

BRITISH PHILATELIC

The ROYAL MAIL magazine *for stamp collectors*

Volume 39 Number 2

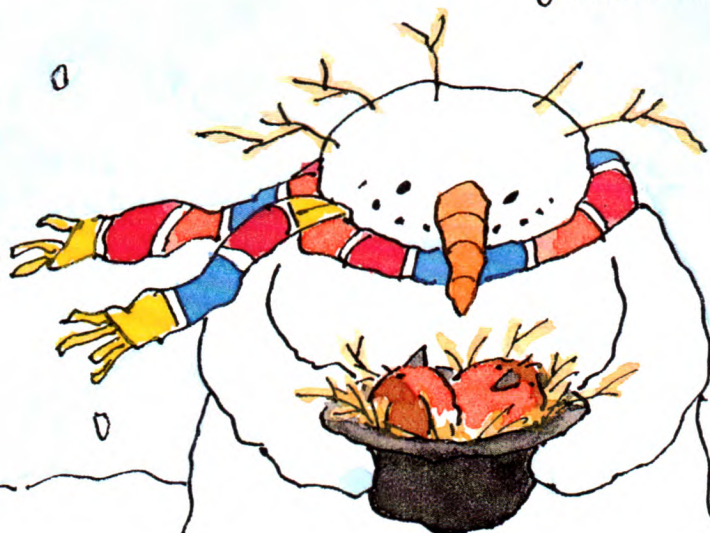
OCTOBER 2001 • 85P

Bulletin

Changes in stamp printing •
George V royal cypher issue



This year's Christmas stamps feature playful robins drawn, fittingly, by Arthur Robins. The set of five self-adhesives goes on sale on 6 November.



Forthcoming issues and withdrawals



Cover Traditionally associated with Christmas, Robins play across Royal Mail's new issue of stamps, previewed on p48. Illustration by Arthur Robins.

Philatelic outlets The outlet at Gloucester has now been replaced by one at Stroud Post Office, 16-17 Russell Street, Stroud GL5 3AA.

Issues Note some items are available only from Royal Mail Tallents House Edinburgh and Post Office Counters philatelic outlets at main post offices in Bath, Belfast, Birmingham, Brighton, Bristol, Cambridge, Canterbury, Cardiff, Chester, Colchester, Coventry, Croydon, Durham, Edinburgh, Exeter, Gatwick Airport, Glasgow, 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, Turo, Windsor and York.

2 October

Issue Nobel Prizes stamps, presentation pack, postbag, and commemorative document.

2 October

Issue Celtic Cross coin cover; Welsh airletter in discount packs of six.

2 October

Withdrawal Millennium Body & Bone stamps, presentation pack and stamp cards; 2000 Christmas airletter.

9 October

Issue Smilers sheets containing 10 x 1st class 1997 Christmas stamp (Father Christmas) and 20 x 2nd class 1995 Christmas stamp (robin in letterbox). Available with personal image on labels (from Tallents House only) or with pre-printed greetings labels.

15 October

Issue Flags & Ensigns stamp cards (five cards, showing four stamps and miniature sheet).

22 October

Issue Flags & Ensigns miniature sheet, presentation pack; Unseen & Unheard prestige stamp book; Flags & Ensigns/definitives stamp book (self-adhesive stamps).

30 October

Issue Christmas stamp cards.

6 November

Issue Christmas stamps, pack, stamp books, and airletter (English and Welsh versions), 2001 Yearbook and Yearpack.

6 November

Withdrawal Millennium Spirit & Faith (Christmas) stamps, pack, stamp cards and stamp book, 2000 Yearbook and Yearpack.

Contents



A stamp printer's label from the collection of Glenn Morgan. Many such major printers of British stamps no longer exist.

Changes in stamp printing

The features incorporated into stamps, and the type of company printing them are undergoing a time of rapid change, as Glenn Morgan describes **51**

The British Philatelic Bulletin is published monthly by Royal Mail, 2-14 Bunhill Row, London EC1Y 8HQ • **Editor** JR Holman • **Price** 85p for single copies, from Post Office Counters philatelic outlets • **Annual subscription** £9.50 in UK and Europe; £13.50 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 hand-stamps. Available on annual subscription, from Edinburgh address above; UK and Europe £10, rest of the world £21.75 • **Copyright** Design and text Consignia plc, unless attributed to a specific author. Requests to reproduce any article should be sent to the Editor, British Philatelic Bulletin, Royal Mail, 2-14 Bunhill Row, London EC1Y 8HQ • **Design** by Robert Maude • **Printed** in Great Britain by The White Dove Press • **ISSN** 0953 8119 • Royal Mail is a trading name of Consignia plc. Registered in England and Wales, number 4138203, registered office 148 Old Street, London EC1V 9HQ

Issues and withdrawals 34

Stamp scene Scottish Congress; Thematica; Societies news; Digital catalogues; Philatelic photography **36**

Prize draw Win leather bound 2001 Yearbooks **38**

GB Philatelic Society Tony Walker reports on the Society's Open Weekend in York **39**

Royal Mail news Nobel Prize Postbag; Flags & Ensigns; Rowland Hill Awards; Smilers; Santa Fun Pack **40**

Royal Mail products A look at the current and future range, by Steve Griffiths **42**

George V Royal Cypher issue Part 4: the origin of the Medal Head II, by Alan Moorcroft **43**

Czeslaw Slania's 80th birthday A celebration in stamp designs by the renowned engraver **46**

Christmas stamps The first self-adhesive set of Christmas stamps from Royal Mail **48**

The installation of door letter plates Part 2, by Lionel Jones **54**

Mainly Machins Report for specialist collectors, by DGA Myall **56**

PPIs A look at postage paid impressions, by James Mackay **58**

Philately on-line Sites for young collectors, by Ron Negus **60**

Editor retires Richard West talks to George Barker of *The London Philatelist* **61**

Postbag Letters to the Editor **62**

Competitions £200 to be won in two easy-to-enter competitions **63**

Events **63**

Stamp scene Scottish Congress • Societies news • Photography • Catalogues go digital

ASPS enquiries Alan Watson,
36 Anson Avenue, Falkirk FK1
5JB.

Scottish Congress Next year's Association of Scottish Philatelic Societies (ASPS) Congress will be held at the Dewar's Centre, Glover Street, Perth on 20 April. Association Secretary, Alan Watson, said, 'Many of us have felt that we have started to outgrow our current accommodation at Falkirk Town Hall. Whilst we are sad to leave, we are very excited at the possibilities available to us at Perth. The Dewar's Centre offers us the opportunity to put all our activities in one place. The space on offer is twice what we currently use. Lighting is excellent. We hope to attract more dealers, have a dedicated youth area and space for specialist societies to attract new members.' The 2002 Congress will be hosted by the Edinburgh Philatelic Society which celebrates its 75th anniversary next year. The ASPS represents all local philatelic societies in Scotland, two postcard clubs and a variety of specialist societies either based in Scotland or Scottish branches of national specialist societies. The first Scottish Congress was held in Dundee in 1924; after the war in Perth, Bridge of Allan and Stirling •

Concorde Study Circle Brian Asquith, Alandale, Radcliffe Gardens, Carshalton Beeches SM5 4PQ.

Concorde Study Circle The June 2001 Newsletter includes tributes to test pilot Brian Trubshaw who died in March; since 1969 he had signed many Concorde covers for collectors. Information is given of a label produced to mark the aircraft's rehabilitation this year, and of the personalised label showing Concorde produced alongside 1995 19p Christmas stamp; these were used on covers to commemorate the Circle's meeting at Stampex in March. Concorde continues to feature on numerous new stamps, aerogrammes and cinderella material – all recorded here, together with postmarks, commemorative covers and postcards. The Newsletter is a 'must' for anyone interested in keeping up to date with Concorde philately •



Margaret Morris presents Francis Kiddle with the BTA Cup at Thematica.

The next Thematica will be at Carisbrook Hall, Seymour Street, London W2, near Marble Arch, 23-24 November.

Thematica Another successful Thematica at London's Carisbrook Hall at the end of June provided the opportunity for thematic dealers and collectors to meet, most collectors finding something to add to their collections. The displays were enhanced by two exhibits from the Association Française de Philatélie Thématique: 'Martin the Brown Bear' (by René Richier) and 'The Birds' (Christophe Bouesnard). Association President, Michel Abram, attended the exhibition. Two other invited exhibits were in the area of Social Philately: 'Canadian Pacific Railway' (Iain Stevenson) and 'Mulreadys and Illustrated Envelopes' (John Bohn). Three competitions are staged as part of Thematica each June. The BTA Cup, judged as the National Thematic Class, was won by Francis Kiddle with his exhibit 'The Goat'. A special prize, provided by the French association, went to David Roseveare for 'From Grandeur to Gravure' and the John Fosbery Trophy, awarded by popular vote of the visitors, to Stuart Henderson for his 'World War One' display. The Inter-Federation Thematic Competition, also judged by the public, was won by the Cornwall Federation's 'The Moving Finger' •

Postal Mechanisation Study Circle The Circle celebrates the 25th anniversary of its formation this month. In the mid-1970s postal mechanisation was revitalised in the UK after a lull of three or four years. New mechanised letter offices were opened and brand new machinery installed, especially at Redhill. Douglas N Muir, then working on the weekly *Stamp Collecting*, wrote a number of articles about these developments in that magazine and in 1976 invited fellow dotty enthusiasts to join in creating a study circle with the aim of recording the many changes as they happened. About 20 collectors responded initially – enough to set up the society. It began with a simple newsletter but with rapidly increasing membership expanded to a quarterly journal as well. Like many societies, membership rose and then declined and has now settled at about 120; about a quarter live overseas.

PMSC members report developments as they see them and this information is recorded in the monthly newsletter, with longer articles in *Ident*, the quarterly journal. An extensive library is available to members. Commemorative covers are produced to mark changes in the field of mechanisation. It is planned to issue three covers in October 2001 for members, incorporating aspects of progress in mechanisation, automation and mail processing over 25 years. One of these covers may be available to non-members in late October.

Activities of the Circle include occasional visits to Mail Processing Centres where, over the years, members have witnessed the change from the early sorting and coding machines to the latest Integrated Mail Processors (IMPs). The latter have necessitated the addition of a special section in the newsletter. Meetings are held mainly in London two or three times a year with at least one room auction, which is usually combined with the AGM in October.

Postcodes, binary codes, related postmarks and handstamps, phosphors, fluor and inks all form part of the interest and study by members. International developments are also monitored with interest. Recent changes in code markings on mail from Australia, Ireland, New Zealand, Portugal, Singapore and Spain, to mention a few, have been noted.

What next? New members are always welcome, help monitor the changes; this is postal history in the making ●

Postal Mechanisation Study Circle All enquiries to the Secretary: Ray Downing, 166 Mitcham Lane, London SW16 6NS (please enclose a stamp for reply).

The Circle's AGM, auction and informal displays will be held at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1 on 20 October, starting at 10.30.



New philatelic photography service A new service has been launched which will take digital photographs of important items or pages from your collection and record them on CD-ROM. This is claimed to give sharper images than flatbed scanning and avoids any possibility of damage from light or heat in a scanner. The resulting CD-ROM is ideal as a support for insurance of valuable collections, or just as a permanent record. Used in a computer, images from it can be printed out as an aid for exhibition previewing, viewed on the screen with magnification as necessary or transmitted to other collectors over the internet. The small size of a CD-ROM disk enables a bulky collection to be carried in your pocket. The new service is run by Clement Olliver and Peter Walker who respectively worked at the Royal Philatelic Society and in computer publishing before their recent retirements ●

Photography enquiries 023 9252 3833. Work is done to customer specification, quotations are given, and travel can be arranged.

BTA membership secretary

I M Paton, 15 Humberstone Road, Cambridge CB4 1JD.

CSC membership secretary

Roger Hudson, PO Box 172, Coventry CV6 6NF.

BTA/CSC joint meeting The British Thematic Association and Cinderella Stamp Club held a joint meeting on 7 July. The proceedings were opened by Christine Earle on behalf of the BTA with displays and talks on Cycle poster stamps, Archery poster stamps and post cards, Big Cats used in advertising, Gerald King fantasy stamps and covers, TB Christmas seals, postcards and phone cards depicting insects, maps and cinderellas of the Croatian government in exile. Brian Sole brought the exhibits of the BTA to a splendid conclusion with his display of bicycle stamps and local issues. The Cinderella Stamp Club displays, introduced by Francis Kiddle, included Goats, Alice fantasy stamps, poster stamps of Wagner and opera, war memorial stamps, Christmas seals, and London Olympic Games 1908-48 ●

SG digital catalogue prices

will be from £8.95.

Digital catalogues After months of speculation, Stanley Gibbons have finally revealed their ambitious new plans for a major series of 'bespoke' digital stamp catalogues. The company sees this new publishing innovation as the way forward (in conjunction with their allworldstamps.com website) for the entire SG catalogue publishing operation. 'One country' digital catalogues will match the collecting interests of the individual philatelist. No longer will the specialist stamp collector have to buy a bulky catalogue containing some information they may well have little use for – in future, collectors will be able to buy any country they want as individual volumes at suitably attractive prices. 'It's all about increasing choice and giving value for money,' says SG production manager David Hardy. 'the new digital "one country" catalogue range will be both flexible and functional. It will allow our customers to have the exact pages they want, when they want them and at a price that will not affect their stamp buying budget'. Final details are yet to be fully confirmed but the new 'one country' series is expected to launch with Australia followed by Canada, New Zealand, Cyprus, Malta, and Gibraltar. Each set of pages will be printed on high quality cartridge paper and will be attractively housed in a specially designed four-ring binder. Individual volumes will also come complete with general information pages, other vital philatelic information and discount vouchers to gain reductions on other catalogues in the series.

Stanley Gibbons are keen to stress that the regular production of their standard printed catalogues will continue for the foreseeable future, whilst not ruling out further format or content changes ●

Prize draw Win a leather-bound copy of the 2001 Yearbook



WE HAVE TWO of these yearbooks to give away – to the senders of the first two cards drawn on 16 November. Three runners-up will be sent the standard yearbook. Simply write your name and address on the back of a postcard and send it to: Yearbook Draw, British Philatelic Bulletin, Royal Mail, 2-14 Bunhill Row, London EC1Y 8HQ ●

Great Britain Philatelic Society's open weekend in York



Michael Lockton talking on his Exeter postal history display at the GBPS weekend in York.

GBPS enquiries A J Lajer, Old Post Office, Davis Way, Hurst, Reading RG10 0TR.

AT THE END OF JULY the Great Britain Philatelic Society held an open weekend meeting at York, coinciding with the York Stamp Fair at the Racecourse Grandstand venue. On Friday 27 July Peter Young displayed a fascinating and high quality selection of QV surface printed issues with a remarkable selection of colour trials, proofs and, of course, the issued stamps. Despite the challenge of a numismatic murmur from the coin collecting fraternity on the floor below, Peter accompanied the presentation with a talk underlining his mastery of the subject.

The Saturday displays were designed to cater for all interests, commencing with four frames of Exeter postal history from Michael Lockton. Among the material was a 1591 letter to Exeter from Filippo Corsini and an 1801 abuse of the franking system when a letter ostensibly addressed to an MP (and free) was marked inside for Sir R Sutton.

Michael's display finished in 1840, which is where Jane Moubray took over with the line engraved 2d blue, 1840-58. Although this stunning show, restricted again to four frames, contained 1840 examples, it was the proofs, papers, perforations and much else of the later period which took the limelight.

Max Melrose completed the first half with five frames of remarkable material under the heading of 'Parcels, Packets and Papers'. The contrast with the neat pristine items of Jane's display could not have been greater, as demonstrated by a large parcel piece comprising 25 examples of the GVI 10s dark blue, plus a 5s and three 6d stamps; a total postage of £12 16s 6d, addressed to HM Dockyard, Malta.

Fifty members and visitors stayed on for the second half, and were treated to a beautiful display by Graeme Webster on the GV Seahorses. Graeme had prepared some immaculate sheets on how to distinguish between the four printers, without having to be a specialist. These rank as some of the most attractive GB stamps, and Graeme did them justice. Members of the GBPS will be able to see his 'checklist' in a forthcoming issue of the Society Newsletter.

Society President Chris Harman provided a 'Back of the Book' display on four frames and amply demonstrated this material has every right to a place at the top table of philately. Not only did we see examples of the Hat Duty labels of 1796 (3d duty for hats retailing at not more than 4s), there was also the Hat Powder duty labels of 1786, and much more.

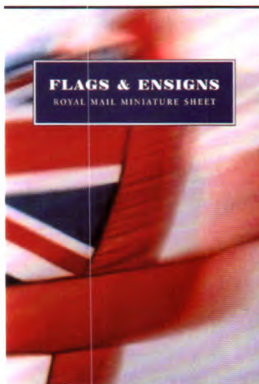
The final display by Jean Alexander lived up to its pre-meeting publicity, on the subject of 'Supermarket Philately'. The audience was not deceived by the humorous and informal presentation by Jean, which is her style. A great deal of time and trouble had been taken in this display, which showed the extraordinary range of commercial offers made over the years which encompassed stamps and/or the Post Office. It was an excellent note on which to finish a very enjoyable weekend.

In addition to the many members who travelled from most parts of the UK, well over 50 visitors called in during the weekend, of which a number joined the Society. Maybe they were also tempted by the 'lucky draw' of a 1d black or £60 of stamps for joining before October 2001... *Tony Walker* ●

Royal Mail news Flags and Ensigns • Nobel Prizes • Rowland Hill Awards • Smilers

22 October 2001 Presentation pack for the Flags & Ensigns miniature sheet (see September *Bulletin* for details).

The miniature sheet is perf 14½. The Submarine stamps in the prestige stamp book are perf 15½ x 15; the sheet stamps in April were perf 15 x 14.



Nobel Prize Postbag The third in the new series of postbags (a kind of presentation pack for young collectors) will contain the six Nobel Prize stamps. Entitled 'Discovery', the foilbag contains, in addition, postcards; fab data cards illustrating weird and wonderful Nobel-related facts, and questions & answers revealed when using 'red shift'; amazing molecule kit (a kit of 150 plastic parts that make up a large, luminous C60 'buckyball' molecule); lively, colourful cards outlining a range of great experiments to do at home (chromatography, haiku poetry, taste mapping, and colour wheel); blotting paper, for chromatography experiment; and red film, for use to reveal 'red shift' hidden information throughout the pack. This intriguing postbag will be available, from 2 October, from Royal Mail Talents House and Post Office philatelic outlets, price £5.99.

The earlier Weather and Buses postbags are still available, price £5.99 each •

Enquiries about the Rowland Hill Awards should be sent to Rachel Lonsdale at Stamps & Collectibles, Royal Mail, 2-14 Bunhill Row, London EC1Y 8HQ, or telephone 020 7847 3339.

Rowland Hill Awards Next month's *Bulletin* will include a form for readers to nominate the post office they consider provides the best philatelic service to its customers. From nominations a short-list will be prepared for final judging in the Post Office Excellence section of the Rowland Hill Awards. The criteria will be set out on the nomination form.

The Awards, sponsored by Royal Mail, the British Philatelic Trust and the Philatelic Traders' Society, were initiated in 1997 to recognise individuals and organisations who have made a major contribution to philately during the year. The awards for 2001 will be made at a ceremony in London next March.

The Post Office Excellence Award for 2000 was won by Manchester Postshop. Previous winners were: 1996 Leeds Chief Post Office, 1997 Truro Branch Office, 1998 Newport Sub Post Office, Shropshire, and 1999 Haslingden po •

NOBEL PRIZES

Royal Mail First Day Cover

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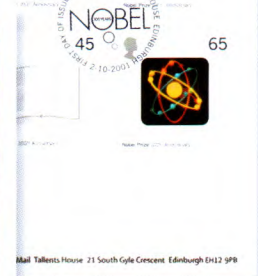


FLAGS & ENSIGNS

ROYAL MAIL FIRST DAY COVER



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



Mail Talents House 21 South Gyle Crescent Edinburgh EH12 9PB

Smilers for You Readers are reminded that a new printing of the Christmas 'Smilers' sheets with personal image labels or pre-printed greetings labels will be available from 9 October. The personal image label sheets will be available only from Royal Mail Talents House; the greetings label sheets from both Tallents House and Post office philatelic outlets. See page 9 of the September *Bulletin* for details. Smilers sheets containing 'Smiles' greetings stamps and Occasions stamps remain on sale •

Santa Fun Pack This new Royal Mail product, available from main post offices from 6 November, comprises a child-friendly stationery set with pre-printed writing paper, postcards, colouring-in card, pencil, stickers, etc. The key components are two pre-paid envelopes that will feature Father Christmas illustrations and printed impressions of this year's 1st class Christmas stamp – fully valid for postage. One of the envelopes is already pre-addressed to Santa's postcoded address – the other will be illustrated identically, but unaddressed, for children to write to whoever they wish. Each year since 1963, many thousands of children have written to the special Santa address and received a reply from the old bearded gentleman. The pre-stamped envelopes in the pack are printed by Questa. Although the product is being developed very much with young mail senders in mind, there will, no doubt, be some philatelic interest and collectors in the UK will be able to obtain the pack from main post offices. For the convenience of overseas collectors and those in the UK who cannot easily get to a main post office, the pack will be available by post from Royal Mail Talents House. Price £2.50.

Although the pack goes on sale on 6 November, the same day as the Christmas stamps, it is not being given first day status and the pre-stamped envelopes will not qualify for the Royal Mail 'first day of issue' Talents House or Bethlehem postmarks •

October first day covers

Above: Flags & Ensigns and Nobel Prizes (details in September *Bulletin*). The issue of the Flags & Ensigns stamps coincides with the anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar (21 October 1805), not its bicentenary as stated last month. We regret any confusion caused.

Royal Mail products Steve Griffiths reports

Framed White Ensign and Flags & Ensigns stamps

Price £59.95 including post and packing from Royal Mail Talents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB.



For more details about current Royal Mail products telephone 08475 641 641.

ROYAL MAIL has placed an increased emphasis on developing Post Office heritage and postage stamp-related products following restructuring some two years ago. This had the dual objectives of helping to publicise the stamp programme and developing new 'collectible' markets. Our new products were first offered at The Stamp Show 2000, and our experiences at that event helped determine the direction of this product development.

The most successful innovation over this period has been in the area of framed products. We always believed that stamps are an art form that should be displayed rather than kept out of sight, and it now seems the collecting world was waiting for the right product range to make it happen. At first we offered a limited range of framed stamps and the 1999 special stamp collection, and have now extended availability to include postcards, stamp enlargements and, with the Buses issue, framed prints. I am currently looking at framing associated merchandise such as coin covers (Philatelic Numismatic Covers) and how to enhance our frames with such prestige items as the Submariners crest/hat badge (as was done for the Submarine Stamp enlargements). The joy of this product is that it appeals to both collectors and non-collectors and is popular with youngsters too.

Sales of jewellery based on stamps have also far exceeded our expectations, with Penny Black, gold half sovereign 'St George' and Festival of Britain ranges all extremely popular.

The new Bus range has demonstrated the impact of a popular thematic issue, with around 10,000 customers purchasing a variety of products.

But there is far more to entering new markets than just creating the products. We are looking at new routes to market, new types of promotion, stock control, storage and computer systems. There will be spin-off benefits to all our customers as we take up these challenges and develop fresh skills ●

King George V Royal Cypher issue Part 4: origin of the medal head II, by Alan Moorcroft

THE NEED for a third engraved head arose following the decision of the PMG in October 1912 that the Coinage head was too large for Eve's Wreath frame for the 4d value. Accordingly Eve continued work on his Wreath and Pillar frames using an interpretation of a smaller head. It was not until March 1913, when these frames had been approved, that JACH was able to commence engraving a new head. The King had stated his preference for the Medal head and so JACH made fresh drawings (right) of Mackennal's plaster cast of the Medal head; two examples of these are known which came from his estate. He then commenced engraving, working from the sketches, and the first proofs were taken on 17 March 1913. He continued to work on the engraving during March and early April, and at least four stages of the die can be distinguished from existing proofs, all in black, a few of which are in private hands. The completed die was proofed on 3 April 1913 and it was hardened the following day. Impressions were taken from the hardened die, and one of these was rolled into the completed Pillar frame during May 1913. Another of the roller impressions was used by Lewis to engrave the Wreath frame for the 9d value.



5d, 6d and 7d Eves Pillar frame with Medal Head II The original intention was that the 4d to 7d values would be in the Eve Wreath design but, as already described, it was finally decided to issue the 4d value in the Mackennal Wreath design. Eve had been working on his Wreath design for the 5d and 7d values during June 1912. He produced Printex trials of the frame with a 12mm Coinage head, and copies of these exist in various colours and some of the 7d values are known overprinted 'ESSAY'. When the PMG decided the Coinage head was too large for the Wreath frame in October 1912, Eve then produced some Printex trials for both the 5d and 7d values using a reduced-size Coinage head and then later with his interpretation of a smaller Medal head. Copies of these are known with various amendments to the frame during October and November 1912.

Attention then focused upon the background shading to the King's head and the PMG requested trials be prepared showing the effect of a partially shaded and a solid background. 'Printex' trials were made, in January 1913, for the 7d value with Eve's Wreath frame with the two types of background (right). They were produced in imperforate blocks of four stamps in black





Proof of completed die pulled on 13 May 1913.

and five different colours. They were mounted onto cards and endorsed 'Essays for Colour only' and examples of these are known in BLPC and POH and several of the complete blocks, as well as singles, are known in private hands. It should be noted that no background trial was carried out for the 7d value with graduated shading, and references to this in some publications actually refer to an earlier stage with the Coinage head.

The PMG then decided, in February 1913, to adopt Eve's Pillar design in place of the Wreath for the 5d, 6d, and 7d values. This change was made to help emphasise the difference between the 3d and 6d stamps. The development work for the Pillar frame was done under the 8d value and is described in the next section. Bromides of the completed frame are known for the 5d value with Eve's interpretation of the smaller Medal head dated 29 April 1913. JACH completed the engraving of the Pillar frame during May 1913 and roller impressions were taken from this into which the

newly-engraved Medal head II was inserted and the values added. Die proofs of the 5d were pulled in early May, the 6d in late May and the 7d in early June 1913. The Mint produced a special nickel plate of four impressions of the 5d value on 31 May 1913 which Somerset House used to print 29 colour trials on 6 June 1913, and six trials on coloured papers the next day. BPC and POH hold examples of these and in addition a few examples are known in private hands. The 5d stamp was issued on 30 June and the 6d and 7d values on 1 August 1913. The colour standards produced for all three values were overprinted 'SPECIMEN' and a very few examples of these are known to exist outside of public institutions.

The 5d value is recorded in six shades, of which the 'ochre-brown' is the scarcest, this being catalogued for 1916 printings, but examples are known from 1917 printings and it appears to occur again during some 1921 printings.

The Mint printed all the 6d value stamps, which were used extensively for fiscal as well as postal matters. To help prevent any attempt to remove the cancellation, they were printed on chalk-surfaced paper in doubly fugitive ink. As mentioned earlier, the similarity with the 3d shade led to a change in the 3d and 6d shades in August 1913. The 6d was changed from 'dull purple' to 'reddish purple'. Eight shades are listed for the 6d value of which 'slate-purple' is the scarcest occurring during the 1913 printings. In September 1920, and for some months following, this value appeared perforated 14×14 , instead of 15×14 . It is believed the Mint perforator broke down and the old machine which was used for the Edward VII issues was brought back into use. Printings were made under just two controls Q.20 and R.21.

The 7d value was introduced for parcel and telegram work. Following the postage increases during 1915 and 1918 there was little demand for it and it was discontinued in August 1918. Consequently only four shades are recorded for this value.

8d: Eve Pillar frame with Medal head II The Eve Pillar frame had been approved for the planned Downey 8d to 1s values. With the change to a profile head, trials were carried out using the 8d value in October 1912 using the Coinage head. In November, Eve carried out further trials using a reduced Coinage head and the frames were amended with even shading to the background. Examples of these trials are known in various shades and some of the examples were overprinted 'ESSAY'. When the King decided he preferred the Medal head, Eve carried out a further series of trials with his interpretation of the Medal head. In these trials, Eve again amended the frame, increasing the space for the head and altering the layout of the words 'postage' and 'revenue'. In common with the 7d value, background trials were carried out during January 1913. In this case four different backgrounds were trialed: solid, part solid, graduated shading and even shading. They were produced by the Printex process in imperforate blocks of four in black and three other colours. These were submitted to the King who selected the graduated background on 3 February 1913.

Sets of these background trials are held by BLPC and POH and examples are known in private hands with some of the graduated shading examples being overprinted 'ESSAY'. The sources of stamps overprinted 'ESSAY' are from two colour schemes put together by the Stamping Department on 10 December 1912 and 20 May 1913. In the first of these, a single 2d and 4d plus two 7d and four 8d stamps were used in different colours. In the second, three 7d and four 8d stamps were used. In both cases other value stamps were used but they were overprinted 'SPECIMEN'. The 7d and 8d stamps were taken from the Printex trials mentioned above for this purpose and specially overprinted to identify them. The two schemes with the selected colours endorsed in manuscript are now in the collections of POH.

With the design now agreed, JACH proceeded to engrave the frame, which he completed and proofed for the 8d value on 8 May 1913. The colour standard for this was printed under control c.13 and overprinted 'SPECIMEN', of which a few examples including at least one control strip is known in private hands. The stamps, issued on 1 August 1913, were printed on yellow paper at first but this was changed to a yellow buff paper containing many impurities, generally known as granite paper, during 1917. Shades of the 8d are not recorded, only the printings on the two papers. However, an intense black is also known on both papers. With little usage of this value and the higher cost of the coloured paper it was decided to discontinue printing 8d stamps when the stock of paper was exhausted, which occurred towards the end of 1918 •

To be continued next month. An earlier version of this article was published in The London Philatelist in September 2000. The author is Hon Treasurer of the Royal Philatelic Society, London.



Trials of the Eve Pillar frame with reduced Coinage head and even shading in the background, overprinted 'ESSAY'.

Key to abbreviations

BLPC British Library Philatelic Collections

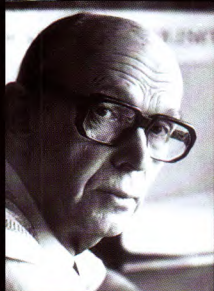
JACH J. A. C. Harrison (stamp engraver)

PMG Postmaster General

POH Post Office Heritage, now Consignia Heritage Services

Czesław Slania's birthday A celebration in stamp designs

THIS MONTH the philatelic world celebrates the 80th birthday of Czesław Slania, the highly acclaimed stamp engraver. Shown here are some of the British stamps engraved by Mr Slania plus a selection of his numerous stamps from other countries. Articles on Slania were published here in August and September 1995 at the time of issue of the Communications stamps.

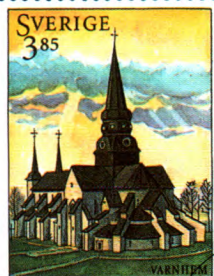


Czesław Slania, celebrating his 80th birthday this month.



ŚWIATOWA WYSTAWA FILATELISTYCZNA
POZNAN 7-16 V 1993 0074340





Christmas stamps Playful robins feature on



Technical details

Printer De La Rue

Processes Gravure

Size 37 x 35mm

Sheets 50

Perforation 14.5 die-cut

Phosphor One band 2nd class, two bands others

Gum Self-adhesive

Gutter pairs Vertical

THIS YEAR'S Christmas stamps go on sale at post offices, Tallents House and Post Office philatelic outlets on 6 November. All five feature playful robins drawn, appropriately, by Arthur Robins. The 2nd class stamp features robins with snowman, 1st class robins with snow-covered feeding table, E robins skating on frozen bird bath, 45p robins feeding on Christmas pudding, and 65p parent robin and baby robins in paper-chain nest.

These Christmas stamps are all printed, for the first time, on self-adhesive paper, the stamps having die-cut perforations, and can be removed from sheets by rouletting which surrounds the 'perforations'.

FIRST DAY FACILITIES Unstamped Royal Mail FDC envelopes will be available from main post offices and philatelic outlets about a week before 6 November, price 25p. Orders for FDCs with the stamps cancelled by a pictorial first day postmark of Tallents House Edinburgh or Bethlehem must reach Tallents House by the date of issue. Price £2.69 UK (including VAT) or £2.29 overseas (no VAT).

Collectors may send stamped covers on the day of issue to: Royal Mail Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB, or Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, Penarth Road, Cardiff CF11 8TA (Bethlehem postmark), marking the outer envelope 'FDO121' or 'FDO122'. Covers can be posted or handed in at main post offices for the Bethlehem postmark. A non-pictorial Bethlehem postmark is also available from the Special Handstamp Centre; request 'FDO122NP'.

STAMP BOOKS Two Christmas stamp books (folded sheetlets) will be available from 6 November: £3.24 containing twelve 1st class, and £4.56 containing twenty-four 2nd class stamps. The books have been printed by De La Rue. Cylinders are: 1A 1B 1C 1D 1E 1F 1G *phosphor* P6 (2nd) or P5 (1st).

AIRLETTER Two versions of the Christmas airletter (acrogramme) will be issued on 6 November – one inscribed in English, one bilingually in Welsh and English for sale at post offices in Wales. Priced 49p each, both will be available from Tallents House and philatelic outlets. Although issued on the same day as the Christmas stamps, they do not qualify for the 'Tallents House or Bethlehem 'first day of issue' postmarks.



Sponsored handstamps will be announced in the *British Postmark Bulletin* – available on subscription from Tallents House (£10 UK and Europe; £21.75 elsewhere).

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

Royal Mail's first self-adhesive Christmas set



YEARBOOK & YEAPACK The 2001 Yearbook and Yearpack will be available from 6 November, price £27.95 and £20.90 respectively. A leather-bound version of the Yearbook will be available exclusively from Tallents House, price £75.

WITHDRAWAL OF 2000 CHRISTMAS STAMPS The 2000 Christmas airletter will be withdrawn on 2 October and the Christmas (Spirit and Faith) stamps, pack, stamp cards and stamp books on 6 November ●

Above: due to the method of production, sheets are printed in units of three instead of the usual two, so there are three sets of cylinders: no dot, dot and double dot (: as colon).

An illustrated Christmas pack (below left, price £2.30) and stamp cards (25p each) will be available from main post offices and philatelic outlets.

Cylinders and colours

2nd 1A new blue ● 1B blue ● 1C greenish yellow ● 1D bright magenta ● 1E vermilion ● 1F black

1st 1A red-orange ● 1B blue ● 1C greenish yellow ● 1D bright magenta ● 1E new blue ● 1F black

E 1A indigo ● 1B azure ● 1C greenish yellow ● 1D bright magenta ● 1E new blue ● 1F vermilion ● 1G black

45p 1A bright purple ● 1B blue ● 1C greenish yellow ● 1D bright magenta ● 1E new blue ● 1F vermilion ● 1G black

65p 1A greenish blue ● 1B blue ● 1C greenish yellow ● 1D bright magenta ● 1E new blue ● 1F vermilion ● 1G black

The phosphor cylinders are P8 2nd class, P7 others.

Robins featured on all of the 1995 Christmas set (below), and on the stamp book covers and aerogramme. The stamps were voted the favourite set of that year by *Bulletin* readers, and the 19p and 41p values were voted the favourite individual stamps.

Robins on stamps Robins – traditionally associated with Christmas and shown on millions of Christmas cards every year – have featured on the stamps shown below, and on Christmas aerogrammes of 1977, 1992 and 1993, a 1994 Birds pictorial aerogramme, front covers of 30p stamp books dated October and December 1971, and numerous Christmas postmarks. An article, 'Feathers, Folklore and Philately', about robins on stamps, by Philip Parker was published here in November 1995 •



Earlier, robins featured on one of the four 1966 Bird stamps (right), and the 31p and 34p values in the 1983 and 1987 Christmas sets (far right).



The changing face of stamp printing by Glenn H Morgan



Glenn Morgan works in the print section of a major bank; he is Librarian of the National Philatelic Society. A profile of Mr Morgan was published here in February 1998.

THE TYPE OF COMPANY, location of printer and features incorporated into a stamp is undergoing a period of dramatic change.

Traditionally, Great Britain was responsible for production of most British Empire stamps prior to the current monarch. With the establishment of the Commonwealth, things stayed the same for many years, but more recently this position has altered. The bigger Commonwealth nations had already set up their own stamp production capacity, and the likes of Australia, Canada and South Africa were largely able to manage their own stamp requirements. However, the smaller countries continued to be almost totally dependent on Britain well into this reign.

As the UK aligned more closely with its European neighbours on the continent, and as developing countries advanced, there has been less dependency, or sense of loyalty, towards Britain. This has resulted in a gradual, but steady, change in the client lists of British stamp printers.

Major British stamp printers such as Perkins Bacon, Waterlow, Bradbury Wilkinson and Format International have all ceased to exist as companies in their own right, largely being swallowed up by others. Waddingtons of Kirkstall and, for a long time prior to their acquisition of Harrisons, even De La Rue, had pulled out of stamp printing. Indeed, when Guernsey decided to celebrate its famed islander Thomas De La Rue they chose to use a Dutch company, Enschedé, to undertake the printing.

Of British stamp printers that still exist, a brief overview proves interesting. De La Rue is active again, following the Harrisons buyout. However, it is rare to see them responsible for stamps of any country other than Great Britain. Even here, they do not have the sole printing contract, but do have a large slice of the British Post Office's output. They share the print runs with two other British printers and one European.

The House of Questa has seen its portfolio of clients change over the years. They are still a major supplier to Royal Mail and produce fine quality printing – including stamps printed by SuperLitho, a process they developed that uses an extremely fine screen to guarantee superb detailing of the image. They were taken over a while ago by a Canadian company called MDC Stamp and Ticket Group.

Walsall Security Printers first became involved in stamp printing in the 1960s for Tonga and Sierra Leone, with the production of freeform and round self-adhesive stamps. They were, in fact, way ahead of their time, as self-adhesives are only recently gaining a strong foothold in the more traditional water-activated arena. A supplier to Royal Mail and many other countries, they started to get involved in banknote manufacturing in the late 1990s as an attempt at diversifying into an allied area. They employed offset lithography, rather than the more traditional intaglio printing process, as this satisfied a niche market. (Interestingly, Harrisons also moved into



banknotes and soon became a thorn in the side of De La Rue, gaining around 5% of the world market. One of the first things that DLR did when they took over Harrisons was to close down banknote production at High Wycombe and move it to its plant at Gateshead!)

Local printers Printing is, without doubt, still a skilled activity. However, technology has moved forward at such a rate in the past few years, that it is now easier and cheaper to set up a print works in a country not used to, or previously capable of, printing its own stamps. Generally, the smaller the country, the smaller the print run and so a set of commemorative stamps could easily be printed in a working day, say a couple of shifts.

A good example of this trend is Barbados, who now use the local COT Printery for the production of many of its stamps – and a fine printer they are proving to be. Now that they have been established for a few years, they are being awarded contracts from neighbouring and more distant countries. Potentially this will take yet more business away from Britain.

Moving to the non-Commonwealth countries, the break-up of the Soviet Union and the creation of a 'new Europe' could have resulted in a bonanza period for the British printer. In general terms, this has not proved to be the case. Certainly on the banknote front, De La Rue has secured many contracts to print currency, but no stamp contracts are believed to have come to Britain from Eastern Europe. What has tended to happen is that countries have set up their own stamp printing works. There are now at least five state-run or private printers in the former USSR – the latest to start operations being based in Belarus. It is very often a matter of national pride to be able

to claim that postage stamps are a 'home-grown' product, whereas banknotes are less easy to print and demand resources not always on hand, such as engravers and intaglio presses. It is also phenomenally expensive to create a banknote production printing facility, unlike with stamps.

At its most basic level, all you need to print stamps is a second-hand sheet-fed litho printing press, pre-press kit, a supply of gummed paper, ink to print with and machines to perforate and guillotine each sheet of stamps. Yes, this gives a totally simplistic approach to the production of stamps, but there is not much more to it than that. Certainly, it gets more complicated when allowing for automated sorting machine phosphors, security inks, anti-counterfeiting features, unique die-cuts, etc, but as a country advances technically, so will the skills available to it.

Cutting costs In more developed countries, it is very often the price of a print job that will now determine who gets the business. In the USA, the Bureau of Engraving and Printing is losing out to private firms. Its recent annual reports show a dramatic drop in production as capacity moves away from this government-run organisation. The likes of Avery Dennison, Banknote Corporation of America (French owned) and Sennett continue to increase their share of production.

Indeed, the following extract from a new issue press release shows how complex the printing of USPS stamps has now become: 'Printing: Stamps printed for American Bank Note Company on a leased Champlain gravure press at J W Ferguson and Sons, Richmond, Virginia, under the supervision of Sennett Enterprises, Fairfax, Virginia. Stamps perforated, processed and shipped by ABNC, Bedford Park, Illinois.'



The change to self-adhesive postage stamps has also helped change the balance in determining what company gets the work. In some countries, such as the USA and Australia, the requirement for water-activated stamps is decreasing at a huge annual rate – to the point where self-adhesive will be the only ‘option’ in a few years time, or less. The position in the UK is set to follow this trend.

New names For those interested in the manufacturing of postage stamps, we live in interesting times. A whole range of new names is constantly being added to the new issue listings of ‘stamp printers’ in philatelic magazines. Indeed, in the past five years alone I have recorded over 35 new names worldwide.

The difference between today and years gone by is that the printers are tending to be private, previously established companies who also produce other security print items, or are commercial printers venturing into new areas. It would be rare (and brave!) for a company to be formed solely to print postage stamps, as the market is not large enough to keep the presses rolling.

For approaching 150 years, there were almost no changes in how a stamp visually appeared and was used. This is no longer the case. Who knows what future innovations will cause even more new names to be added to the roll of stamp printers as the once humble stamp evolves into something far more interactive?

We have seen stamps that are: peelable without the need to lick (self-adhesive substrate) • in a free-form shape (die-cut) • three-dimensional when seen with red/green glasses • stereoscopic • scented (aromatic inks) • computer generated at vending site (Frama labels and their like) • with chunks missing, such as a jigsaw piece (die-cut

out of traditional stamp) • ATM vendable (plastic and paper developed to resemble a banknote) • capable of changing colour (thermochromic inks) • with hidden images revealed with a decoder (scrambled indicia) • multi-hole punched in a pattern • with micro-text visible only with a magnifying glass • light reflective (holographic substrates and OVI inks) • sponsored by corporations, often with their logo • able to be coloured-in by hand • with non-circular perforations • scratchable, with messages or images below the surface • personalised with photographs • on continuous self-adhesive coils minus backing sheet • digitally printed in their entirety by Fuji-Xerox colour office printers.

Only a year or so back, Switzerland announced production of an embroidered stamp in a limited edition. Clearly, the company concerned for its production would never have dreamt that they would one day manufacture stamps.

The innovative ideas above, and others, would have been unthinkable, or unachievable, even a short time ago, helping to make stamp collecting so fascinating and rewarding. They may also keep the purveyors of doom-and-gloom at bay and the hobby alive well into this new millennium.

Footnote As I write this article, Swiss company Hélio Courvoisier has announced that it is closing down due to ‘too much competition in the international market’. A sad loss, but it helps to illustrate that there are always losers, as well as winners. The Courvoisier name and some of its printing equipment has been acquired by Walsall. Enschedé has recently lost the production of Dutch stamps, but has gained the production of all of Norway’s output; whilst Walsall has won a Dutch PTT contract. Changing times indeed •

Installation of letter plates by Lionel Jones

AS DESCRIBED LAST MONTH, acceptance of door letter plates was slow; the progress or lack of it regarding installation in the UK is detailed on the opposite page. It is of interest to note that even today, although numerous attempts have been made to compel owners/occupiers to install a letter box, it is not a statutory requirement.

Regarding articles upon this subject I have never seen any but for the one I wrote in the *Royal Mail Collectors Club* magazine in September 1995 •

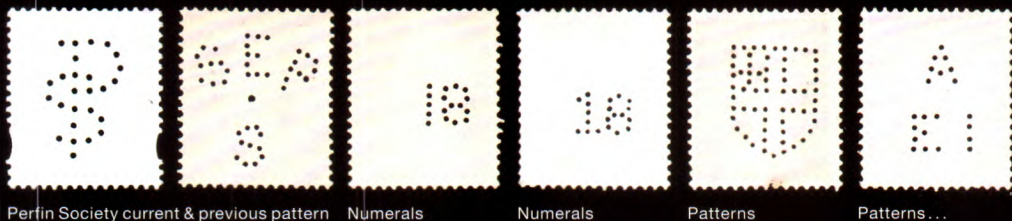


- 1839-40: Private suggestion from Dublin to aid Rapid Delivery.
- MARCH 1849: PO posters encourage installation of delivery slits. States plates available at 7s.
- MAY 1849: Handbill distributed in Scotland and Ireland by letter carriers to encourage rapid delivery of letters by installation of delivery slit.
- 1851: Second appeal to householders.
- FEBRUARY 1854: Samuel Portlock of 18 Clarence Sq Brighton suggests to their Lordships that those who do not put box in be surcharged 1d.
- MAY 1856: *British Postal Guide* suggests that unless an outer door is kept open a letter box should be installed.
- JUNE 1859: Hill writes to households who have not installed apertures for rapid delivery reporting the annoyance of those who have put them in but see no delivery improvement due to delays at the numerous houses where not installed.
- DECEMBER 1865: Further attempt to get householders to put letter plates in to street doors.
- JANUARY 1866: Tilley writes to Postmasters urging them to stock the leaflet and to distribute it, especially when receiving complaints of delays. They are also urged to persuade ironmongers to stock safe and suitable types of box or plate, as many installed are injurious to letter carriers.
- JANUARY 1866: Wm Wood of Peckham writes to PMG that as courtyards are locked, boxes adjacent the thoroughfare might be tampered with and mail stolen. He suggests a rod carried by the deliverer like the rod used by newsboys to hand up papers to outside passengers on omnibuses.
- 10 FEBRUARY 1866: 100 copies of notice sent to Eastbourne, 1000 to Brighton, 300 to Worthing.
- JULY 1866: In North Wales 9280 leaflets delivered to houses with no letter plate in 17 different post towns. Following this appeal only 465 new boxes installed in those 17 places.
- c1867: In all of the regions it is calculated that only 8387 delivery points in England, 281 in Ireland and 714 in Scotland have letterboxes as a result of recent campaigns and posters.
- FEBRUARY 1868: The circular is now repeated but signed by individual Surveyors.
- JUNE 1870: The circular is now repeated with the addition about expected increase in letter

traffic due to transmission of newspapers, printed matter, samples, postcards etc.

- JULY 1870: Tilley writes to Surveyors to advise that in future the plea is to be sent out folded instead of appearing as an open circular. A guidance to costs involved has been incorporated.
- 8 OCTOBER 1870: *The Times* carries an article supporting and urging householders to provide a delivery point within their street-door.
- AUGUST 1871: A new print of the letter to householders still without a letterbox. This print refers to shortening of Sunday Labour amongst letter carriers if only householders would install the box.
- 5 DECEMBER 1871: The PO seek to bring a Bill compelling builders and property owners in the metropolis to install letter boxes in street doors.
- 28 DECEMBER 1871: *The Daily News* carries a letter from a Londoner stating that in Manchester for 5s 6d the Post Office would arrange for a box to be installed. Stow the Surveyor found no truth in the availability of this service.
- 19 JANUARY 1872: Henry Coleman, Ironmonger of Chelmsford, writes to PMG saying above type of fittings advertised in *Ironmongers Journal* for November 1871 are fine for the affluent but what of the ordinary millions. He says he has made a plate opening inwards with spring, easy to fit, which he could sell for 1s 6d and still have a little profit.
- 20 OCTOBER 1873: The Metropolitan Board of Works turns down PO request for an amendment to the Metropolitan Building Act to make a street door letter plate compulsory.
- 1877-78: Many Postmasters produced letters to householders with letter boxes, which in the opinion of the letter carrier were defective, and could lead to the abstraction by unauthorised persons, of mail put into them. Some letters enclosed a plan for a better type of receptacle.
- 1880: In *The Life of Sir Rowland Hill* by Geo B Hill it is stated that Hill envisaged from the beginning (1840) the public providing themselves with letter boxes as a means of economising the time of the letter carriers.
- 6 AUGUST 1932: The Rapid Delivery of Letters circular is now made obsolete. ●

Mainly Machins Specialist collectors report by D G A Myall:



Perfin Society current & previous pattern

Numerals

Numerals

Patterns

Patterns...

Machin perfins 'Perfin' is the name given by collectors to stamps perforated with initials. The practice of mutilating stamps in this way is designed to protect against theft or fraudulent misuse. It dates from early Victorian times and has the approval of the Post Office subject to a few conditions. Credit for the idea must go to Joseph Sloper who was granted a patent in 1858 for a machine which indelibly marked bankers' cheques and other documents of value with eg, the word PAID, by means of perforations. He persuaded the Post Office to permit sheets of mint stamps to be similarly marked by commercial firms and public bodies, including government departments. The current conditions are that: 'Mint stamps may be perforated with initials (but not with names or trademarks) provided that the perforating holes are no larger than those dividing one stamp from another in a sheet of stamps'. Although names and trademarks are not officially permitted, both are known, as are devices and numerals. Some examples are illustrated here.

Simple dies, such as those consisting of a single letter, may have been used by a dozen or more firms etc. Multiple-use dies have existed for many years and some of the owners may have ceased their use before the Machin era began. Unless, therefore, an identity can be proved by an example on cover bearing the name of the sender, it is not always possible to state with certainty who was responsible for the pattern on a Machin, nor what the letters comprising the pattern stand for.

There are many ways of collecting perfins but the one I prefer means obtaining an example of each pattern used on a Machin stamp. It is not concerned with the identity of the user or which values are involved; any will do. So far, I have

established that there are 880 different ones used on Machins. This does not take account of 'commemorative' patterns created by, for example, the Polish Philatelic Federation which are not, it seems to me, in line with the true function of perfins. It does, however, include the monogram used by the Perfin Society of GB and the pattern of its predecessor, the Security Endorsement & Perfin Society of GB.

Most of the Machin patterns are to be found only on the pre-decimal stamps and I guess that there are fewer than 100 still in use. The majority were used by urban, rural, district, borough, county, etc local councils, public utilities, branches of the health service administration, and banks and insurance companies. Probably the commonest Machin pattern is PAC used by the Prudential Assurance Company. There are three versions, the usual one having a pin count of 8,8,7 in one line. More difficult to find is the one with a pin count of 11,10, 9 as is the one with the letters on three lines.

Although I do not usually collect more than one example of each pattern, I have made an exception: I have dozens of the very common pattern LB/WF, used by the London Borough of Waltham Forest. These are all on the 4d pre-decimal red stamp and have clear dated handstamps. These reveal that the stamps were used in many locations some distance from the Borough. They include: Bath, Bognor Regis, Bournemouth, Brighton & Hove, Camborne-Redruth, Chapel-en-le-Frith, Dundee, Edinburgh, Ilkley, Mold, Newquay, Ramsgate, Ryde and Southend. Most have August/September 1969 dates. Could it be that the staff took a few with them on holiday to send 'wish you were here' postcards?

Machin perfins, and the retrospective at the Royal Academy



...at different sizes Full name pattern Same letters, different patterns

The Perfin Society Collectors wishing to identify a perfin are advised to join the Perfin Society. For membership details, contact their Secretary, Dave Hill, Wheal Florence, Helston Road, Rosudgeon, Cornwall, TR20 9PA.

Today's computer technology makes it easy to prepare patterns for illustration of a collection. I scan them actual size with maximum contrast to give a clear black-and-white image. If the pattern appears the wrong way round I simply use the scanner's reverse button to put it right. Reversed or inverted patterns are frequently seen on stamps but are of no special significance; sheets were often folded before being perforated.

Patterns may also be described by a simple notation. Letters which appear on more than one line are separated by a slash (/). Some which appear similar at first sight may be distinguished by the presence or absence of serifs and full stops, the pin count, the height of the letters and the overall height and width. Some examples illustrating these principles are shown here.

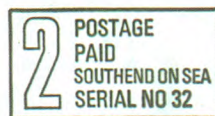
So when you are sorting through a bundle of Machin kiloware and come across some of these 'damaged' stamps you will know what they are and that an interesting sideline collection can be made of them. If you are interested in exchanging patterns, or selling them, why not send for my wants list? My address is: 2 Elizabeth Avenue, Bridport, Dorset DT6 5BA.

Machin retrospective An exhibition titled 'The Life and Times of Arnold Machin OBE, RA' was held at The Royal Academy Schools in London's Piccadilly from 17 July to 3 August. Put together by his son Francis with participation by Royal Mail, The Royal Mint, De La Rue Security Print and the Royal Academy of Engineering, the works on show provided a captivating glimpse of the extraordinary breadth of Machin's artistic talents. Machin was a deeply principled man, strongly influenced by his religious beliefs and by classic

mythology. Known mainly as a sculptor, he was, as he says in his memoirs, born with a pencil in his hand. From an ethereal watercolour executed when he was a child of 5 or 6 to a design of a doll's house for his granddaughter when he was in his eighties, there were examples of his delicate flower paintings for Minton plates, terracotta chessmen for Wedgwood, garden design (including fountains, grottoes, summerhouses and iron gates), silver buckles, figure modelling and life studies (many of which revealed an advanced knowledge of anatomy), coins, medals and, of course, the famous definitive stamp, the only stamp he ever designed.

The exhibition was housed in a series of small rooms in the Academy's schools where Machin had been a Master of Sculpture. I found this better than having it all in one large room. To me, it fitted in with his philosophy, expressed in a film about his garden, that he liked to reveal things a bit at a time. The other film shown was a clip from the 1969 film *From Picture to Post* made by the Post Office. This showed the artist's involvement at every stage of his work on the stamp, from the original clay model, via extra direct modelling on a cast (his viewing the detail of The Queen's eye via a plasticine pressing was particularly interesting), to the photographing of the final cast and finally to the choice of colours best likely to bring out the sculpted effect he wanted. There were two souvenirs to treasure: a beautifully printed catalogue with nearly 100 colour illustrations, and a postcard of the famous Head with a souvenir postmark incorporating Machin's signature. I would like to express here my personal thanks to the family for giving us a frank insight into what made the great man tick •

Postage paid impressions James Mackay looks at the PPI



Two of the questions I am asked most frequently are 'What are these?' and 'Are they collectable?' In both cases I am referring to those marks, usually printed or struck from a rubber handstamp, but sometimes in the form of self-adhesive labels, which adorn so much of our mail. I am very reluctant to use the term 'junk mail' which is both derogatory and highly inaccurate, but I suppose it would be more correct to say that the vast bulk of what comes through the letter-box these days, other than 'social mail' (private letters and cards), is marked in this manner.

Royal Mail uses the term Postage Paid Impression (PPI) to describe any mark which indicates a bulk posting pre-paid by a licensed user whose serial number appears in the mark. The system, in its present form, dates from 1966, although it can trace its origins back to 1924 when 15 circular dies inscribed LONDON / PAID with a value in the centre (above, left) were registered by the Post Office as a 'stamped-to-order' item of postal stationery. The only use of these dies, however, so far recorded was in September 1932, on envelopes used by the Bank of England to send out notification of War Loan conversions.

From 1938 onwards the *Reader's Digest* used a number of pre-printed marks inscribed AYLESBURY / BUCKS / POSTAGE PAID in three lines, while several newspapers had similar marks used at London mainly on the wrappers of papers going overseas. In the early 1960s, the Philatelic Bureau had rectangular impressions inscribed 'Postage Paid LONDON', while Sothebys and Christies used the same formula on the packets containing sale catalogues going abroad.

Bulk posting It is obvious, therefore, that the Post Office made special arrangements for bulk posters long before 1966. The main feature of the system

introduced that year, however, was the inclusion of the poster's 'serial' (licence number). Originally this facility was offered to bulk users despatching a minimum of 20,000 inland items of printed matter or air or surface packets going abroad, or 5000 large or bulky packets, or 500 inland or overseas parcels of uniform size, shape and weight. Over the years, the regulations have been altered from time to time to vary the number of items in any one consignment.

The earliest PPIs were inscribed POSTAGE PAID, with the name of a town and the user's serial. The advent of the two-tier system in September 1968 led to PPIs incorporating the numerals 1 or 2 and later R (Rebate postings). Posters mailing material from more than one post office were given serials with PHQ (Post Office Headquarters) instead of a town name, and although some PPIs may still be encountered with a place name, the vast majority now have an all-purpose serial. Following the division of the Post Office into separate companies and the emergence of Royal Mail as the letters business, the abbreviation was shortened to HQ, while many PPIs in recent years have included ROYAL MAIL in their inscription.

Early requirements Originally the Post Office insisted that impressions should be in a rectangular frame measuring 1.25in x 0.5in. Inscriptions were to be set in four lines consisting of POSTAGE / PAID / town name / serial, using capitals in the first three lines an eighth of an inch in height. Black ink was stipulated but this was soon relaxed. From the outset, moreover, the rules regarding size and style of lettering seemed to have been breached more often than they were observed, and even the layout and actual inscriptions varied, with Postage Paid sometimes rendered solely by initials.

The two-tier system triggered off a spate of 1s and 2s in a wide variety of shapes, sizes and styles. The extension of PPIs to Rebate postings and parcels further widened the scope of impressions incorporating the letters R or P. There were also combination PPIs inscribed R2, P2 or 2P which could be used on second class, rebate or parcel postings, and PPIs inscribed CP which denoted a contract parcel service. Multi-purpose PPIs, with P or 2P prominent at the side, combined the Post Office serial details with PAID HOME alongside the names or initials of various freight companies, such as Road Express, National Carriers, Roadline, British Rail or White Arrow. There were even distinctive PPIs for bulk postings going abroad by surface or air. In more recent years computerisation has greatly facilitated the pre-sorting of bulk postings, leading to special rates for mailers prepared to undertake this work. As a result, PPIs with a prominent M, with or without the word MAILSORT, have come into widespread use, and there are even PPIs which incorporate the word WALKSORT, denoting mail (from BT and other public utilities) which has been segregated into bundles for each postman's route.

Collecting PPIs PPIs now come in a wide range of different shapes, colours and styles, and even a general collection based on the combinations of design, layout and lettering would run to many hundreds. PPIs are fundamentally of interest to local postal historians who endeavour to identify all the users in their own locality. Other, more general, collectors arrange their specimens according to the town names (where present). Look out for PPIs which have been converted or upgraded;

for example, envelopes printed originally for rebate mail are frequently used for first or second class mail with some form of overprint. As a rule, PPIs are undated, but many organisations apply a datestamp at a second operation to let the addressee know when the item was despatched and these 'postmarks' are not without considerable interest in their own right.

From the aesthetic point of view, PPIs do not appear at first glance to offer much, but there have always been examples which departed from the norm. There are those which are adorned with facsimile perforations and some attempt to create an artistic motif, in order primarily to convince the recipient that this is a piece of social mail. In the same way there are many examples which vaguely resemble either a paid machine die (complete with 'Postcode' slogan!) or a meter mark. A good example of the latter even resembles a meter 'tape', complete with perforations; it is only when you look at it closely that you realise that it is actually printed on to the envelope.

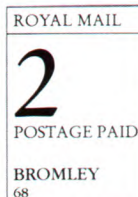
Surprisingly few PPIs include a firm's name, let alone a logo or something more elaborate, but those that do are very attractive and should not be overlooked by collectors of different themes. Of course entire envelopes bearing a PPI can often be of immense thematic interest – my favourite is one produced by the British Philatelic Bureau incorporating a Penny Black. In recent years some banks and large institutions have highlighted their sponsorship of sports using a motif together with the PPI. There are even commemorative PPIs, usually noting a firm's anniversary, while the British Postmark Society broke new ground in 1998 with its very own PPI celebrating its 40th birthday •



Previous articles on PPIs were published in the *Bulletins* of November 1994 (by Matthew Hinton), and January and May 1995 and January 1996 (Ron Negus).



FORTY YEARS RESEARCH
ON
BRITISH POSTMARKS
AND
PRINTED POSTAGE IMPRESSIONS



Philately on-line Sites for young collectors, by Ron Negus



Stamp Review Session

Journey into the fascinating World of STAMPS!

Here we have put together an on-line review session beginning with how stamps came to be and will slowly introduce ways, tips, and how-to's on getting started or improving your stamp collection!

Where did it all begin?

- **Stamps and Collectors Are Born** - how stamps came to be
- **Stamps through the Years** - a chronological listing of how stamps have evolved
- **Postage Rates** - then and now - a rate table showing postage rates over the years.
- **Who Decides What is on a Stamp** - believe it or not, Americans from all over the world can contribute to the creation of a stamp!

AT ONE TIME the majority of children collected stamps whilst at school. Nowadays, such children are the exception. Many explanations have been given for this change, including the increased appeal of alternative types of entertainment such as TV and computer games. National philatelic organisations in both the UK and the USA have responded to this by providing internet sites specifically designed to attract new young collectors to the hobby. In the UK, the site I reviewed in July 2000 (www.ukphilately.org.uk) contains information about the National Youth Stamp Group. This body promotes the Stamp Active programme with assistance for individuals who want to run junior stamp clubs in schools and elsewhere.

Another site that is currently being developed jointly by the National Youth Stamp Group, the British Philatelic Trust, Cavendish Philatelic Auctions and Royal Mail will be called Planet Stamp. This will use drawings and pictures to encourage children to visit different sections of the site where aspects of the hobby will be attractively presented.

In the USA, the American Philatelic Society has a part of its own information site devoted to junior collecting, named 'For Kids'. The opening screen of this section states that 'The APS attempts to promote stamp collecting to youth. We do this by answering questions and correspondence, helping to staff youth areas at certain shows, and providing resources and ideas to leaders of youth clubs.'

The main APS site is at www.stamps.org and contains clear navigation tabs for each of its constituent parts. The 'For Kids' tab on this page

The APS website Now that children are computer literate from a very young age, it is appropriate that the internet provides them with the facts on stamp collecting. This site from the USA, for example, is designed to show junior collectors that 'Stamps are Fun'.

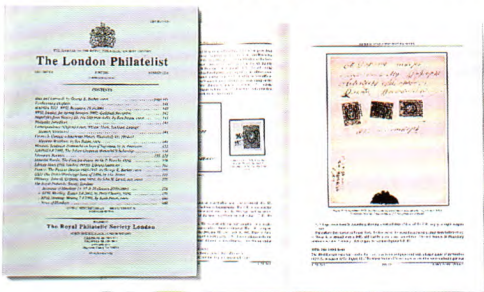
takes the user to another that lists the sections designed specially for children. These include reading material suitable for a beginner, answers to some frequently answered questions, activity pages containing stamp related games and puzzles and details of links to other stamp sites suitable for juniors.

For beginners, the 'For Kids' pages include a comprehensive Welcome to the Hobby overview. This contains descriptions of the various kinds of stamps that exist, advice on deciding what to collect and suggestions for ways to obtain items for the chosen collection. Information is also provided here on stamp accessories, on how to soak, sort and mount stamps, and on the relationship between condition and value. Finally, this introduction gives a listing of common stamp terms.

The site is under continual development and news of the latest improvements, addition of new games or puzzles, and so on is distributed via a free Youth Bulletin Service. To receive this, children only have to submit an e-mail address using the signing-in page. A guarantee is given that this personal information is not used for any other purpose than e-mailing the Youth Bulletin.

Using the internet is a normal activity for children today, and computer literacy begins being taught in primary school. It is to be hoped that philatelic sites that interest children, such as those mentioned above, will become more widespread. This will help to attract younger collectors back to the hobby by introducing them to what the APS site describes as the 'journey into the fascinating world of stamps' ●

An editor retires The LP's George Barker, by Richard West



George Barker and the June issue of *The London Philatelist* – the last edited by him. The LP saw three printers in his 18 years. To begin with, copy was typeset from manuscript; although more is now computer generated, George preferred pasting-up page layouts and checking proofs. His successor, Frank Walton, is likely to rely more upon computers.

The London Philatelist is probably the most prestigious philatelic journal in the world. Published by The Royal Philatelic Society London, it includes the most erudite of papers written by the leading philatelists. To be its editor is both an accolade and privilege.

George Barker has held that envious position for 18 years, following in the footsteps of Stuart Rossiter, whose untimely death from leukaemia had left the editorial chair vacant. (Stuart dedicated his life to philatelic research, and provided the means for the establishment of the Stuart Rossiter Trust.)

Not much has changed with the 'LP' during his time as editor, at least as far as George is concerned. Most will feel it has reinforced its position, with a happy blend of the scholarly with the essential news, plus a few touches of colour.

Following Stuart Rossiter's death, George was approached by John Levett, then a Vice President of the 'Royal', to be the new Editor. The third issue for 1983 (dated May/June) was the first George edited (the first two issues of 1983 were edited by Dr Alan Huggins).

Fortunately right from the beginning George was passed a small stock of material. The major concern of many editors, that of running out of suitable material, has never been a problem for George – although he does admit that occasionally it became very close.

Information scientist George has always been happiest in a research environment, as evidenced throughout his working life. His first job was with the North Thames Gas Board, but he spent most

of his working career, indeed for 33 years, working for RTZ Borax as an information scientist until his retirement in 1993. He did have a short break, spending four years with Unilever at Port Sunlight as a Scientific Editor.

Collecting started at the age of eight, when George purchased at a post office the set of stamps issued in 1940 for the centenary of the Penny Black. As is so often the case, the collection went into limbo during the early years of his marriage.

However, his collecting has always been influenced by one of his passions in life, France. He has maintained a fascination for the country, its tourism, and not least its stamps. And so he has studied the postal history of France, and the definitive issues from 1900 to 1940, including the 'Colonials' where these have taken up the design theme of the basic French issues.

George has always been a 'society man', not least of The Royal Philatelic Society London, since 1979 (becoming a Fellow in 1983). He has supported his local philatelic society, both at Walsley and currently at Guildford.

Understandably he is a keen supporter of the France and Colonies Philatelic Society (GB), being an Honorary Life Member since 1978. He has served as its Secretary, Vice President, President (twice), Editor, and has been its Librarian since 1986. He is both a founder and honorary member of the Académie Européenne de Philatélie and, among many others, is a member of the Académie de Philatélie (Paris), the Association des Amis du Musée de la Poste (Paris, still fortunate in being able to boast of a postal museum) and the Union Marcophile (France).

George has frequently exhibited from his own collection, first achieving a silver medal at Stampex back in 1971, and more recently being awarded a large vermeil medal at PhilexFrance in 1999. During his editorship, *The London Philatelist* has more than once been awarded a gold medal. Now, however, George feels he has occupied the editorial position for long enough: the time has come for a new editor to take over. After all, George feels he still has much to do, not least for the 'Royal' in completing an indexing of the 'LP'.

There is also much general bibliographic research he wishes to undertake. Sadly George's wife died four years ago, but throughout she had supported him and shared in his hobby.

As for the hobby, he has concern for those, particularly the young, who start in an undisciplined way, only to feel disappointment or disenchantment later. He knows more would benefit by being a member of a local philatelic society. George has certainly served the 'Royal' well – and, in all he undertakes, we wish him well ●

Postbag Letters to the Editor

Mail by Bus I was interested in the notes on 'Mail by Bus' (Stamp Scene, July) and hope the following will add to the story. In the late 1930s the Post Office and Sheffield Corporation worked together in the transport of mail. I was then living in a small village in north Derbyshire some miles from Sheffield. A little before 8am each weekday, a mail bag arrived locked to the handrail of the stairs on a bus from Sheffield. This was collected by the local postman, for sorting and delivery. A similar system, in reverse, took mail from the village each tea-time. But, this was not all. The last bus of the day, leaving the village at 10pm for Sheffield carried, on a special bracket on the back of the bus, a small mail box, so that letters could be posted at any stopping place along the bus route. Similarly, within the city, the last tram-car along each route each day carried a like mail-box. So, along some routes, it was possible to post a letter well after midnight and be sure it would be delivered by the first post on the same day. How was that for service? W HAROLD SMITH, BIGGLESWADE ●

George V I greatly enjoyed Alan Moorcroft's article on the KGV 1912-24 issue (July), and was particularly fascinated by his imputation of intrigue, chicanery and early attempts at 'spin' to the De La Rue board of the day. I think his illustration makes quite clear that the Die 11 Downey printing by Harrisons was no whit inferior to DLR's vastly more expensive KEV11 printing. Mr Moorcroft mentions the lack of critical letters from the

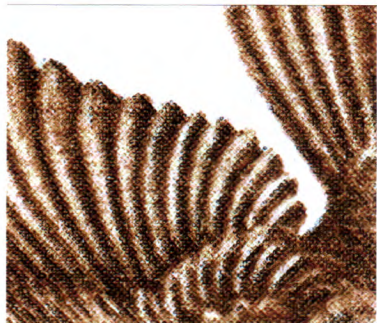
public in the POH file. A letter dated 28 June 1911, however – six days after the first issue of Die 1A

from KGV's Assistant Private Secretary to Mr Nathan at the Post Office, mentions that 'This new Stamp, much to The King's regret, has been received with loud abuse in the United Kingdom and judging by the letters addressed to His Majesty with contempt abroad' (my italics: the letter is quoted in the leaflet 'The Royal Collection' available at The Stamp Show 2000).

But of perhaps greater interest is the fact that though leading the hue and cry against Harrisons and 'their' Downey Head, DLR did not disdain to use it themselves. In 1911 there was a requirement for a PO Savings Bank stamp. DLR obtained the contract to print this (which they retained until 1936, the end of KGV's reign), and registered the head design on 4 September 1911: the stamp went on sale on 1 January 1912, the same day as the Harrison Die 11 Downeys. The POSB stamp also used the Die 11 Downey head; and this was retained until 1920, the replacement Profile head not being registered for the POSB stamp until 5 August 1920. A good long run by DLR for such a despised head! PETER MANSFIELD, EASTLEIGH, HANTS ●



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



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

- 1 Who designed the 1991 Christmas stamps?
- 2 What was the face value of the Welsh Black Bull stamp?
- 3 What do the initials FRPSL stand for?



July identify The detail is from the 1987 Victorian Britain 22p stamp. The winner was R Tucker of Herts.

July knowledge Answers: 1) S D Scott; 2) 1969; 3) Walsall Security Printers. The winner was E Nickell of Northern Ireland.

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

Send your answer (addressed to either October *Identify* competition or October *Knowledge* competition), name and address on a postcard or back of a sealed envelope to: British Philatelic Bulletin, Royal Mail, 2-14 Bunhill Row, London EC1Y 8HQ. The senders of the first cards drawn in each competition on 16 November will each receive £100. Ten runner-up prizes of presentation packs and FDCs will be awarded in each competition. Competitions are not open to Royal Mail employees ●

Events

5 October Welsh Phil Soc meeting at Oswalds, Bangor. **Enquiries** Marion Turner, 01766 590203.

13 October Assn of Sussex Phil Socs convention at Our Lady of Sion School, Gratwicke Road, Worthing. **Enquiries** G Frankcom 01903 884139.

13 October Torquex exhibition and fair at the Old-way Mansion, Paignton, 10.30-16.30. **Enquiries** J Jeffrey, 71 Blue Waters Drive, Paignton TQ4 6JF.

13 October Ashford (Kent) Phil Soc Stamp & Postcard Fair, at Norton Knatchbull Grammar School, Hythe Road, Ashford, 10.00-16.30. Refreshments available. **Enquiries** Peter Ainsley 01233 639927.

16-21 October Hafnia '01 international exhibition, Copenhagen. **Enquiries** Hafnia '01, PO Box 2001, DK-2770 Kastrup, Denmark.

20 October Hampex 2001 at Thornden School, Winchester Road, Chandler's Ford. **Enquiries** 01425 474310.

26-28 October Federation of Surrey Philatelic Societies' convention at East Anglian Hotel, Poole Road, Bournemouth.

27 October Thatcham & District Phil Soc Annual Stamp Fair at Memorial Hall, Bath Road, Thatcham, 10.00-16.00. **Enquiries** 01635 866942.

27 October NW Federation of Phil Socs Convention & Stamp Fair, at Canon Slade School, Tonge Moor Road, Bolton, 10.00-16.00. **Enquiries** G B Fielding, 01204 307252.

27 October Sidcup Phil Soc Fair at Emmanuel Hall, Hadlow Road, Sidcup ●

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