

BRITISH PHILATELIC

The ROYAL MAIL magazine *for stamp collectors*

Bulletin

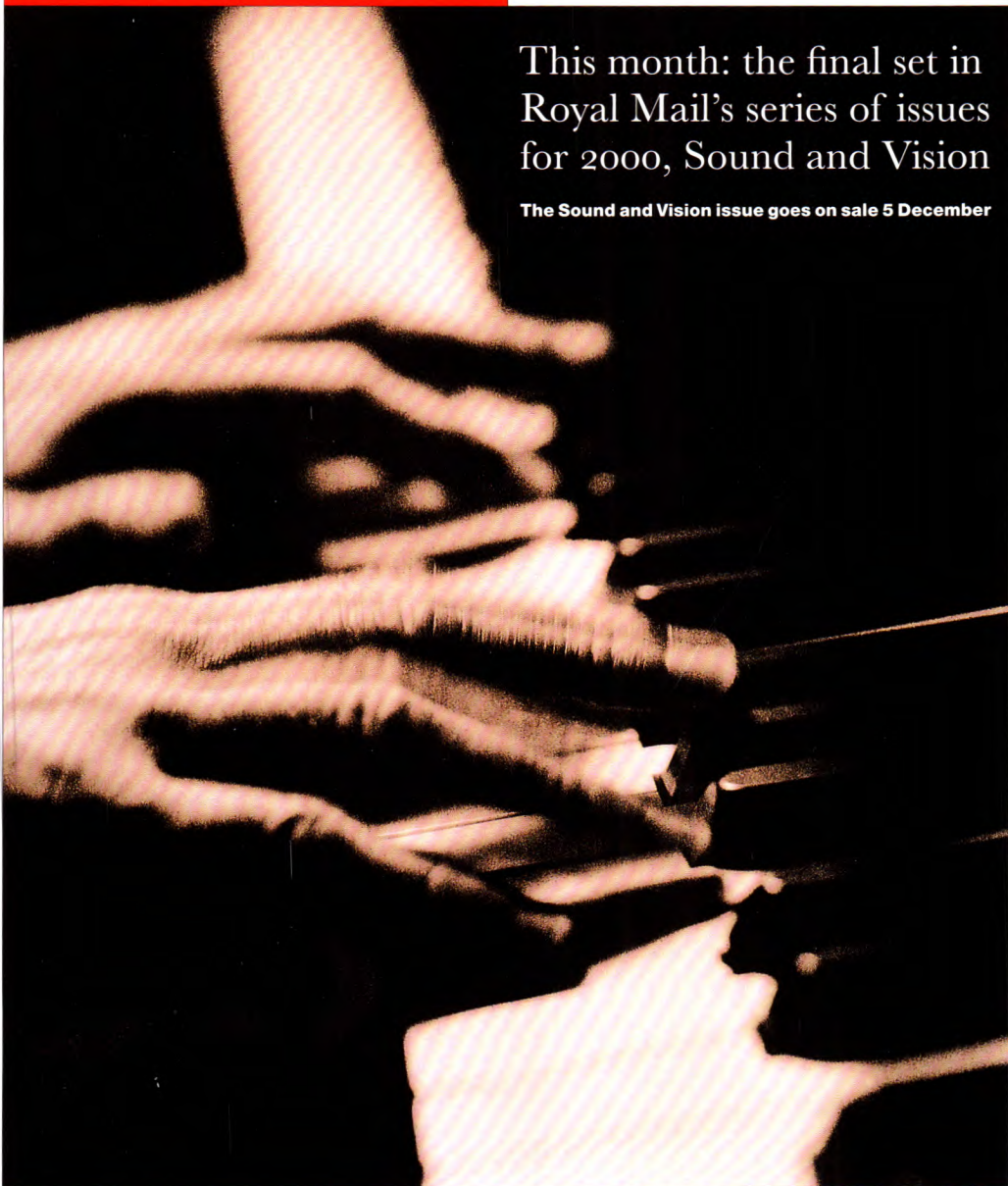
Volume 38 Number 3

NOVEMBER 2000 • 85p

Glasgow's post offices • The
British Forces Post Office

This month: the final set in
Royal Mail's series of issues
for 2000, Sound and Vision

The Sound and Vision issue goes on sale 5 December



Forthcoming issues and withdrawals



Cover The Year of the Artist, one of the Millennium projects featured in the Sound and Vision issue, is a nationwide programme celebrating living artists and all art forms. See preview on page 80. Photograph: Getty One Stone.

Corrections Gutter pairs of the Mind and Matter stamps are vertical, not horizontal as stated in August.

Colin Peachey points out a mistake in his article on Islay in September: Jura's current post office is at Craighouse, not Castlebay which is on the Isle of Barra. Apologies for any confusion caused.

Issues Note some items are available only from the British Philatelic Bureau 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 Gloucester, Grimsby, Guildford Harrogate, Leeds, Leicester Liverpool, London (Lombard Street and Trafalgar Square) Manchester, Newcastle upon Tyne, Norwich, Nottingham Oxford, Plymouth, Portsmouth Southampton, Southend-on-Sea, Stevenage, Stratford-on-Avon, Truro, Windsor and York

1 November

Withdrawal 1995 Greetings stamp book and reprint (issued 21 Mar 1995 & 5 Feb 1996); 1996 Cartoons greetings book and reprint (26 Feb & 25 Nov 1996); 1997 Flowers greetings book and 1999 printing (6 Jan 1997 & 16 Mar 1999).

7 November

Issue Millennium Spirit & Faith (Christmas) stamps, presentation pack and stamp books (20 × 2nd; 10 × 1st) • 2000 Yearbook (standard and leather bound versions).

28 November

Issue Millennium Sound and Vision stamp cards.

5 December

Issue Millennium Sound and Vision stamps and presentation pack • 2000 Yearpack.

29 December

Withdrawal £10 Britannia stamp and presentation pack.

1 January

Issue The Archers philatelic medallic cover.

1 January

Withdrawal Millennium Moment miniature sheet, commemorative document and coin cover.

9 January

Issue Millennium The Future stamp cards.

16 January

Issue Millennium The Future stamps & presentation pack.

29 January

Issue Self-adhesive retail stamp books: 12 × 1st (Questa and Walsall); 12 × 2nd (Questa); 6 × 1st and 6 × 2nd (Walsall); and 10 × 1st and 10 × 2nd (Questa). Details of the new self-adhesive books will be published next month.

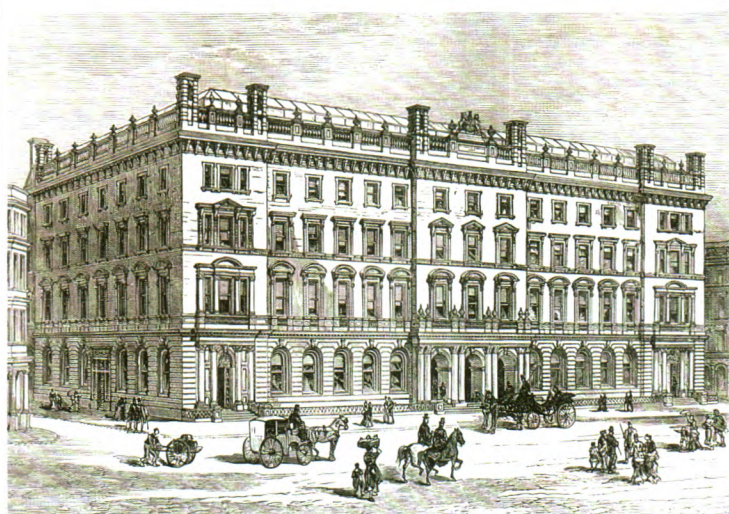
29 January

Issue Label stamp book: 6 × 1st definitives and Queen Victoria label.

1 February

Withdrawal All 1999 Millennium stamps, presentation packs and stamp cards; 1999 Yearbook and Yearpack; 1999 Solar Eclipse miniature sheet; 2000 Above & Beyond and Fire & Light stamps, presentation packs and stamp cards.

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At its height, Glasgow's head post office in George Square (above, in an illustration of 1876) controlled several hundred post offices within a 90-mile radius of the city centre.

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: British Philatelic Bureau, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB • **Binders** to hold 24 issues, price £7, are available by post from British Philatelic Bureau (address above) • Royal Mail also publishes the fortnightly *British Postmark Bulletin*, giving details of forthcoming special handstamps. Available on annual subscription from British Philatelic Bureau (address as above) UK and Europe £10, rest of the world £21.75 • **Copyright** Unless copyright is attributed to a specific author, any articles or features may be reproduced without formal permission, but acknowledgement should be given to *British Philatelic Bulletin*. Requests to reproduce copyright articles should be addressed to the Editor, 2-14 Bunhill Row, London EC1Y 8HQ • **Design** by Robert Maude • **Printed** in Great Britain by The White Dove Press • **ISSN** 0953 8119

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Stamp scene Exhibitions • Glasgow 2000 • Friends of the NPM • New postal miniatures



To His Royal Highness
The Prince of Wales, K.G.
St. St. St.
Buckingham Palace
S. Dr.

This unique cover bearing the Edward VII 2d Tyrian Plum, from the collection of HM The Queen, will be exhibited at the Monaco 2000 show.

Monaco 2000 Office des Emissions de Timbres-Poste, 23 av Du Prince Hereditaire Albert, 98050 Monaco Cedex (Principaute).

Overseas exhibitions The Monaco 2000 exhibition will be staged in Monte-Carlo on 1-3 December, open each day 10.00-18.00. This will be in three sections in different venues, billed as 'a trilogy which will charm you'. One hundred postal administrations and dealers will be present at the International Philatelic Exhibition in the Salle du Canton. Collectors will be able to obtain the signatures of designers of Monaco stamps of 2000 and 2001, obtain special cancels, copper-plate prints and other souvenirs. A philatelic passport will be available. The exhibition of 100 of the rarest stamps and philatelic documents in the world will be on view at the Stamp & Coin Museum. This will include items from Royal collections and from 17 major postal museums. The Edward VII 2d Tyrian Plum cover (illustrated left) will be shown, and a cover bearing the 20c of the first issue of Sardinia used on cover with Menton datestamp will be displayed by Prince Rainier of Monaco. The British Library will show a cover bearing the Post Office Mauritius 1d. A Thematic Exhibition at the Monaco Top Cars Collection will include material from the Olympic Museum and the Righetti-Mazza collection on the 'aesthetics in the correspondence of the 19th century'. Visitors will be able to obtain signatures of international athletes, Olympic winners, racing drivers and football players. Monaco 2000 will be open each day 10.00-18.00. A special 3f (0.46 euro) Monaco 2000 stamp was issued last December; a miniature sheet of two 20f (3.05e) stamps will be issued at the time of the exhibition •

'Nations Cup' Some years ago the UK participated in several competitive events between a number of European countries. Each country provided exhibits of material covering the various FIP classes which, with the exception of thematic philately, had to comprise material issued by, or related to the country concerned. FIP now proposes a 'Nations Cup' competition which is a modified form of this concept with competitive events being held between groups of countries, the winners of each group moving on to compete at Continental and World levels. The ABPS expressed an interest in staging a trial run of such an event involving the UK, Belgium, Portugal and possibly France, and Spring Stampex 2001 (28 February-4 March) is pleased to provide the venue. The competition will be run by a joint ABPS/British Philatelic Trust working group. Each country will produce exhibits in four compulsory classes – youth, thematic, traditional and postal history plus three others selected from aerophilately, astrophilately, postal stationery, revenues, or maximaphily. The exhibits will be assessed according to the FIP General and Special regulations •

Win new book on Scotland's postal history To coincide with the Glasgow 2000 exhibition James Mackay has written a new book, *Scotland's Posts*, telling the story of the postal service from the 17th century to the present. It is profusely illustrated with Scottish postal markings.

We have four copies to give away to the senders of the first four cards drawn on 30 November. To win, send your name and address on the back of a postcard to: Scotland's Posts Draw, British Philatelic Bulletin, Royal Mail, 2-14 Bunhill Row, London EC1Y 8HQ •

Scotland's Posts Price £16 plus £3 postage from: James Mackay, 67 Braidpark Drive, Giffnock, Glasgow G46 6LY. Proceeds from sales go to the exhibition fund.

Glasgow 2000 The third of the new series of national exhibitions, under the auspices of the Association of British Philatelic Societies, will be held at the Scottish Exhibition & Conference Centre, Glasgow, 17-19 November. The exhibition includes postal history and social philately displays, invited exhibits as well as dealers' stands. The British Philatelic Bureau will be present. The Royal Philatelic Collection will mount a major 16-frame display covering: Parliamentary envelopes; Mulready envelopes and covers; British Guiana early covers; Circular Delivery stamps; Pigeon Post; Hong Kong Victory issue; India early covers; George V Silver Jubilee, Jamaica 1923 issue and Barbados; George VI Cayman Islands, Jamaica, St Lucia and Bahamas; and Elizabeth II Jamaica. The last-named display includes the block of four illustrated above, and artist's designs for 1955 definitives, illustrated below.

Items from the Post Office Heritage display are featured on page 89. A feature article on the interesting new class of Social Philately was published in last month's *Bulletin*.

The exhibition will be open 17 November 11.00-18.00, 18th 10.00-17.00 and 19th 10.00-16.00. Admission is free. Special postmarks will be applied to mail posted at the exhibition or sent to: Scotland & N Ireland Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, 57 Queen Street, Glasgow G1 3AZ, stating Glasgow 2000 cancel and date(s) required. Covers should bear at least 1st class postage •



The Royal Philatelic Collection display will include the unique block of four of the unissued 1955 1/2d stamp (there is a single in the British Library) and artist's designs for the 1955 1/2d to 6d definitives (detail below). The designs are hand-painted apart from The Queen's head and crown, which are printed.

Post Offices of Glasgow This free exhibition runs throughout November at the city's Mitchell Library (Kent Road entrance). Mon-Thurs 09.00-20.00, Fri-Sat 09.00-17.00. See article on page 76.

JAMAICA

1955

Definitive Issue

3d-6d : artist's designs by Dela Rue, hand painted apart from the head of the Queen and the Crown which are printed



Enquiries about membership, souvenir covers, postcards and gift subscriptions to: Ray Pottle, PO Box 40, Uckfield TN22 2SP. Telephone 01825 766546. Please enclose a stamped addressed envelope or international reply coupon with written enquiries.

Friends of the National Postal Museum Despite the Museum's closure, the Friends continue with events and visits, also publication of the *Cross Post* journal and postcards featuring items from the PO Heritage Collections. The Association will hold its annual general meeting at the Phoenix Suite, Mount Pleasant, London EC1 on 25 November. Souvenir covers are being produced.

The Association offers its usual gift package of a special two-year subscription – an ideal Christmas (or birthday) gift for any philatelist or postal historian. The annual subscription for UK members normally costs £15, overseas £20. For the festive season only, the two-year subscription is just £25 UK, £35 overseas – a saving of £5. On joining, a new Friend will receive material produced since 1 April 2000, including copies of *Cross Post*. New material issued up to 31 March 2002 will be despatched as it becomes available. To ensure delivery by Christmas, please order by 30 November, stating clearly the name and address of the person you want the subscription for.

The Friends issued eight new postcards on 5 September. No 15 features the Sir Rowland Hill statue outside former London Chief Post Office; cards 16-22 show items relating to the 1924-25 British Empire Exhibition at Wembley including unadopted stamp designs by Eric Gill and Harold Nelson, postal stationery, and telephone advertising on reverse of 1925 Post Office Exhibit card. Price £3.20 the set, or £8 with special Friends postmark of 5 September. Orders and enquiries to Ray Pottle, address opposite •



Orders and enquiries BFM Collectables, PO Box 69, Fleet GU13 9YN. Telephone 01252 617952 (office hours).



Postal models A Victorian thatched post office and stores (5in wide) has been produced by BFM Collectables, known for their white-metal motorcycles and historical figures. This cottage model is the first of a new range. Price £28.95; mention this publication when ordering, and BFM will include a free Dambusters signed cover with VC stamp and Queen Mother birthday cover signed by the artist Alan Roe (both normally £6 each).

Even during the Blitz conditions of the Second World War, young Post Office boys, on their distinctive red motorcycles, rode out to deliver urgent telegrams. As a tribute to these young 'warriors', BFM has produced a hand-crafted bike and rider (2 in tall) with telegram, slung steel-helmet and white blackout strips on his mudguards. To complement the telegram boy, BFM have added an ARP 'fire guard' postman of the King Edward Street depot in the City of London during the Blitz. Price £28.95 •

Enquiries Stanley Gibbons Ltd 01425 472363.

New SG catalogues Stanley Gibbons has announced that the 2001 edition of *Collect British Stamps* and new *Collect Falkland Islands Stamps* catalogues will be published on 1 December. The 2001 edition of *Collect Channel Island and Isle of Man Stamps* and the 7th edition of the King George VI catalogue follow on 26 January, and the 5th edition of Part 6 France and 12th edition of GB Specialised Catalogue Vol 1 Queen Victoria in February •

Royal Mail news Design a Stamp winners • 2000 Yearbook and pack • Collector's Club



Stamp Show 2000 Design a Stamp Competition About 3000 young people entered the Design a Stamp competition at Stamp Show 2000 in May. They could choose from five of the 10 themes in the Perspectives on Britain display part of the Royal Mail stand. The themes were: Royalty, Nature, Sport, Travel, and TV. The entries were judged by Paul Singleton, then of the House of Questa, and John Whittaker and Simon Eddy of Royal Mail. The winners were: age group 5-8 Amelia Drew (6), of London; age group 9-11 Lauren Hood (10), of Middlesex; age group 12-16 Marshi Harig (14), of London. The winners attended a presentation ceremony at the House of Questa Security Printers where they saw their winning design being printed into a limited edition souvenir sheet. This was then followed by lunch and a trip to the theatre to see *The Lion King*. All the winners also received a camera, drawing set and subscription to Collectors Club.

A copy of this souvenir sheet by Questa is included as a free gift in this *Bulletin*. This follows the tradition of Questa printing the winning entries from the Design a Stamp competitions at the Wembley stamp shows. These sheets have been given as free gifts each year in the *Bulletin* enabling readers to build up a collection of these interesting cinderella items •

Left: Royal Mail's Exhibitions Manager John Whittaker, with Lauren Hood, Amelia Drew and Marshi Harig with their framed stamp designs.

Centre: Questa's Steve Winton shows Lauren, Amelia and Marshi proofs of the souvenir sheet of their stamp designs.

2000 Yearbook and Yearpack The 2000 Yearbook will go on sale on 7 November and will contain information and spaces for all issues up to the last Millennium set, The Future, to be issued on 16 January 2001. The book will contain all stamps up to the Spirit & Faith set plus a card to be returned in order to receive the Sound & Vision (5 December) and The Future sets when they are issued. Bureau standing order customers for the Yearbook need not return the card; they will be sent the stamps automatically. As always the book gives interesting background stories to each issue with details of the designers.

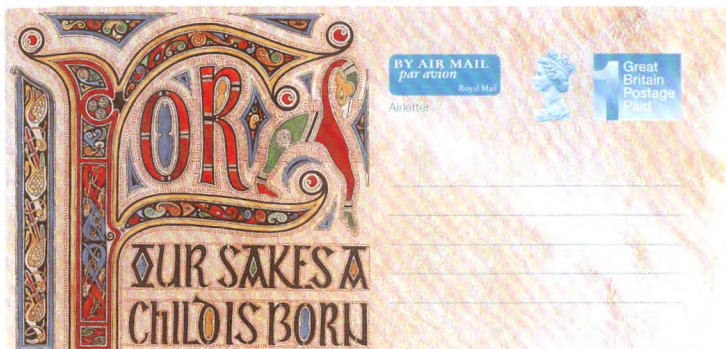
The 2000 Yearpack containing all the special stamps of the year will be available from 5 December •

Yearbook £25.95 standard version or £75 de luxe leather-bound edition. The latter is available only from the Bureau.

Yearpack £20.50.

Both Yearbook and Yearpack contain the Queen Mother miniature sheet.

Christmas airletter Shown opposite is the front panel of this year's Christmas airletter. Designed by Glazer Limited of London using illustrations by Lieve Cornil, it is now on general and philatelic sale, price 49p.



Aerogramme quantities Numbers issued of the 1999 Craft aerogrammes were: English version 49,780; Scottish 41,430; and Welsh 15,920 •

Nomination form Completed forms should be returned to John Whittaker, Stamps and Collectibles, Royal Mail, 2-14 Bunhill Row, London EC1Y 8HQ by 7 January.

Telephone 020 7847 3317.

Rowland Hill Awards This month's *Bulletin* includes 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 are 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 2000 will be made at a ceremony in London next March.

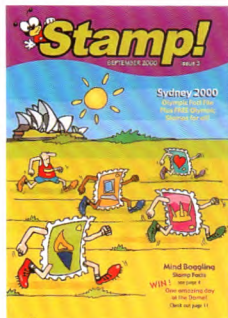
The Post Office Excellence Award for 1999 was won by Haslingden po, the runners-up were Romsey and the Galleries Branch Office in Bristol. Previous winners were: 1996 Leeds Chief Post Office, 1997 Truro Branch Office, and 1998 Newport Sub Post Office, Shropshire.

All nomination forms will go into a draw and the winner will receive £100 worth of Royal Mail philatelic products. Enquiries about the Awards should be sent to John at the address or phone number opposite •



Mike Ainscough receiving the Haslingden post office award.

Membership forms or further details from: Collectors Club, Freepost NEA1431, Sunderland SR9 9XN.



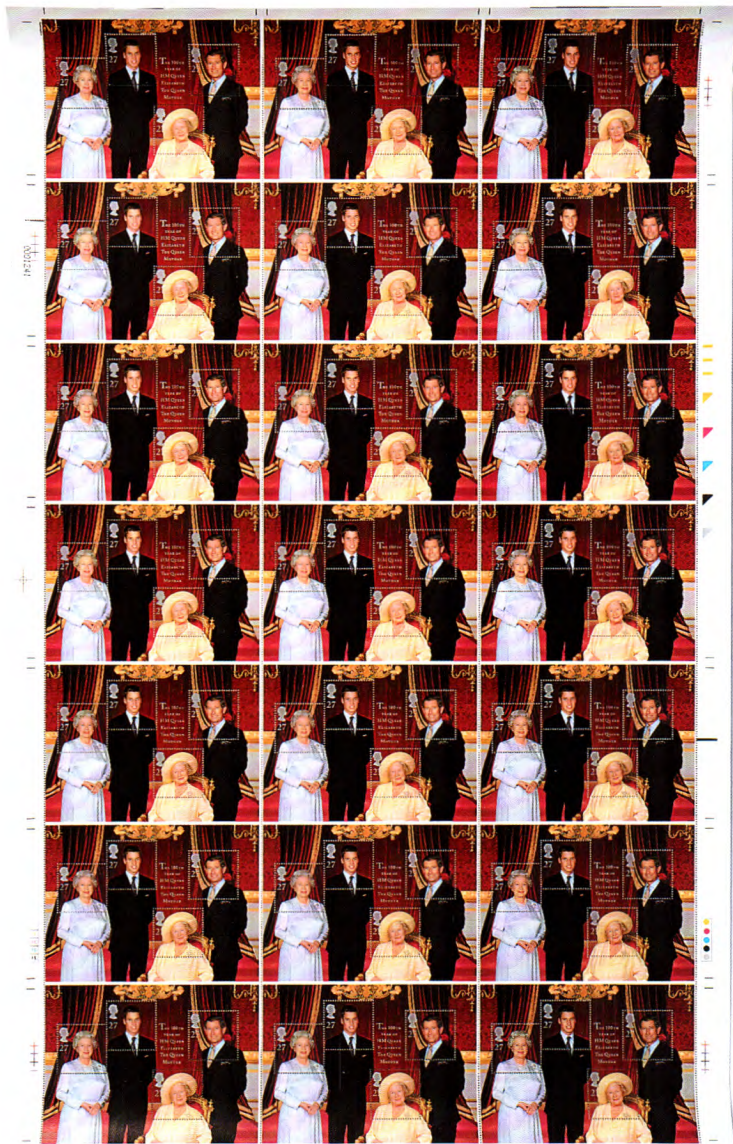
Royal Mail Collectors Club This is the only club aimed solely at young collectors up to age 14, catering for their every collecting need. On joining, each member receives a fun starter pack full of great stamp collecting goodies from stamps to tweezers, a badge and membership card, plus information on how to collect in different ways. Members receive a bi-monthly magazine, *Stamp!*, updating them on the latest special stamp issue, free stamp offers, and more. The September issue of *Stamp!* Gives information on the Mind & Matter and Body & Bone stamps, the Millennium Dome, Olympic Games, and includes a jokes section and competition to win family tickets to the Dome. A supplement to the magazine includes members' swaps and penpal requests, puzzles, and an order form for items from the Club shop. Membership of the Collectors Club is just £5 for 2 years (£7 overseas), or £9.50 for 5 years (£13.50 overseas) •

Queen Mother miniature sheet Shown here is the complete printers' sheet of 21 of the Queen Mother miniature sheet. The cylinder numbers (shown actual size below right) were printed in the left sheet margin and lost when the sheets were guillotined to produce the individual miniature sheets.

The complete sheet of the Jeffery Matthews miniature sheet was shown in last month's *Bulletin* •

Queen Mother cylinders

P94 phosphor • 1A silver •
1B yellow • 1C magenta • 1D
cyan (blue) • 1E black



1A
1B
1C
1D
1E



16 January	The Future (final Millennium issue)
13 February	Cats and Dogs
13 March	Weather (stamps and miniature sheet)
10 April	Submarines
15 May	Buses (stamps and miniature sheet)
19 June	Hats
10 July	Pondlife
4 September	Puppets
2 October	Nobel Prizes
6 November	Christmas

2001 stamp programme The special issues for next year are given opposite

Please note the amended dates for Buses, Hats, and Nobel Prizes issues from those published in the June *Bulletin* (page 295). A new country set for Northern Ireland, a prestige book, books with mixed definitives and special stamps, and a book with a commemorative label depicting Queen Victoria are also planned. Further details will be announced in due course ●

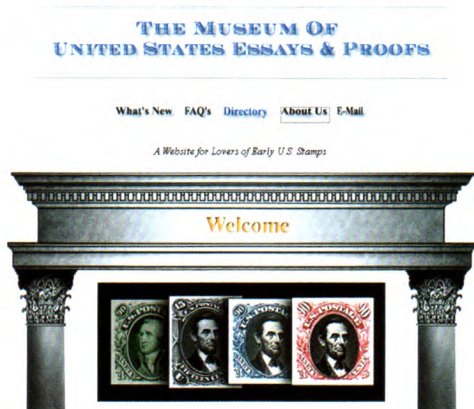
Coming off sale The 1993 £10 Britannia stamp and presentation pack will be withdrawn from sale at the Bureau and philatelic outlets on 29 December. The Millennium Moment miniature sheet, commemorative document and coin cover will come off sale on 1 January. All 1999 Millennium issues (Inventors' Tale to Artists' Tale) will be withdrawn on 1 February, also the 1999 Yearbook and Yearpack, Solar Eclipse miniature sheet and 2000 Above & Beyond and Fire & Light sets. The three prestige books promoting the Stamp Show 2000 – 1998 Definitive Portrait, 1999 Profile on Print, and 2000 Special by Design – will be withdrawn on 14 February ●

Special draw £10 Britannia pack to be won

We have 10 packs to give away – to the senders of the first 10 cards drawn on 30 November. The £10 stamp is to be withdrawn from sale on 29 December. Simply write your name and address on the back of a postcard and send to: Britannia Pack Draw, British Philatelic Bulletin, Royal Mail, 2-14 Bunhill Row, London EC1Y 8HQ ●



Philately on-line Ron Negus views some of the US classics



www.essayproof.net Awarded a ranking as one of the top 5% of philatelic websites of 1999 by the FIP in its inaugural on-line competition in Beijing, the Museum of United States Essays & Proofs shows how the power of the world wide web can allow close-up views of the early stamp designer's skill. Above, Ron Negus.

WITH the increased number of gaudy commemoratives that appear each year, collectors often say how much they miss the excellent design and production skills shown on the classic issues of yesterday. Unfortunately, to study these older issues in detail often requires a visit to an exhibition or a museum, and this may not always be possible. However, an innovative website allows examination of the early stamps and fiscals of the United States to be made at your leisure on the screen.

The site (www.essayproof.net) was developed in 1998 by enthusiastic collectors Peter Schwartz and Ralph R Zerbonia, in order to provide the on-line equivalent of the disbanded American study circle that had been known as the Essay-Proof Society. They started by including scans of material from their own collections, but were soon able to add examples supplied by the growing number of visitors to the site. These visitors included other collectors, some specialised dealers and auction houses who all added further information.

In a clear mission statement, the founders declare that the main purpose of the site is to 'provide on-line, high resolution, full colour images of essays and proofs for the purpose of serious philatelic research, as well as for simple viewing pleasure.' The Museum now contains over 300 pages of scans of essays (preliminary drafts and unaccepted designs) and proofs (carefully made printings of the adopted designs) for 19th and

early 20th century postage and revenue stamps of the USA. These images are indexed by type of use – postage, revenue, tax-paid, etc – and by issue. Some are enlarged to make it easier to view the intricate detail that made many of the early stamps such fine instances of the engraver's art.

Contributions of scanned items for essays and proofs not yet included in the Museum holdings are invited, with the object of building up as complete a collection as possible. Full details of the procedure needed to submit specimens are given. A further section, called 'What is it?' contains pictures of unidentified or questionable essay-proof material, for which collectors can suggest possible identities by sending an e-mail to the site.

A reading room is included containing a number of illustrated magazine extracts of general interest about essay and proof collecting, plus some in-depth research articles. In addition, a 'Required Reading' page lists essential reference books, periodicals and auction catalogues.

The site is updated regularly, and by registering their interest, collectors can receive a free newsletter via e-mail once per month with details of the latest additions. Even if your own collecting interests do not include American classics, you will find this particular website worth visiting. It is an excellent example of how the power of the internet can be used to provide absorbing information for stamp collectors ●

Glasgow's sub post offices exhibition by James Mackay



IN CONJUNCTION with Glasgow 2000, the three-day national philatelic exhibition at the Scottish Exhibition and Conference Centre on 17-19 November, there will be a month-long exhibition in the Mitchell Library in the city centre. The exhibition, in the main Kent Road entrance of the library, includes a selection of letters and their covers produced in evidence at the murder trial of Madeleine Smith in 1857. Adjoining glass cases will contain a variety of artefacts associated with the postal services, coming under the heading of social philately.

The main part of this exhibition, however, consists of upright frames illustrating the origins and development of Glasgow's network of sub post offices. At its height, around the turn of the century, Glasgow's head post office controlled several hundred post offices within a 90-mile radius of the city centre, from Corrour in the Highlands to Wanlockhead in the Borders. Many of these, of course, ranked as independent or railway sub offices and therefore did not include GLASGOW in the inscription on their datestamps. The exhibition focuses on those offices which lay within the former town delivery area, a much more compact field, yet one that affords considerable scope for study.

At one time or another there have been over 250 sub post offices within this area. Sub post offices tend to be rather ephemeral in urban areas and

their transfer to a new location – even if moving only round the corner – may mean a change of name. The city fathers, in their infinite wisdom, have chosen to alter street names and numbering at various times (such as in 1912 and 1938, when the city absorbed surrounding districts), and these upheavals have also had repercussions on the post offices. Retrenchment has also played a part. At the end of 1965, for example, there were 167 subordinate offices in the Glasgow town area but by 1990 this had fallen to 140. The number has remained fairly constant at that level in the past decade, but inevitably there have been quite a few closures and also a number of new offices, reflecting the movement of population. The disappearance of the head post office in George Square, for example, has resulted in the opening of new sub offices in Miller Street, St. Vincent Street and Jamaica Street and in 1999 the last-named burned down.

The Glasgow sub offices can trace their origins back to the Penny Post receiving houses established in July 1800. This scheme was not a success, and it was not until January 1826 that seven receiving houses were opened within the city boundaries. At that time there were district Penny Posts in Cathcart, Maryhill, Parkhead, Patrick and Pollokshaws, all places which were eventually absorbed by the city. At first these offices used handstamps bearing their names but later rec-



tangular numbered stamps were used on a strictly alphabetical basis, which meant that every time a new office opened the numbers were reshuffled.

Undated name stamps were revived in the 1840s and several of these were even used to cancel adhesives up to 1860. Gradually the town receiving offices, as they were now known, were given thimble datestamps which were confined to registered packets and counter work, but later extended to postal orders (from 1881) and parcel labels (from 1883). Many of the offices on the periphery of the city continued to cancel all outgoing mail until the 1930s in some cases, until they were absorbed into the town delivery area.

In the early 1930s Glasgow gradually adopted an alphanumeric system of district compass points and sub-district numbers, on the same lines as London, and this continued until the advent of postcodes in the 1970s. Existing counter and parcel datestamps remained in use, but had the obsolete district designations filed off, pending the introduction of new stamps showing the first part of the postcode. In recent years many offices have adopted self-inking datestamps of the Reiner pattern, but as these have to be purchased by sub-postmasters, there are many who are still using the obsolescent handstamps, and even a few of the partially erased stamps of the 1970s are continuing to perform yeoman service •

Serving the Armed Forces

Richard West visits the British Forces Post Office at Mill Hill

THE BRITISH FORCES Post Office is a justifiably proud institution. Wherever British troops are deployed, whatever the circumstances, mail to and from will be carried efficiently and as speedily as possible. Philatelically the activities are equally fascinating, with many collectors specialising in covers and cancellations of the BFPO.

It all started with the Peninsular War in 1808, during which an Army Post Office was put into use. Similarly in 1840 for the first Chinese War. Then, in 1882, The Post Office Corps was formed to serve in the Egyptian and Sudan campaigns. Later the Royal Engineers Telegraph Reserve was formed, and in 1908 the two were amalgamated to become the Royal Engineers (Postal Section).

This was to prove vital during the First World War, carrying the mail by whatever means was available, including sleigh and mine sweeper. One of the means developed was by air, and in 1919 a service was initiated between Folkestone and Cologne: it was the world's first scheduled airmail service. In 1914 the Home Postal Depot was established in London, which would act as a central focus for the sorting and distribution of mail to forces, wherever they might be.

It has long been acknowledged that receipt of a letter can be a great boost to morale. Throughout its life, RE (PO), later renamed Royal Engineers (Postal and Courier Communications) has been constantly noted for its great efficiency and dedication. Its activities have increased, to include carrying classified mail, and serving the Royal Navy and HM Ships.

The Home Postal Depot moved in 1962 from Acton to Mill Hill, which became known as the Postal and Courier Depot RE. From 1992 RE (PCS) has been allowed to be more commercial in its approach, with the launch of the Defence Postal and Courier Services Agency, and in 1993 it left the Royal Engineers to become part of a new corps, The Royal Logistic Corps.



Standard Philatelic Bureau handstamp, and the standard envelope which can be used for any first day of issue.

OFFICIAL FIRST DAY COVER



BRITISH FORCES POST OFFICE



Philatelic Officer
BFPO 77

In 1999 came another change of name: to the British Forces Post Office Agency. Today, the operation extends to all parts of the world: in Africa, central America, USA, Europe, the Far East, Middle East and to such places as East Timor and the Falkland Islands.

The services offered fall into four main categories: a Rapid Response Courier Service for operationally urgent material; a scheduled courier service for material sent within the United Kingdom, and classified material world-wide; a postal service for official and private letters, packets and parcels; and a counter service, offering services similar to a normal post office.

All mail posted in the UK destined for any BFPO address is directed by Royal Mail to Mill Hill. Here it is x-rayed for security, then sorted and dispatched in sealed bags to BFPOs world-wide. Electronic letter-sorting equipment is used, capable of sorting 30,000 items an hour.

In a world that is increasingly commercially-minded, the operation undertakes the sorting, and indeed delivery, of mail for other organisations, at an agreed commission rate. Most letters and parcels are despatched by air (either RAF or civil), but some parcels will be sent by surface, such as to Gibraltar, Bosnia and Kosovo. Mail for Germany is sent via the Channel Tunnel, and is sub-contracted to Eddie Stobart.

Classified material, whether it be for the Ministry of Defence or Government, is handled by the Defence Courier Service, operating not only within the United Kingdom but world-wide. It operates in conjunction with The Queen's Mes-

senger Service (organised by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office) and the NATO Courier Services. All such communications are carried by hand. Daily services are also provided to link the main Ministry of Defence buildings, and the headquarters of the Army, Royal Air Force and Royal Navy in the United Kingdom.

In addition to Mill Hill, there are 10 regional Defence Mail Centres serving some 900 posting points throughout the United Kingdom. These are only used for official mail from the Ministry of Defence and Government. All the major Post Office counter facilities are offered, mostly used by Forces serving overseas.

All HM Ships have a BFPO number. Mail to and from all the ships and submarines is handled in a similar way, albeit ships have a nasty habit of often being on the move.

One of the most popular forms of communication for those in the Armed Forces remains the 'bluey', the famous blue air letter forms, which are postage free to members and their families of the Armed Forces in certain operational areas. In 1999 a new Electronic form was initiated, called the 'E-bluey', which allowed the air letter form to be filled in electronically yet securely using the Royal Mail's Relay One website.

Never forgetting the philatelist However, amidst all the effort required to maintain the basic services, the philatelist is not forgotten. While for a short time the Philatelic Bureau was moved within the Agency, it is now back under Postal Services. And to celebrate, a new series of covers has



DPCS Series No. 1
Philatelic Officer
BFPO 777



Left, the first in the new series of covers: to mark the Horse Guards Parade in July 2000.

Above, the entrance to the BFPO, Mill Hill.

been launched for the Millennium, the first in the series being for the Royal Military Tattoo held at Horse Guards Parade in July, and The Queen Mother's Birthday, this being a group of eight covers, one for each of the eight Regiments of which she is Colonel-in-Chief.

Encouragement is being extended to all service units to produce their own covers: the staff at the Philatelic Bureau in Mill Hill will offer as much help and support as possible, including the forthcoming publication of a guide on how to proceed.

There have been over the years – and indeed still are – many series of covers linked with major campaigns. Many of these have raised thousands of pounds for Forces' charities. One of the leading designers of such covers has been the famous stamp designer, Tony Theobald.

The Philatelic Bureau has available an illustrated catalogue of the covers still available from stock: these recall such memorable occasions as D-day, VE and VJ, plus a number of the Royal Tournaments held over the years, and other anniversaries and occasions. Some of the covers are appropriately and personally signed: the Bureau is in a unique position of having contact with dignitaries who are only too willing to sign covers and thereby helping a good cause. Also available are three limited edition, signed or unsigned, prints of paintings by Terence Cuneo: Air Drop; Sleigh Post; First Air Mail.

A 'standard' first day cover and handstamp are available. Many collectors use these to produce an unusual first day cover for each new Royal

Mail stamp issue. Sufficient of such covers are only serviced to meet advance orders; however, it is possible to receive such covers on standing order. Simply send a £10 deposit to the BFPO Philatelic Bureau, Defence Postal and Courier Services, Inglis Barracks, Mill Hill, London NW7 1PX. The Bureau will also provide details of special event and anniversary commemorative covers sponsored by any Ministry of Defence unit.

At one time there was a British Forces Post Office museum at Mill Hill: sadly this closed, and some of its artefacts were transferred to the Royal Engineers Museum at Chatham. However, plans are actively being put into place for a Philatelic Display at Mill Hill which will enable the various covers produced and archives to be more easily viewed within an historical context. To enable better understanding of the work of a field post office, displays are frequently given at public events. Many of the visitors to The Stamp Show 2000 were intrigued by the re-creation of a BFPO Field Post Office.

The future? Today a question mark hangs over Mill Hill. The Defence Secretary, Geoff Hoon, is exploring a number of options which include closing down the operations at Mill Hill and moving all to Northolt. A further choice is to keep the sortation in Mill Hill, albeit the site now needs some refurbishment. A time of change; but the need to serve the Armed Forces efficiently and quickly will never cease ●

Richard West is Editor at Large, Stamp Magazine.

Ring in the Millennium This image results from the photographers's visit to John Taylor's bell foundry in Loughborough, which cast many of the new bells for this Millennium project.

Year of the Artist This country-wide programme of arts activity celebrates living artists and all art forms – visual arts, crafts, performance, literature, film and digital or combined arts.

Canolfan Mileniwm The harp on this denomination symbolizes the strong tradition of Welsh music. It represents the Wales Millennium Centre on the Cardiff Bay Waterfront.

Talent & Skills 2000 Established in 1996 to tackle youth unemployment and social exclusion, this charity helps young people find work in the expanding creative industries.

The Sound and Vision issue will go on sale at post offices and philatelic outlets on 5 December.

Michael Caldwell



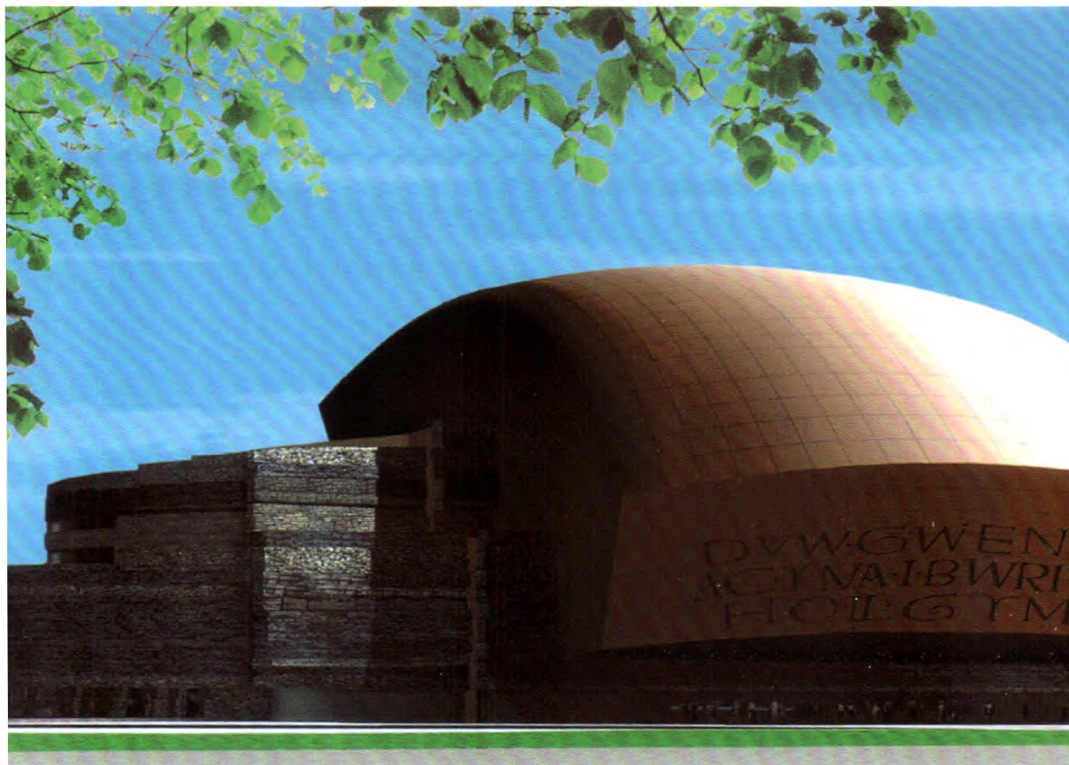
Etienne Bol



Tobi Corney

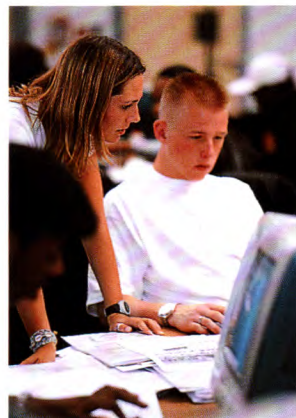


Arthur Tress



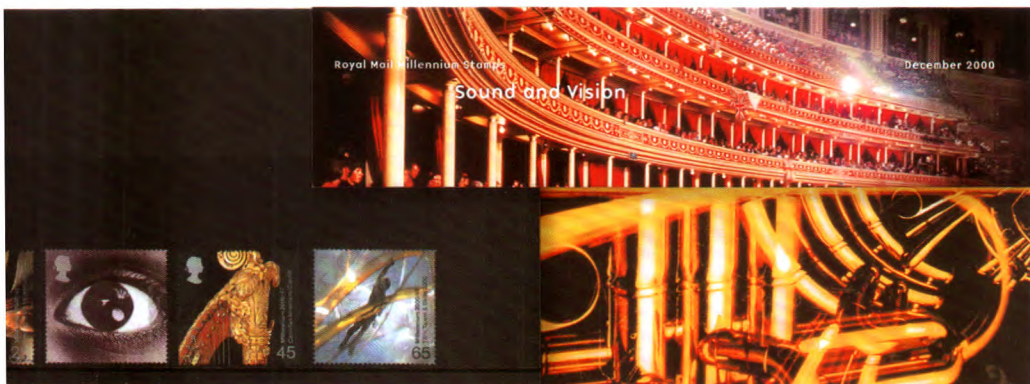
Sound and Vision is the final set in Royal Mail's series of 12 stamp issues inspired by Millennium projects across the UK. The 2nd class stamp, *Ringling in the Millennium*, represents the project which restores a nationwide network of bells • The subject of the 1st class stamp is the Year of the Artist, an initiative which will establish 1000 artists-in-residence • The 45p value represents the Wales Millennium Centre, which will be a focus for Welsh culture, identity and talent • Talent & Skills 2000, the subject of the 65p, is a charity which helps young people find work in creative industries.

The Wales Millennium Centre, below, reflects the landscape and culture of Wales with a diverse range of building materials. To help young people find work in creative fields, right, Talent & Skills 2000 offers support and training, and develops new initiatives.



47

Canolfan Milennwm
45 Ringling in the Millennium
46 Year of the Artist
48 TS2K Talent & Skills 2000



A well-illustrated presentation pack (above, price £1.95) and stamp cards (price 25p each) will be available at main post offices and philatelic outlets.

Technical details

Printer De La Rue

Process Gravure

Size 37 × 35mm

Sheets 100

Perforation 14 × 14.5

Phosphor One band 2nd class, two bands others

Gum PVA

Gutter pairs Horizontal

Cylinders and colours

2nd 1A silver ● 1B greenish yellow ● 1C magenta ● 1D new blue ● 1E black ● P95 phosphor

1st 1A silver ● 1B magenta ● 1C blue ● 1D black ● 1E brownish grey ● P96 phosphor

45p 1A silver ● 1B greenish yellow ● 1C magenta ● 1D new blue ● 1E black ● P96 phosphor

64p 1A black ● 1B greenish yellow ● 1C magenta ● 1D new blue ● 1E grey-black ● 1F silver ● P96 phosphor

Bells have long been rung to commemorate events of local, national and global significance – including weddings, the Armistice, VE and VJ Days. Continuing this heritage, over 100 churches and other buildings pealed out the close of 1999 and the start of the year 2000 on New Year's Eve. Ringing in the Millennium created a nationwide network of Millennium bells by casting and hanging new church bells – and restoring bells which had been silent for many years.

The Year of the Artist initiative (June 2000–May 2001) will establish 1000 artists in residence in 1000 places, organised through regional arts boards. Through these residencies, the aim is to promote greater public awareness of acceptance of the arts, expanding the arts economy and creating new opportunities for employing individual artists. The image on the stamp is from an advertising campaign featuring a child's eyes. The photograph was taken in a street in Battersea, London about four years ago.

The Wales Millennium Centre (Canolfan Mileniwm) will be an international showcase for musicals, opera, dance, museum displays and exhibitions, in an egg-like building that will reflect the landscape and cultural traditions of Wales – through the use of a diverse range of building materials. These include recycled slate blocks from north Wales, hardwood from mid Wales and internal columns in the shape of fossilised tree ferns from the coal measures of south Wales. The harp shown on the stamp is from the Museum of Welsh Life at St Fagans, Cardiff. A series of photographs of musical instruments taken to promote BBC Radio inspired the photographer to shoot a harp – a symbol of the strong musical tradition of Wales. A harp featured on the 13p stamp, honouring the Royal National Eisteddfod of Wales, in the 1976 Cultural Traditions set.

Through partnerships with over 150 organisations, the charity TS2K (Talent and Skills 2000) aims to develop opportunities and initiatives to bring new talent into the sector. In London, TS2K has established Creative Enterprise Centres, where young people learn skills to equip them for work. For the image on the stamp the photographer used an intricate latticework of transparent material and gold rubber bands to create a brave new world in which a silhouetted central figure travels dynamically upwards.



Collectors may send stamped covers on the day of issue to: British Philatelic Bureau, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB, or Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail, Mount Pleasant, London EC1A 1BB (London postmark), marking the outer envelope 'F00031' (Bureau), or 'F00032' (London). Covers can be posted or handed in at main post offices for the London postmark. A non-pictorial London postmark is also available from the Special Handstamp Centre, request 'F00032 NP'.

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

Final Millennium issue The last of the 25 Millennium sets – The Future – will be issued on 16 January. The series of 100 stamps was granted Millennium Product status by the Design Council in December 1999 ●



The Post Office telegraph stamps 1876-81 By Fred Gee

AS A SCHOOLBOY stamp collector, it was my natural instinct to add to my collection any piece of paper which looked remotely like a stamp. But my elders advised me that some categories of so-called stamps did not warrant a place in my album because they were not 'proper' stamps. This was way back in the 1940s, when stamps which were not intended for postal use were generally not appreciated and were consequently rejected, and it still saddens me to think of the gems which, as a result of this misguided advice, I must have discarded.

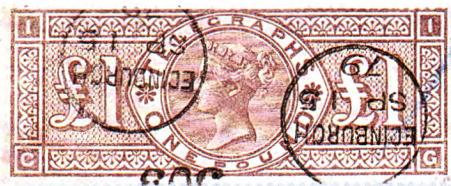
These categories included the imprinted stamps on postal stationery, the labels of private mail services (eg those from offshore islands), perfins, revenue stamps, railway letter stamps, and telegraph stamps. All these types of material are now eminently collectable, and the last-mentioned group – particularly the Post Office telegraph stamps – makes an interesting subject not only because of their close affinity with the postage stamps of the time, but also because they played an important, if relatively short-lived, role in the development of speedier communications.

In the mid 19th century – an age long before the internet, long before fax and telex, before radio, and before even the telephone – the telegraph (the transmission of electro-magnetic impulses by wire) made it possible, for the first time, to send messages almost instantaneously to distant destinations. In Britain, the development of commercial telegraph services had been undertaken by private companies (including some of the railway companies) using wires supported by poles, usually alongside railway lines. (That is why, even today, we still speak of 'telegraph poles'.) But there was an increasing demand for a unified and standardised service across the whole country and in February 1870 all the telegraph services were vested in the Post Office.



One of the problems which the private telegraph companies had encountered was that of keeping account of payments made to the telegraph offices and to agents by users of the services. In attempting to deal with this problem, several companies had issued stamps (to be affixed to the forms on which the users' messages were written out) but, after some consideration, the PO decided, in 1870, that special stamps would not be needed for their newly-inherited service. It was decided that this purpose could instead be fulfilled by postage stamps or by the use of forms on which stamps had been embossed using existing postal stationery dies. (It was this practice which led to the perpetration in 1872 of the 'Stock Exchange Forgeries' of 1s postage stamps – but that is another story!)

Allocating revenue It was, however, belatedly realised that this made it impossible to distinguish between revenue generated by the telegraph service and that arising from postal use of stamps, and on 1 February 1876 special telegraph stamps were introduced. (The use of postage stamps on telegraph forms became inadmissible as from 1 May that year.) The first four stamps issued were 1d red-brown, 3d carmine, 1s green, and 5s rose, these being the values which were expected to be in greatest demand, but it was soon found that other values – particularly high values – were needed, and 4d sage, 6d grey, 3s slate blue, 10s grey-green, £1 brown-lilac and £5 orange telegraph stamps were issued on 1 March 1877. One other value was subsequently introduced – a ½d orange stamp which was issued on 1 April 1880 using the same design as the existing 1d. There was insufficient time to prepare a new design because the ½d was needed urgently for changes in rates. The only other change during the life of this group of stamps



was a change of colour of the 1s from green to brown-orange, in October 1880.

All these stamps were produced by De La Rue & Co and they bore several 'family likenesses' to the GB postage stamps which were in use around that time, these also being produced by that same firm. They were surface printed; the designs comprised the Queen's head in various ornate frames; the colours were generally similar to those of postage stamps where there were equivalent values; and they had coloured corner letters. Unlike those on the postage stamps, the check letters appeared only in the lower corners, but the big difference was that, while the telegraph stamps were the same size as their postal counterparts, they had a horizontal rather than vertical format. This was supposedly to make it easier for the public – and for PO staff – to distinguish telegraph from postage stamps.



The horizontal telegraph stamps, opposite and above, had several similarities with postage stamps of the time. The design of the £1 telegraph stamp, top left, lasted into the next century on postage stamps.

Policy reversed The PO telegraph stamps did not have a very long life, especially the ½d value and the 1s brown-orange, which were in use for only a few months. By 1881 the PO and the Treasury were convinced that more sophisticated accounting practices could ensure that receipts from the telegraph service were effectively and accurately recorded, even without the use of special stamps, so there was an about-turn in policy and after 31 October 1881 no further telegraph stamps were issued, the service reverting to the pre-1876 practice of affixing postage stamps to the message forms to denote payment of the relevant fee.

For the purists who feel that these non-postal issues do not belong in a collection of postage

stamps, values of telegraph stamps which must surely excite their interest are the £1 and the £5. These two, like the lower values, were of horizontal format, but their shapes – long and narrow – were quite different from anything that had gone before. Their significance in the story of GB postage stamps is that, soon after the dedicated telegraph stamps had been abandoned, these two both enjoyed a new lease of life as postage stamps. When a £5 postage stamp was required in 1882, De

La Rue actually resurrected the redundant plate of the £5 telegraph stamp, cut out the word 'Telegraphs' from each impression and substituted the word 'Postage'.

And when the other existing high value postage stamps were replaced during 1883 and 1884, the new £1 brown-lilac was identical in design to the defunct telegraph stamp of that value – with the exception, of course, of the word 'Telegraphs' which, as on the £5 stamp, was replaced with 'Postage'. So, although withdrawn as telegraph stamps, these two designs survived as postage stamps beyond the end of the century.

It is in some ways surprising that so many of the telegraph stamps have survived. Once the messages had been transmitted, the stamped forms on which they were written were supposed to be destroyed, but this obviously did not always happen, and a significant proportion of cancelled stamps found their way to the philatelic trade. Examples of most of the stamps can still be picked up for a few pounds, with the exception of the values above 5s and the 4d amongst the lower values •

A thematic life of Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother

Franceska Rapkin describes how to collect a popular theme

FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS 'thematics' have been hailed as the great saviour of our hobby: the way to bring in new collectors and introduce youngsters to stamp collecting. All this may or may not be true. However, a simple collection of all the stamps issued that show a subject is not a thematic collection, nor is it likely that it will give the collector any long-term satisfaction.

So what is the best way to develop a theme? It is certainly not by joining a new issue service and buying every new item that appears which relates to the subject. Nor is it a collection of that subject neatly set out in catalogue and chronological order. What has then been created is merely a traditional collection, arranged by subject instead of country.

One of the most recent and more popular subjects to appear on postage stamps has been the celebration of the 100th birthday of Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother. Ever since the coronation issue in 1937 marking the accession of George VI, countless stamps have been released showing this popular lady. Until the countries of the Commonwealth decided to commemorate her 80th birthday, the number of these issues remained manageable, but since then, every five years there has been a deluge. In 2000, not unnaturally, the flood has become even larger. Is it really necessary to buy every stamp released to create an interesting collection of the lady's life? No! Nor is it necessary to limit the collection to postage stamps, or even only those items that show her image. One of the delights of a thematic collection is that it is the collector and not the catalogue who sets the boundaries. 'Gaps in the collection' refers to thematic information that has been omitted, and not to missing stamps.

Sources of information Surprisingly, the best place to start developing a really worthwhile collection of this popular subject is not a stamp catalogue, but a couple of in-depth biographies. From these it is possible to discover the former Queen Con-

sort's likes and dislikes, who were her ministers during her husband's reign and which countries she visited – and when. These books are likely to also give information about her hobbies, her friends and which charities she has supported throughout her long life. Much of this information can be interpreted philatelically and included in the collection. It is a misconception that thematics consist only of postage stamps.

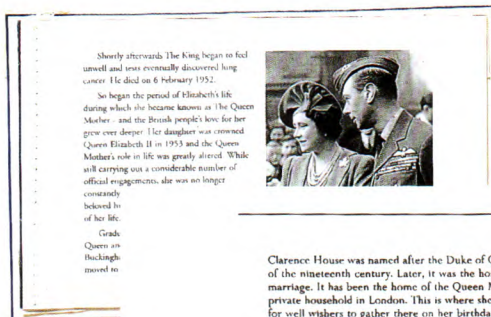
Any thematic collection that shows good development will have been started by studying some of the better literature on the subject. The deeper the subject knowledge, the greater the possibilities of adding interesting, unusual material.

While it was true in the early years that only postage stamps could be used in this branch of the hobby, this has not been the case for the last 30 years. Thematics now include material from all branches of philately. Without the inclusion of special postmarks, postal stationery, meter cancellations and even the more recent PPIS (printed postage impressions), it is far more difficult to tell a complete story. PPIS are frequently used by charities for their mailings and are a boon for the thematic collector, since they often have additional illustrations or have printed information that can be used thematically. Since these items are produced with post office authorisation, they are even valid in an exhibit. However, this article does not deal with exhibiting, but merely with forming a collection that gives pleasure to the owner.

Naturally, the omnibus issues that have been released in the last two decades of the 20th century showing the Queen Mother in various stages of her life would be included in the collection. However, it is not necessary to include them all. It is certainly unnecessary to keep them in their sets. In the most recent omnibus issues, there have been some charming stamps showing the Lady Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon, both alone and with her brother David, in various stages of her childhood, as well as Glamis Castle, the home where

5.2 THE YEARS OF CONFLICT

"The Princesses will never leave without me. I will not leave without the King - and the King will never leave" Quotations like this, as well as her determination to share the trials and tribulations of ordinary people, endeared the Queen to the people of Britain and strengthened the Monarchy after the shock of the abdication. Both the King and the Queen visited the troops, and during the worst of the bombing, both of them visited the East End and other parts of the country to see for themselves the carnage and destruction



2.3. CLARENCE HOUSE

Clarence House was named after the Duke of Clarence, the son of George IV, who lived there in the early years of the nineteenth century. Later, it was the home of Princess Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh after their marriage. It has been the home of the Queen Mother since 1953. She has made Clarence House the last grand private household in London. This is where she entertains her friends. In recent years it has become a tradition for well wishers to gather there on her birthday to greet her and other members of her immediate family.



Personal correspondence of the Queen Mother mailed from Clarence House

Two pages from Franceska Rapkin's collection of Queen Mother material.

she spent much of her youth. These stamps should be grouped together, along with postmarks or postal stationery items that illustrate her or her home at that time of her life.

More recently, grandchildren and great grandchildren have appeared on stamps, both with and without the Queen Mother. Prince William of Wales's 18th birthday has been another excuse for an omnibus issue by Commonwealth countries. It may be the first, but it certainly won't be the last series honouring a future King of the United Kingdom. Naturally, the members of the Queen Mother's family, as well as her ancestors would find a place on the album leaves.

Since it is not necessary (though obviously desirable) to use older stamps, 'The Life and Times of Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother', would be an ideal subject for the impecunious collector. Later, if funds become available, earlier, more expensive items can be included. Of course, a similar approach can be adopted for almost any subject where a broad spectrum of sufficient material can be found.



This year will also mark the 250th anniversary of the death of Johann Sebastian Bach. Although there are not as many stamps honouring Bach as those which honour the Queen Mother, there are more than sufficient to form the basis of a worthwhile collection.

Whether it is Royalty, composers, scientists or any one of hundreds of different people or subjects, thematic philately has something for everyone. All it requires is an enquiring mind to ferret out information and the imagination to put it all together.

There will always be those whose love of the hobby goes no further than the study of the stamp itself. Others are more interested in the use to which those small pieces of gummed paper are put and the journey they took from sender to recipient. However, life in the first year of the 21st century is very different to the year when the Queen Mother was born. Perhaps it is easier to win new adherents to the hobby through thematic. Only time will tell! ●

Post Office Heritage Collections Glasgow 2000 display

Douglas Muir describes the Scottish stamps that never were

ITEMS from the Collections will be displayed at Glasgow 2000 from 17 to 19 November, filling some 10 frames. These will comprise unique, and previously unseen, unadopted Scottish artwork and essays – from the first suggestions of regionals in the reign of George VI to the latest Scottish definitives. Some will show issues that never came to fruition – such as the 1978 World Cup issue which would have appeared had Scotland won, or the 1979 Scottish Assembly which never took place (*Bulletin* August 1998 p360, and July 1999 p333). Others are designs or essays that were never adopted for issues that did take place. Themes include architecture and engineering.



Bute House, Edinburgh For the 1981 issue marking the 50th anniversary of the National Trust for Scotland, a number of Trust properties were chosen by designers as subjects. One picked by Paul Hogarth was Bute House, or no6 Charlotte Square, in the New Town of Edinburgh.

The original conception for the New Town was by the unknown James Craig – two large squares (St Andrew's Square and St George's Square – later Charlotte Square after George III's Queen). The great architect Robert Adam was approached to provide elevations for Charlotte Square 'not much ornamented but with an elegant Simplicity' and his grand design for the

Right: two unissued variations in colour of Andrew Restall's accepted design for the Forth Road Bridge 3d value, and two essays of the second choice designs by William Kempster. Opposite page: Andrew Restall.

12^p

Bute House, Scotland

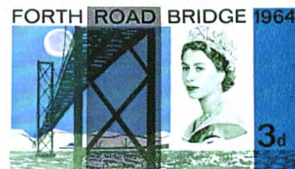
north side (including the central x06) is much as he conceived it, even though he died in March 1792 just before building began. Nos 5, 6 and 7 are now properties run by the National Trust for Scotland with x06 (Bute House) now being the official residence of Scotland's First Minister.

Above is Paul Hogarth's artwork, essayed but not accepted for the final issue. It depicts part of the building shown as 'Charlotte Square' on a 1975 European Architectural Heritage Year stamp.

1964 Forth Road Bridge Initially, Andrew Restall – based in Edinburgh, though not Scottish – was invited to submit designs for the 1964 Forth Road Bridge issue as a result of his painting of it winning a competition. Other designers, including

one Scot, were later requested to provide designs and a total of 17 were submitted. Two sets were essayed, that by Restall and another by William Kempster whose unsuccessful designs for the earlier Geographical Congress issue had been very highly thought of. Sir Kenneth Clark was Chairman of the Stamp Advisory Committee at the time and he agreed changes to the lettering and design with Restall.

The Committee regarded Restall's designs as much better than Kempster's and insisted that The Queen be informed that Restall was 'a new young artist resident and trained in Scotland and showing outstanding talent' when she was choosing the final designs. The Queen obligingly chose the preferred essays by Restall •



Denis Vandervelde catches disinfection by Richard West

THERE can be no greater satisfaction than having undertaken a piece of original philatelic research. To have managed a lifetime of such achievement is truly remarkable, and meant that Denis Vandervelde was a worthy recipient earlier this year of the Rowland Hill Award for Authorship and Research (in the Initiative categories under the aegis of the British Philatelic Trust with the Association of British Philatelic Societies).

Denis has been a lifelong collector, starting at the age of five; however, when seven, he was evacuated to Wiltshire, and had to start again. (The original collection was later found in a tin box in the rubble of their home.)

When 14, Denis realised that his colour-blindness imposed limitations; he was also always short of pocket money. Shrewd even then, he decided the answer was no longer to collect stamps, but to turn to postmarks. Colour is less important, and at the time they were very little appreciated.

By the time he went to Oxford University he regarded himself as a postal historian, collecting world travelling post offices, paquebot marks, seaposts, and Levant post office cancellations.

He became a firm friend of Robson Lowe, widely regarded as the one who brought collecting postal history to respectability. Attending one of RL's postal history auctions in 1968, the sale being conducted by Robbie's daughter Annabel, progress was painfully slow. Receiving no interest in a pair of Italian covers with disinfection cachets, with a reserve price of £10, Annabel turned to Denis with the remark: 'You've been sitting there doing nothing for the last hour, Denis. I'm knocking these down to you for £7.'

Thus was sparked the interest in disinfection, stimulated by the purchase of more covers and of the only book then available in English on the subject, by KF Meyer. Denis wrote to the author, a professor of medicine in California, head of the WHO section on plague, and a fanatical collector and researcher. A close friendship resulted.



Denis Vandervelde receiving his Rowland Hill Award.

The fascination increased, leading in 1973 to the formation of the Disinfected Mail Study Circle, with KF Meyer as its first Life President (at the age of 90!). The Circle studies not only all the forms of disinfected mail but also quarantine ephemera, health passports, ships' documents showing a clean bill of health (pratique), anti-compulsory vaccination propaganda and vaccination postal stationery. Denis is Chairman and

Editor of the Circle's magazine *Pratique*.

Much of what appears in *Pratique* is the result of his own researches. It is intended to compile a series of handbooks: monographs have already been produced on disinfection practice in Serbia, Gibraltar, USA, Russia and GB.

However, Denis has in no way solely concentrated on disinfection. His first publication was an analysis of the German 'Aus Russland' marks in 1965. He has studied seaposts and travelling post offices (he was editor of the TPO and Seapost magazine for five years). He joined the Society of Postal Historians in 1961, and took over the editorship of *A Postscript to the Postal Historian* from Jack Grumble. He was editor for nine years, and then Secretary.

He joined the Postal History Society, and was involved in the establishment of the Indian Ocean and Italy and Colonies societies. He organises the highly successful annual weekend conference of the Postal History Society, the most recent of which was held in Bath in October.

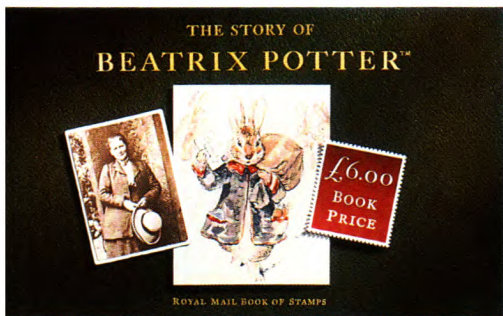
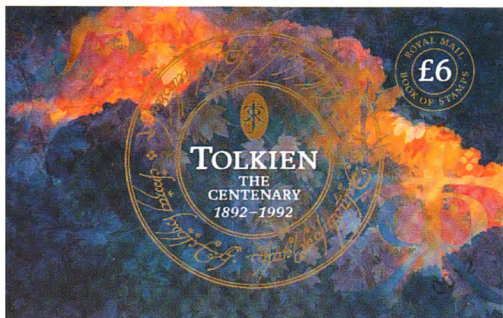
At present Denis is working on a book for the Stuart Rossiter Trust, consolidating his study of the forwarding agents and pedlar-couriers who expedited mail between Russia and the West in the 18th and early 19th centuries.

Clearly Denis is far more than simply a collector and was a worthy recipient of a Rowland Hill Award for such a lifetime of research.

To find out more about the Disinfected Mail Study Circle, write to Denis Vandervelde at 25 Sinclair Grove, London NW11 9JH •

Prestige book labels Tolkien and Beatrix

Potter, by Lionel Jones



THESE HERALDIC EMBLEMS RELATING TO THE SILMARILLION WERE DESIGNED BY TOLKIEN



These two books proved very popular, Tolkien selling 167,875 copies and Beatrix Potter 297,575.

THE *Tolkien the Centenary 1892-1992* prestige book, issued on 27 October 1992 to commemorate the literary work of John Ronald Reuel Tolkien (1892-1973), contained four panes of definitive stamps. A pictorial label reproducing Tolkien's initials 'JRR' was located in the centre of the third pane which contained a mixture of 18p, 24p, 39p and 1st and 2nd xvi stamps. The pane is listed as number x1012l in the Stanley Gibbons catalogue. The book was designed by The Partners and all interleaves and stamp panes printed offset litho by Questa on their sheet-fed Heidelberg Speed-master press. The stamps and label were comb perforated on a Bickel machine, gauge 14.75 × 14.

The *Story of Beatrix Potter* book, issued 10 August 1993, comprised some 30 pages commemorating Miss Potter's life and literary works. The book contained four of the Peter Rabbit stamp from the 1993 Greetings issue, also mixed Country and definitive stamps. The Partners were responsible

for all artwork in the book, apart from the stamps, although in most cases the actual designs were copyright of Frederick Warne and Co. The interleaving pages contained no fewer than 18 perforated pictorial labels, showing book cover designs and characters from Potter's books – Peter Rabbit, Jemima Puddleduck, etc. With the exception of pane one (greetings stamps), all printing was by offset litho at Questa using the Heidelberg press. The greetings stamps and the label showing the rabbit and the robin were printed photogravure by Harrison on the Jumelle press and perforated by the APS perforator. The perforations of the Questa labels range between 9.25 and 14.75; the Harrison label is perf gauge 14.5 × 14.

The four panes are listed in the SG catalogue – as nos 1451al (2nd and 1st xvi stamps); 1649a (Peter Rabbit greetings stamps); x1012m (mixed value pane with central label); and n148l (N Ireland, Scotland and Wales country stamps) ●

Postbag Letters to the Editor

Queen Mother miniature sheet Although I like the sheet I think it is a great pity there was no commemorative stamp, issued in sheets of 100, to mark Her Majesty's 100th birthday. Very few of the stamps from the miniature sheet (or the prestige book) will be used for normal postage, thus there was little (if any) actual postal commemoration of this significant event. Contrast this to 1953 when over 415 million of the Coronation 2½d stamp were issued, the majority used on ordinary mail. Even in 1980 and 1990 the UK postal rate stamps for The Queen Mother's 80th and 90th birthdays sold over 70 and 60 million. When the time comes for a Queen Mother memorial issue I hope there will be a value we can use on our post. JOYCE LAWSON, MIDDLESBROUGH ●

Queen Mother issue Royal Mail missed a golden opportunity with this issue. Why did the Queen Mother have to share the issue with her daughter, grandson and great-grandson? Surely she deserved a set on her own and issued in a way that the general public would see. How many, I wonder, knew about or understood the miniature sheet and prestige book? How many of the stamps would be used on letters – I haven't seen any so far. It would have been better to have issued four stamps – 19p, 27p, 36p for Europe and 45p for overseas for normal use and a special 100p (£1) stamp in a miniature sheet for collectors. This could have been engraved and recess printed, making an outstanding item in the tradition of the 1929 PUG stamp. I suppose such thinking would be too much to hope for. PETER REES, LONDON SW5 ●

Queen Mother sheet Congratulations on the recent miniature sheet with the beautiful portrait of four generations of the Royal Family – a worthy addition to any Royal collection of stamps. Might I suggest a similar sheet showing the Queen Mother with her family on the balcony of Buckingham Palace on her 100th birthday for issue as a tribute to this great lady in due course? HELEN CARR, BIRMINGHAM ●

Stamp Show 2000 I have just finished reading your second ss2000 report in the August *Bulletin* and offer comments. I attended the Show on 23-24 May and was pleased with the show. In addition to being a collector of some 51 years, I am also a philatelic journalist. I held press credentials for ss2000. I felt that the show was very much aimed at the average collector, rather than the world-class exhibitor. My congratulations on doing so. I know that many of the heavy hitters in the exhibitor ranks felt the show was a bit elementary for their liking, but where do these people think the next generation of international exhibitor will come from if not today's average collector?

I found the personnel staffing the Royal Mail sales booth to be very helpful and more than willing to cater to out-of-the-ordinary requests from this US collector. I mailed several postal cards back to the USA with special daily cancellations and all the recipients were extremely pleased that the cards were put into protective sleeves before mailing. Thus, everything arrived back here in pristine condition. Thanks for the special effort.

My only negative comment on ss2000 is that the exhibits were hard to find relative to the layout printed in the program. Perhaps better overhead hanging frame number signs would have been helpful. RICHARD COLBERG, LANCASTER, PENNSYLVANIA, USA ●

Bulletin competition It was a very pleasant surprise to receive your letter telling me that I had won the June Identify Competition. Thank you for the very welcome cheque for £100 which I can assure is already earmarked for a Victorian stamp I am chasing. It is the first time I have entered this particular competition and I had to do very little to identify the 1953 Coronation stamp. It was my very first purchase as a young boy towards what is now an extensive collection of GB stamps. I should tell you that I have been a subscriber of the *Bulletin* for more years than I can remember and always look forward to reading its wide variety of stamp subjects each month. P. JOHNSON, LIVERPOOL ●

Cover corner



Festiniog Railway letters For details of stamps and covers available send SAE or IRC to: Railway Letter Service, Festiniog Railway, Harbour Station, Porthmadog LL49 9NF.

THIS MONTH'S ITEM, submitted by C F Aldridge of Devon, is a first day cover of two issues of stamps to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Stockton & Darlington Railway. The cover, produced by the Festiniog Railway, features the company's seal. It bears the four Post Office stamps featuring Stephenson's *Locomotion*, North British Railway and Great Western Railway steam locomotives, and a British Rail Inter-City high speed train.

The cover also carries three Festiniog railway letter stamps cancelled with the Minffordd station oval handstamp. The cover was carried by FR train to Porthmadog where it was posted on arrival, the PO stamps being cancelled with the town's double-circle datestamp.

The narrow-gauge Festiniog Railway, incorporated in 1832, still runs between Porthmadog and Blaenau Ffestiniog. Railway letter stamps were introduced in 1969 ●

Posting boxes 199

THIS MONTH'S photographs were submitted by Allan Stobbs of Penrith who writes: 'I should like to draw your attention to the recent repainting of pillar and letter boxes in the Carlisle Postal District. The unique treatment includes the pick-ing-out of the crown and lettering in gold and results in a most elegant addition to our street furniture. I have travelled extensively in England recently and Carlisle is the only district in which I have seen letter boxes painted in this manner'.

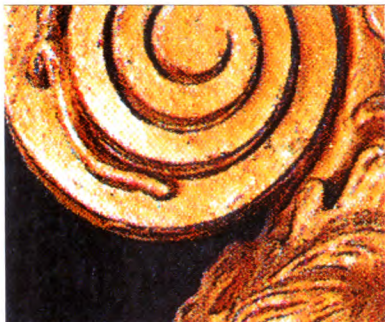
Actually similar treatment has been given to boxes in some other areas – see, for example, Posting Boxes Nos 188 and 196 in the September 1999 and July 2000 issues of the *Bulletin*.

Mr Stobbs concludes: 'On a totally different subject, why is it that Royal Mail delivers the 'post' but Canada Post delivers the 'mail'?' ●



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

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



August identify The detail is from the Aden 1937 Coronation 3½d stamp. The winner was Mrs J Williams of Herts.

August knowledge Answers: 1) Andrew Restall; 2) Arts & Crafts; 3) Scottish lion (rampant). The winner was D Coltup of Yorkshire.

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

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

- 1 Who designed the 1995 National Trust stamps?
- 2 Which set of Millennium stamps features Charlie Chaplin?
- 3 Who wrote *Scotland's Posts*?

Send your answer (addressed to either November *Identify* competition or November *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 15 December will each receive £100. Ten runner-up prizes of presentation packs or FDCs will be awarded in each competition. Competitions not open to Royal Mail employees •

Events

1-30 November The Post Offices of Glasgow exhibition at Mitchell Library, Glasgow G3 7DN. See pages 69 and 76. **Enquiries** 0141 287 2870.

4 November Sixth Stuart Rossiter Memorial Lecture 'Philatelic Research at the British Library' by David Beech at The Auditorium, Conference Centre, British Library, 96 Euston Road, London NW1, 10.30 for 11.00. Admission by free ticket from R C A Payne, Anso Corner Farm, Hempstead, Saffron Walden CB10 2NU.

10-12 November STAMPA (Irish national stamp exhibition), Royal Dublin Society, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4.

11 November Maidstone & Mid Kent Phil Soc Stamp Fair at Grove Green Community Centre, Maidstone (close to Junction 7, M20), 10.00-16.00. **Enquiries** B Stonestreet, 01622 675784.

17-19 November Glasgow 2000 national exhibition at Scottish Exhibition & Conference Centre, Glasgow. See page 69. **Enquiries** Mrs M Morris, 81 Ellon Way, Paisley PA3 4BW.

18 November Camberley & District Stamp Club Autumn Stamp Fair and Exhibition. **Enquiries** Harold Capsey, 01344 642 213.

22-23 November Autumn Thematica at Carisbrooke Hall, 63 Seymour Street, London W2. **Enquiries** B Sole 01372 467652.

24-25 November Leeds Phil Soc Annual Fair at Pudsey Civic Hall. Open Fri 10.30-18.00; Sat 9.30-16.30. **Enquiries** R Shiers, 0113 2682370.

25 November AGM of Association of Friends of the National Postal Museum. See page 70 •

Late news

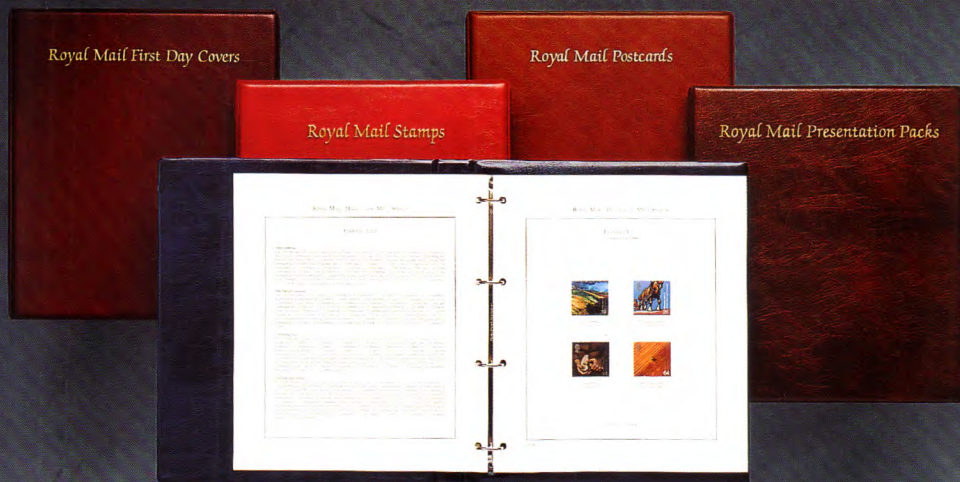
Autumn Stampex As always the exhibition contained displays of interest to collectors of GB stamps and postal history. In the 'International Exhibits' section, C Reid's 'Victorian Registered Mail' traced the development of registration, showing fees, routes, rates and PO methods of identifying registered mail in transit. G Osborn's 'Naval Officers Mail by Ship's Bag' traced the point of origin and route taken by letters sent home bearing British stamps. Chris Harman received a large vermeil medal and the Cinderella Stamp Club Award for his 'Private Enterprise and Postal Reform' which told the story of the Circular Delivery Companies and their stamps. These private delivery services forced the PO to introduce reduced postal rates in 1870. A large vermeil was also awarded to John Bohn for his well-known display 'The Mulready and its Caricatures' which included pre-authorised use on 2 and 5 May 1840. The 'National Exhibits' section included 'Postal Charges during the period 1830-40' (Dr N Clark), 'Mail from the Hills - Co Donegal Postal History' (J Matthews), 'Military Mail of Ireland 1850-1985' ('Hibernicus'), 'A Study of the 10s Booklets issued during the sterling Machin period' (R Tibbenham), and 'GB 1887 Jubilee Issue 2½d value' (T Lediard). Mr Tibbenham also mounted a non-competitive display entitled 'Sterling Machins - One man's obsession' about which he wrote in the exhibition catalogue. There were good displays of postal artefacts by David Harrop from the Manchester Postal Museum, and of model letterboxes provided by Robert Danzig. The National Youth Stamp Group attracted young visitors to its stand, with a well-attended and much-enjoyed auction on the Saturday. There were more youth exhibits than adult this time, all of which showed enterprise, imagination and an interest in their subject. Charlotte Rookes's 'Before the Penny Black' - the story of the English postal service before 1840 - included covers that would grace an adult collection. The Chairman of the Jury, Dr Alan Huggins, commented on increasing number of youth entries in the Jury Report •

Spink GB auction On 6 December Spink will offer for sale the largest collection of modern varieties ever sold by public auction. This is especially strong in definitive issues but also with many rare and stunning commemorative and booklet items, and the rarest cylinder blocks. Several items are as yet uncatalogued by Gibbons but may well be listed in the future. Amongst the gems will be a Machin ½p green essay from the trial plate of four impressions and multipositive proof block of four in lilac, imperforate block of four of the 12p bright emerald (FCP/PVAD), plate block of four of the 1970 £1 bluish black plate 2 (only six blocks recorded), and 1989 50p booklet showing spectacular dry print on 19p stamps (below). Further information on this auction will be included in next month's *Bulletin*; meanwhile enquiries to Mark Stephenson or Richard Watkins on 020 7563 4000.

Spink's last GB sale (7 June) included some fine postal history and Treasury Competition material, line-engraved stamps, Elizabeth II errors, 1911 Coronation Aerial Post cards and covers, Circular Delivery and College stamps, postal fiscals, revenues, telegraphs and Irish overprints. A magnificent block of 18 of the 1864 1d rose-red plate 225 (corner letters LA-NF) went for £9200, a block of eight 1d blacks on cover realised £3450, a collection of cancellations including Maltese Crosses, Scottish locals, Railway, Paquebot, Royalty, etc made £3105, and a 1903 'Life-Boat Saturday' balloon post card made £920 •



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Special prices available to *Bulletin* readers until 6 January 2001 (please call the British Philatelic Bureau quoting the relevant reference number): Stamp Album (ref PA617) £18.95, Presentation Pack (ref PA615), First Day Cover (ref PA614), Postcard (ref PA616) Albums all £15.50 and Millennium Album (ref PA213) £19.95.

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