

December 1992



British Philatelic Bulletin

Volume 30. No: 4 The Royal Mail Magazine for Stamp Collectors Price 70p



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Front: First Day Cover album (full size) open.

Half the pleasure of collecting stamps is in the presentation.

And what finer way to display your collection than in an official Royal Mail album.

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Royal Mail

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British Philatelic Bulletin

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

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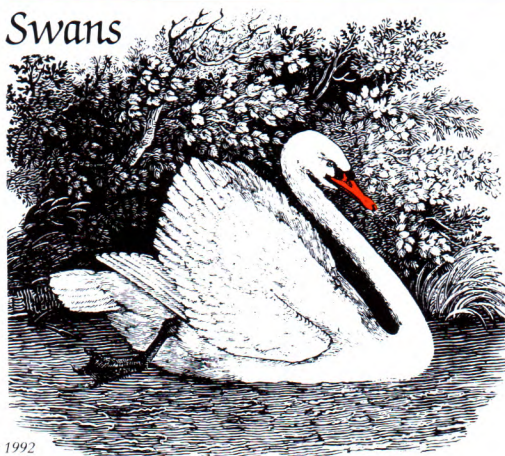
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Main Feature

Swans



Preview of five attractive stamps featuring one of the world's most graceful birds. The Swans set, to be issued on 19 January 1993, commemorate the 600th anniversary of Abbotsbury Swannery in Dorset.

77

End of Year



Much of the work on the two Bulletins, as with all magazines, is routine. One of the more enjoyable aspects is "reader participation" in the way of letters and responses to polls and surveys. It is time again to ask for your views on our special stamps of the year, illustrated on pages 84-85. About 2000 of you respond each year; I look forward to hearing from you and reading your comments.

As always we will send Yearbooks to those comments judged "the most original and interesting". If you haven't sent in the voting form before, why not do so this year? You may well find your views published in the *Bulletin*, or even receive a Yearbook. As you will see from the results and comments published for 1990 (*Bulletin* April 1991) and 1991 (April/May 1992) we try to be even-handed in selecting comments, both complimentary and adverse, on our stamp designs. Please send in your voting form to arrive by 29 January 1993.

Another annual feature is the listing of definitive and country stamps and postal stationery. There has been no increase in postal rates during 1992 so the listing is rather shorter than last year. I hope the list will be of help to readers bringing their collections up to date. Like many of you I will be working on my collection over the Christmas/New Year break. Now is the time to do that "mounting up" you have been meaning to do for months, and to draw up your philatelic New Year resolutions.

I hope you all have a restful Christmas and wish you well in your philatelic endeavours during 1993.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John Holman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end of the name.

JOHN HOLMAN
Editor

The Directors and Staff of Royal Mail National wish all Bulletin Readers a Happy and Peaceful Christmas and New Year.

NPM News

Postcards

The Museum will issue four new postcards on 19 January; there feature items from the "People in the Post" exhibition, on show until May 1993. The cards cost 25p each. Orders to: National Postal Museum (Mail Order), KEB, LONDON EC1A 1LP. Handling charge 24p on orders up to £24; £2.14 over £24 (sent by registered post).

Friends of the Museum

A good idea for an appropriate Christmas gift for a stamp collector, relative or friend, is a two-year subscription package to the Association of Friends of the Museum. Benefits of membership include copies of new Museum postcards, issues of *Cross Post*, the Friends' own magazine, and copies of the NPM's annual report, *The Philatelic Year*, which gives details of Museum research, publications and other activities. *Cross Post* contains a good mix of articles of interest to philatelists and postal historians.

The annual subscription is £12, the special two year offer of £20 applies until Christmas. To order the package send cheque or postal order, payable to "Friends of the National Postal Museum", with name and address of your nominee to Ray Pottle, National Postal Museum, address above. To ensure delivery by Christmas, please send orders to arrive not later than 11 December.

Cross Post

The Autumn 1992 issue of the journal of the Friends of the NPM is now available. Edited by Allan Daniell, it contains interesting articles on the Museum's "People in the Post" exhibition; the Norwegian Postal Museum, Oslo; Sergeant Knight's Victoria Cross (recently acquired by the NPM); Packet Mail; and Rural Post Shelter Huts. Dr Stone continues with extracts from the "Peover Papers" — the records of PO administration in the 1670s. *Cross Post*, free to members of the Friends (annual subscription £12), is available to non-members, price £2. Orders or enquiries to: Ray Pottle, address above.

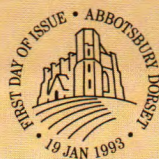
Christmas/New Year Closures

The National Postal Museum will be closed 25-28 December and 1 January, and Post Office Archives 25 December-3 January inclusive.

Stan Goron and his staff at the National Postal Museum extend their best wishes for Christmas and the New Year to all our customers, Friends of the NPM and readers of the *Bulletin*.

Swans

19 January 1993



Five stamps commemorating the 600th anniversary of Abbotsbury Swannery go on sale at post offices, the British Philatelic Bureau, Collections, and philatelic counters on 19 January. The values, postal usage and designs are as follows:

18p (inland 2nd class basic rate) – mute swan cob, with St Catherine's chapel at Abbotsbury;
24p (inland 1st class and EC basic rate) – Cygnet, with duck decoy;



28p (Europe, non-EC basic rate) – mute swan breeding pair and cygnet at the nesting site;
33p (worldwide postcard rate) – mute swan's eggs and nest, with the Tithe Barn at Abbotsbury;
39p (basic airmail letter rate) – mute swan, by the side of the Fleet at Abbotsbury.

The designs are the work of David Gentleman, one of Britain's best-known stamp designers. Mr Gentleman has been designing British stamps for over 30 years; his first stamps, marking National Productivity Year, were issued in November 1962.

Abbotsbury Swannery

The Swannery was first mentioned in 1393, in the Court Rolls of the Manor of Abbotsbury, which was at the time in the possession of the Monastery.

After the dissolution of the monastery in 1541, Henry VIII granted the Estate to Sir Giles Strangways and it has been in the hands of the same family ever since. The head of the family



was made Earl of Ilchester in 1756.

The number of swans fluctuates from 300 or 400, to as many as 1,500. There are about 800 now. In 1591, when the earliest known count was taken, there were 500 swans at Abbotsbury. Most swans belong to the Crown but the Abbotsbury swans belong to the heirs of the Seventh Earl of Ilchester.

The swans are Mute swans. The male (the cob) is distinguished from the female (the pen) by the black knob at the base of his beak, which is larger than the pen's.

The swans stay at Abbotsbury largely because there are abundant supplies of their favourite food growing on the bed of the Fleet – the narrow strip of water between the Chesil Beach and the Mainland. This food is seaweed known as *Zostera Marina* and *Zostera Nana*.





ABBOTSBURY, a small village near the Dorset coast, has a history stretching back over 1500 years. In the Middle Ages it was the site of the Benedictine Abbey of St Peter's, which had originally been founded in Anglo-Saxon times. The swannery, which has remained there to this day, would have been an important resource for the medieval monks.

In 1395, six hundred years ago, William Squiter, the swanherd, was accused of allowing the birds under his care to be flooded out. Fortunately no lasting damage was done and Abbotsbury still has its colony of swans today.



their nesting sites. Later the adult birds may have with them fluffy, greyish brown cygnets (Wans Andersen's ugly duckling). Most pairs of matte swans build solitary nests among reed beds or beside water. However, the species sometimes forms nesting colonies, and Abbotsbury has the only large colony in the UK which

about a hundred pairs will build nests and breed on the flat, open area beside the Fleet. The female lays an average of five eggs here. Both the male and female help to incubate them and look after the young. In the adult birds the sexes are similar to each other, but males are longer overall and have a slightly larger berry, the black protuberance at the base of the bill.

pens. To enable the owners to identify their birds, an elaborate system of marking developed which involved nicking swans' feet or bills. Today, all swans on open or common water in the UK belong to the Crown, except some on the Thames and most at Abbotsbury. Those on the Thames still technically belong to either the Vintners' or the Dyers' Company and a traditional marking ceremony, swan-upping, takes place on the river every summer.



Michael Groomer/PA

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and the Tube Barn
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Technical Details

Printers: Harrison and Sons Ltd

Process: Photogravure

Size: 30 x 41mm, vertical

Sheets: 100

Perforation: 14 x 15

Phosphor: One band (18p); Phosphor

Coated Paper (24p-39p)

Gum: PVA Dextrin

Presentation Pack: No. 233, price £1.75

Stamp Cards: Nos 149A-E, price 21p each

First Day Facilities

Unstamped Royal Mail first day cover envelopes will be available from main post offices, the Bureau, Collections, and philatelic counters approximately two weeks before 19 January, price 21p.

The Bureau will provide a first day cover service – collectors may order the Royal Mail cover bearing the five stamps cancelled with a pictorial “First Day of Issue” postmark of the Bureau or Abbotsbury, price £2.03 (including VAT) to UK addresses, £1.73 to overseas addresses (no VAT). Orders for first day covers must be received at the Bureau by 19 January.



Collectors may send their own stamped covers, on the day of issue, for the Bureau or Abbotsbury cancels, to: British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, EDINBURGH EH3 5TT or Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail Windsor, Peascod Street, WINDSOR SL4 1AA. The outer envelope should be endorsed “Pictorial First Day of Issue postmark”.

First Day Posting Boxes will be provided at most main post offices for collectors who wish to post covers to receive the standard, non-pictorial “First Day of Issue” handstamps.

Details of other special handstamps, sponsored

by Royal Mail, stamp dealers and others, will be found in the *British Postmark Bulletin* – the Royal Mail’s magazine for postmark collectors. It is available on subscription from the British Philatelic Bureau: £10 UK and Europe, £21.75 Rest of World (Airmail).

There will be no souvenir covers; these have now been discontinued.

Swans 18p stamp

Collectors are advised that it will be in order to affix just the 18p Swans stamp to covers to receive all special cancels (“First Day of Issue”, sponsored, and philatelic counter) in use on 19 January. The minimum 1st class rate rule is suspended on this day as the Swans set includes a 2nd class rate stamp. It should be noted that this concession applies only to the 18p Swans stamp; covers bearing other than Swans stamps must bear at least 24p postage.

Stamp Book News

Two new series of machine books will be issued next year featuring Postal History (50p) and Educational Institutions (£1). These will start on 9 February, with further issues on 6 April, 6 July and 28 September.

The 1993 prestige book, to be issued on 10 August, will commemorate Beatrix Potter. 1993 is the 50th Anniversary of her death and the centenary of the creation of Peter Rabbit.

Bureau Christmas Closure

The British Philatelic Bureau will be closed for Christmas/New Year from 25 December-3 January inclusive.

Postal Memorabilia Displays

Last month we gave details of David Harrop’s permanent display of postal memorabilia at the Crewe Railway Age (formerly Crewe Heritage Centre). In connection with “Santa Special” steam train weekends, Mr Harrop will be providing additional displays on 5-6, 12-13 and 19-20 December. He will also be appearing at the Winter Garden, Blackpool (*not* in panto, he assures us) with a display of Postal Artefacts at the Giant Antique & Collectors Fair on 26 & 27 December (10am to 5pm). For further information contact Mr Harrop at: 15 Hawthorn Road, Heaton Mersey, STOCKPORT, Cheshire, SK4 3DQ. Tel: 061-442 1089.

1992 Definitives, Country Stamps and Stamped Stationery Checklist

Each December we publish a listing of definitives, country stamps and stamped stationery issued during the year. We hope this 1992 list will prove helpful to collectors in completing their collections.

Notes

Definitive stamps have been printed by three companies:

(1) Harrison & Sons Ltd, photogravure, perf. 15 × 14, PVA Dextrin gum, on fluorescent coated paper with phosphor bands, or Advanced Coated Paper (ACP).

(2) The House of Questa Ltd, offset-lithography, perf. 15 × 14, PVA gum on fluorescent coated paper with phosphor bands or Phosphor Coated Paper (PCP).

(3) Walsall Security Printers Ltd, offset-lithography, perf. 14, PVA or PVA Dextrin gum on fluorescent coated paper with phosphor bands or PCP.

Country stamps – all printed by Questa in offset-litho; perf. 15 × 14, PVA gum, on fluorescent coated paper with phosphor bands or PCP.

Some of the single stamps are issued only in books and can only be bought from Royal Mail in complete books. To help collectors we quote the relevant British Philatelic Bureau order number (prefixed DB, DC, IS, etc). These numbers are given on the Bureau stock list.

ACP = Advanced Coated Paper

PCP = Phosphor Coated Paper

H = Harrison & Sons Ltd

Q = The House of Questa Ltd

W = Walsall Security Printers Ltd

21 January

3p definitive – bright pink, redrawn numeral, H, ACP (DS032)

Note: First issue in sheets of 200; previously issued in mixed value coil, October 1989

50p definitive – sand, H, ACP (DS503)

21 January

50p Machine Book: Archaeology 2 – Tomb of Tutankhamen (contents as Archaeology 1 (10 September 1991), viz 2 × 1p and 2 × 24p ACP) (TB013)

£1 Machine Book: Punch 2 – Tenniel/Burgin

cartoons (contents as Punch 1 (10 September 1991), viz 2 × 2p and 4 × 24p ACP, straight edges at left and right) (TB014)

21 January

NVI Retail Book, W, 4 × 2nd class bright blue, 72p (UB047)

NVI Retail Book, W, 10 × 2nd class bright blue, £1.80 (UB049)

NVI Retail Book, W, 4 × 1st class flame, 96p (UB048)

NVI Retail Book, W, 10 × 1st class flame, £2.40 (UB050)

NVI Retail Book, H, 10 × 1st class flame, £2.40 (UB051)

Note: these books have the Olympic/Paralympic logos on the front cover and information about the use of NVI stamps on letters to Europe on inside back cover. Also see 31 March.

28 January

10 × 1st class Greetings stamps showing Memorabilia, H, 2 bands (JB004)

£2.40 Greetings Book (JB004)

Greetings Book pane in presentation pack (ref. G1). Price £2.70 (JP001)

11 February

33p Vertical Roll, H, (Code ZL) (DC057/857)

39p Vertical Roll, H, (Code AL) (DC058/858)

25 February

33p definitive, emerald, Q, 2 bands (ex £6 Wales prestige book) (YB003)

NVI 1st flame, Q, 2 bands (ex £6 Wales prestige book) (YB003)

NVI 2nd bright blue, Q, band right (ex £6 Wales prestige book) (YB003)

Wales 18p light green, Q, band right (ex £6 Wales prestige book) (YB003)

Wales 24p rust, Q, 2 bands (ex £6 Wales prestige book) (YB003)

Wales 18p, Q, band right of centre, pane of 6 with surrounding selvage (ex £6 Wales prestige book) (YB003)

Wales 24p, Q, PCP, pane of 6 with surrounding selvage (ex £6 Wales prestige book) (YB003)

Mixed pane containing two 33p definitive 2 bands; one 1st NVI 2 bands; one 2nd NVI band right; two 18p Wales band right; and two Wales 24p 2 bands (ex £6 Wales prestige book) (YB003)

£6 Cymru/Wales Prestige Book (YB003)

Notes: (1) Wales prestige book also contained pane of four 39p Wintertime special stamps, showing Welsh sheep. (2) NVI 1st 2 bands and NVI 2nd band right also in £6 Tolkien prestige book, 27 October.

3 March

Reprint of 1991 Smiles NVI Greetings book with revised text about the use of NVI stamps to countries in Europe. Price £2.40 (JB005)

31 March

NVI Retail Book, Q, 10 × 2nd class bright blue, £1.80 (UB052)

Note: This book has Olympic/Paralympic logos on front cover and revised text about the use of NVI stamps on mail to Europe on inside back cover.

14 April

Scottish Aerogramme – Nature of Scotland. Price 44p – includes 34p postage paid by imprinted NVI stamp (QS029)

28 April

50p Machine Book: Archaeology 3 – Assyrian Sites (contents as Archaeology 1 & 2, viz 2 × 1p and 2 × 24p ACP) (TB015)

£1 Machine Book: Punch 3 Tenniel/Anton cartoons (contents as Punch 1 & 2, viz 2 × 2p and 4 × 24p ACP) (TB016)

23 June

Scottish Aerogramme – 350th anniversary of Scots Guards. Price 44p – includes 34p postage paid by imprinted NVI stamp (QS030)

28 July

50p Machine Book: Archaeology 4 – Pyramids and Temples of Giza (contents as Archaeology 1-3, viz 2 × 1p and 2 × 24p ACP) (TB017)

£1 Machine Book: Punch 4 – Tenniel/Hewison cartoons (contents as Punch 1-3, viz 2 × 2p and 4 × 24p ACP) (TB018)

Panc 2 × 39p with straight edges top and bottom, W, (ex 78p retail book) (UB053)

78p Retail Book, W, (2 × 39p, plus airmail labels) (UB053)

8 September

33p emerald, W, PCP, PVA Dextrin gum,

straight edge top (ex £1.32 retail book (UB062))

33p emerald, W, PCP, PVA Dextrin gum, straight edge bottom (ex £1.32 retail book (UB062))

Panc 4 × 33p with straight edges top and bottom, W, (ex £1.32 retail book) (UB062)

£1.32 Retail Book, W, (4 × 33p, plus air mail labels) (UB062)

22 September

50p Machine Book – Sheriff's Millennium (contents as Archaeology series, viz: 2 × 1p and 2 × 24p ACP) (TB019)

£1 Machine Book – Sheriff's Millennium (contents as Punch series, viz: 2 × 2p and 4 × 24p ACP) (TB020)

22 September

NVI Retail Book, W, 4 × 2nd class bright blue, 72p (UB054)

NVI Retail Book, W, 10 × 2nd class bright blue, £1.80 (UB058)

NVI Retail Book, W, 4 × 1st class flame, 96p (UB055)

NVI Retail Book, W, 10 × 1st class flame, £2.40 (UB059)

NVI Retail Book, H, 10 × 2nd class bright blue, £1.80 (UB060)

NVI Retail Book, H, 10 × 1st class flame, £2.40 (UB061)

NVI Retail Book, Q, 10 × 2nd class bright blue, £1.80 (UB056)

NVI Retail Book, Q, 10 × 1st class flame, £2.40 (UB057)

Note: These books are as the issues of 21 January (W & H) and 31 March (Q) but without the Olympic/Paralympic logos on the front covers

6 October

Christmas Aerogramme. Price 44p – includes 34p postage paid by imprinted NVI stamp (QX015)

27 October

18p light green, Q, centre band (ex £6 Tolkien prestige book) (YB004)

18p light green, Q, right band (ex £6 Tolkien prestige book) (YB004)

24p rust, Q, PCP (ex £6 Tolkien prestige book) (YB004)

24p rust, Q, 2 bands (ex £6 Tolkien prestige book) (YB004)

39p rhododendron, Q, 2 bands (ex £6 Tolkien prestige book) (YB004)

- 18p light green, Q, centre band, pane of 6 with surrounding selvedge (ex £6 Tolkien prestige book) (YB004)
- 24p rust, Q, PCP, pane of 6 with surrounding selvedge – Hobbit first edition (ex £6 Tolkien prestige book) (YB004)
- 24p rust, Q, PCP, pane of 6 with surrounding selvedge – Runic Alphabet (ex £6 Tolkien prestige book) (YB004)
- Mixed pane containing 2 × 18p, 2 × 24p, 2 × 39p, 1 × 1st class NVI, 1 × 2nd class NVI and “JRR” label, Q, PCP (ex £6 Tolkien prestige book) (YB004)



27 October

Mail Pack C4 size (229 × 324mm), stamped envelope, 1st class indicator, £1.30 (RV001)

Mail Pack C4 size, stamped envelope, 2nd class indicator, £1.10 (RV002)

Mail Pack C5 size (162 × 229mm), stamped envelope, 1st class indicator, 95p (RW001)

Mail Pack C5 size stamped envelope, 2nd class indicator 80p (RW002).

1 December

50th Anniversary Aerogramme. Price 34p – postage paid by imprinted NVI stamp (QO028). 50th Anniversary Aerogramme. Pack of six, price £1.90. (QO027).

Note: The aerogrammes in the discount pack have a “discount star” on the top flap.

Please Note:

1. Listed above are all items issued or notified to the Editor by mid-November. Any subsequent issues will be listed later.

2. This annual list replaces the Six Month Digest this month.

3. The Editor regrets he is unable to engage in correspondence regarding the contents of this annual listing.

New £10 Definitive

Royal Mail announces that a £10 definitive featuring the image of Britannia is to be added to the definitive range on 2 March 1993. Steve Griffiths, Royal Mail's Product Manager for Definitive Stamps, explains the background.

This stamp is continuing the range of high security, High Value Definitives launched last March. The new High Value Definitives featured Optically Variable Ink (OVI) as a security measure. We have now gone several steps further with the new £10 Definitive.

Almost every facet of the stamp will carry a security feature, from the physical appearance of the stamp to its chemistry and complex artwork. It is also the first British stamp to be braille embossed.

A major factor contributing to the development of this unusual stamp is the need to stay one step ahead of the forger. Royal Mail has taken the view that no one system could ensure complete security, and it is only with a combination of state of the art security techniques that makes this product as near as possible forgery-proof.

All of the research and development which has gone into this stamp, together with its larger than normal size and relatively small print run, will surely make it one of the most interesting stamps produced by Royal Mail.

Head of the Stamps and Personal Mail section of Royal Mail National*, Kevin Doherty, says, “Our customers; both the public and Post Office staff, have been increasingly vociferous in their demand for a stamp of this value. We’ve seen more overseas and high value insured mail in the last few years and it makes sound commercial sense to have a single stamp replacing the wastage involved when lower values are used as make-ups”.

Stamp cards showing the new £10 stamp, also the £1, £1.50, £2 and £5 Castle High Values will be available from philatelic outlets from 16 February 1993, price 21p each.

Editor's Note: The usual preview article on this new definitive will be published nearer the time of issue.

*Royal Mail National is part of Royal Mail.

Encouraging Philatelists of the Future

In September we published some ideas for encouraging more young collectors – essential for the long term future of our hobby. The feature suggested suitable philatelic books to buy as presents for young collectors, clubs they might join, and ways adults can help young collectors get started and keep an interest in stamps.

Sent out with the September Bulletin was an application form for the Stamp Bug Club which included a competition. Young collectors were asked to answer three simple questions about stamps and to design a special new stamp issue all about Stamp Bug. A considerable number of new members joined the Stamp Bug Club and many also entered the competition which was judged by Mr Barry Robinson, Design Director, Royal Mail National, and Mr John Holman, Editor of the *British Philatelic Bulletin*. The 10 winning entries all showed imagination and tackled the design in different ways. The ages of the winners ranged from six to 15; they are – Abigail Craggs of Northants (age 11); Sonia Coneti of Hertfordshire (10), Rebecca Davis of Yorkshire (11), Dominik Langhamer of Germany (10), Stephen McDonald of Nottinghamshire (13), Anna McKendry of Surrey (11), Ben McLean of Surrey (11), May Race of Powys (15), Fiona Ross of Glasgow (6)

and Emily Smith of Lancashire (10). All ten will be sent a Royal Mail Yearbook.

Shown here are some of the winning designs. Emily's designs are for 18p and 24p values showing stamps from around the world, and stamps finding a home in an album. This idea was liked by Mr Robinson. Sonia's design showing "The British Stamp Bug" as part of a jigsaw map of Great Britain, found favour with Mr Holman. Stephen submitted two designs, one showing Stamp Bug standing on a globe, the other showed him driving a Royal Mail van past a post office. Rebecca's fun drawing of Stamp Bug pleased Mr Robinson. Unfortunately her drawing got a bit wet in the post, this was taken into account in judging. Her drawing has been "repaired" for reproduction here.

Ben took mail transport as his theme – with drawings of a mail plane, train, bicycle and van. His rendition of The Queen's portrait was liked by both judges. One of Fiona's designs shows Stamp Bug holding flags with the dates 1980 and 1992, indicating the 12 years the Club has been running. Her other design shows Stamp Bug holding a 24p definitive stamp and a copy of *Stamp Bug News*, the Club's magazine.

Congratulations to all winners and our thanks to all who entered. We are also grateful to all who sent in ideas for encouraging young collectors – some of these will be published here before too long. Comments and suggestions are still welcome and should be sent to me at: Royal Mail National, 76 Turmill Street, LONDON, EC1M 5NS.

Julietta Edgar, Youth Philately Manager



Emily Smith



Sonia Coneti



Ben McLean



Rebecca Davis



Stephen McDonald



Fiona Ross

1992 Royal Mail Stamps Poll

Again we are asking readers to vote for their favourite stamps. Shown here are all the special and greetings stamps issued during 1992. Let us know your top three sets and favourite individual stamp (numbered 1-48) on the enclosed voting form. Also please tell us why you like your

favourite set best. We will send 1992 yearbooks to the five readers whose comments are the most original and interesting.

The closing date for votes is 29 January 1993 and the results will be published in the *Bulletin*. We look forward to receiving your vote.

A. Wintertime



1



2



3



4



5

B. Happy & Glorious



6



7



8



9



10

C. Tennyson



11



12



13



14

D. Europa



15



16



17



18



19

E. Civil War



THE CIVIL WAR 1642-51
fought between the forces of KING
& PARLIAMENT. *T. James 11111*

20



THE CIVIL WAR 1642-51
fought between the forces of KING
& PARLIAMENT. *D. Mallett 1111*

21



THE CIVIL WAR 1642-51
fought between the forces of KING
& PARLIAMENT. *M. Mallett 111*

22



THE CIVIL WAR 1642-51
fought between the forces of KING
& PARLIAMENT. *Standard Bearer*

23

F. Gilbert & Sullivan



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G. The Green Issue



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H. Single European Market

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J. Greetings (Memories)



How it all began...

Victorian Stamps and Stamp Collecting

KENNETH R LAKE

Few collectors realise the treasures that can be found in really old stamp magazines: we tend to think modern research tells it all, but we forget that "I remember" touch that brings the past most realistically to light.

Do you realise just how much our hobby itself has changed over the past 140-odd years? And how one went about getting cut-price postage before 1840? Let me tell you of the days before there were any forgeries to worry about, when mail was delivered six times a day in London and a letter cost one old-fashioned penny to any destination in Britain. I'm quoting from a pioneer article. It was written somewhere between 1853 and 1858, and I leave you to figure out how I know this. But first I must remind you that Victoria's Penny Black and Penny Red cost 1/240th of a week's income for a working man: that makes it worth well over £1 today, so our current postal rates are still a bargain.

A Modern Marvel

When the anonymous Victorian wrote his piece there was no telephone to speed communications, no airmail and no fax; he tells us that the 500 miles his penny letter can cover would cost him £20 by rail, equivalent to well over £5,000 today! Yet for him the penny stamp was a modern marvel; as he says, "Personally, our regard for the penny postage stamp owes something to certain memories of the times when no such things were to be had – when a letter from home cost tenpence on delivery by the postman," for few letters were prepaid then.

"In those days we remember that while Parliament was sitting and tenpences were rather scarce with us, because employment was difficult to obtain, we used to haunt the lobby of the House of Commons, and intercept the members as they came up the stairs, in order to solicit the favour of a frank." For members of both Houses were granted free postage – their signature on a folded letter was enough to pass it free to any part of the country, and they were not averse to selling this privilege to undercut the high cost of postage.

Imagine the scene: "The first of them whom

we found courage to address was a tall, round, ruddy-faced man, with an eye that used to laugh and sparkle, and a mouth that smiled habitually, with a touch of sarcasm about it, and who wore a light buff-coloured suit and a white hat."

The response was welcoming: "*Come along, said he, I'll give you a frank, and two if you like.*" He led the way into that little closet that used to stand open at the left of the doorkeeper's, and wrote, in a firm, legible hand, the name of William Cobbett." I could write a book about the great Tory-turned Radical; suffice it to say he was prepared to give away his franks to all comers.

It was, of course, quite unfair that those who could spare time to hang around Parliament could get cheap postage, but those were strange times. "People who had a good share of assurance, it seemed, rarely paid postage for anything, but got everything franked. They did not wait till their letters were written, but brought blank half-sheets, which they folded as envelopes, and got them endorsed by the members, dozens at a time... We cannot remember a single instance of refusal, certainly never encountered one ourselves."

I leave you, however, to make what you can of his claim that "Rumour said that most of the franks were made use of by the ladies: how that may have been we do not know, but certainly, one met with far more ladies in the lobby than it is customary to see now".

Check to the forger

Our informant describes the Penny Black in detail and tells us that the corner letters were "supposed to constitute the check to the forger; but there has never been, and probably never will be, an instance of the forgery of postage stamps." Alas, he was wrong, as our own Stock Exchange forgeries, and the Australian Sydney Bridge postal forgeries, show us; why did he judge things so wrongly?

"The reason, it cannot be doubted, is that there is not sufficient inducement to the crime, or, in other words, it would not pay. Stamps cannot be passed like notes, and though they do often circulate as representatives of coin, it is generally in small amounts for the most part among persons known to each other; it would be no easy matter to get quantities of them exchanged for cash."

And, of course, there was little chance of washing off those heavy Victorian "obliterations", while the hobby had not yet given birth to stamp auctioneers who, under

pressure of philatelic demand, helped prices to rise to the point where forgery and faking became very much worth while. There were, for that matter, no high-value stamps at all – and as he points out, in those days “the forger would have not only to engrave his punch or die and cast his own blocks, but to make his own paper” so that his creations would show the large, clear Crown watermark of the time. Even this precaution failed before later forgers: Sperati dissolved the designs of low-value Australian ‘Roos and printed £2 designs on the blank watermarked paper!



A fine block of Two Pence Blues in the Phillips Collection, National Postal Museum. How many similar blocks ended up as Victorian wallpaper?

Things were a lot more casual, and people more trusting, in those far-off days; our informant tells of a letter bearing the addressee's name and that of his Northumbrian village, and nothing else but the words *To be left till called for*. At the village post office the letter was stuck “with the address outwards into the casement of his little office, that if any friend of the person to whom it is addressed should pass that way and happen to see it, the news of its arrival may reach him.”

At that time “you may be startled to hear that the demand is little short of 500,000,000 in the year... for every working day about 1,600,000 stamps to be manufactured.” Today, with metermarks galore and all those Mailsort “rebated mail” items, the Royal Mail still sells millions of stamps a day, while over the Christmas period the total is frightening.

Describing perforations, he comments on how they often “encroach upon the stamps themselves, cutting away a part of their sides, or devouring a part of the words at the top or bottom.” Astonishing – a pioneer of good centring! However, he reminds us that “Four thousand pounds was paid to the inventor of this drilling ceremony – a very large reward for what seems at first view a very inconsiderate service”.

The stamps, he mentions, had “in the two upper corners a couple of square studs with the word POSTAGE between them” and reminds us that a magnifying glass revealed better and yet better details of the engraver's art. Today's photogravure stamps, of course, merely turn muzzy and blobby under magnification. However, even then not everyone used stamps, it seems, for while Queen Victoria herself insisted on paying for her postage, there was “the exception (though perhaps that is not the sole exception) of the members of the Cabinet, who have a round red stamp of their own, bearing the word PAID and no Queen's Head”.

Many uses

Yet stamps had many uses; he mentions “the advertising columns of a newspaper will show us fifty other functions... *Send seven penny stamps*, says one, *and you will receive a (German) silver spoon*... *Send a dozen stamps*, says another, *with a specimen of your handwriting, and I will disclose to you the mysteries of your own mind and temper*.” I wish I could have tried that one!

“But the destiny of all stamps, at last, is to be stuck, like a limpet on a rock, on the envelope of a letter. “He goes on to describe in picturesque terms the story of a stamp and letter's journey, the brutal defacement of the Queen's visage, the mail van and the railway sorting office, and then surprises us by telling how the letter “suddenly finds itself jerked out of the window of the carriage, with its companions, without the train stopping an instant, and caught in the arms of a man in a red jacket, who was standing alone on the silent and solitary platform, on the look out for it.” The village postman then, he explains, carries the bundle back to his “humble cottage,” sorts them and sets off to deliver them at 7am. Today we have postcodes and automatic sorting, but still our postmen set out at unearthly hours to walk the streets: are we grateful enough to them?

At last we come to the stamp collectors of that far-off age. “The whims of a certain class of people who like to exercise their industry on trifles have decreed that vast numbers of stamps shall be rescued... and appropriated to a useful (if it may so be called) purpose. As there are collectors of almost everything old under the sun, from old pots and pans, old metals, old stores and old anything, so also there are collectors of old postage stamps.”

From his tone, one can imagine the 1850s reader breathing in, sharply and incredulously:

By the Great Lord Harry, are there indeed? And what on earth could they be doing with them all, then? The answer is quick to come: "This odd sort of antiquaries buy old stamps wherever they go and amass them by hundreds of thousands for their cherished purpose of their own, on the accomplishment of which they have set their hearts."

Bringing Tears to Philatelic Eyes

One imagines these careful, scholarly men playing their Penny Blacks, checking for flaws, studying alphabets...and one is completely, disastrously wrong, for "Now it is a line, or a workbox, or a trunk or the interior of a closet or cabinet, and sometimes their ambition takes a higher flight than this, and their grand design is to paper a room with defaced Queen's Heads..."

I can't go on! Look at the catalogue, see the current prices of these ruined sackfuls of early issues, and weep that "the stamp may chance to get into the hands of a collector and continue its existence as a permanent fixture after its day of locomotion is gone...an infinitesimal position of a monument of industry and pertinacity which" – and here we can but agree with him – "might perhaps have been much better applied".

Life was certainly simpler when they had only Penny Blacks and Reds, and Twopenny Blues with and without lines, to think about. I still think I prefer today's outpourings of colourful new issues, though, not to mention our albums, stockbooks, tweezers, catalogues and philatelic magazines galore.

1992 Christmas Stamps Cylinders

Harrison and Sons Ltd, the printers, notify that the cylinders and colours used were:

18p 1A (grey-black) 2B (greenish yellow) 1C (magenta) 1D (bright blue) 1E (emerald) 1F (gold) P99 (phosphor).

24p 1A (grey-black) 1B (greenish yellow) 1C (magenta) 1D (bright blue) 1E (Cobalt) 1F (greenish yellow) 1G (gold).

28p 1A (black) 1B (lemon) 1C (rosine) 1D (bright blue) 1E (reddish violet) 1F (red orange) 1G (gold).

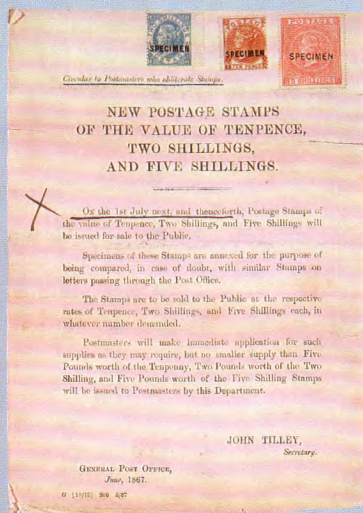
33p 2A (bright blue) 1B (greenish yellow) 1C (rosine) 1D (red brown) 1E (yellow orange) 1F (black) 1G (gold).

39p 1A (black) 1B (lemon) 1C (rosine) 1D (bright blue) 2E (deep violet) 1F (yellow orange) 1G (gold).

Gems from the RM Phillips Collection

204. 1867 High Values

This month's Gem comprises a fine Circular to postmasters issued from the GPO in June 1867, advising of the issue on 1 July of new 10d, 2s and 5s postage stamps. SPECIMEN stamps of the three values are attached. The 2s value was printed in various shades of blue. That attached to this Circular is in a milky shade of blue, proving that it was first issued in that shade.



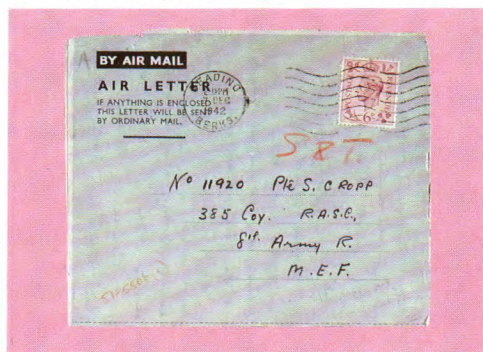
The Circular invites postmasters to "make immediate application for such supplies as they may require but no smaller supply than five pounds worth of the Tenpenny, Two Pounds worth of the Two Shilling, and Five Pounds worth of the Five Shilling Stamps, will be issued to Postmasters by this Department".

This Circular can be seen on page 11 of vol XXXIII of the Phillips Collection in the National Postal Museum, King Edward Street, London EC1. The Museum, in London's Chief Post Office, is open Monday-Friday 9.30am to 4.30pm. Admission free.

Aerogramme Anniversary

The standard aerogramme with special logo commemorating the 50th anniversary of the introduction of air letters (now termed aerogrammes) goes on sale at the British Philatelic Bureau, Collections, and philatelic counters on 1 December. It will be available at post offices as stocks of the earlier printing are used up.

Air letters, to which 6d adhesive stamps were affixed, went on sale at post offices in Britain on 7 December 1942. One is shown here, used on the day of issue. This particular aerogramme belongs to Mr A S Goldstone of London who kindly loaned it to us for reproduction here. It was sent to Private Stanley Cropp by the Rev. R E Scantlebury of Abbey Ruins, Reading.



The introductory part of the letter reads, "...I am sending you one of these air mail letters on the first day of the service and hope you will keep it and send it back to me with any others you may scrounge. Later letters will also be valuable, so keep them". He continued, "Christmas draws near but there doesn't seem to be a great deal of preparation for it, save for the long queues outside the wine shops." Regarding the war, the Rev. Scantlebury added: "The news from the desert is very heartening and cheery. Keep it up and chivie the old blighter right out of Africa. We certainly have had a very peaceful existence since the landing in N. Africa".

Before the war the carriage of letters by aircraft was still regarded as something of a luxury; however, the war played an enormous part in the development of air mail. The carriage of mail for military personnel increased tremendously and the British postal authorities and military forces of the British Commonwealth throughout the world quickly adopted the Air Letter form as the most feasible method to provide troops with a fast medium of communication which

was light enough to be carried by the already overtaxed capacity of military aeroplanes.

Various types of air letter forms exist, some printed officially and some privately.

On 21 July 1941, Great Britain became the first country in Europe to issue an impressed-stamped Air Letter form. Specifically for the use of prisoners of war in Germany and Italy, the forms were printed by McCorquodale & Co Limited at Wolverton.

Forms to take civilian greetings out to the brave men and women in the combat zones were not available until 7 December 1942, when Air Letters with the "Army Form" designation omitted and a 6d adhesive stamp affixed were put on sale for corresponding with members of the Forces serving in East Africa. The service was extended to South Africa on 9 April 1943.

It was not until 18 June 1943, that Air Letters with an imprinted 6d stamp were made available at all British post offices.

Details of the issue of the war-time aerogrammes are taken from part 3 of a series of seven articles entitled "The History of the Aerogramme and the start of commercial air mail" by Peter Jennings, published in the *Bulletin* between March and December 1976. Jean Farrugia, Post Office Archivist, wrote about early "Private Air Letters" in the *Bulletin* of December 1986.

Railway Letter Stamps

Shown here are new 25p railway letter stamps issued by the Mid-Hants Railway and the Talyllyn Railway on 6 September and 10 October respectively. The MHR stamp features West Country Class locomotive "Swanage", the TR stamp shows a line drawing of loco No 7 "Tom Rolt". Stamps are available at face value plus postage. Details of FDCs on request. All orders/enquiries to: Postal Co-ordinator, Mid-Hants Rly, ALRESFORD, Hants, SO24 9JG, or Postmaster, Talyllyn Rly, Wharf Station, TYWYN, Gwynedd, LL36 9EY.



Royal Mail Philatelic Products

BARRY BURKE *Products Manager, Royal Mail*

Questions, questions...

As this is my final article for 1992, I thought I would take the opportunity to carry out a bit of market research amongst readers – to give you a chance to have a genuine influence on Royal Mail stamp products. The Christmas and New Year break will, hopefully, give you more time to give consideration to some of my queries and put pen to paper. As an added incentive, the sender of the best letter (in the judgement of the editor and myself) will receive a copy of the superb *Royal Mail Stamp Album* (illustrated on the inside front cover).

Whilst on the subject of the products featured on the inside front cover, I will begin my quest for customer feedback by looking at the range of albums we currently produce. These include standard and half size First Day Cover Albums, the Presentation Pack Album, Postcard Album, Stock Books and the Stamp Album mentioned above.

By far the most popular of these is the standard First Day Cover Album. With this product at least, we are seen to be getting it absolutely right by producing something customers want, can use and at the right price. But what about the other albums in the range? Is there a real need for Stock Books or Postcard Albums? If Presentation Pack collectors do not use an album, how else do they keep and display their collection? Should all our albums be the same colour so they look more attractive and coherent on the shelf, or does this not matter? Do collectors prefer to buy other brands of album and if so why?

The list of questions I have about albums gets longer the more I think about it, so I will stop there. However, you may wish to make other observations, comments or suggestions not covered by the above. These will be most welcome and all will be read (although if I get swamped, I may not be able to answer every letter!).

My aim in all this is to improve the range of albums we offer customers. This may mean dropping one or two less popular lines in order to enhance others or it could be that we end up

expanding the range of albums in order to meet a customer demand not previously identified. For example, we do not produce an album for stamp booklets at present. Should we? If so, is there a particular page layout or format booklet collectors would like to see? – there I go, asking endless questions again!

Another question on a different subject. Collectors who have First Day Covers mailed to them from the British Philatelic Bureau, receive them fully addressed, with stamps affixed and cancelled. However, many collectors still like to buy covers blank and unadorned from their local post office. I do not wish to change this as it is obviously what many collectors want.

However, I was wondering if given the choice, would collectors like to buy Royal Mail First Day Covers with the stamps already affixed in a neat, straight line, so they do not have to fiddle about with the stamps, before adding their name and address and popping them in the FDC posting box? Again, I want your views before introducing changes which may not be wanted by the people that matter most – you the customer.

If you have any other comments about the current range of stamp products (not just those mentioned here), please write. Be as critical as you like – the 'best letter' will be judged as the one which proves most helpful or innovative, not most complimentary!

And a Few Answers...

In October I wrote about Stamp Pyramids and this product certainly seems to have stirred up some interest. I have been asked a number of questions by collectors, non-collectors and colleagues, some of the more interesting of which I thought I would summarise here so my answers can be shared by all *Bulletin* readers.

Q. Why a pyramid and not some other shape?

A. The pyramid, with its square base, seemed to work better with oblong or square postage stamps than most other shapes. We will see what demand is like and if the basic concept of mint stamps mounted in quality glass or crystal proves popular, we can do the same thing with other shapes.

Q. How many of each variety (that is, each different mounted stamp) will be produced?

A. Pyramids are being custom-made to order, so we will only produce as many as we have taken orders for.

Q. Will you continue making pyramids using stamps which have come off sale?

A. No. We intend to extend our consistent policy on stamp availability to Stamp Pyramids. So when the Wintertime stamps come off sale in January 1993, no further orders for Pyramids containing any of this set will be taken.

Q. Will you publish the number of each variety produced once they come off sale?

A. At the moment, I can think of no reason why not. A proud owner will then be able to boast "...and do you know, it is one of only xx number ever produced?"

Q. Are Pyramids collectable, then?

A. They may well appeal to collectors of glass or crystalware. However, I would not expect to see them listed in stamp catalogues in years to come. I hope they will be perceived and accepted purely as beautiful and intriguing objects which provide an unusual and complementary setting for special issue and high value definitive postage stamps.

Please keep those questions and comments coming in. Write to me at Philatelic Marketing, Room 104, 76 Turnmill Street, LONDON EC1M 5NS. Meanwhile, I would like to wish all *Bulletin* readers a very merry Christmas and a happy and peaceful New Year.

Bar Codes on Special Delivery Labels

Royal Mail's Priority Services "track trace equipment" is to be installed in all concentration and delivery offices by the end of March 1993. Birmingham and Sheffield offices installed the equipment in October 1992. To test the equipment, a barcode is being applied to all Special Delivery labels. These labels will be supplied to all post offices as the equipment installation takes place.

The introduction of the new labels does not herald any change for customers in the existing Special Delivery procedures, so the transaction

will be handled exactly as it is now. It is worth noting, however, that the new label does make reference (on reverse) to the new double money back guarantee.

Royal Mail is a pioneer in the use of new technology to monitor mail consignments as they are sped through the network. We are already using TATOM (Tracking and Tracing of Overseas Mail) to track every outward bag of airmail to its departure airport from the UK. We are constantly looking at ways of improving our services and "track and trace" is one initiative we are evaluating.

Posting Boxes

136. Early Australian Boxes

Two boxes from "down under" feature this month. Jean Farrugia's book *The Letter Box* (1969) tells us that "a few years after the introduction of postage stamps (1850), the Postmaster General of New South Wales announced his intention of abolishing the existing shop 'Receipt Boxes' and replacing them with cast-iron letter receivers placed in the most conspicuous part of Sydney." The first boxes, probably installed early in 1856, were modelled on those already in use in Belgium and Paris. The boxes were produced by Bubb and Son of the Victoria Foundry, Sydney. Some were exported for use in New Zealand. Our first illustration shows one still in use in New Zealand, photographed by Mr T M Wills of Christchurch, Dorset.



Our second photograph, submitted by Sqn Ldr A Horn of Western Australia, shows a Penfold-type box at Perth Zoo. Mrs Farrugia's book tells of a similar cast-iron box at Claremont, Western Australia, dating from 1868. The Perth Zoo box also bears this date, the "VR" cipher on the "dome", and the inscription ON LOAN FROM AUSTRALIA POST under the posting aperture.

Certificate of Posting for Special Delivery
A Priority Service from Royal Mail

How to post:

1. Place the certificate in the space and fill in the details as written on the reverse (back).
2. Put the certificate in the space and fill in the details as written on the reverse (back).
3. Write the address and add the name of the person to whom the letter is to be sent on the back of the letter packet.
4. If the certificate is to be used for the first class postage and Special Delivery fee, the certificate must be used with the letter packet to an office of The Post Office.
5. The certificate will be returned and produce a receipt of delivery.

POST OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Post office LAC:

Post office's name:

date and time received (or time of delivery):

date delivery due:

accepting authority:

address checked: ☐

time of posting:

item posted before 1.00: ☐

after 1.00: ☐

item posted after 1.00: ☐

does posting and delivery (i.e. 1.00) apply: ☐

Special Delivery
A PRIORITY SERVICE FROM ROYAL MAIL

Barcode: *S000050444 GB*

Book

Reviews

The **Royal Mail Special Stamps** Yearbook was first produced in 1984 and proved very popular with collectors. The early editions now have high catalogue valuations. The 1992 Yearbook, published on 10 November, maintains the high standards of its predecessors. A chapter is devoted to each of the nine 1992 special issues: Wintertime, Happy & Glorious, Tennyson, Europa, Civil War, Gilbert & Sullivan, The Green Issue, Single European Market and Christmas. Useful background information is given on the designs, designers and subject matter. The stamps are supplied on a stock card

Associates – formed in 1987 by former Royal College of Art students Andy Altmann, David Ellis and Howard Greenhalgh. They “chose pictures that represent the way people think of The Queen, their memories of fleeting occasions when they might actually have seen her”. Their aim was to fade the pictures into each other, presenting the 40 years of The Queen’s reign as a continuously varied stream of imagery rather than as a series of individual moments.

Collage artist Irene Von Treskow used the latest technology for the Tennyson stamps – the job of cutting out, sizing and assembling all the elements of her collage – normally done by hand – could be transferred to the computer screen. The Tennyson chapter includes a highly readable account of the great poet’s life and works. Ms Von Treskow wanted to present him “as a vital force, not as a monument”. In her researches she visited archives in Lincolnshire, and studied



and can be mounted on the relevant page if desired.

In the chapter on the Wintertime stamps, designer John Gorham tells us “winter colours are predominantly drab and grey, so Keith (Bowen) used the device of sunrise and sunset – the whole diurnal range, in fact – to bring in warmer tones... Snow is falling in only two of the pictures, the deer and the sheep, but it’s obvious in all of them that we are bang in the middle of winter”. At first illustrator Keith Bowen used watercolours, switching to oils to give the stamps “a far richer appearance”.

The five 24p stamps marking The Queen’s 40th anniversary were the work of Why Not

“echoes of his work in Victorian painting”. The end result was a set of attractive and evocative stamps.

The Europa set took Spain as its theme, commemorating the Olympic and Paralympic Games in Barcelona, the 500th Anniversary of Columbus’s landfall in the new world and the Expo 92 exhibition in Seville. The Yearbook describes Keith Bassford’s design problem in deciding how the stamps could best reflect Britain’s involvement with these events. (*Keith wrote about his work in the Bulletin of April 1992. Ed.*)

Jeremy Sancha’s Civil War stamps recall the years when families were divided in support of

the forces of the King, Charles I, and Parliament. Mr Sancha designed the stamps in the form of lino cuts – a medium lending “itself very well to the visual style of woodcuts used in pamphlet issued during the Civil War. Martin Newton’s typography closely followed the eccentricities of the hand – carved blocks used at the time”.

Lynda Gray, we are told, has a passion for costume so a set of Gilbert & Sullivan stamps was an ideal subject for her. The designs are full of action – as with a real Gilbert & Sullivan performance, there is a larger-than-life theatricality to it all. “It’s like a pantomime”, says Lynda, “the exuberant costumes, the staginess of the gestures – it’s all enormous fun.”

Some 30,000 youngsters entered a *Blue Peter* competition to design The Green Issue stamps. The four winners were aged between six and 12; three were present at a press launch at the BBC Television Centre in June to hear BBC and Royal Mail Managing Directors Will Wyatt and Bill Cockburn praise the originality of their work. The stamps highlight childrens’ awareness of the importance of caring for the environment.

The Single European Market stamp was the work of one of Britain’s best-known contemporary artists, David Hockney. His somewhat controversial design shows his interpretation of the British Star in the European Star emblem. The idea came from two students at Croydon College of Art, Kerry Hughes and Senka Loosemore. The full story of the concept and designing of the stamp is recorded in the Yearbook. Hockney’s design was computer generated; it does not exist as an actual painting.

From a modern, we return to a traditional, approach for the designs of the 1992 Christmas stamps. Iain Crockett and Nicholas Thirkell of Carroll, Dempsey and Thirkell Ltd used photographs by the late Tony Evans in producing five stamps featuring stained glass windows in churches in Pangbourne, Berks; Bidbury, Glos; Porthcawl, Glam; and Leatherhead, Surrey. The windows themselves were the work of Karl Parsons and Paul Woodroffe. These 1992 stamps complement the medieval stained glass featured on the 1971 Christmas issue.

As always the Yearbook has been well-written and includes some splendid illustrations. Collectors will refer to it again and again for the background story to the issues, but for the full philatelic information the Stanley Gibbons *GB Specialised Stamp Catalogue* will still be needed.

Part 1 (British Commonwealth) of the 22-part **Stanley Gibbons Stamp Catalogue** is now produced in two volumes, covering countries A-I and J-Z. Volume 1 of the 1992/93 edition was reviewed here in October. Volume 2 is now available. Amongst the editorial improvement made are: completion of the listing of chalk-surfaced paper varieties on George VI issues, the inclusion of several George VI varieties, a rewritten listing of the pre-1935 stamps of Mauritius, listing of the stamps of the two printers of the 1985 Insects definitives of Singapore, and the revision of the listing of the Ceylon official overprints of Sri Lanka. Prices have been revised as necessary, particularly the issues of Straits Settlements, Malayan States, Ceylon, Palestine, Zanzibar and Transvaal. 688 pages, hardbound. Price £20. Available from Stanley Gibbons Strand Shop, or by post from: Stanley Gibbons Publications, Parkside, RINGWOOD, Hants, BH24 3SH. Postage £3 UK, £6 overseas surface mail.

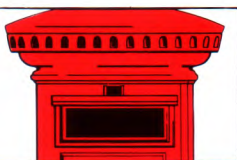
The 44th edition of Stanley Gibbons **Collect British Stamps** checklist was published on 27 November. Price £4.95. It is available from the British Philatelic Bureau; the National Postal Museum shop; and from selected Collections, philatelic counters, and post shops. This new edition includes a feature on collecting *Machins* by Hugh Jefferies, Editor of *Gibbons Stamp Monthly*.

Joint Services Philatelic Charities Fund Catalogue of Flown Covers.

The 1992 supplement to the catalogue is now in print. The cost is £3.20 plus post 34p 2nd class or 45p 1st class postage. All other supplements and extra loose leaf binders are available from: A J Munday, 92 Countess Road, Amesbury, SALISBURY, Wilts SP4 7AT, who is the catalogue distributor for the JSPCF.

Machin Catalogue available from Bureau

The new (9th) edition of the *Connoisseur Catalogue of Machin Stamps*, edited by James Negus, FRPSL, is now available from the British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, EDINBURGH EH3 5TT. Price £16.95. This much-respected catalogue has received many awards including the National Postal Museum medal at Stampex/BPE 1987.



Gilbert & Sullivan

J D Knight of Warwick writes: "I was saddened to see that the information card issued with the First Day Cover of this stamp issue referred to 'W S Gilbert and Sir Arthur Sullivan' as well as running down the former gentleman. Whoever edited the material appears to be unaware of the fact that both these brilliant men were knighted, so that W S Gilbert should properly be referred to as Sir W S Gilbert".

"Arthur S" of London takes issue with the statement in the presentation pack that W S Gilbert wrote "fourteen comic operas". He tells us that there are in fact 13 comic operas as *Trial By Jury* is neither comic opera or operetta, stating that this term was rather loosely used in the *Bulletin*. Sir Arthur Sullivan, he goes on, was careful in the descriptions of his works. *The Pirates of Penzance* and *The Gondoliers* were called "comic opera", *Patience*, "aesthetic opera", *Ruddigore* "supernatural opera" and *Trial by Jury* "dramatic cantata".

"Arthur S" kindly sent in photocopies from music publications to verify his comments. Included are definitions which may be of interest to readers. An opera is defined as: "(1) A drama set to music, with acting and appropriate scenery, and sung throughout with full orchestra. (2) comic opera has spoken interludes and might be classed as light-serious entertainment. (3) Musical comedy is the lowest form of this branch of music". Operetta/opérette is described as "A short opera with dialogue sometimes spoken."

Ronald Lewis of Middlesex writes to say that the painting "The Three Little Maids" which featured on our front cover in June was painted by W Russell Flint in 1909 and first appeared in a volume called *Iolanthe and other Operas* published by George Bell & Sons in 1910. It was subsequently reproduced in a single volume of *The Mikado* by Macmillan in 1928. He points out that the productions listed of *The Sorcerers* and *Trial by Jury* in 1884 were in fact revivals.

1971 Strike FDCs

Mr R Munden of Hereford reports covers bearing decimal definitives postmarked at Severn-Stoke, Worcester, and Longton,

Hereford on 15 February 1971. Thus two more offices known to have handled local mail during the 1971 strike.

Listings have been published here from time to time since February 1971. Mr Munden wonders if all covers bearing local date stamps actually travelled in the post, or were some merely cancelled by favour by sub postmasters for known stamp collectors in their area. Sub post offices remained open during the strike and sold the new decimal stamps even though nationally the postal service was suspended and most crown offices were closed.



Caravan Post Offices

Mr M Watson of Suffolk has submitted a photograph of the caravan post office at Ruaig on the Isle of Tiree, Scotland, recorded here in October. Shown are Margaret McInnes, the postmistress, and Duncan McInnes, one of the island's postmen. The former caravan post office at Barvas Isle of Lewis was illustrated here in April 1992 (page 184).

Single European Market

I received quite a few letters on the design of this stamp, not all complimentary. The most succinct was from Barry Dexter of Bedfordshire: "David Hockney has made a brilliant statement with an awful stamp design – a demented starfish trying to escape the net!"

Any Pigeon Post fanciers out there?

A German reader is seeking British Pigeon Post material of pre 1950. Any reader having material for exchange should contact: Lutz Longig, Siedlung 2, D-O-5501, Leimbach, Germany.

Lord of the Rings

Mrs Joy Mercer of West Sussex writes to point out that *The Two Towers* is the second volume of Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, not the first

volume as stated here in September (page 7). We are happy to set the record straight – the first volume was *The Fellowship of the Ring*.

In-Phil Required

Aydin Kazancioglu wrote to say he is trying to complete his collection of the "In-Phil" leaflet issued by the British Philatelic Bureau. He is willing to pay "reasonable amounts" and requires Nos 1-5, 11, 12, 23, 26, 28, 32, 42, 47 and 53. Any reader who can help should write to Mr Kazancioglu at: Gilekli Cad. No.24, Levent 80620, Istanbul, TURKEY.

All letters sent to the Editor are carefully read; matters of general interest will be dealt with in "Postbag". The Editor regrets that he is unable to reply personally to all letters – to do so would seriously delay production of this, and the Postmark, Bulletin.

1991 Special Stamp Quantities

The quantities issued to counters were:

Dogs

22p	31,011,800
26p	4,980,000
31p	5,032,100
33p	5,160,800
37p	5,104,000
Stamp cards (sets)	105,180

Scientific Achievements

22p Faraday	20,988,700
22p Babbage	21,087,700
31p	4,851,600
37p	4,918,700
Stamp cards (sets)	93,660

Europa

22p (pairs)	36,470,800
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37p (pairs)	7,593,500
Stamp cards (sets)	90,790

Sport

22p	28,894,100
26p	4,834,000
31p	4,872,600
37p	4,973,000
Stamp cards (sets)	93,480

Roses

22p	28,877,900
26p	4,722,000
31p	4,889,000
33p	4,633,600
37p	4,867,200
Stamp cards (sets)	91,800

Dinosaurs

22p	28,461,800
26p	4,635,400
31p	4,617,300
33p	4,579,700
37p	4,780,200
Stamp cards (sets)	93,820

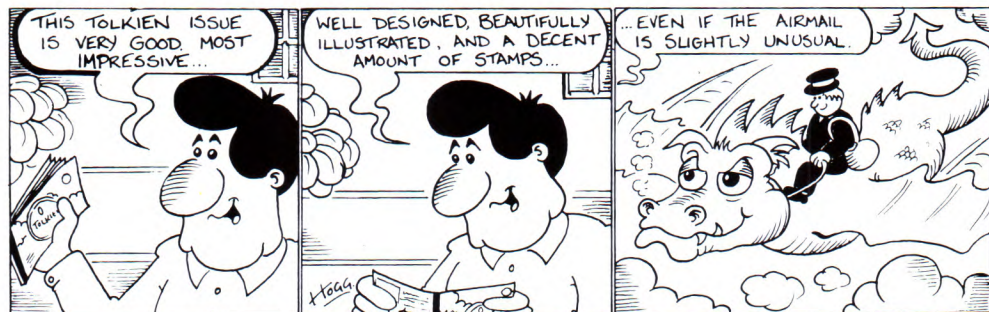
Maps

24p	28,123,100
28p	4,553,900
33p	4,519,800
39p	4,677,300
Stamp cards (sets)	99,420

Christmas

18p	329,830,900
24p	181,091,200
28p	12,630,600
33p	12,503,500
39p	14,748,700
Stamp cards (sets)	101,040
Xmas stamp book (£3.60)	2,561,350

CUSTOMER KNOWS BEST.



December Digest

Issued in December

1 December: Standard aerogramme with anniversary symbol commemorating the 50th anniversary of British Air Letter forms sold at post offices. Price 34p single, £1.90 pack of six. *Printing:* McCorquodale Envelopes Ltd

Notes: (1) Aerogrammes from the pack have a discount star on the top flap; (2) available from December from philatelic outlets, the aerogrammes will go on sale at post offices as stocks of the existing issue are used up.

Withdrawn in December

11 December: National Postal Museum 1991 Christmas postcards.

Note: These cards will be withdrawn from the Bureau on 11 December; they will remain on sale at the Museum.

18 December: 37p definitive.

Note: This date supersedes the originally scheduled withdrawal date of 13 September 1992 (September Digest).

Events

NPM = National Postal Museum

until 31 Dec 92. "Pictures in the Post" exhibition (story of picture postcards) at Bath Postal Museum, 8 Broad Street, BATH BA1 5LJ. Tel: 0225 60333.

until Feb 93. "Victorian Revenues & Other Fiscals" exhibition of material from the Phillips Collection at NPM, London EC1. Open Mon-Fri 9.30-16.30.

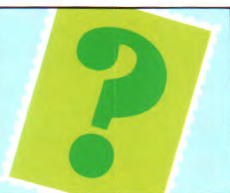
until May 93. "People in the Post" exhibition at NPM.

23 Jan 93. Telford Phil Soc Stamp & Postcard Fair at Belmont Hall, Wellington, Telford, 10.00-16.00. Enquiries: P Morris-Jones, 190 Holyhead Road, Wellington, TELFORD, TF1 2DW. Tel: 0952 223926.

2-7 Mar 93. Spring Stampex at Royal Horticultural Society Halls, London SW1. Enquiries: STAMPEX, 107 Charterhouse Street, LONDON EC1M 6PT.

Note: Includes Eur-Apex '93 airmails exhibition.

Competition



Win £75 worth of British stamps

Enter this month's competition and stand a chance of winning £75 worth of current British philatelic products of your choice – stamps, stamp books, postcards, albums, etc. Answer the questions below, the answers will be found in this month's *Bulletin*, and send with your name and address on a postcard to: December Competition, British Philatelic Bulletin, Royal Mail National, 76-86 Turnmill Street, LONDON EC1M 5NS to arrive by 29 January.

The winner will be invited to order £75 of philatelic products; five runners-up will be sent packs of the Swans stamps. Answers and winners' names will be published in March.

1. Which were the first British stamps designed by David Gentleman?
2. Britannia will feature on a new definitive stamp – what is its value?
3. Sydney's first posting boxes were modelled on those in Belgium and which French city?
4. Who edited the *Connoisseur Catalogue of Machin Stamps*?

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

The winners of the September competition were: F Clark of London (£75 worth of philatelic products); E Dubois of BFPO 49; P Plant of Dyfed; L Senior of Suffolk; M Foley of Ireland; and Miss C Webb Ware of Australia (presentation packs). The answers: 1. Green & Carmine; 2. The Partners; 3. 23 June 1992; 4. 30,000; 5. 600th anniversary of Abbotsbury Swannery.



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