Stanley Gibbons Catalogue Editor and Editor of *Gibbons Stamp Monthly*, following the AGM on 24 November. It was appropriate that these representatives of S.G. should address the Friends in the year in which S.G. celebrated the 150th anniversary of the birth of Edward Stanley Gibbons (1840-1913), the 125th anniversary of the publication of the first catalogue ("Penny Price List") and the centenary of the magazine

(originally *Stanley Gibbons Monthly Journal*). The

The Autumn 1990 issue of *Cross Post*, the journal of the Friends, is now available. This contains articles on Rowland Hill by Rachel Hasted; Postal Services GB to Europe, 1801-76 by Geoffrey Oxley; Recorded Delivery Service by L F Newbery and The Peover Papers (earliest extant record of day-to-day PO administration) by Dr J W M Stone. Derek Lang reports on his researches on Indian postal stationery in the De La Rue files in the NPM. *Cross Post* costs £2 (£1.25 to members) and can be ordered from: Hon Secretary - Friends; National Postal Museum, KEB, King Edward Street, LONDON EC1A 1LP.

Walsall Perforation Error

Part of the print run of the 4 x 1st class NVI stamp in the current flame colour by Walsall Security Printers has been perforated in a different gauge. The specification from Royal Mail Stamps is for a minimum perforation gauge of 14 holes per 2 cm and all other stamps printed by WSP have complied with this by having a gauge of approximately 14 on all sides. However the stamps in question are gauge 13 along the vertical sides and 13½ along the horizontal.

The explanation is that WSP have recently expanded their production facilities and as part of this programme have purchased a new perforating tool. This was correctly specified by WSP but has turned out to have been wrongly made. The error was spotted too late to prevent a substantial number of stamps being perforated in the new gauge.

This was not a deliberate change and books perforated with this tool are not being given any "philatelic distribution" by Royal Mail Stamps. This means they will not be on sale from the British Philatelic Bureau, "Collections" or philatelic counters. The stamps will not be listed in the Royal Mail Stamp album, as they are regarded as a "printer's error" rather than an official variety.

The stamps have been issued for general use because the error is not serious enough to make them unacceptable for use. Stamps do not become impossible to tear apart when the perforation gauge falls below 14 and in fact this specification originally applied to sheets of stamps. In books of only four stamps the difference should not be noticeable.

David Dale,
Manager - Definitive Stamps, Royal Mail Stamps

Posting Boxes

117. Replica Penfold Box

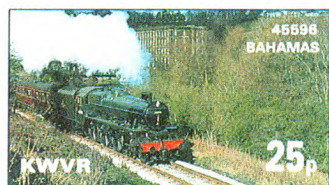
In the November and December 1989 issues we featured two of the replica Penfold boxes now in service in Nairn and Gloucester. This month we show a replica box recently installed in the centre of Hillsborough, Northern Ireland. As can be seen, this box was introduced in style!



The hexagonal Penfold boxes were made between 1866 and 1879. The new replica boxes are exact copies of the original; Royal Mail has been given permission by the Lord Chamberlain to use Queen Victoria's coat of arms and cipher on these boxes. Some early Penfolds were painted green but repainted in red in the 1870s. The new boxes, painted red, can be distinguished from the originals by the manufacturer's name, cast into the base; they are made to special order by Macham Engineering Ltd of Denny, Stirlingshire.

We are obliged to Geoffrey Grindle of London for supplying the photograph which was taken by his nephew Sir Ivan Ewart, DSC.

Railway Letter Stamp

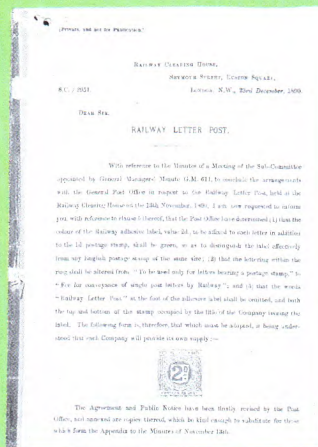


Shown here is the new Keighley & Worth Valley Railway stamp reported in the December *Bulletin*, page 95.

Gems from the R M Phillips Collection

182. Railway Letter Agreement

On 1 February 1891 the Railway Letter Post was introduced, the result of an agreement between the Post Office and over 70 railway companies whereby the companies could accept letters for conveyance by train to a destination station where they would either be called for by the addressee or posted in the nearest PO posting box. The aim was to ensure a quicker transmission of urgent letters and the service was extensively used by businesses. Special railway letter stamps were issued (illustrated in "Philatelic Terms Explained" No. 26, November 1988). The Phillips Collection contains a number of these stamps and essays (see Gems 155,



August 1988), also the printed circular shown here. Dated 23 November 1890, it was sent by the Secretary at the Railway Clearing House to the various companies; it carries a sample railway stamp bearing the fictitious name BENGAL AND NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY. This interesting item can be seen on page 50 of Volume 43 of the Phillips Collection in the National Postal Museum, King Edward Street, London EC1; open Monday-Thursday 9.30am to 4.30pm, Friday 9.30am to 4pm.

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.

Lancaster at Christmas. The Cambridge Stamp Centre produced a special Christmas limited edition cover featuring the famous Second World War bomber, the Avro-Lancaster in the winter snows of 1941. The cover bears the full set of Christmas stamps and is pilot signed; all covers have been flown on at least two types of aircraft on special Christmas flights. This is one in a series of covers. Full details from: Cambridge Stamp Centre Ltd, 9 Sussex Street, CAMBRIDGE CB1 1PA.

Model Engineers. J & M Arlington Ltd in conjunction with Argus Specialist Exhibitions produced a special cover to celebrate the diamond jubilee of the Model Engineers Exhibition (Alexandra Palace, 29 December 1990 - 6 January 1991). The cover features LMS locomotive No. 5674 and bears the 20p Alexandra Palace stamp cancelled by a special handstamp. Price £1.50 plus 50p postage. Orders/enquiries: J & M Arlington Ltd, 45 Lakenheath, LONDON N14 4RL.

Channel Tunnel. To commemorate the official breakthrough ceremony of the service tunnel, Eurotunnel PLC and the British Tunnelling Society jointly sponsored a commemorative cover and a special handstamp used on the day of the breakthrough. Cover A bears British Queen's Award stamp and special handstamp, price £2.25, B - British and French stamps with British and French postmarks and "Carried through Tunnel" cachet, £4.25; C - as B but signed by the President of the Institution of Civil Engineers and the Chairman of the British Tunnelling Society, £6.50. Overseas customers add £1 postage. Orders/enquiries: Pilgrim Philatelics, PO Box 20, CANTERBURY CT1 2XX.

Royal Veterinary College. A cover featuring a dog and the coat of arms of the Royal Veterinary College has been produced by A G Bradbury on behalf of the College which celebrates its 200th anniversary this year. The cover bears the five Dog stamps cancelled by a special handstamp reproducing the College arms. Price £7.50 (overseas add 50p postage). Orders/enquiries: A G Bradbury, 3 Link Road, LEICESTER LE2 3RA.

Crufts. Benhams produced a series of first day covers for the Dogs stamps on behalf of the Kenel Club. Ten different champion dogs are illustrated on the covers, each costs £5.35, complete set £50. Also available are covers with individual Dog stamps and sets of "silk" postcards featuring dog paintings. Orders/enquiries: Benham (A Buckingham) Ltd, The Bayle, FOLKESTONE, Kent, CT20 1SD.

Crufts/NCDL. A cover commemorating the centenary of Crufts and the National Canine Defence League has been produced by A G Bradbury; this bears the 1991 Dogs stamps and the 1979 Dogs set, both cancelled by a special "Best of British Dogs on Show" handstamp of 8 January 1991. Price £9.75. Orders/enquiries: A G Bradbury, 3 Link Road, LEICESTER LE2 3RA.

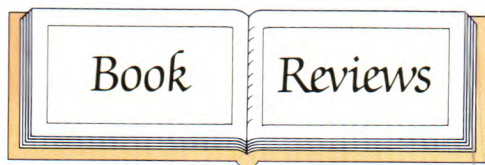
Tate Gallery. A limited edition of 500 covers featuring "Two Hounds in a Landscape" by Stubbs has been produced; this painting, on the 31p Dogs stamp, is in the Tate Gallery. The cover bears all five Dogs stamps cancelled by a special Tate Gallery handstamp. Price £9.75. Orders/enquiries: A G Bradbury, address above.

Birmingham Dogs Home. The Dogs' Home, founded in 1892 and amongst the largest in the country, has commissioned a first day cover for the Dogs stamps. The cover with the five Dogs stamps and special Birmingham Dogs Home handstamp costs £5.75. Orders/enquiries: A G Bradbury, address above.

Fino and Tiny. The set of five stamps featuring the work of George Stubbs issued on 8 January, included on the 37p value the painting of Fino and Tiny which was undertaken for the Prince of Wales (later George IV) in 1791 - exactly 200 years ago. This painting is from The Royal Collection and CoverCraft were given permission to reproduce it on a special first day cover. The cover is printed in full-colour and the picture has a gold-line frame. A unique postmark, also sponsored by CoverCraft, was applied in Liverpool, the birthplace of Stubbs and includes a reproduction of his signature. Price £5 with set of five stamps, £2.50 with 37p stamp only (overseas add £1 for airmail postage). Orders/enquiries: CoverCraft, PO Box 713, LONDON SE19 2HH.

New Bureau Phone Number

With effect from 2 February, the Bureau's telephone number will change to: 031 550 8900.



Twenty years ago, on 20 January 1971, began the "Great Postal Strike" – the most serious disruption to postal services in the history of the Royal Mail. The Minister of Posts waived the Post Office's letter monopoly and several hundred private services were established, with or without official licence. David Stirling's study **1971 Postal Strike Stamps of Scotland: A Treatise** provides a carefully researched catalogue of the many "stamps" issued north of the border by over 20 private services. The listing of the stamps and proofs of the Bannockburn & District Delivery Service alone amounts to over 20 pages! There is no doubt that some operators looked to philatelic sales of their issues, but most did provide a genuine service. In addition Mr Stirling includes the regular parcel stamps of Scottish bus companies which saw increased use during the strike. Mention is made of mail locally delivered from the Scottish Office in Edinburgh and of the fact that volunteer postmen carried essential order books for pensioners from various Social Security offices. A useful guide for collectors of Scottish "cinderella" material. 92 pages, paper covers. Price £10 postpaid UK and overseas seairmail, £13 airmail, from: Glass Slipper, PO Box 92, YORK YO1 1YL.

Interest in postal rates has increased in recent years and collectors now have a choice of three books on the subject. The first, by C Tabeart was reviewed here last October. The two recently published books are by O R Sandford & Denis Salt and David Robinson.

The Postal History Society has published Sanford & Salt's **British Postal Rates, 1635 to 1839** (180 pages, card covers). The work is arranged in four sections covering: 1. rates of postage within the British Isles; 2. rates between the British Isles and overseas destinations or places of origin, including ship-letter rates; 3. rates for printed matter and 4. rates for soldiers' and sailors' letters. Each section is preceded by a list of Acts of Parliament, Post Office notices, Treasury warrants, etc which authorised the establishment and modification of rates; the rates resulting from each change are clearly set out in chronological order. Illustrations of some of the

acts and notices are included. In section 1, no fewer than 42 acts and directives are cited, from Charles I's famous proclamation of 1635 (opening the royal posts to the public) to the Treasury warrant of 5 December 1839 which abolished all local delivery charges on General Post letters. The documents cited in Section 2 date from 1657 – Act for the Settling of the Postage. No book on postal rates can claim to be 100% complete and so for the convenience of users who may wish to annotate the text with the findings of their own research the main text is printed on one side of the page only. Available from: George Henderson, c/o CBD Research Ltd, 15 Wickham Road, BECKENHAM, Kent, BR3 2JS, price £20 (£16 to PHS members).

Mr Robinson's book is entitled **For the port & Carriage of Letters: A Practical Guide to the Inland and Foreign Postage Rates of the British Isles 1570 to 1840** (258 pages, card covers) and is arranged in 57 chapters under three main section headings: 1. Postal Rates within the British Isles; 2. Postal Rates to and from Places Overseas; 3. Reduced and Special Rates. The detailed table of contents is most helpful in enabling the user to very quickly find, for example, Anglo-Scottish rates to 1801, the rates to Madeira, Central America or for "Expresses", Books and Periodicals. As with the Sandford & Salt book, the relevant acts and documents are cited and the rates clearly set out in boxed tables. The inclusion of illustrations of covers and postal markings is most welcome and the various maps will prove useful. The author's foreword clearly sets out his aims: "...to attempt a practical explanation of how rates were actually decided, not merely restate what is in Acts of Parliament." Amongst the many useful explanations are those relating to Scottish and Irish currencies. During the 18th and early 19th centuries, Irish currency had a lower value than British money; when unified in 1826 the Irish currency was worth one thirteenth less than sterling. Irish postal rates of 1784-1826 were defined in Irish currency and there was a clear potential for confusion over the charges made for letters between GB and Ireland. Appendices cover: Postal Legislation; The 1836 Agreement – French Rates; Combined British and American Rates; Combined British/Portuguese Rates; and Letters in Transit through Britain. Available from: David Robinson, 25 Myreton Avenue, KILMACOLM, Renfrewshire, PA13 4LL, price £15 plus £1 postage UK, £2 overseas.

February Digest

Issued in February

5 February: Greetings stamps book containing 10 x first class featuring Good Luck symbols and 12 greetings labels, price £2.20.

Designer: Tony Meeuwissen.

Printing: Harrison & Sons Limited, photogravure. 41 x 30mm, printed on non-phosphor paper overprinted with two phosphor bars, PVA Dextrin gum. Perf. 15 x 14.

Pictorial First Day of Issue postmarks: British Philatelic Bureau and Greetwell, Lincs.

6 February: Greetings stamps souvenir cover, price 19p. Available from "Collections" centres and philatelic counters.

18 February: Scientific Achievements stamp cards, price 19p each.

26 February: Spring Stampex Exhibition card, price £1.50. Available at Royal Mail stand at the exhibition (with exhibition cachet) and from British Philatelic Bureau.

Withdrawn in February

5 February: 1990 Greetings stamp book.

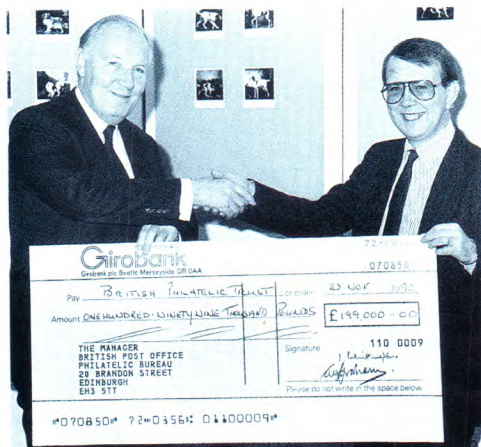
Royal Mail boost for Stamp Collecting

The Royal Mail has aided the hobby of stamp collecting with a further donation of £199,000 to the British Philatelic Trust which supports philatelic activities throughout the country. Keith Fisher, General Manager of Royal Mail Stamps, presented a cheque to Dr Alan Huggins, Chairman of the BPT, at the press preview of the Dogs stamps at the Royal Veterinary College in London on 23 November.

The money comes from the sale of three miniature sheets produced by RMS in support of the Stamp World London 90 exhibition. In all the Trust has received £1,070,000 from the sale of these sheets. Mr Fisher commented: "I am delighted that the miniature sheets proved so popular. The funds raised from their sales have not only helped the British Philatelic Trust to cover the costs of staging the exhibition, but also provided an additional sum which can be used to foster interest in stamp collecting."

Established in 1981, the Trust funds local,

regional and national philatelic activities such as exhibitions, seminars, open days, school and youth organisation stamp clubs, publications and books on philately for public libraries. Details of its work can be obtained from its Secretary, John Littlebury, at: 107 Charterhouse Street, LONDON EC1M 6PT.



Dr Huggins, on behalf of the British Philatelic Trust, receives a cheque for £199,000 from Keith Fisher, General Manager of Royal Mail Stamps

British Philatelic Bulletin

ISSN — 0953-8119

The *British Philatelic Bulletin* is published monthly by The Post Office.

Compiled and typeset by John Holman at:
National Postal Museum
King Edward Building
King Edward Street
LONDON EC1A 1LP

Editorial Adviser Douglas N Muir

Annual Subscriptions
UK and Europe £6
Rest of World (Airmail) £9.25

Subscriptions should be sent to:
British Philatelic Bureau
20 Brandon Street
EDINBURGH EH3 5TT

Single copies from "Collections" and philatelic counters: 55p

Binders, to hold 24 issues, are available by post from the British Philatelic Bureau, price £6. Also available, to callers only, at the National Postal Museum sales counter.

Printed in Great Britain by Moore and Matthes (Printers) Ltd for The Post Office.