

1985/86 British Special STAMPS



By Francis Kennedy

British Special Stamps

1924-84 Articles in the

British Philatelic Bulletin

Stamp Issue

1. British Empire Exhibition 1924-25	August 1974
2. Ninth UPU Congress, 1929 - The Low Values	September 1974
3. Silver Jubilee of King George V, 1935	October 1974
4. Coronation of King George VI, 1937	November 1974
5. Centenary of First Adhesive Postage Stamps, 1940	January 1975
6. Victory 1946	February 1975
7. Royal Silver Wedding, 1948	March 1975
8. Channel Islands Liberation, 1948	April 1975
9. Olympic Games 1948	May 1975
10. 75th Anniversary of Universal Postal Union, 1949	June 1975
11. Festival of Britain, 1951	July 1975
12. Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II, 1953	August 1975
13. World Scout Jubilee Jamboree, 1957	September 1975
14. 46th Inter-Parliamentary Union Conference, 1957	October 1975
15. Sixth British Empire & Commonwealth Games, 1958	November 1975
16. Tercentenary of the General Letter Office, 1960	December 1975
17. 1st Anniversary of European Postal & Telecom Conference, 1960	January 1976
18. Post Office Savings Bank Centenary, 1961	February 1976
19. European Postal & Telecommunications Conference, Torquay, 1961	March 1976
20. Seventh Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, 1961	April 1976
21. National Productivity Year 1962	May 1976
22. Freedom from Hunger 1963	August 1976
23. Paris Postal Conference Centenary, 1963	September 1976
24. National Nanny Week, 1963	October 1976
25. Ninth International Lifesave Conference, 1963	November 1976
26. Red Cross Centenary Congress, 1963	December 1976
27. Opening of COMPAQ 1963	January 1977
28. The Shakespeare Festival, 1964	February 1977
29. International Geographical Congress, 1964	March 1977
30. International Botanical Congress, 1964	April 1977
31. Opening of Forth Road Bridge, 1964	June 1977
32. Churchill Commemoration, 1965	July 1977
33. 700th Anniversary of Parliament, 1965	August 1977
34. Salvation Army Centenary, 1965	September 1977
35. Lister Centenary - Antiseptic Surgery, 1965	October 1977
36. Commonwealth Arts Festival, 1965	November 1977
37. The Battle of Britain - 50th Anniversary, 1965	December 1977
38. Opening of Post Office Tower, 1965	January 1978
39. United Nations & International Co-operation Year, 1965	February 1978
40. Centenary of the International Telecommunications Union, 1965	March 1978
41. Burns Commemoration, 1966	April 1978
42. Westminster Abbey's 900th Anniversary, 1966	May 1978
43. Landscapes 1966	June 1978
44. World Cup Football Competition, 1966	July 1978
45. British Birds, 1966	August 1978
46. British Technology, 1966	September 1978
47. Battle of Hastings - 900th Anniversary, 1966	October 1978
48. Christmas, 1966	November 1978
49. European Free Trade Association, 1967	December 1978
50. British Wild Flowers, 1967	January 1979
51. British Paintings, 1967	February 1979
52. Sir Francis Chichester's World Voyage, 1967	March 1979
53. British Discoveries, 1967	May 1979
54. Christmas, 1967	June 1979
55. British Bridges, 1968	July 1979
56. British Anniversaries, 1968	September 1979
57. British Paintings (2), 1968	October 1979
58. Christmas, 1968	November 1979
59. British Ships, 1969	December 1979
60. First Flight of Concorde, 1969	January 1980
61. Notable Anniversaries, 1969	February 1980
62. British Architecture: Cathedrals, 1969	March 1980
63. Investiture of I.R.H. the Prince of Wales, 1969	April 1980
64. Gandhi Centenary Year, 1969	May 1980
65. British Post Office Technology, 1969	June 1980
66. Christmas, 1969	July 1980
67. British Rural Architecture, 1970	August 1980
68. General Anniversaries, 1970	September 1980
69. Literary Anniversaries, 1970	October 1980
70. Commonwealth Games, 1970	November 1980
71. 'Phillypia' Stamp Exhibition, 1970	December 1980
72. Christmas, 1970	January 1981
73. Not published	
74. Literary Anniversaries, 1971	February 1981
75. 'Ukter' 71 Paintings, 1971	March 1981
76. British Anniversaries, 1971	April 1981
77. British Architecture - University Buildings, 1971	May 1981
77. Christmas, 1971	June 1981
78. British Polar Explorers, 1972	July 1981
79. General Anniversaries, 1972	August 1981
80. British Architecture: Village Churches, 1972	September 1981
81. Broadcasting Anniversaries, 1972	October 1981
82. Christmas, 1972	November 1981
83. Royal Silver Wedding, 1972	December 1981

Bulletin

84. European Communities, 1983	January 1981
85. Tree - Planting Year, 1973	February 1981
86. British Explorers, 1973	March 1981
87. County Cricket, 1873-1973	May 1981
88. British Paintings, 1973	June 1981
89. 400th Birth Anniversary of Inigo Jones 1973	July 1981
90. 150th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, 1973	August 1981
91. Royal Wedding, 1973	September 1981
92. Christmas, 1973	October 1981
93. British Trees, 1974	November 1981
94. Bicentenary of Public Fire Services, 1974	December 1981
95. Centenary of the Universal Postal Union, 1974	January 1982
96. Great Britons - Medieval Warriors, 1974	February 1982
97. Birth Centenary of Sir Winston Churchill 1974	March 1982
98. Christmas, 1974	April 1982
99. Health and Handicap Charities, 1975	May 1982
100. Birth Centenary of J.M.W. Turner, 1975	June 1982
101. European Architectural Heritage Year, 1975	July 1982
102. Sailing, 1975	September 1982
103. 150th Anniversary of Public Railways, 1975	November 1982
104. 62nd Inter-Parliamentary Conference, 1975	December 1982
105. Birth Centenary of Jane Austen, 1975	January 1983
106. Christmas, 1975	February 1983
107. Telephone Centenary, 1976	March 1983
108. Social Reformers, 1976	April 1983
109. Bicentennial of American Independence, 1976	May 1983
110. Centenary of the Royal National Rose Society, 1976	June 1983
111. British Cultural Traditions, 1976	July 1983
112. 500th Anniversary of British Printing, 1976	September 1983
113. Christmas, 1976	October 1983
114. Racket Sports, 1977	November 1983
115. Centenary of Royal Institute of Chemistry, 1977	December 1983
116. Royal Silver Jubilee, 1977	January 1984
117. Commonwealth Conference, 1977	February 1984
118. British Wildlife, 1977	March 1984
119. Christmas, 1977	April 1984
120. Energy Resources, 1978	June 1984
121. Historic Buildings, 1978	August 1984
122. 25th Anniversary of the Coronation, 1978	October 1984
123. Horses, 1978	November 1984
124. Cycling Centenaries, 1978	December 1984
125. Christmas, 1978	January 1985
126. British Dogs, 1979	February 1985
127. British Flowers, 1979	March 1985
128. First Direct Elections to the European Assembly, 1979	May 1985
129. Bicentenary of the Derby, 1979	August 1985
130. International Year of the Child, 1979	December 1985
131. Rowland Hill Centenary, 1979	January 1986
132. Metropolitan Police Sesquicentenary, 1979	February 1986
133. Christmas, 1979	March 1986
134. Centenary of the Wild Bird Protection Act, 1980	April 1986
135. 150th Anniversary of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway, 1980	May 1986
136. "London 1980"	June 1986
137. London Landmarks, 1980	July 1986
138. Famous Authorities, 1980	August 1986
139. 80th Birthday of Queen Elizabeth, The Queen Mother, 1980	September 1986
140. British Conductors, 1980	October 1986
141. British Sporting Centenaries, 1980	November 1986
142. Christmas, 1980	December 1986
143. Folklore "Europa", 1981	January 1987
144. The International Year of Disabled People, 1981	February 1987
145. British Butterflies, 1981	March 1987
146. 50th Anniversary of the National Trust for Scotland, 1981	May 1987
147. Royal Wedding, 1981	July 1987
148. Duke of Edinburgh Award, 1981	August 1987
149. Fishing Industry, 1981	September 1987
150. Christmas, 1981	December 1987
151. Charles Darwin, 1982	February 1988
152. Youth Organisations, 1982	April 1988
153. British Theatre, 1982	June 1988
154. British Maritime Heritage 1982	July 1988
155. British Textiles, 1982	October 1988
156. Information Technology, 1982	December 1988
157. British Motor Industry, 1982	February 1989
158. Christmas, 1982	March 1989
159. British River Fishes, 1983	June 1989
160. Commonwealth Day, 1983	September 1989
161. British Engineering Achievements, 1983	October 1989
162. British Army Uniforms, 1983	December 1989
163. British Gardens, 1983	January 1991
164. British Pairs, 1983	March 1991
165. Christmas, 1983	April 1991
166. Heraldry, 1984	July 1991
167. British Cattle, 1984	August 1991
168. Urban Renewal, 1984	September 1991
169. Europa, 1984	November 1991
170. London Economic Summit, 1984	January 1992
171. Greenwich Meridian, 1984	March 1992
172. Royal Mail, 1984	May 1992
173. The British Council 1984	July 1992
174. Christmas 1984	November 1992

Notes:

*Un-numbered †Wrongly numbered 151

Non 1-129 were written by James Watson, 130 onwards by Francis Kennedy.

The magazine was entitled *Philatelic Bulletin* to February 1983, *British Philatelic Bulletin* thereafter.

Introduction

Although the British Post Office was the first in the world to issue adhesive postage stamps (the Penny Black and Twopence Blue of 1840), it was not until 1924 that it issued its first commemorative, or special, stamps. In April 1924 two stamps, 1d and 1½d, were issued to mark the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley. The stamps featured the Wembley Lion and a profile of King George V, himself a noted philatelist. The King took a keen interest in the design of these stamps and in the two later special sets of his reign, issued in 1929 for the Postal Union Congress and in 1935 for his Silver Jubilee.

Special issues became more plentiful during the reign of George VI and in the early 1960s. Following a change in the criteria for issuing special stamps in 1964, their issue not only became more regular but the designs more imaginative and eye-catching. Interest in special stamps grew apace, with both general public and stamp collector alike.

In August 1974 the first article in a series entitled "British Special Issues" was published in the Post Office's *Philatelic Bulletin*. Written by the late James Watson, it dealt with the 1924 Empire Exhibition set. Sadly Mr Watson died in 1986, by when he had covered some 129 issues to the Bicentenary of the Derby set of 1979. The series has, since December 1986 been continued by Francis Kennedy. Pressure on space in the *Bulletin* meant slow progress in bringing the series up to date and it has been decided to continue publication in booklet format; this, the first, records the 18 issues of 1985-86.

A listing of the articles, covering the years 1924-84, published in the *Bulletin* between August 1974 and November 1992, appears on the inside front cover of this book. It is hoped, in due course, to reprint these 174 articles in a British Philatelic Bulletin Publication.

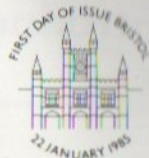
These articles (and future booklets) provide clear, concise records of each issue with useful information on the designs, printing varieties, first day postmarks, postcards and presentation packs. Many collectors use this information when writing-up their collections, or for enjoyable reading when looking at their stamps.

The issues of 1985-86 include some of the most popular of the 1980s, such as Terence Cuneo's Famous Trains and Ken Lilly's Nature Conservation.

John Holman
Editor, British Philatelic Bulletin

Note: This is the first in a new series of Bulletin Publications; an earlier title "The Early Days of the Postal Service" was published in 1986.

175: Famous British Trains



22 January 1985

The 150th anniversary of the founding of the Great Western Railway prompted the Post Office to issue, on 22 January 1985, five stamps featuring the major "named" trains of the four divisions into which the many small railways then existing were obliged to group themselves in accordance with the Railway Act of 1921.

The Great Western, already the biggest voluntary grouping, absorbed Cambrian Railways and several Welsh Valley Lines. The other divisions were the Southern Railway based on the old London, Brighton and South Coast lines and those serving Kent; the London

and North Eastern Railway and the London Midland and Scottish.

Steam power was at its peak and the fierce competition between the divisions led them to establish trains famous for their speed and reliability. The GWR "Cheltenham Flyer" (29p), hauled by a Castle Class locomotive, set a world speed record on 6 June 1932, when it covered the 77.3 miles from Paddington to Swindon at an average speed of 81.68mph, reaching a maximum of 92.3mph during the run. On the stamp, the locomotive shown in the Castle Class No. 5069, "Isambard Kingdom Brunel" an appropriate choice in view of



Brunel's participation in constructing the original GWR.

This railway, on its 150th birthday, also provides the subject for the **34p** stamp, "The Cornish Riviera" whose history goes back to 1904 as the 10am express to Plymouth during the holiday months of July, August and September. Subsequently, the Cornish Riviera ran daily leaving Paddington at 10.30am. The locomotive featured on the stamp is No. 6015, "King Richard III", one of several GWR "King" class engines to break records of one kind or another.

The remaining three stamps relate to the other three companies which emerged from the 1921 reconstruction. First there is the LNER with the "Flying Scotsman" (**17p**). This train originated in 1862 as "The Special Scotch Express" taking 10 hours to reach Edinburgh – fast enough to justify the public re-action in calling the train "The Flying Scotsman". Some years later this train established a new world record with a non-stop run of 392.9 miles from the London (Kings Cross) to Edinburgh. The powerful Pacific Class locomotives made this possible, the one on the stamp being No. 4498, "Sir Nigel Gresley", in about 1947.

The rival West Coast route to Scotland from London (Euston) to Glasgow and Edinburgh via Carlisle was in the LMS system which competed for traffic with their "Royal Scot" (**31p**). This left Euston every morning at 10am, running non-stop to Carlisle (301 miles) where the train divided, one portion going to Glasgow and the other to Edinburgh, each arriving at 6.15pm. The stamp depicts the Duchess Pacific Class locomotive No. 46243 "City of Lancaster".

Lastly there is "The Golden Arrow" (**22p**) of the Southern Railway which was inaugurated in 1929 as a luxury Pullman through service from London (Victoria) to Paris, a 6½ hour journey for an overall fare of £5. With fading magnificence, the service continued until 1972, beaten by the frequent London-Paris air service. Perhaps however a new life awaits The Golden Arrow with the opening of the Channel Tunnel? The locomotive on the stamp is "219 Squadron", No. 34806 of the "Battle of Britain" class engines.



The designer of the issue was Terence Cuneo, then 76-years old, an artist with a passion for steam trains. Although British-born, Cuneo was of Italian descent and claimed Garibaldi as an ancestor. Apart from the normal signature, all Cuneo's later work includes a mouse hidden away in the picture – a feature which is lost in the necessary reduction to stamp size. A framed set of prints, on which the five designs were based, can be seen on the walls of the main gallery in the National Postal Museum.

Two varieties are listed by Gibbons. The 17p Flying Scotsman is known imperf (A pair is priced at £1,800 in the 1993 Part 1 catalogue), and the 22p Golden Arrow stamp (row 6, stamp 7) from the no dot cylinder has a shortened upright to the first "R" in "ARROW".

Sales by withdrawal on 21 January 1986 were: 17p – 27,698,600; 22p – 7,916,200; 29p – 7,472,200; 31p – 7,314,900; and 34p – 7,050,00.

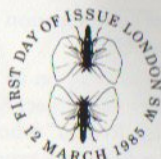
Pictorial "First Day of Issue" postmarks were provided for the British Philatelic Bureau and Bristol. The Bureau postmark featured the GWR logo, that for Bristol showed the facade of the original Temple Meads station. Numerous other appropriate and attractive handstamps were sponsored by cover dealers and others.

Stamp cards were produced, reproducing the stamp designs; these were numbered 81a-e. Some 216,000 sets were produced. The National Postal Museum organised an exhibition of railway material and issued a card (number SS30) reproducing a GWR Land's End poster of c. 1904 and a Great Western TPO handstamp. The printing of this card was 15,000 copies.

176: British Insects

12 March 1985

Two important centenaries and the pursuit of the British Wild Life Theme on stamps led to the issue on 12 March 1985 of this set of five stamps concerned with British Insects. The Royal Entomological Society was founded in 1833 and was granted a Royal Charter in 1885. In that same year, the Selborne Society was founded in memory of, and to further the work of, the Rev Gilbert White (1720-93) who was born at Selborne in Hampshire and who returned there in 1751 as the curate-naturalist of the village church. Gilbert White became famous as the author of the classic work, *The Natural History of Selborne*, first published by his brother, Benjamin White, in 1790. The style and content of White's book established a pattern for later writers on the same theme. Selborne Hills is now owned by the National Trust.



The choice of designer was not difficult. Gordon Beningfield, whose delicate work on the Butterflies issue of 1981 had been so appreciated by everyone, was commissioned to produce five insect stamp designs. An internationally-known artist and naturalist, Beningfield chose five insects, from the hundreds available, which he considered attractive, each in its own right. These he set against a natural background applicable to each insect, thus repeating the successful formula of the Butterflies issue.

The 17p stamp featured Buff-tailed Bumble Bee (*Bombus terrestris*) – one of the most common of Britain's bees and among the earliest on the move in Spring. The buff-coloured tail is unique to this British bee and especially distinguishes the queens.



Buff-tailed Bumble Bee



Seven Spotted Ladybird



West-Order Bush-Cricket



Stag Beetle



Emperor Dragonfly



The **22p** value depicted Seven-spotted Lady Bird (*Coccinella septempunctata*) – Britain's favourite beetle, of which there are over 40 species in this country alone. The seven-spotted lady bird is among the commonest of its kind and is regarded as the gardener's friend because of its insatiable appetite for aphids. The red back warns birds that this particular insect is not for eating with the result that the lady bird is left alone to carry on with its good work in the garden.

The **29p** stamp shows the Wart-biter Bush Cricket (*Decticus verrucivorus*) – by far the rarest of the five insects in the series. It is a protected species, virtually confined to dry grasslands near the south coast where the comparative warmth encourages the male to chirp endearments to the hopefully responding female. The name of this insect is derived from a Scandinavian belief that warts can be cured through a bite from this particular cricket.

The **31p** denomination features the Stag Beetle (*Lucanus cervus*) – the largest of British beetles. The antler-like appendages to the head are, actually, jaws which come into action especially when two males fight over a female who is provided with smaller but more useful pincer jaws. Most stag beetles are concentrated in the south east of England in the old deciduous forest and parklands which are a

feature of the region.

The top value, **34p**, shows the Emperor Dragonfly (*Anax imperator*) – yet another southerner, found flying in June and July. It is sometimes called the "hawker" dragonfly because it catches its food on the wing, unlike the "darter" dragonfly which rests between each quick foray for food. The sexes are distinguished by colour, the male being blue (as on the stamp) and the female, green. The normal hunting grounds are ponds and lakes which attract the small insects on which the dragonfly feeds.

The stamps were printed in photogravure, by Harrison & Sons (High Wycombe) Ltd in five (31p), six (22p and 34p) or seven (17p and 29p) colours. The printing was so accurate that no constant varieties are listed by Stanley Gibbons. Sales by the withdrawal date, 11 March 1986, were: 17p – 39,534,200; 22p – 7,812,500; 29p – 9,495,200; 31p – 7,223,900; 34p – 6,932,600.

The five PHQ cards for this issue were numbered 82a-e; 174,980 sets were produced. Pictorial "First Day of Issue" handstamps were used at the British Philatelic Bureau and London SW. Several handstamps were sponsored by cover producers and others; details were published in the *Postmark Bulletin* at the time and can now be found in first day cover catalogues.

177: British Composers

14 May 1985

The Conference of European Postal and Telecommunications Administrations (CEPT) proclaimed 1985 to be European Music Year and required members to make music the theme for that year's CEPT issue. Great Britain chose to honour four prominent British composers. In place of mundane portraits (as used for the British Conductors issue of 1980), the commissioned artist, 47-year old Wilson McLean (a British-born illustrator living in New York), chose to interpret his personal re-action to four pieces of familiar classical music by the composers involved.

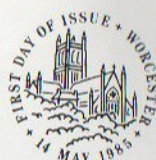
The pro-European flavour of the stamps issued on 14 May 1985, was enhanced by the backgrounds of the composers. Georg Friedrich Händel was German-born in 1685 – making the issue a 300th anniversary tribute to his birth

– but worked largely in Great Britain after studying at European musical centres, and became a naturalised British subject in 1726, changing his name to George Frederick Handel.

Gustav Holst was British-born at Cheltenham, Glos, in 1874, to a Swedish family which had settled in England in the early 1800s. During his appointment as music master at St Paul's Girls School, London, he composed the work for which he is best known, "The Planets Suite".

Frederick Delius was of German extraction, born at Bradford, Yorkshire, in 1862, but lived and worked largely in France.

Edward Elgar was pure English, being born in 1857, at Worcester, into a family with a





strong musical background. Richard Strauss is reported to have said that, by writing "The Dream of Gerontius", Elgar had put Great Britain on the musical map of Europe. Coincidentally, Holst, Delius and Elgar all died in 1934.

McClean was the first to design British stamps actually square in shape and he made good use of the innovation. Contrary to Universal Postal Union regulations, the values on the stamps are expressed in words rather than figures, as the UPU normally requires, to ensure an easy visual check on the postage paid by the sender of any letter.

The **Seventeen Pence** features Handel's "Water Music" pictured by McClean as a reflection in water. The **Twenty-Two Pence** stamp depicts Holst's "The Planets Suite" epitomised by the artist's impression of planets moving in space. The **Thirty-One Pence** value features "The First Cuckoo", a theme typical of Frederick Delius, many of whose compositions were concerned with the English countryside. The top value, **Thirty-Four Pence**, showing a bird's wing above the sea evoked for the artist Elgar's "Sea Pictures", a piece of song-writing for which the composer had to overcome his dislike for the style of composition. He was far more at home with pieces like "Pomp and Circumstance", with which his name will always be associated.

Printing was in photogravure by Harrison & Sons (High Wycombe) Ltd, in counter sheets of 100 with standard 14 x 14½ perforation. Unspecified "printing difficulties" resulted in no sheets from the right-hand side of the printing cylinder being issued for the 31p value. This meant that while stamps were issued for cylinders 1A 2B 1C 2D 1E 1F, the

corresponding "dot" cylinders were not available. Two constant printing flaws are recorded for the 17p stamp: a large blue retouch above the "C" of "MUSIC" (Row 10 Stamp 5); and on Row 1 Stamp 5 the small dot (representing a hyphen) is missing between "SEVENTEEN" and "PENCE". Imperforate stamps are known for the 17p and 22p. These should only be collected in pairs.

Sales by the withdrawal date (13 May 1986) were: 17p – 36,849,700; 22p – 7,805,800; 31p – 7,148,700; 34p – 6,806,100. The four PHQ postcards were numbered 83a-d; 156,140 sets were produced.

Two pictorial "First Day of Issue" cancellations were available. That used at the Philatelic Bureau, Edinburgh showed a musical notation representing a face – the European Music Year logo. The alternative handstamp, used at Worcester as a tribute to Elgar (one-time organist there), featured a view of Worcester Cathedral.

The National Postal Museum organised a Music Stamps exhibition and used a special cancellation (7 May–14 June) featuring the European Year of Music logo.



National Postal Museum and sponsored handstamps.

178: Safety At Sea

18 June 1985

The 1985 (11th) Conference of the International Association of Lighthouse Authorities was held in Brighton, Sussex; the first occasion on which this event was staged in Great Britain since the Association was founded in 1957. The first unimmensible life-boat, built by Lionel Lukin in 1785 was the pioneer attempt to assist those in peril following mishap at sea. Before that, lighthouses on coastal sites provided warnings of dangers but there was no provision for rescue when needed.

In 1824, Great Britain took a big step forward, at the suggestion of Sir William Hillary, with the creation of the Royal National Institution for the Preservation of Life from Shipwreck. Known now as the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, this voluntary organisation maintains 130 fully-equipped lifeboats capable of reaching any vessel in distress within 30

miles of the British coast in four hours; and 120 inflatable speed boats for inshore operations. From 1824 to the date of issue of the Safety at Sea stamps, the RNLI has saved 110,000 lives.

The first of the lighthouses serving mariners in British waters was erected by the Romans at Dover sometime before AD200. Today, the Corporation of Trinity House is responsible for 92 lighthouses along the English coast, around the Channel Islands and in Gibraltar, as well as other aids to navigation such as light and bell-buoys and advanced electronic devices. Trinity House also licences 600 pilots in its capacity as the Principal Pilotage Authority. The corresponding authorities for Ireland (with 87 lighthouses) and Scotland (188) are the Commissioners for Irish Lights and the Commission for Northern Lights, respectively.

HM Coastguard has moved with the times. It operates the Civil Maritime Search and





— SAFETY AT SEA —
ROYAL MAIL FIRST DAY COVER

Rescue service, the base on which the International Maritime Satellite Organisation (INMARAT) was founded in 1979 and by 1985 there were 41 member-countries. INMARAT co-ordinates search and rescue operations on an international scale through constant communication by satellite with thousands of ships world-wide.

The final safety factor covered by this issue of stamps deals with marking of channels and pinpointing under water hazards by fixed buoys and beacons riding the tides. Trinity House was appointed by Queen Elizabeth I in 1594 to supervise all rights of "beconage, buoyage and ballastage" for England; and this same authority has inaugurated an international standard of colours and shapes for all buoys, each colour and shape conveying a particular message to passing shipping.

The four stamps commemorating the Brighton Conference were issued on 18 June 1985 and were designed by F Newell and J Sorrell in partnership (designers of the 1984 British Council issue) and were printed in lithography by John Waddington Ltd of Leeds (whose first British special stamps were the 1983 British Gardens issue). The four broad aspects of safety at sea discussed above were illustrated by the stamps' designs.

The **17p** stamp shows an RNLI Oakley Class

lifeboat and flags of the international code of signals. The **22p** features Beachy Head lighthouse, near Eastbourne, and a section of the local Admiralty Chart.

The **31p** denomination illustrates a Maresc satellite above the Atlantic Ocean and earth tracking devices; and the **34p** value a South Cardinal Class I Buoy with a range of other Cardinal buoys used by members of the International Association of Lighthouse Authorities.

No printing flaws are listed for these stamps but the 17p is known imperforate between the stamp and bottom sheet margin.

In addition to the usual PHQ postcards (numbered 84a-d), the National Postal Museum produced a special postcard (reference SS33) to mark the Safety At Sea exhibition staged to coincide with the release of the stamps. Some 177,012 sets of the PHQ cards were produced; 15,000 of the Museum card.

Sales of stamps by the withdrawal date (17 June 1986) were: 17p – 36,372,000; 22p – 9,078,400; 31p – 7,057,400; and 34p – 6,757,600. The official Post Office "First Day of Issue" cancellations were provided at the British Philatelic Bureau and Eastbourne. In addition, the RNLI serviced covers with special handstamps at the Poole Lifeboat Display; at Cromer, Norfolk; and Appledore, Devon.

179: Royal Mail: 350 Years Of Service

30 July 1985

To many people, including some philatelists, the first country-wide postal service was that run by Henry Bishop in 1660-62 when King Charles II proclaimed the General Letter Office, and awarded the service and its profits to his brother, the Duke of York (later King James II). The Duke then "farmed" the service to Bishop for £21,500 per annum, this ensuring himself of the income without earning it!

In fact, it was King Charles I who first announced, in 1635, that *his* Royal Mail was available to any member of the public who cared to use it. The announcement made at

Charles I. He needed a wide-ranging postal service for royal and political documents and the cost of running it was considerable. The charges that could be made for carrying letters for the public would help towards the overheads without adding much to the costs. The service was limited to places along post-roads radiating out of London to Dover, Plymouth, Bristol, Holyhead, Yarmouth, and Edinburgh; letters being dropped at, and collected from, a central point in each town.

The arrangements were short-lived. By 1637 the political domestic scene was so uncertain that another edict by Charles I limited the use



Bagshot, Surrey, was headed: "By the King: A Proclamation for the Settling of the Letter Office of England and Scotland" and confirmed the service (by mounted postboys) which was to be maintained by Thomas Witherings, who already held the position of "His Majesty's Postmaster of England for foreign parts". It was hard-headed business thinking which guided

of the Royal Mail to government business. Within five years the Civil War brought disruptions throughout the land.

Nevertheless, on 30 July 1985, the Post Office commemorated the 350th anniversary of public postal services by issuing four stamps with designs devoted to specific aspects of



contemporary postal services.

The 17p stamp features a motor-cyclist of the Datapost express service which guarantees next day delivery anywhere in the United Kingdom and special deliveries overseas (hence the Datapost aircraft overhead). The 22p value depicted a rural postbus – a modern conception of mail carrying and the provision of a public passenger service in remote areas not served by other means.

On the 31p value Parcel delivery is represented – now undertaken by Parcelforce, separate from the Letters business of The Post Office. Finally the top value, 34p, shows town door-to-door delivery of mail.

The designer was Paul Hogarth, RA; the stamps were printed by Harrisons in photogravure. No printing varieties are recorded but the 17p stamp is known imperforate on three sides and the 31p completely imperforate. These, in vertical pairs, are priced by Gibbons at £1300 each (Part 1 Catalogue 1993 edition).

An innovation was the release of a booklet containing ten 17p stamps for price of nine stamps (£1.53). To prevent the resale of the stamps at full price all those contained in the book had a double-lined "D" printed in blue on the back of the stamp on top of the gum. A special cylinder was made to print sheets of 220 stamps in 22 horizontal rows of 10, stamps 5 and 6 in each row were *tête-bêche* and when split up for booklets provided two rows of five stamps with a binding edge at the top of each

block of ten stamps. This special printing produced 5,057,600 booklets.

The British Philatelic Bureau in Edinburgh used a special "First Day of Issue" cancellation with a bold "350 YEARS" in the centre. At Bagshot, Surrey, a pictorial first day cancellation depicted a mounted post-boy of 1635. The mounted post-boy also featured on a special cancel used at the National Postal Museum, 30 July 1985 – 25 April 1986, to coincide with an anniversary exhibition.

The four PHQ postcards for this issue were numbered 85a-d; 182,160 sets were produced. Sales of the normal sheet stamps by the withdrawal date (29 July 1986) were: 17p – 36,318,300; 22p – 7,682,100; 31p – 7,087,500; 34p – 6,772,700; booklet stamps (17p) – 50,576,500 (withdrawn 31 August 1985).

A special 350th anniversary event was held by The Post Office at Bagshot on 30 July 1985. Amongst the many displays was one of historic postal vehicles including a mail coach. Guest of honour was HRH The Prince of Wales who arrived by helicopter. First day covers carried on board were available to collectors and were given a special cachet: "CARRIED ON BOARD A HELICOPTER OF THE QUEEN'S FLIGHT piloted by HRH THE PRINCE OF WALES BAGSHOT 30 JULY 1985".

A "ROYAL MAIL 350 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE PUBLIC" slogan postmark was used at sorting offices throughout the UK from 1 July–31 August 1985.

180: Arthurian Legends

3 September 1985



There are no legends more English in character than those surrounding the mythical King Arthur whose valiant deeds – shared with those of loyal Knights of the Round Table – were the basis of Sir Thomas Malory's epic work, *Le Morte D'Arthur*. First printed by William Caxton in 1485, the contents of this classic volume of English literature were based on earlier sources and were collated by Malory during the Wars of the Roses when he was imprisoned in London's Newgate goal.

The stamps mark the 500th anniversary of the publication of *Le Morte D'Arthur*. The designer, Yvonne Gilbert used the same technique as she did for the 1984 Christmas stamps, producing the finished art work in crayon. The soft and subdued effect was ideal

in suggesting the ethereal nature of the subject matter – legends wreathed in mysticism and association with the occult in the person of Merlin the Magician.

The stamps, released on 3 September 1985, depicted: **17p** – King Arthur with Merlin; **22p** – The Mysterious Lady of the Lake with the sword, Excalibur; **31p** – Queen Guinevere and Lancelot fleeing from Camelot and the disgrace of their association with each other; and **34p** Sir Galahad at prayer during his quest for the Holy Grail. Collectors were spared the tragic finale of Malory's account of events when Arthur was mortally wounded during the rebellion led by his disloyal nephew Mordred.

William Caxton edited, printed and published Malory's writings in 1485 giving the Tudor monarch, Henry VII an opportunity

through Welsh descent to declare himself the re-incarnation of the fabled King Arthur. Modern archaeological research at Tintagel, Cornwall; at Cadbury Castle in Somerset (the supposed site of Camelot), and at Glastonbury Tor in Somerset (Arthur's alleged resting place), gives at least some credence to the stories about this otherwise legendary King.

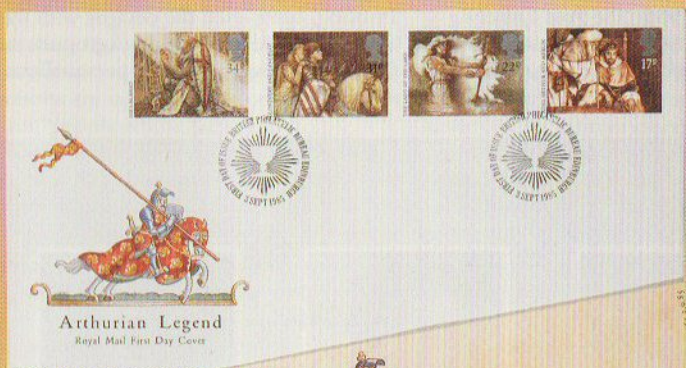
Tintagel, site of the ruined castle linked with Arthur's reign, was the "alternative" location for the Post Office's "First Day of Issue" cancellation. The Tintagel postmark featured Arthur's crown; that at the British Philatelic Bureau in Edinburgh used a design incorporating the Edinburgh star cancellation

against which the Holy Grail (a communion cup) appeared in silhouette.

The four PHQ postcards for the issue were numbered 86a-d; 170,160 sets were produced.

No constant printing flaws, major or minor, are recorded in Stanley Gibbons *GB Specialised Stamp Catalogue*, suggesting a tribute to the excellent photogravure printing by Harrison and Sons (High Wycombe) Ltd. The 17p is known imperforate; pairs being priced at £1800 in the 1993 Part 1 catalogue.

Sales by the withdrawal date (2 September 1986) were: 17p – 37,582,500; 22p – 7,783,500; 31p – 7,272,100; 34p – 6,984,300.



181: British Film Year

8 October 1985

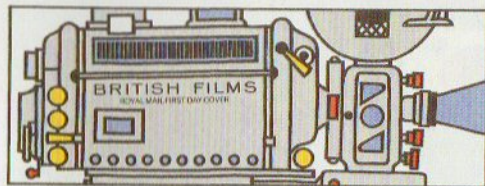
An unusual combination of old and new prompted this issue of stamps on 8 October 1985. It was in 1835 that the British scientist, William Henry Fox Talbot, invented a photographic process which enabled him to produce a negative from which numerous copies could be made. His first recorded photograph was taken looking out of a window at his home in Laycock Abbey, near Chippenham. The 150th anniversary of this piece of pioneering photography was declared to be British Film Year (which actually ran from March 1985 to May 1986); the Post Office's participation was the issue of five stamps featuring outstanding British personalities associated with films.



Britain's first motion picture film producer was Robert Paul who, in 1896, included a 20 minute film in a programme of mixed entertainment at the Empire Theatre, Leicester Square, London. That same year, the University Boat Race became the first news event to be shown on film.

The stamps are reproductions of hand-tinted black and white photographs, each one having been taken by a well-known portrait photographer. Keith Bassford, who trained as a graphic designer at the London College of Printing, completed the designs with the addition of the lettering, backgrounds and the facsimile autographs of the personalities involved.





Announcing the issue, the Post Office emphasised that, with the exception of royalty, living persons are not portrayed on British stamps but "people whose fame and contribution to their field has endured the test of time" are suitable subjects for philatelic recognition.

The 17p stamp featured Peter Sellers (1925-80), an original "Goon", and star of many films, including the comic role of Inspector Clouseau in the *Pink Panther* films (photo by Bill Brandt). The 22p denomination depicted David Niven (1910-83), the archetypal English gentleman, good humoured and intelligent (photo by Cornel Lucas).

The 29p value showed Charlie Chaplin (1889-1977), the supreme British film comedian of the era of silent films and later himself a film producer (photo by Lord Snowdon). The 31p stamp featured Vivien Leigh (1913-67), one of England's greatest film actresses who went to America in the 1930s and made her name as Scarlett O'Hara in *Gone With The Wind* (photo by Angus McBean).

The top value, 34p portrayed Alfred Hitchcock (1899-1980), British master of suspense and shock effects in film drama (photo by Howard Coster).

Exceptionally, a souvenir book was issued for

the occasion. Designed by Howard Brown and John Goran, it consisted of 24 pages with full colour illustrations and text covering the history of the British cinema. Harrods, the famous Knightsbridge store, joined in by arranging window displays, one window for each of the five distinguished personalities portrayed on the stamps.

There are no recorded constant printing flaws for the issue. The British Philatelic Bureau in Edinburgh cancelled first day covers with a postmark including a side-view of a reel of film; at the "alternative office", London WC, a film clapper board featured in the cancellation.

The five PHQ cards for this issue were numbered 87a-e; 190,160 sets were produced. Sales of stamps by the withdrawal date, 7 October 1986, were: 17p - 36,204,900; 22p - 7,740,300; 29p - 7,264,600; 31p - 7,122,300; and 34p - 6,792,200.



A sponsored handstamp.

182: Christmas 1985

19 November 1985



The obvious similarity between the Christmas stamps of 1985 and the British Theatre issue of 1982 is because both issues were designed by Adrian George. In each case his original artwork was submitted in crayon while the other unifying factor was the choice of pantomime as the subject for the Christmas issue, thus continuing the theatre theme.

The designs have the merit of being distinctive in style from any other Christmas issues, the subject itself being a novel approach. Pantomime, as a form of entertainment is as old as Christmas itself. It originated as the *pantomimus* of ancient Rome, an entertainment without speech, such as a ballet or a mime

show. To the Romans a *pantomimus* was a mimic capable of acting recognisable roles from mythology. The *Comedia Dell' Arte* (Italian Comedy) developed the use of pantomime to a point which brought it nearest to the Victorian conception in Britain. From then on Britain adapted pantomime in a unique fashion to produce, eventually, the story of Mother Goose, a children's pantomime still popular today.

All pantomimes are concerned with fairy stories in which the hero (generally played by a woman known as the Principal Boy) triumphs over evil. Although basically children's entertainment, from the late Victorian times pantomimes have attracted the services of leading characters of the music hall. Marie

Lloyd, Vesta Tilley, Harry Lauder and Dan Leno were regular pantomime performers and, today, radio and television celebrities have taken their place.

A vital ingredient of pantomime is audience participation, especially by children in the audience who were encouraged to warn the hero(ine) of impending danger and to boo the villains as occasion demanded. It is all part of the fun of Christmas. From the many pantomime characters available, Adrian George chose the following for his stamp designs: **12p** – a Principal Boy; **17p** – a Genie from *Alladin* and the Wonderful Lamp; **22p** – a typical Pantomime Dame; **31p** – a Good Fairy; **34p** – a Pantomime Cat (*Puss in Boots*). The not very obvious figures of value are in the star at the top left corner on each stamp. Each design is overlaid with a generous supply of gold and silver stars.

The 12p value (second class rate for Christmas cards) was available in sheet form (100 stamps in two panes of 50), and in a Christmas booklet of 20 in a cover designed by Adrian George featuring Cinderella's glass slipper. Stamps in these booklets had an under print of a double-lined blue star applied over the gum.

Additionally, a special Christmas pack

(folder) containing 50 of the 12p stamps was on sale until Christmas Eve at £6. The pack carried a special offer for free National Gallery postcard prints. It was only available from post offices in the Southampton area which had been chosen as a test market, all philatelic counters, and by post from the British Philatelic Bureau in Edinburgh. The pack only (with no stamps enclosed) was also on sale from the Bureau price 50p. Imperforate examples are known for the 12p and 17p stamps. These, in pairs, are catalogued by Stanley Gibbons, at £1300 and £1800 respectively (1993 Part 1 catalogue). No printing flaws are listed.

The sheet stamps and booklets were withdrawn on 18 November 1986 when sales had amounted to: 12p – 284,590,600 (sheet form) and 61,972,000 (booklet stamps); 17p – 150,799,500; 22p – 17,357,500; 31p – 14,786,000; and 34p – 13,101,200. The five PHQ cards were numbered 88a-e; 189,180 sets were produced.

Adrian George also designed a Christmas pictorial aerogramme featuring a pantomime fairy. This was printed by Waddington Security of Leeds and was available from 19 November 1985 at 30p (postally valid for 26p, the world-wide aerogramme rate from Great Britain). Some 1,399,000 aerogrammes were issued.



183: Industry Year

14 January 1986

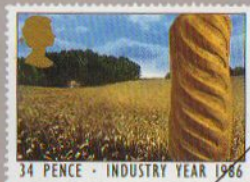
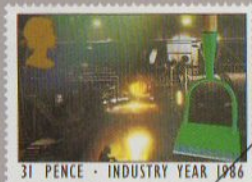
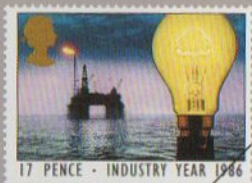
It was the Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (usually known as "the RSA") which promoted 1986 as Industry Year, the object being to underline the dependence of a good national standard of living on the success of the country's industrial performance.

The Duke of Edinburgh, President of the RSA, launched Industry Year with a declaration that: *Industry is by far the most important activity in our national life. This is a fact and it can do no good at all to give it a bad reputation or to call it a 'rat race'. This programme is intended to re-awaken appreciation and understanding of what industry is all about and that can only be to the benefit of all the people of Britain.*

How to create stamp designs with a visual approach to the project puzzled several

commissioned designers. The successful competitor was the London-trained and Denmark-based Keith Bassford who worked with a prominent industrial photographer, Chris Morris. On 14 January 1986 the outcome was a set of four stamps, printed in offset lithography by The House of Questa. Practicality rather than artistic composition guided Keith Bassford whose British Film Year stamps of 1985 had also depended largely on photographs.

Each design links industry with daily life. The 17p value features the North Sea oil-drilling rig and demonstrates the daily need for energy which provides light (hence the electric bulb), heat and power for the nation's needs. The 22p stamp depicts a laboratory representing the manufacture of





34 PENCE - INDUSTRY YEAR - PHILATELIC BUREAU OF EDINBURGH



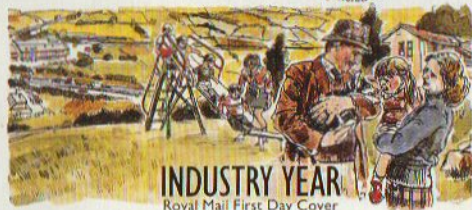
22 PENCE - INDUSTRY YEAR - PHILATELIC BUREAU OF EDINBURGH



31 PENCE - INDUSTRY YEAR - PHILATELIC BUREAU OF EDINBURGH

BRITISH PHILATELIC BUREAU OF EDINBURGH
FIRST DAY OF ISSUE
Thanks to
INDUSTRY
14 JANUARY 1986

BRITISH PHILATELIC BUREAU OF EDINBURGH
FIRST DAY OF ISSUE
Thanks to
INDUSTRY
14 JANUARY 1986



INDUSTRY YEAR
Royal Mail First Day Cover

pharmaceutical products in the interests of a healthy nation's needs – hence the thermometer at the right of the main design.

The **31p** denomination shows the steel industry, characterised by the interior of a furnace, so essential to engineering but also of domestic concern – hence the thermometer in the design. The **34p** stamp features agriculture as the industry nearest to the major necessity of life – food, which is amply illustrated by the fruitful field of wheat and the superimposed loaf of bread. Each design, therefore, has a specific message but, overall, the series tells the story of industry and the way it pays for financing the nation's social services. In short, Industry Year was designed to show that industry is the key to everything else.

The printing quality was good; no errors or constant printing flaws are listed by Stanley Gibbons in their catalogues.

Apart from the two official "First Day of Issue" cancellations used at the British Philatelic Bureau in Edinburgh (inscribed "Thanks to Industry") and at Birmingham ("Industry Matters"), sponsored pictorial handstamps were used at Ironbridge, Shropshire ("The Birthplace of Industry"); at London W1 by GEC (General Electric Co.) to commemorate the firm's centenary and at Blackpool, Lancs., and Dunster, Somerset.

The usual presentation pack and four PHQ cards (Nos 89 a-d) were issued. Some 178,300 sets of cards were produced. Sales of stamps by the withdrawal date, 13 January, 1987, were: 17p – 35,414,400; 22p – 7,262,300; 31p – 6,275,800; and 34p – 6,180,600.

The National Postal Museum issued a "motor cars" postcard (SS36) on 14 January to coincide with this issue of stamps. Some 15,000 were printed.



A temporary posting box was established on the Conoco Hutton oil platform on 14 January 1986 when the Industry Year stamps were issued. The 17p stamp featured a North Sea platform.

184: Halley's Comet

18 February 1986

For such a serious astronomical occasion as the once-in-76-years-appearance of a famous comet, the choice of designer for this issue was surprising. He was Ralph Steadman, the cartoonist who has contributed to *Punch*, *Private Eye*, the *Daily Telegraph* and *The New Statesman* and the resulting four stamps were distinctly unconventional in design.

Of all the comets, Halley's is the best known. It was first identified by Chinese astronomers in 240BC, since when its regular re-appearance every 76 years has permitted close studies with ever-improving facilities. Associated with the memorable historic events, Halley's comet was seen in 12BC (heralding, it is said, Christ's birth) and in 1066AD immediately before the Battle of Hastings.

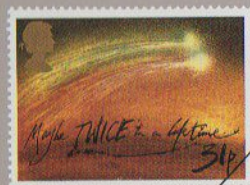
Comets are composed of frozen gases

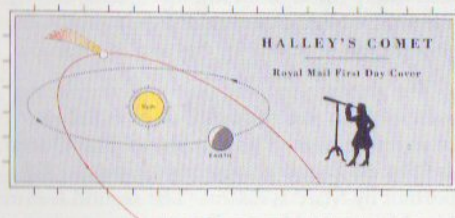
containing rocky detritus. As they approach the Sun, layers of the gas vaporize, releasing the debris which then appears as a fiery "tail" sometimes millions of miles in length.

Most comets are named after their discoverers but Halley's comet received its name in memory of Edmond Halley (1656-1742), England's second Astronomer Royal whose study of comets enabled him to predict the return of "his" comet at Christmas 1758, sixteen years after his own death.

The predicted appearance of Halley's comet in 1986 prompted the issue of these four stamps as a tribute to the worth of British astronomers generally and that of Halley in particular.

The 17p stamp features a close-up of the comet in the form of a caricature of Edmond





Halley with the dates "1656-1742". The **22p** value depicts a representation of the Giotto spacecraft probe launched by the European Space Agency to study Halley's comet during its 1986 appearance. The probe was named after the Italian artist, Giotto di Bondone, who used Halley's comet as the model for the Star of Bethlehem in his "Adoration of the Magi" (1301) painted for the Scrovegni Chapel.

The **31p** denomination is inscribed "Maybe twice in a lifetime"; this imaginative design of two comets crossing the sky hints at the possibility of anyone seeing Halley's comet twice during their life. The design of the **34p** stamp represents the brightening comet as it orbits the Sun and its fading as it moves away.

In 1986 overcast skies obscured viewing from Britain which now has to wait until 2062 for another possible chance.

Production of the stamps was by Harrisons at High Wycombe, Bucks, in photogravure. There are two constant printing flaws listed by Gibbons. They are: 17p – a shortened downstroke to the figure "7" (row 10, stamp 9, on the no dot cylinder); and 34p – a black spot on the Earth, slightly right of centre at the top of the globe (row 4, stamp 5, dot cylinder).

In addition, the 17p is known horizontally imperf between the bottom row of stamps and the sheet margin.

The PHQ cards were numbered 90 a-d; 151,000 sets were produced. The "First Day of Issue" cancellation used at the British Philatelic Bureau featured the Giotto Space Probe; the first day handstamp at Greenwich, London, SE10, "borrowed" for its design the Bayeux Tapestry version of the Comet. Other special cancellations were sponsored by the London Planetarium in Baker Street, The Hurstmonceux Observatory in Sussex, the British Interplanetary Society and the European Space Agency.

By the withdrawal date (17 February 1987) sales had amounted to: 17p – 35,571,800; 22p – 7,097,500; 31p – 6,430,000; and 34p – 6,120,500.



A Ralph Steadman self portrait.

185: 60th Birthday of Queen Elizabeth II

21 April 1986

Royal Weddings and their anniversaries, Coronations and their silver jubilees had been commemorated before 1986 on British stamps but this issue marking The Queen's 60th birthday was the first British issue related to a specific birthday of a ruling monarch. The only precedent was a single 12p stamp in 1980 commemorating the 80th birthday of Queen Elizabeth, The Queen Mother.

Quite properly, the issue of 1986 was released on Monday, 21 April 1986, The Queen's actual birthday, as distinct from her official birthday in June. A Monday release was a Post Office concession, Tuesday being normal. Although there were only two denominations issued, 17p and 34p, four

stamps and six portraits were involved. Three portraits, spaced by decades, were used on each of *se-tenant* pairs of 17p stamps printed alternately throughout the sheet. With exactly the same designs, but in different colours, the process was repeated for the two 34p stamps.

The six photographic portraits completing each *se-tenant* pair of stamps were as follows from left to right. The first shows The Queen as Princess Elizabeth, aged two, from a 1928 portrait by Marcus Adams. The second features Her Majesty as Heiress Presumptive to the Throne, aged 16, a 1942 portrait by Cecil Beaton, the Princess being in the service uniform of a Colonel of the Grenadier Guards.

The third portrait comprises a Dorothy





The Sixtieth Birthday of Her Majesty The Queen 21 April 1986

ROYAL MAIL FIRST DAY COVER

Wilding study of 1952, as used for the first definitive stamps of the new reign. The fourth portrait shows The Queen in 1958 on the occasion of the Trooping of the Colour which annually marks the official birthday of the monarch, photograph by the Popperfoto agency.

The fifth study is of The Queen at the Badminton Horse Trials in 1973, an informal portrait attributed to The Photo Source. The sixth portrait is a formal study by Lord Snowdon, taken in 1982 and showing The Queen wearing the same diadem as in the Wilding portrait of 1952.

This ingenious way of covering 60 years in an economical fashion was the work of designer Jeffery Matthews whose talents had been employed on earlier Royal issues. The 17p stamps were in tones of blue and green and the 34p stamps a wider range of browns.

Apart from the usual first day covers and presentation packs, a souvenir book was published. Written by Mike Barden, and designed by Trickett and Webb Ltd, this special souvenir of a special occasion was freely available at £2, which included a set of the four stamps. There were four PHQ cards, two for each denomination numbered 91 a-d. Some 344,000 sets of cards were produced.

Official first day covers, also designed by Jeffery Matthews, received a British Philatelic Bureau cancellation picturing a gift-wrapped parcel, or a Windsor handstamp showing a batch of greeting cards entwined by a ribbon. The wide range of other sponsored cancellations included one by the National Postal Museum which showed celebration bells and the wording "MANY HAPPY RETURNS". The Museum supported the issue by staging a special exhibition of stamp portraits of The Queen; the exhibition ran from 21 April to 18 June.

The stamps were an instant success with the general public as the sales figures up to withdrawal on 20 April 1987 clearly indicate. They were; 17p – 77,003,200 pairs (i.e. 154,006,400 stamps) and 34p – 16,459,100 pairs (32,918,200 stamps). These figures should be compared with the average 40 million and 6 million for inland 1st class and overseas rate stamps in other special issues.

The printers, Harrison & Sons Ltd deserve commendation as no constant flaws are listed in even Stanley Gibbons *GB Specialised Stamp Catalogue*.

The National Postal Museum issued a postcard (SS37) showing the Wilding portrait of The Queen as used on the pre-1967 definitive stamps; 20,000 cards were produced.

186: Nature Conservation: Species at Risk

20 May 1986



In 1986, the 50th anniversary of Britain's Council for National Parks happily coincided with the decision of CEPT to proclaim that year's theme for all the European issues to be the Protection of Nature and the Environment. The outcome was the issue, on 20 May 1986, of a charming set of four stamps with designs devoted to species of British wild life in danger of extinction.

The Council for National Parks launched a National Parks Campaign in conjunction with the Countryside Commission and the ten National Parks Authorities. Simultaneously a £10 million British Wildlife Appeal was launched, with Sir David Attenborough as

Chairman, to prevent the extinction of many British species.

Ken Lilley, a newcomer to stamp designing but an established wild life artist, produced a set of designs that complemented earlier issues devoted to Britain's flora and fauna, adding usefully to that theme.

Each stamp included the inscription "NATURE CONSERVATION" across the top of the design while below it was "SPECIES AT RISK" followed by the common name and Latin classification of the creature depicted. All four stamps carried the CEPT logo of four interlocking posthorns and the word "EUROPA".

The 17p stamp depicts a Barn Owl (*Tyto*



alba), once quite common but now scarce throughout the country due to a lack of suitable nesting places. The 22p value features a Pine Marten (*Martes martes*) which once flourished throughout Great Britain but is only found in the Lake District, Wales and Northern Ireland. A furry woodland animal the size of a large domestic cat, the Pine Marten is mainly a night hunter of rodents and small birds.

The 31p stamp portrays a Wild Cat (*Felis silvestris*), a creature larger than the domestic cat, thick-set and with a distinctive black-tipped and blunted tail, and with a striped body designed for camouflage. This once inhabited forested areas throughout Great Britain but is now confined to the Scottish Highlands where it is a night hunter of voles, rabbits, hares and small birds. The 34p denomination features the Natterjack Toad (*Bufo calamita*), distinguishable from the Common Toad by the yellow stripe along its back and the fact that when on the move it walks or runs rather than hops. It is generally found in coastal sand dunes or sandy heathland on the west coast from Solway Firth to the Wirral, and a few places in Surrey and Hampshire. A night hunter of insects, the Natterjack Toad spends the day buried in the sand to prevent dehydration. On each stamp the creature is shown against a background representing its natural habitat.

The issue was printed in photogravure by Harrisons. There are no recorded constant printing varieties.

The official Post Office first day cover was designed by David Driver (who also designed the presentation pack). Special covers and/or cancellations were sponsored by the British Wildlife Appeal, the Ramblers' Association, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, the

British Herpetological Society, the Royal Society for Nature Conservation and Friends of the Earth, the last-named having specially commissioned the stamps' designer, Ken Lilley, to produce a co-ordinating cover based on the stamp designs.

The British Philatelic Bureau "First Day of Issue" cancellation featured three birds' eggs in a nest. Lincoln was chosen for the other official pictorial cancellation which pictured a badger – an endangered species not included in the stamp designs.

The four PHQ postcards were numbered 92a-d; some 166,000 sets were printed. A few of the 17p and 31p cards exist with the inscription and value transposed and inverted, an extremely rare occurrence. The National Postal Museum published two postcards in connection with this issue. They were two prize-winning entries in a Post Office-sponsored photographic competition. Numbered SS39A/B they featured "Scavenging seagulls at council rubbish tip" (Paul West) and "Damselfly Ovipositing" (Alex Cleland). Some 10,000 of each card were produced.

Sales of the stamps, by the withdrawal date of 19 May 1987 were: 17p – 36,000,800; 22p – 7,135,800; 31p – 6,384,200; and 34p – 6,022,000.



187: Medieval Life

17 June 1986

The 900th Anniversary of the compilation of the Domesday Book, the first comprehensive national survey of population, land and livestock in British history, prompted the issue of four interesting stamps featuring life in medieval England. Beyond a few castles and religious centres, there were practically no listable landmarks except for watermills of which over 6000 were included in the Domesday Book, being regarded as sources of energy for grinding corn.

The survey was ordered by King William I in 1086, twenty years after his successful conquest in 1066 and it was completed within 10 months, a remarkable achievement in pre-computer days with poor communications.

The Domesday ("Day of Judgement") Book graded the population in four classes and life

styles: peasants or bondsmen, virtually slaves; freemen or burgesses of towns, usually former apprentices who had graduated to entry in the various craft guilds; knights who had been granted lands (seized from the native Anglo-Saxons) in return for military service during the invasion; lords and barons invested with absolute power over large estates, even to allowing tenantry to marry and conscription for military service when required by the King.

The designs of the four stamps in the series reflected the social divisions. The 17p stamp depicts bondsmen working in the fields under supervision. The 22p value features freemen at work on the crafts. The 31p denomination shows a knight leading his pikemen into battle, and the 34p stamp portrays the lord at the head of his banqueting table. The London design





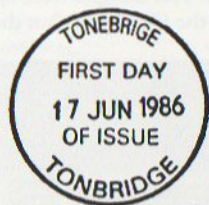
MEDIEVAL LIFE

ROYAL MAIL FIRST DAY COVER

consultancy, Tayburn, created the theme for this, their first stamp design commission and they, in turn, employed an illustrator, Magnus Lohkamp, to finish the project which he did, styling his designs on a medieval illuminated manuscript.

For each special issue of stamps, a large number of Head Post Offices use a plain handstamp reading "First Day of Issue", with the town name and the appropriate date. This is applied to covers posted in philatelic posting boxes in the towns concerned. For the Domesday Book issue nearly 80 towns prepared a special handstamp bearing the current name of the town and its Anglo-Saxon equivalent as used in the *Descriptio Angliae* (the official title of the national survey which became "the Domesday Book" around 1179 AD). Examples of these handstamps are: Eilesberia (Aylesbury); Bristelmestune (Brighton); Croindene (Croydon), and Lothu Wistoft (Lowestoft). Exceptions to the Anglo-Saxon rendering were religious centres where Latin names had already been adopted, such as Eboracum (York), Cantueria (Canterbury), and Villa Sancti Eadmundi (Bury St Edmunds). Had Harrisons been operating around 1086 AD, they would have been at Wicumbe (now High Wycombe). For historians, postal or otherwise, a complete list of the towns involved in this 1986 exercise appeared in the *British*

Philatelic Bulletin of May 1986. The same issue contains an informative article on the compilation of the Domesday Book.



The two pictorial "First Day of Issue" cancellations for this issue were used at the British Philatelic Bureau, featuring an open book, and at Gloucester where the "deep speech" the King had with his advisors in 1085 led to the decision to proceed with the survey. This Gloucester "First Day of Issue" handstamp incorporated an excerpt from the written record of the "deep speech".

Only one constant printing variety is listed. On the 22p stamp (row 1, stamp 2, no dot cylinder) the "E" of "DOMESDAY" is clipped off at the lower left corner of the letter. The PHQ postcards were numbered 93 a-d; some 168,000 sets were produced. The quantities of stamps sold by the withdrawal date of 16 June 1987 were: 17p – 35,062,700; 22p – 7,018,700; 31p – 6,249,100; and 34p – 5,917,000.

188: Sport – Commonwealth Games and Hockey

15 July 1986

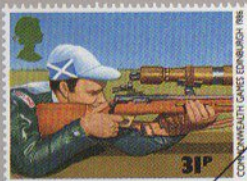
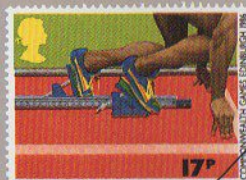
This tribute was to the 13th Commonwealth Games, held in Edinburgh 24 July – 2 August, 1986; to the centenary of the Hockey Association (Britain hosted the 6th World Hockey Cup Competition for Men, 4-19 October 1986) and to the Golden Jubilee of the British Canoe Union. The designs were more lively than previous issues on the sports theme.

The Commonwealth Games originated in 1930 as the British Empire Games, a four-yearly event hosted by former Empire countries, of which Great Britain is one.

Britain's first sports stamps were issued in 1948 to commemorate the Olympic Games, held in London. The designs were symbolically associated with the Olympics; but did not

illustrate any sporting action. The 6th British Empire & Commonwealth Games held in Cardiff in 1958 fared no better. The first "action" designs were those of the 1966 Football World Cup issue to be followed by the rather dismal "fuzzy" depictions of runners, swimmers and cyclists issued to mark the 9th Commonwealth Games of 1970. The remaining sports issues prior to 1986 were Cricket Centenary (1973), Sailing (1975), Racket Sports (1977), and Cycling (1978).

Nick Cudworth, a newcomer to stamp designing, chose to illustrate his theme in 1986 by concentrating on the muscular effort each sport called for, rather than picturing the sportsmen in full. The original issue date of 22 July was brought forward to 15 July to allow





SPORT

ROYAL MAIL MINT STAMPS



for the Royal Wedding (Prince Andrew and Sarah Ferguson) stamps to be added to the 1986 special stamps programme at short notice.

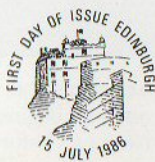
The 17p stamp shows track events (leaving the starting blocks); 22p rowing (a reference to the canoe jubilee); the 29p denomination features footwork for weight lifting; and the 31p value depicts shooting (with a tribute to the host country by the use of St Andrew's Cross on the competitor's helmet and the SCOTLAND shoulder flash).

The 34p denomination commemorates hockey showing a tackle in action. The four lower values were inscribed COMMONWEALTH GAMES EDINBURGH 1986; the top (34p) value WORLD HOCKEY CUP LONDON 1986, a courtesy not extended to the British Canoe Union for its Golden Jubilee.

The 34p Hockey stamp is known imperforate, a pair being listed by Gibbons at £1300 (1993 Part 1 catalogue). This also provides the only constant flaw recorded for this issue: the "O" of "HOCKEY" being broken near the top of the letter (row 9, stamp 5, dot cylinder).

The accidental early release of the 17p value at Coventry resulted in some covers being dated 8 July 1986, while at Liverpool all five values were released on 9 July and cancelled accordingly. This chapter of accidents was

compounded by the Croydon, Surrey head office where first day covers were mis-dated by a year, the handstamp used there reading "15 July 1985".



The Edinburgh "First Day of Issue" pictorial handstamp featured Edinburgh Castle; that for the British Philatelic Bureau pictured runners leaving the starting blocks. Another cancellation used at Edinburgh during the Games read XIII COMMONWEALTH GAMES EDINBURGH 1986 and included a sketch of three competitors (numbered 2, 1 and 3) on the award podium. The Royal Mail issued a "Special Souvenir Cover" for use with this postmark. The five PHQ cards were numbered 94 a-e; some 160,000 sets were printed. Quantities of stamps sold by the withdrawal date (14 July 1987) were: 17p - 35,087,400; 22p - 7,157,700; 29p - 6,372,200; 31p - 6,443,100; and 34p - 6,087,000.

189: Royal Wedding

22 July 1986



The programme of special issues for any one year begins to take shape at least two years before the first stamps of the year are issued. Late additions to the approved programme are difficult to incorporate into the very carefully planned printing schedule which normally accounts for full-time working of the available printing capacity.

Certainly, the two stamps issued on 22 July 1986 to commemorate the marriage of HRH Prince Andrew, Duke of York, and Miss Sarah Ferguson caused some consternation. The engagement was announced on 19 March 1986 after the 1986 programme had already been started and the wedding at Westminster Abbey almost coincided with the planned release of the Commonwealth Games issue. Work on the latter was speeded up to allow for the release of the Royal Wedding stamps on 22 July, the day before the marriage took place.

Faced with the need for quick designing, the Post Office immediately commissioned the designer whose track record of 17 special issues

from 1965, embraced five Royalty issues including that for The Queen's 60th birthday earlier in 1986. It was, of course, Jeffery Matthews who, with approval from Buckingham Palace, based his designs on a very informal photograph of the engaged couple, taken by a close friend of Prince Andrew. The Prince is wearing an open-necked shirt (rather than being in full naval uniform), while the future Duchess posed so as to display the engagement ring with its fine ruby encircled with diamonds.

The two values, 12p and 17p were identical in design and colour except for small, but significant details. On the **12p** the obligatory silhouette of The Queen's head is in silver and the panel below the double portrait carries two silver bands and wedding bells against a lake-coloured background. The **17p** has The Queen's head in gold and the panel incorporates the gold bands of a naval lieutenant's cuffs set against a steel-blue background.

The one recorded printing flaw is of special interest because, exceptionally, an attempt was made to correct the flaw on the cylinder, thus providing two states – the original flaw and the retouch. The flaw is a white scratch on Sarah's collar above her hand (on row 9, stamp 5, no dot cylinder) and when retouched appears as a group of small grey screening dots. The 17p is listed imperforate, catalogued by Stanley Gibbons (1993 Part 1 catalogue) at £850 as a pair.

The two official first day cancellations on 22 July were both inscribed THE ROYAL WEDDING, the circular frame consisting of intertwined ribbons for the British Philatelic Bureau cancellation and a circle of wedding bells on the London SW1 cancellation (the Westminster Abbey postal district). Among several other first day cancellations was one used at Basingstoke,

Hants, the post town for the Ferguson home at nearby Dummer.

The Wedding Day, 23 July, was not proclaimed a public holiday. Posting boxes were provided at all the normal philatelic posting offices and all covers posted in them received a postmark, similar to the operational handstamp usually applied to bulky packets. These handstamps included the town name and the date, 23 July; there being no reference to the wedding itself.

Two PHQ postcards were issued on 8 July, numbered 95a-b, of which 334,000 sets of two were produced. Sales of the stamps by the withdrawal date (21 July 1987) once again demonstrated the popularity of any Royalty stamps with the general public since they were almost double the usual for special issues: 12p – 61,642,500; 17p – 59,684,400.



190: Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Conference

19 August 1986



In a crowded year of special issues, this single-value commemorative was a last-minute inclusion, despite the fact that previous CPA conferences held in London (as was this 1986 event) had been marked in 1961 and 1973 by special stamps. The 1961 issue consisted of bi-coloured 6d and 1s.3d stamps, the latter providing a remarkable error in that the Wilding portrait of The Queen was omitted, leaving a large blank square on the stamp. In 1973, the issue consisted of 8p and 10p stamps. All four designs drew on the Houses of Parliament for their theme.

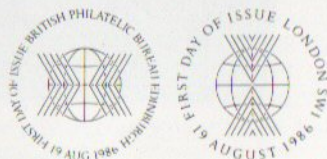
Not for the first time, political pressure was exerted on the Post Office to again mark the CPA conference philatelically. This London-based organisation, founded in 1911 during the Empire period, holds a conference every year in a Commonwealth country when Members of Parliament from over 100 branches of the CPA based on national, provincial and territorial

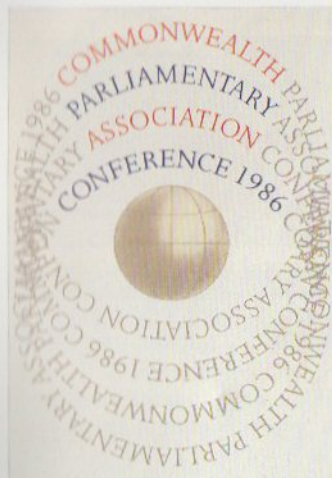
parliaments in the Commonwealth meet informally for discussion and the exchange of ideas to promote democratic processes. The CPA has no legislative powers.

As with several other single-value special issues, the stamp was not at the prevailing domestic first class rate (the Post Office has always claimed that such an issue is only produced at a loss) but at 34p, then the airmail Zone C rate for Australia and the Far East. Naturally, public demand in Britain was accordingly reduced so that, inclusive of the normal philatelic sales, only 7,089,400 of the stamps had been sold by the withdrawal date of 18 August 1987.

The Post Office commissioned John Gibbs, a free-lance designer specialising in corporate symbols to produce a design other than one based on the Houses of Parliament. Gibbs had previously designed the 1981 International Year of the Disabled stamps. This time he came up with an ingenious design which conveyed very little to the general public and stamp collectors alike until it was explained.

Printed in off-set lithography by The House of Questa, the theme of the design was a cross such as used on voting papers at democratic elections around the world. Printed in red, blue and silver, the intersection of the diagonal lines, forming the cross, represented the centre of the Commonwealth to which the participants had come for this particular conference. Unusually for special issues of the period, The Queen's head is not a profile silhouette; placed centrally between the upper arms of the cross is the Machin head depicted in relief.





ROYAL MAIL FIRST DAY COVER



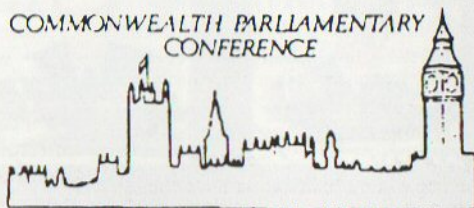
John Gibbs also designed the Royal Mail first day cover which was serviced at the British Philatelic Bureau with a pictorial cancellation incorporating some of the rays of the stamp design. The London SW District Office cancelled first day covers with a similar, but distinctively different, cancellation. Both offices dated the cancellations for 19 August 1986, the

only clue to the nature of the event which was not referred to at all in either cancellation.

A single PHQ postcard (of which 170,000 were printed) was issued on 5 August 1986, numbered 96. The last minute decision to issue the stamp precluded the designing and printing of a presentation pack to accompany the stamp.



COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY
CONFERENCE



HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT
19th AUGUST 1986 - LONDON SW1

Sponsored handstamps.

191: The Royal Air Force

16 September 1986

Royal Air Force activities were the subject of earlier issues, as in 1965 when the 25th anniversary of the Battle of Britain resulted in Britain's first se-tenant block of six different designs (all at 4d) in printed sheets of 240. There was, also, the 1s value in the mixed anniversaries set of 1968, which marked the 50th anniversary of the creation, in 1918, of the RAF in succession to the Royal Flying Corps and the Royal Naval Air Service of the First World War.

This issue of 16 September 1986 marked the 50th anniversary of a vital reconstruction of the RAF in 1936. In that year Bomber, Fighter, Coastal and Training Commands were set up with the result that an efficient – even if small for the task – Fighter Command was ready for the outbreak of hostilities in 1939 to defend Britain, as in *The Battle of Britain* immortalized by “the few”.

The other commands played their parts in winning the war and each of the five stamps in the issue pays a personal tribute to the heads of the three active service commands and to two other outstanding leaders of the RAF. These exceptional philatelic tributes to such recently deceased leaders, who are portrayed in conjunction with the aircraft usually associated with their names, were designed by Brian Sanders whose earlier work for the Post Office embraced the Police stamps (1979), Fishing (1981) and Youth Organisations (1982).

The 17p stamp features Lord Dowding (1882-1970) and a Hurricane aircraft – Dowding was a member of the Air Council from 1930 to 1936 and in that capacity urgently promoted production of the Hurricane in advance of 1939. It was pilots of these sophisticated fighter aircraft who in 1940 shot down more enemy aircraft than all the other,





defence aircraft combined. The 22p value portrays Lord Tedder (1890-1967), Deputy Supreme Allied Commander under General Eisenhower, and the Typhoon aircraft noted for paving the way for aircraft superiority in advance of land battles.

The 29p denomination shows Lord Trenchard (1873-1956), "Father" of the RAF by virtue of being the first Chief of the Air Staff, and DH 9A (the de Havilland "Nine Ack") single engined bi-plane bomber of the First World War. The 31p stamp depicts Sir Arthur ("Bomber") Harris (1892-1984), of Bomber Command, and an (Avro) Lancaster bomber, the backbone of the attacking forces over Germany in the Second World War.

The 34p value features Viscount Portal (1893-1971) overall head of the RAF for the greater part of the Second World War, having won the Military Cross and the DSO (and bar) during 1000 hours of flying in the First World War with the old RFC - pictured with an RAF Mosquito, the remarkable light-weight, wooden airframed bomber which was able to avoid interception in bombing raids.

Although no constant printing flaws are listed, three important errors are catalogued by Stanley Gibbons. The 17p is known imperforate, and is listed at £950 per joined pair. The 22p exists with the face value ("22p") and

The Queen's head missing, both errors emanating from the same three sheets of stamps on which the vertical row 1 lacked the face value and the adjoining row 2 lacked the Royal silhouette, each error being priced by Gibbons at £400 (1993 Part 1 catalogue).

The British Philatelic Bureau used a first day cancellation with the central motif of an outline of a First World War Sopwith Camel. The second Post Office pictorial "First Day of Issue" cancellation was used at Farnborough, Hants (still the main RAF research centre) and had a Tornado aircraft for its theme. Nearly a dozen other towns with RAF association employed specially - designed day of issue cancellations.



**FIFTY
YEARS**
OF THE
SPITFIRE
16 SEPT 1986

A sponsored handstamp.

The five PHQ postcards (print order 170,000 sets) were numbered 97a-e, and sales of the stamps by the withdrawal date of 15 September 1987 were: 17p - 35,497,000; 22p - 7,124,200; 29p - 6,343,200; 31p - 6,407,700; and 34p - 6,056,000.

192: Christmas 1986

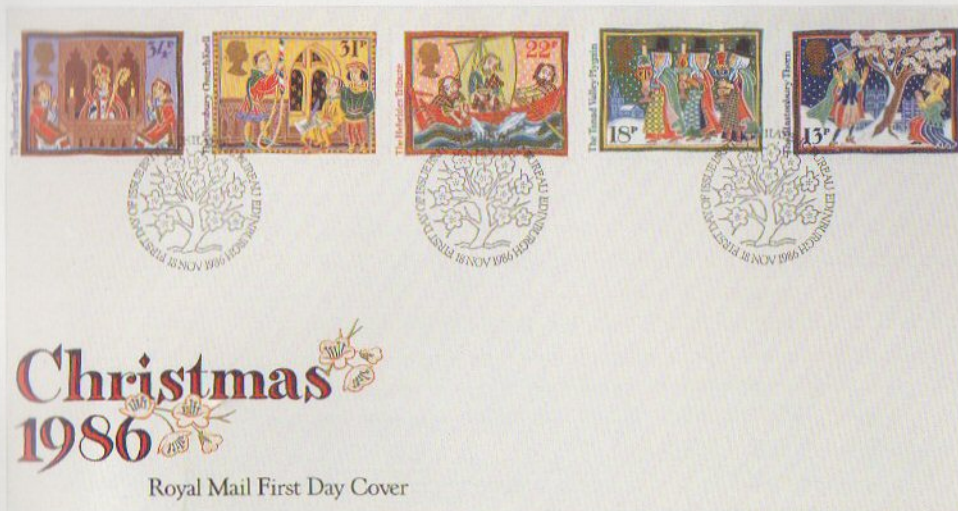
18 November/2 December 1986



The customary Christmas stamps provide the greatest challenge each year for the Royal Mail Stamp Advisory Committee who are anxious to find a new slant on which to base the issue. Certainly, Christmas 1986 included some surprises with its total of six different denominations. The designer, Lynda Gray, a newcomer to stamp designing but an illustrator with many years of experience behind her, found a mid-way course between the usual purely secular or religious theme. Her five designs (the 12p and 13p shared the same design) were all related to English customs and legends associated with the church in one way or another, but not directly associated with the Nativity.

The 12p and 13p stamps feature pilgrims at the Glastonbury Thorn, the legendary site of Joseph of Arimathea's final preaching engagement and where a thorn bush (flowering twice a year – on Christmas Eve and during the Spring) was planted by Joseph. The 18p value depicts The Tanad Valley Plygain, an early Christmas morning carol service, held between 3am and 6am, a Welsh tradition which survived into the 20th century in some areas. All the participants hold a lighted candle to symbolise the coming of the Light of the World.

The 22p denomination shows The Hebrides Tribute (or *Dioladh Pierce*), based on Western Isles folklore which considered that Christ commanded Peter to row 707 strokes before



Christmas 1986

Royal Mail First Day Cover

catching a miraculous fish. On Christmas Day, right into the 20th century, fishermen from Uist followed tradition and distributed the resulting catch to the needy of the district. The 31p value features the Dewsbury Church Knell, a Yorkshire tradition dating from the 13th century involving the ringing of the tenor bell once for each year of Christ's life.

The top value, 34p, portrays the Hereford Boy Bishop, recalling a thousand-year old tradition whereby choir boys from cathedrals, parish churches and a few church schools, elected a mock bishop from among their own number to conduct the affairs of the real bishop from St Nicholas' Day, 6 December, until 28 December. Hereford was an early example of the custom, which Queen Elizabeth I abolished.

The set of five stamps from 13p to 34p went on sale on 18 November 1986. The 12p was issued on 2 December and was valid for use until 24 December as if it had been a 13p stamp, the basic second class stamp in general use for posting Christmas cards. This 12p stamp was sold in blocks of 10 for £1.20 per block, a saving of 10p on the then current second-class rate. From 2 December the 13p was also available in a specially-designed Christmas pack containing 36 stamps which were sold for £4.30, a saving of 38p. This printing of 13p stamps was distinguished by an

underprint of blue double-lined stars (a measure to prevent accidental sale at full face value) and by a slightly wider phosphor band than the normal 100 stamp sheet issue. Some 4 million packs were produced. The stamps and packs were withdrawn from sale at Post Offices on Christmas Eve 1986, the pack was also withdrawn from sale at the Bureau and philatelic counters the same day. Otherwise the 13p-34p stamps remained on philatelic sale until 17 November 1987, the 12p until 1 December 1987.

There were five PHQ postcards, one each for the 13p to 34p stamps, numbered 98a-e, of which 180,000 sets were issued on 4 November. There was no card for the 12p stamp which was also omitted from the presentation pack for this issue. As usual, a Christmas aerogramme was also issued on 18 November. It sold at 30p of which 26p was for postage, and the balance to meet the cost of production. Designed by Lynda Gray, this pictorial aerogramme illustrated the seasonal custom of using evergreens for decorating the interiors of churches and homes. Sales at 1,180,200 were a little lower than for previous years.

The quantities of stamps issued were: 12p – 100,613,200; 13p – 164,743,600; 18p – 148,542,100; 22p – 16,635,800; 31p – 14,188,300; and 34p – 12,359,100.

1985/86 British Special STAMPS

The 73 special stamps issued in 1985 and 1986 contained some of the most popular and interesting designs of the 1980s. The Age of Steam was relived in Terence Cuneo's paintings on the "Famous Trains" stamps, the music of Handel, Holst, Delius and Elgar was recalled by the European Music Year set. Four designs by Paul Hogarth celebrated the 350th anniversary of the Royal Mail as a public postal service and British Film Year stamps depicted some of our greatest stars – Peter Sellers, David Niven, Charlie Chaplin, Vivien Leigh and Alfred Hitchcock.

The Appearance of Halley's Comet was commemorated by four controversial designs by cartoonist Ralph Steadman. A photographic approach was taken for the stamps celebrating the Queen's 60th birthday and illustrated medieval manuscripts inspired the set marking the 900th anniversary of the Domesday Book.

The History of the RAF stamps featured some of our best-known aircraft – the Hurricane, Typhoon, DH-9A, Lancaster and Mosquito, with the relevant chiefs of the RAF. The Christmas stamps featured Pantomime characters and Folk Customs.

In this book, Francis Kennedy tells the story of each issue with useful information on the designs, designers, printing varieties, first day covers, postmarks, stamp cards and presentation packs.

These articles continue a popular series on British Special Stamps from 1924 to 1984 published between 1974 and 1992 in the British Philatelic Bulletin – the Royal Mail magazine for stamp collectors.



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