

BRITISH PHILATELIC

The ROYAL MAIL magazine *for stamp collectors*

Bulletin

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The Court Post Office part 1
• Annual stamp poll results



**A new issue to celebrate the
Royal Horticultural Society's
200th anniversary.**



Forthcoming issues and withdrawals



Cover Delphinium variant © Barbara & Zafer Baran 2003 (part of their exhibition 'The Flower Cabinet', Blue Gallery, London May-June 2004). The Baran's photographs feature in the RHS anniversary issue, previewed this month.

Issues Note some items are available only from Royal Mail Tallents House Edinburgh and Post Office Limited philatelic outlets at main post offices in Bath, Belfast, Birmingham, Brighton, Bristol, Cambridge, Canterbury, Cardiff, Chester, Coventry, Croydon, Durham, Edinburgh, Exeter, Gatwick Airport, Glasgow, Grimsby, Guildford, Harrogate, Leeds, Leicester, London (Eastcheap and Trafalgar Sq), Manchester, Newcastle upon Tyne, Norwich, Nottingham, Plymouth, Portsmouth, Southampton, Southend-on-Sea, Stevenage, Stratford-on-Avon, Stroud, Truro, Windsor and York.

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Edinburgh EH12 9PB, UK.
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17.00 Monday-Friday): 08457
641 641; from overseas +44
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30 March

Issue Entente Cordiale stamp cards.

1 April

Issue 7p, 35p, 39p, 40p and 43p definitives; Universal postcard rate stamp (43p) in book of four (self-adhesive).

6 April

Issue Entente Cordiale stamps, presentation pack, joint FDC, pack and commemorative document (British and French stamps), and coin cover; Ocean Liners stamp cards.

13 April

Issue Ocean Liners stamps and miniature sheet, presentation pack, self-adhesive stamp book, philatelic medallion cover and presentation case (miniature sheet & silver medals).

13 April

Issue Presentation pack containing new 7p, 35p, 39p, 40p, and 43p definitives, Postcard rate stamp and 1st class NVI in gold.

28 April

Withdrawal Extreme Endeavours stamps, presentation pack, stamp cards and self-adhesive book.

5 May

Withdrawal 33p and 41p Machin definitives.

11 May

Issue 40p country stamps for England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland, presentation pack containing one of each stamp.

18 May

Issue Royal Horticultural Society stamp cards (seven cards – six stamps and miniature sheet).

25 May

Issue Royal Horticultural Society stamps, miniature sheet, presentation pack, *Glory of the Garden* prestige book, Smilers sheet and Philatelic Medallion Cover.

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This month The Editor previews this issue

INCLUDED in this month's *Bulletin* are the Rowland Hill Awards for 2003. The awards, set up in 1996, honour those who have given good service in the philatelic world – in areas such as stamp design, writing for the philatelic press, personal contribution and business enterprise. The Award ceremony is probably the nearest the philatelic world gets to the Oscars or BAFTA and is enjoyed by all who attend. For the recipients of awards, it is a special night indeed and one to remember for a long time. We also publish the results of our Favourite Special Stamps and Favourite Bulletin Authors polls for 2003. The favourite stamps poll is an important barometer within Royal Mail of how our stamps are viewed by collectors. The comments some of you add when voting for your favourite *Bulletin* author testifies to the enjoyment and knowledge you get from their articles. We are fortunate in having a good team of writers.

I am pleased to publish in this edition an article by the Chief Executive of the Ministry for Postal Services, Gibraltar on their special issue marking the tercentenary of British Gibraltar, and the first in a series on the Court Post Office by Glenn Morgan, author of the standard book on the subject. I hope you find both articles of interest. JOHN HOLMAN, EDITOR •

Stamp scene Rowland Hill • Isle of Man • Societies news • Publications • Auctions



Nigel Fordham retires Nigel Fordham has recently retired as Head of the Crown Agents Stamp Bureau, a position he has held with distinction since 1990. Nigel first joined the Crown Agents in 1964 and has also worked for the Ministry of Defence. At the Crown Agents he has, with the stamp issuing territories, maintained a well-balanced stamp programme with high quality design and printing standards. He is rightly proud of some of the Crown Agents omnibus series for Royal events in recent years, and of the new portrait of The Queen introduced on certain Crown Agents issues last year. I am pleased to learn that Nigel will continue to work for the Crown Agents in a part-time advisory capacity, to ensure a smooth transition to his successor. Quite an authority on the career of Lord Nelson, Nigel will no doubt take a keen interest in the Crown Agents issues to mark the bicentenary of the Battle of Trafalgar next year. Nigel is widely respected and liked in the philatelic community, and I wish him well for the future and for the interest he has taken in the *Bulletin* since I became Editor in 1988.
John Holman •

Scottish Congress The Association of Scottish Philatelic Societies Congress for 2004 will be held at the Dewar's Centre, Perth on 16-17 April. Enquiries: Alan Watson, 36 Anson Avenue, Falkirk FK1 5JB or see the Association's website: www.scottishphilately.co.uk •

Rowland Hill Awards The awards for philatelic achievement during 2003 were presented at a dinner held at Skinners' Hall, London on 18 March. Comper for the evening was Miles Kingston. The awards were presented by Gavin Macrae of Royal Mail, Francis Kiddle of the British Philatelic Trust, and Nigel Howarth of the Philatelic Traders' Society, the three sponsoring organisations. Each winner received a certificate bearing a 1995 Rowland Hill stamp tied by a special cachet and an attractive Perspex award featuring Rowland Hill's signature •

The 2003 Rowland Hill Awards winners and runners-up

ROYAL MAIL INNOVATION AWARDS

Journalistic Excellence: Print & Broadcast Media

Blue Peter for coverage of the Secret of Life stamps. Runners up: Spotlight (BBC South West), *The Sunday Telegraph*.

Journalistic Excellence: Philatelic Writing

Richard West for 'Edmund Dulac: a Designer of Distinction', *Stamp Magazine*, May 2003. Runners-up: Martin Robinson, Richard Breckon

Stamp Innovation Johnson Banks for the Fun Fruit & Veg stamps (Royal Mail's first DIY stamps).

Post Office excellence Windsor Post Office branch. Runners up: St Margarets (Twickenham) branch, Sydenham branch.

BPT INITIATIVE AWARDS

Personal Contribution to Youth Erene Grieve for the Stamps in Schools Project (see *Bulletin* May 2002). Runners-up: Prashanthini Shanthakumar, Howard Peters

Young Collector Prashanthini Shanthakumar for the development of her own collection and encouraging others (see *Bulletin* June 2003). Runners-up: Bertie Brown, Ian Cant.

Authorship/Research John Sacher for The Postal Services of the Gold Coast to 1901. Runners-up: Alan Drysdall (see *Bulletin* January 2004), Douglas Myall (*Bulletin* December 2002).

Society work Mary Claydon for her enthusiasm and dedication to the West of England Thematic Society.

Runners-up: Organising Committee of the Dundee Philatelic Weekend, Southampton & District Philatelic Society.

Innovation Bruce Castle Museum for five days activities with the BPT and National Youth Stamp Committee.

PTS ENTERPRISE AWARDS

Business Enterprise and Development

Brian Bayford for building a successful business in GB stamps, his promotional exhibition stands and website. Runners-up: Simon Andrews, Trevor Harris

Personal Contribution Richard West for 30 years on the Stampex Committee and for his work in promoting youth philately.

OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT

Max Stern (see *Bulletin*, August 2003).

Publications The January Newsletter of the Welsh Philatelic Society (Cymdeithas Ffilatelig Cymru) includes features on special handstamps in Wales (January-June 2003), post office closures, the last TPO in Wales (July 2003), the South Wales Post Road 1672-77, double circle datestamps of Swansea, 19th century cachets of Swansea firms and other notes and reports of interest to collectors of Welsh material past and present. The Society was awarded a bronze silver at Autumn Stampex for its publication *Postman's Roots*, written by Michael Scott Archer to accompany the exhibition of Breconshire postal history held at the Brecknock Museum & Art Gallery last year. For details of this active and friendly society contact Paul Gaywood at the address opposite •

The February Newsletter of the Letter Box Study Group includes notes on Edward VIII boxes, reports from the Technical Topics Team, notes from the Photograph Archive, members letters, and news of Group and members' activities. Sent out with the newsletter was the Group's 102nd postcard, showing the postbox outside the Harbour Office in Hong Kong, c 1898-1903, and a 26-page Letter Box Listing •

Welsh Philatelic Society For details write to Paul Gaywood, 2 Fairways, Fulwood, Preston PR2 8FX or see the Society's website: www.wps.wales.org

Letter Box Study Group For details contact Val Scott, 38 Leopold Avenue, Handsworth Wood, Birmingham B20 1ES, or see website www.lbsg.org

ASPS For further information see the Association's website: www.scottishphilately.co.uk

ABPS For details write c/o British Philatelic Centre, 107 Charterhouse Street, London EC1M 6PT.

GBCC For details of membership contact Parker A Bailey, 17 Greenwood Road, Merrimack, NH 03054 USA, or see www.gbustamps.com/gbcc

The January issue of *Scottish Philately*, the newsletter of the Association of Scottish Philatelic Societies, provides a useful listing of forthcoming events in Scotland, including a special meeting of the Royal Philatelic Society in Perth on 1 May, and of the Scottish Group of the New Zealand Society of GB in Edinburgh in October. There is a short appreciation of David Jeffries, a stalwart of the Scottish philatelic world, who died on 15 January. To subscribe to the Newsletter (about eight issues a year) send a cheque/PO for £2.50 payable to 'ASPS' to Alan Watson, 36 Anson Avenue, Falkirk FK1 5JB •

As always, *ABPS news* (official magazine of the Association of British Philatelic Societies) is good reading for all interested in organized philately in the UK. The February edition includes details of new appointments to the Philatelic Trust and a summary of the Trust's activities in 2002-03 and plans for 2003-04; an obituary of A Ronald Butler, a useful diary of events (local, national and international), reports from societies, and a summary of issues from Royal Mail, Guernsey, Jersey, and the Isle of Man. The *news* is well-produced with good quality colour illustrations •

The January issue of the *GBCC Chronicle* (quarterly journal of the Great Britain Collectors Club) includes Larry Rosenblum's Mostly Machins column, an article by Edgar Smith on Court Post postmarks, a feature on George VI Coronation FDCs, and an eight-page interview with Greg Wilkie, Head of Stamps Operations at Royal Mail Tallents House in Edinburgh. Mr Wilkie explains the different Royal Mail businesses carried out at Tallents House – for retailers and business customers as well as for the philatelic trade and collectors. He told interviewer Gordon Milne (*GBCC* President) that he was a stamp collector in his youth, but most of his spare time is now taken up by his two young sons and their activities but he manages 'a passing interest in wine... and trying to revive my golfing skills'. The interview in the April *Chronicle* will be with Tony Walker, Editor of the Great Britain Philatelic Society *Newsletter* and a member of Royal Mail's Stamp Advisory Committee •

Cavendish Philatelic Auctions
Telephone 01332 250970 or
see www.cavendish-auctions.com

Auction news Demand was strong for GB material at Cavendish's sale on 24 January. A pair of broadsheets on Post Office themes (1834 and 1839) made £699. Even FDCs were in demand, with a wholesale lot of 1984 and 1985 covers (in 10 and nine albums respectively) making £1265 each! An incoming entire of 1852 from the USA with the Liverpool '9d' mark realised £862, a Shropshire rarity, the Broseley UDC tying a 1d red to cover reached £747, with a West Witton UDC cover in the Michael Champness Bedale collection going for the same amount. A 1708 incoming cover from Danzig in the Peter Kay Inverness Collection achieved £529 and a last day hand-struck '4' went for £368. A rare air cover from the last RAS flight from Croydon to Glasgow and then via the first Inverness-Wick flight made £977 (est £100). Part 1 of Michael Champness Scots Locals cancels included a trio of rare Shetland manuscript marks from Brae, Tangwick, and Voe – each made £1380 (ests £300, £240, £240). Good prices were also paid for Welsh and Irish postal history material •

Spink's Stamps and Covers of the World and Stamp Boxes auction on 4-5 February realised £630,721. A cover bearing a strip of six 1841 2d blue, plate 4 (AA-AF) in violet-blue shade on lavender paper went for £8500 (est £8000-10,000), and a Crimean War envelope with letter detailing military action realised £750 (£700-800). Over 80 attractive stamp boxes and related items were on offer; prices realised ranged from £50 to £2300. A London silver box of 1882 with six compartments for stamps and a sovereign holder made £2300 (est £2200-2300), and a five-compartment box of 1892 with a centre plaque showing a micro mosaic of the Colosseum in Rome went for £1900 (£1500-1600). Future auctions include Stamps & Covers of the World, featuring Italy & States (22 April); Single Vendor (6 May); and Sudan & Virgin Islands W Frazer Exhibition Collections (20 May) •

Spink Telephone 020 7563 4000 or website www.spink.com



Manx railway stamps The Isle of Man Post office issued six stamps on 21 February to mark the bicentenary of steam locomotives. The stamps feature: *Maitland*, Isle of Man locomotive (23p), *Evening Star*, last locomotive built for British Railways (27p), *Penyardarren Tramroad Locomotive* (40p), *Duchess of Hamilton* (57p), *City of Truro* (61p), and *Mallard*, holder of the speed record (90p). The stamps cost £2.98 a set, presentation pack £3.53. Postage 75p on orders under £10 •

Orders and enquiries Isle of Man Philatelic Bureau, PO Box 10M, Douglas, Isle of Man IM99 1PB. Telephone 01624 698430.

Obituaries The death of David Jefferies in January after a long battle with cancer has robbed Scotland of one of its best-loved philatelists and postal historians. David was born in Edinburgh in 1938, the son of an architect who was responsible for, among other things, the design of many of the prisoner of war camps during the Second World War – a matter reflected in David's abiding interest in POW mail from the Scottish camps. From general stamp collecting he progressed to a specialised study of postwar Germany, especially the local issues, while his lifelong interest in scouting resulted in a fine thematic collection devoted to that subject.

He served in Germany and Austria as a REME lieutenant in National Service before entering the building industry, but in 1962 he became a full-time member of the headquarters staff of the Scouts and was, until he retired, Executive Commissioner for Scouts in Scotland, largely responsible for the regular jamborettes at Blair Atholl.

He was a prominent member of the Edinburgh and Scottish philatelic societies and curator of the forgery collection of the latter. He was also a member of the Germany and Colonies Society and a founder member of

the Scottish Postmark Group and later the Scottish Postal History Society, holding the highest offices in these organisations. He was a senior official in the Association of Scottish Philatelic Societies for many years, and he took an active role in such good causes as Probus and Christian Aid, for which he was a very able and efficient fund-raiser. *James Mackay* •

Lady Pike, who died in January aged 85, was, as Miss Mervyn Pike, Assistant Postmaster General 1959-63. During this time she attempted to brighten up post offices, then noted for a rather sombre décor. She hoped this would have 'a beneficial psychological effect on staff and public'. Her job involved some contact with special stamps and philately and she opened Stampex in 1962. She retired as an MP in 1974 and subsequently was Chairman of the WRVS and of the Broadcasting Complaints Commission •

NPG information 020 7312 2463. Tickets for the Beaton exhibition 08700 060 1738.

Beaton exhibition An exhibition of the work of Sir Cecil Beaton is on at the National Portrait Gallery in London until 31 May. His Coronation portrait of The Queen featured on one of last year's Coronation Anniversary stamps. It was voted most popular stamp of the year by *Bulletin* readers •

BDSSC For a free information pack write to D Threadgold, 39 Scrub Rise, Billericay CM12 9PG.

British Decimal Stamps Study Circle The Circle welcomes a new auctioneer to its committee. Barrie Williamson steps into the shoes of Dave Feltham, who served successfully for many years. Barrie is looking forward to his new role, especially since his debut auction comprises pre-decimal Machins – an area of special interest to him •

Royal Mail news New stamps and books • Ingots and covers • Forthcoming specials



New definitives and stamp books Certain postal rates will be increased from 1 April, necessitating some new definitive and country stamps. These will go on sale at Post Office branches and philatelic outlets and from Royal Mail Talents House from 1 April. The new definitives will comprise: 7p (make-up value between UK 2nd and 1st class), 35p (2nd class, second weight stage), 39p (surface postcard rate), 40p (European basic letter rate), and 43p (airmail postcard rate). There will also be a new universal postcard rate stamp book containing four non-value postcard rate stamps. The book will sell for £1.72 (4 × 43p). The stamp will be self-adhesive and printed in red, ultramarine and dark grey. Details of first day postmarks were published here last month.



The new 40p country stamps will be in the design of the E country stamps shown left, but will be valued 40p.



New 40p country stamps for England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland will be available from 11 May. The first day postmarks are shown at right. Serviced covers for each of the four countries with the new 40p country stamps cancelled Tallents House or the country capital (London, Edinburgh, Cardiff, or Belfast) can be ordered from Royal Mail Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB, each price 89p UK, 76p overseas.

Collectors can send stamped covers on the day of issue to Tallents House for its postmark or to any of the Special Handstamp Centres for the other postmarks. Please quote reference numbers: FD0437 Tallents House, FD0433 London, FD0434 Edinburgh, FD0435 Cardiff, and FD0436 Belfast. Royal Mail first day envelopes for each of the country stamps will be available at main Post Office branches in each country (and from philatelic outlets and Tallents House), price 25p each. The covers are as previous issues, showing scenery. There will be no new stamp cards. A presentation pack containing the four new 40p country stamps costs £1.95.

A self-adhesive book of four 1st class gold definitives and two 1st class British Journey: Northern Ireland stamps (above) was issued on 16 March •

Withdrawal of definitive stamps The 4p, 8p, 34p, 37p, £1.50, £2, £3, and £5 definitives will be withdrawn from general sale at Post Office branches on 31 March. The low values remain on philatelic sale until further notice; the £1.50, £2, £3 and £5 stamps will remain available to business customers through Royal Mail Direct's mail order service and to collectors from Tallents House •





A British Journey: Wales To be issued 15 June. Shown at proof stage, 85% actual size.

Special issues There are two sets of special stamps this month – Centenary of the Entente Cordiale and Ocean Liners (6 & 13 April). They were previewed last month. Special dual cancellation of joint covers arrangements have been made for joint FDCs bearing both British and French Entente Cordiale stamps. Royal Mail Tallents House will apply a French pictorial first day postmark by authority of La Poste, but in accordance with British handstamping practice. The postmark was created to be used on joint products being produced on behalf of both Royal Mail and La Poste. Tallents House will also apply the French handstamp to cancel privately produced covers. The postmark will only be used to cancel French Entente Cordiale stamps and only on covers that also bear at least one British Entente Cordiale stamp in order to facilitate the creation of dual first day covers. No other stamps will be cancelled on such a cover. In addition, the final date for receipt of such covers will be 28 days after the first day of issue (4 May 2004). The maximum number of postmark designs that can be applied to a cover is two, and stamps should be affixed so that a handstamp can be applied without over-printing any stamp which has already been cancelled or another postmark. Further details will be published in the *British Postmark Bulletin*.

Next month's stamps, miniature sheet, and prestige book marking the Bicentenary of the Royal Horticultural Society are previewed this month, beginning on page 240. Shown here (at proof stage, 85% actual size) are the British Journey: Wales stamps to be issued on 15 June. They feature: 2nd class Barmouth Bridge; 1st class Hyddgen, Plynlimon; 40p Brecon Beacons; 43p Pen-tych, Rhondda Valley; 47p Rhewl, Dee Valley; and 68p Marloes Sands. Further details of the issue will be given next month. The programme for 2004 then continues with Royal Society of Arts (10 August); Woodland Animals (16 September); Crimean War (12 October); and Christmas (2 November).

The 2005 programme will comprise the following special issues: Farm Animals (January), Magic Circle (February), British Journey: South West England and The Brontes (March), World Heritage Sites (April), Trooping the Colour (June), Motorcycles and British Journey (region to be announced) (July), Gastronomy (August), Independent Television (September), Battle of Trafalgar (October) and Christmas (November). Exact dates of issue and numbers of stamps per set will be announced nearer the time. Miniature sheets will be issued with the Magic Circle, Trooping the Colour, Motorcycles, Battle of Trafalgar, and Christmas issues. Prestige stamp books are to be issued in March (subject to be announced) and October (Battle of Trafalgar), and miniature sheets containing definitive stamps in March and September. A Smilers sheet will be issued in connection with the Farm Animals set ●

Withdrawals Any remaining stock of the Extreme Endeavours stamps, pack, cards, and self-adhesive stamp book will be withdrawn from sale at Tallents House on 28 April. The 33p and 41p Machin definitives will be withdrawn on 5 May ●



Ingots and special covers The first in a new series of six ingots is expected in June. These will feature stamps of the reigns of Edward VII and George V: Edward VII 1d and £1, George V 1d Mackennal profile definitive, 10s Seahorse high value, 1d 1924 British Empire Exhibition, and 1929 £1 PUC commemoratives. The Victorian stamp ingot series is still available, price £29.95 each – see the back cover of last September's *Bulletin*.

Some coin, banknote, and ingot covers were withdrawn from sale at Tallents House in February. Still available are: Pillar to Post ingot cover (2nd class stamp, 28 Jan 2003, code A1001, price £29.95); DNA Discoveries coin cover (25 Feb 2003, AN031, £13.95); Pillar to Post ingot cover (1st class stamp, A1002, £29.95); Coronation coin cover (2 June 2003, AN032, £15.95); Coronation banknote cover (2 June 2003, AB001, £44.95); Pillar to Post ingot cover (E stamp, A1005, £29.95); Extreme Endeavours coin cover (27 Aug 2003, AN033, £13.50); British Museum medal cover (7 Oct 2003, AM010, £12.95); Classic Locomotives coin cover (13 Jan 2004, AN034, £13.95); and Ocean Liners medal cover (13 April 2004, AM011, £14.95) •

Ocean Liners The Ocean Liners miniature sheet was produced in printer's sheets of 15 (5 × 3) before being guillotined into individual sheets. The colours used were gold, black, cyan (blue) magenta, and yellow, but no cylinder numbers were shown in the printer's sheet margins •

Storing the Bulletin Binders and box files are available for this and the *Postmark Bulletin*. The box files, in maroon for the *Philatelic Bulletin* and green for the *Postmark Bulletin*, are available from Tallents House price £9.95 each (order codes PB349/PB350). Binders cost £8.50 each (BB001/PB322) •

Bulletin back issues Graeme Stewart offers a run from September 1966 to August 2002 to any reader willing to collect from him in Thatcham, Berks, or pay the postage for delivery. Contact Mr Stewart on 01635 866942 • Adrian Belton has bound back issues from volume 6 (September 1968) available to a reader who can collect from him or pay postage costs. Contact Mr Belton at Overhill House, White Lodge Lane, Baslow, Bakewell, Derbyshire DE45 1RQ •

Bulletin stamps poll The Editor announces your favourite



IN DECEMBER we invited you to vote for your favourite set of special stamps of 2003, also your favourite individual stamp and *Bulletin* author. This was our 18th annual stamp poll and, as in previous years, we received a good response from readers in all parts of the world. A number of readers added comments and opinions to their voting form, and a selection of these is featured on page 238.

Favourite set As always, points were allocated for each vote for the set: three points for first choice, two points for second, and one point third. This enables us to get a clear picture of the relative popularity of each issue. The voting was as shown opposite. The *Extreme Endeavours* set, designed by Howard Brown, was the winner, with *Birds of Prey* and *Pub Signs* in second and third places.

For interest, past winners were: 1986 *Nature Conservation*; 1987 *Flowers*; 1988 *Linnean Society*; 1989 *Birds*; 1990 *Queen Mother*; 1991 *Maps*; 1992 *Wintertime*; 1993 *Autumn*; 1994 *Age of Steam*; 1995 *Christmas*; 1996 *Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust*; 1997 *The Great Tudor (Henry VIII)*; 1998 *Lighthouses*; 1999 *Scientists' Tale*; 2000 *Tree and Leaf*; 2001 *Weather*; and 2002 *London Bridges* 1st class.

Favourite stamps The Coronation Anniversary stamp showing Cecil Beaton's Coronation portrait of The Queen was your favourite individual stamp, with two of the *Birds of Prey* stamps in second and third place. For the record, the prev-

ious favourite individual stamps were: 1996 *Wildfowl & Wetlands* 19p; 1997 *Henry VIII* 26p; 1998 *Endangered Species* 20p; 1999 *Scientists' Tale* 64p; 2000 *Above and Beyond* 19p; 2001 *Flags – Union Jack*; and 2002 *London Bridges* 1st class.

Favourite Bulletin authors This was the eighth year we had conducted this poll. Douglas Myall was again your favourite author. Dorothy Martin, Ron Negus and Richard West were voted second, third and fourth. There were some kind words expressed for many of the authors, in particular Douglas Myall. A reader in Canada states: 'Mr Myall's devotion to *Machins* astounds and delights me', and another asked 'how does he manage to spot the things the rest of us don't even notice? Amazing!' A reader in Ireland comments Mr Myall's 'scholarship and enthusiasm are exceptional' and another wrote 'He helps me sort out my muddles of *Machins*.' A reader in South Africa found Richard West's interviews with philatelists 'always interesting and informative', and a reader in Israel wrote: 'just about every article is interesting and well written. Well done all!'

Draw winners All the voting forms went into two draws. The four winners of £50 each in the FAVOURITE STAMPS draw were: M Abrahamsen of Denmark, G Mallett of Essex, J Wood of Lancashire, and C Jolliffe of Hampshire. The winners of £50 each in the FAVOURITE BULLETIN AUTHOR draw were P Warren of Essex and Mrs J Elley of Hertfordshire.

stamps and Bulletin authors of 2003, and prize draw results



Favourite stamps and sets The number following each value is as shown in December's *Bulletin*.

Coronation 42	125	British Museum 1st 69	8	Fruit & Veg Potato 23	1
Birds 1	68	British Museum 47p 72	7	Fruit & Veg Tomato 28	1
Birds 3	55	Birds 7	6	Prince William 28p 48	1
Pub Signs 1st 58	46	Secret of Life 2nd 17	6	Christmas 53p 77	1
Birds 5	44	Secret of Life 47p 20	6	Birds 4	0
Christmas 1st 75	41	Scotland 1st 53	6	Occasions 13	0
Endeavours 2nd 32	40	Secret of Life E 19	5	Occasions 14	0
Pub Signs E 59	38	Coronation 44	5	Occasions 15	0
Pub Signs 47p 61	38	Coronation 47	5	Occasions 16	0
Endeavours 1st 33	37	Scotland E 54	5	Fruit & Veg Strawberry 22	0
Scotland 47p 56	37	Pub Signs 68p 62	5	Fruit & Veg Apple 24	0
British Museum 2nd 68	33	Birds 10	4	Fruit & Veg Pear 26	0
Endeavours 47p 36	30	Coronation 39	4	Fruit & Veg Orange 27	0
Transports E 64	27	Prince William 68p 51	4	Fruit & Veg Lemon 29	0
Transports 42p 65	24	Birds 2	3	Fruit & Veg Cabbage 30	0
Coronation 40	22	Birds 8	3	Fruit & Veg Aubergine 31	0
British Museum E 70	22	Secret of Life 68p 21	3	Christmas 68p 78	0
Pub Signs 42p 60	21	Fruit & Veg Red Pepper 25	3	FAVOURITE SETS	
Scotland 2nd 52	18	Coronation 43	3	Extreme Endeavours	1070
Endeavours E 34	16	Scotland 68p 57	3	Birds of Prey	990
Endeavours 42p 35	13	Transports 68p 67	3	Pub Signs	802
Christmas £1.12 79	13	British Museum 68p 73	3	Coronation Anniversary	775
Transports 1st 63	12	Christmas 2nd 74	3	Transports of Delight	668
Prince William E 49	11	Occasions 12	2	British Journey – Scotland	507
Transports 47p 66	11	Coronation 38	2	British Museum	457
Coronation 46	10	Coronation 41	2	Christmas	231
Birds 6	9	Coronation 45	2	Fun, Fruit & Veg	146
Secret of Life 1st 18	8	British Museum 42p 71	2	Secret of Life	115
Endeavours 68p 37	8	Christmas E 76	2	Prince William	111
Prince William 47p 50	8	Birds 9	1	Occasions	17
Scotland 42p 55	8	Occasions 11	1		

Your views A number of you added comments to your voting forms. Several remarked on the cropping of the photograph of Prince William used on the 28p value in the set for his 21st birthday. One reader thought this set ‘too repetitive – three of the stamps were William with the same expression. Not enough interaction “with the people”.’ There were the usual comments about too many stamps and some difficult to understand designs, but also expressions of support, for example from a reader in Glasgow: ‘I know there is a lot of negative comment in the philatelic press regarding stamp design but I do not agree. I think British stamp design is among the best in the world’. Another ‘liked the mix of colour and black and white in the Coronation issue, something different that worked well. Similarly the long landscape of the Explorers [Extreme Endeavours] helped it stand out a bit.’

As can be seen from the voting figures, there was little support for the Occasions stamps, a reader in Thailand describing them as ‘absolutely hateful and vile’, but he liked the Fruit & Veg: ‘here is our Post Office at last casting off its staid image and for once moving with the times. An excellent, inspired, novel and creative set.’

A few readers added comments on the Rugby stamps which were issued too late to be included on the voting form. It seems some readers would have voted them highly if they had the opportunity. One reader thought the Rugby miniature sheet should have a ‘very special award’. A reader in Scotland found Pub Signs a rather frivolous subject for a stamp issue, commenting: ‘What next? Bus stops?’ and he disliked the Christmas issue and instead used the ‘excellent’ new country stamps with white borders on his Christmas mail. Another compared the image on the E rate Christmas stamp to ‘an upturned egg box’ and wondered if the designer had ‘ever studied the stamps of the Isle of Man and Channel Islands? There is real talent coming from these postal authorities’. Like the reader in Scotland, she ‘boycotted the Christmas stamps, using instead the England country stamps on my Christmas post.’

Several noted the paucity of commemorative stamps used on the mail. From a reader in Lin-

colnshire: ‘Despite the number of 1st class stamps issued very few appear on the mail I receive and we get 25-30 items a week. Where do they all go?’ There was a plea from a reader in Birmingham for stamps reflecting British history and culture and fewer aimed at a thematic market. A reader in Herts ‘appreciated a celebration of British heroes [Extreme Endeavours] in this politically correct time we live in’, and described the Coronation set as ‘an imaginative and refreshing view of a royal event’, but another reader found them ‘far too crowded’. She also asked for stamps of different shapes, and questioned the need for so many sets of five stamps. There were relatively few comments on the Scotland issue, but one reader on the Isle of Wight wondered if they were designed ‘to put off people from going?’ and offered his services when the stamp approval committee was sacked. A reader in Cambridge thought the Secret of Life could have been ‘a most historic issue’ but the ‘cartoons didn’t do the issue any justice’. Like a number of other readers she wondered if the lack of a religious theme to the Christmas issue was to avoid upsetting ethnic minorities.

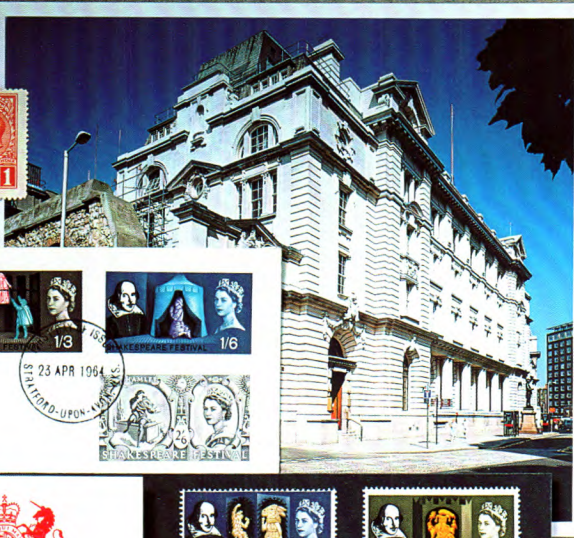
In general the comments expressed the view that British stamp design has improved over the last couple of years, and there was little of the ‘hate mail’ type of remarks that the Millennium stamps attracted. A number of you commented favourably on the Classic Locomotives stamps (shown in the December *Bulletin*) and hoped all 2004 issues would meet this high standard. It will be interesting to see which sets you like in the next stamp poll.

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My thanks to all who returned the voting form, particularly from our overseas readers in Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Macau (China), Malaysia, Malta, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, Thailand, and USA ●

April anniversaries

A NUMBER of significant anniversaries fall this month. The first British Postage Due stamps were issued on 20 April 1914 in a design that continued until decimalisation. The use of Postage Due/To Pay stamps declined from the mid-1990s and they were discontinued in January 2000. The first British special (commemorative) stamps went on sale on 23 April 1924 to mark the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley. The stamps still enjoy great affection amongst collectors of GB specials. Forty years later, on 23 April 1964, the GPO issued its first first day cover and presentation pack for the Shakespeare Festival stamps (previously some definitives were sold in envelope packs). First Day of Issue handstamps came into use, replacing the first day machine slogans used during 1963.

Finally it is now a decade since the closure of London's Chief Post Office in King Edward Street on 22 April 1994. This caused the closure of its popular philatelic counter and, four years later, of the National Postal Museum. Gone but not forgotten! Next month James Mackay records some important anniversaries in May •



GPO FIRST DAY COVER



SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL



SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL

A wide variety of exhibitions, plays, operas, ballets and concerts will mark the 400th anniversary of the birth on 23rd April 1564 of William Shakespeare



Royal Horticultural Society stamp issue



Technical details

Printer Joh Enschedé
Security Printers

Process Gravure

Stamp size 35mm square

Sheets 25 and 50

Miniature sheet 115 x 105mm

Perforation 14.5

Phosphor One band 2nd class, all-over others

Gum PVA

Gutter pairs Horizontal

Cylinders and colours

All values E1 sage-green ●
E1 black ● E1 cyan (blue) ●
E1 magenta ● E1 yellow ● E1
phosphor

SIX STAMPS, a miniature sheet and a prestige book marking the 200th anniversary of the Royal Horticultural Society will be issued on 25 May. The six stamps depict flowers popular with British gardeners – all examples of six of the nine types of plant for which the RHS is the official international registrar of cultivar names (a voluntary international system ensuring that different plants do not share the same name.) British gardeners have grown cultivated clematis and pinks successfully for generations. The flowers are: 2nd class *Dianthus* Allwoodii Group; 1st *Dahlia* 'Garden Princess'; E rate *Clematis* 'Arabella'; 42p *Miltonia* 'French Lake'; 47p *Lilium* 'Leon Pixie'; and 68p *Delphinium* 'Clifford Sky'. The Queen's silhouette and price or service indicator appears at top right with the caption 'Royal Horticultural Society 1804-2004' and the plant name on the left side of the stamp. The stamps are by Rose Design, with photography by Barbara and Zafer Baran.

The stamps will be issued to Post Office branches in sheets of 25; sheets of 50, with gutter margins, will be supplied to Royal Mail Tallents House and Post Office philatelic outlets.

FIRST DAY FACILITIES Unstamped Royal Mail FDC envelopes will be available from main Post Office branches and philatelic outlets about a week before 25 May, price 25p. Orders for serviced FDCs with stamps/miniature sheet cancelled by a pictorial first day postmark of Royal Mail Tallents House Edinburgh or Wisley must reach Tallents House (address below) by the day of issue. Price £3.31 UK or £2.82 overseas. Please state if stamps/miniature sheet required. Covers can also be ordered with the label pane from the prestige book, price £3.83 to UK customers, £3.26 overseas.



Collectors may send stamped covers on the day of issue to: Royal Mail, Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB (Tallents House postmark), or any of Royal Mail's six Special Handstamp Centres, (Wisley postmark), marking the outer envelope 'FD0417' (Tallents House), or 'FD0418' (Wisley). Covers can be posted or handed in at main Post Office branches for the Wisley postmark. The Tallents House and Wisley postmarks will be applied in silver ink.

Details of other handstamps for 25 May will be announced in the *British Postmark Bulletin* – available on subscription from Tallents House (£12.25 UK/Europe; £24.95 elsewhere). For a sample copy write to: The Editor, British Postmark Bulletin, Royal Mail, 148 Old Street, London EC1V 9HQ.

PHILATELIC PRODUCTS A well-illustrated pack containing the six stamps (price £3) and seven stamp cards (30p each) will be available from Tallents House, main Post Office branches and philatelic outlets. The cards feature one of each stamp and the miniature sheet. A Philatelic Medallion Cover will be available, price £13.95.

SMILERS SHEET A 'generic' sheet of 20 of the 1st class (Dahlia) stamp will be available, price £6.15. The colourful labels illustrate and give details of different groups of dahlias and guidance on successful dahlia growing. The RHS logo appears in the sheet margin. The sheet is being printed in litho by Walsall, yielding a litho variety of the 1st class stamp. These sheets cost £14.95 for one sheet of 20 stamps, £13.95 each for 2-4 sheets, and £11.95 each for 5-9 sheets; enquire for prices for larger quantities.

The miniature sheet (top, on a first day cover) contains one of each stamp. Price £2.46.

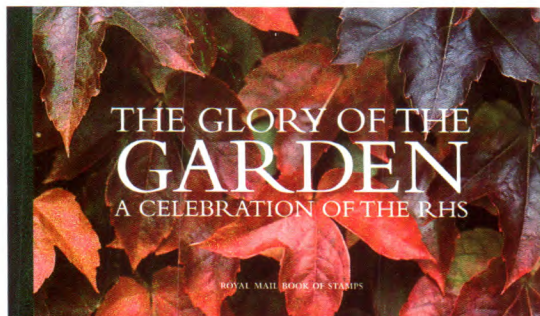
A presentation pack, shown above, has been designed by The English Group, with text by botanist Francesca Green-oak. The illustrations include some delightful drawings of pinks and clematis.

Smilers For details of how to order personalised sheets, phone 0845 074 2000 or see website: www.royalmail.com/smilers



Royal Horticultural Society PSB panes

- 1 Machin definitives: top and bottom rows 1st class, 42p, 1st class; middle row 47p, label with RHS logo, 47p.
- 2 RHS stamps: top row 2nd and E; bottom row 68p and 42p.
- 3 1997 Flowers greetings stamps: top row *Iris latifolia* and *Tulipa*; bottom row *Tulipa* and *Gentiana acaulis*.
- 4 RHS stamps: top row 1st and 47p; bottom row 47p and 1st.



'Gardening is the art that uses flowers and plants as paint, and the soil and sky as canvas'

ELIZABETH MURRAY

The Royal Horticultural Society Britain's leading gardening charity, known worldwide for its magnificent Chelsea show and Hampton Court Palace garden, is highly respected for its scientific work in horticulture. Its science department, with library and herbarium, is situated at its garden at Wisley in Surrey – chosen as the location for the alternative first day postmark. It has other gardens at Rosemoor, Devon; Hyde Hall, Essex; and Harlow Carr, North Yorkshire.

The RHS began with a meeting, arranged by John Wedgwood (son of Josiah, the potter) of four amateur and three professional gardeners at Hatchard's bookshop in London in 1804. The Society's aim was to 'collect every information respecting the culture and treatment of all plants and trees'. Its early meetings were held at the Linnean Society in Parton Square and later in Gerrard Street. (The bicentenary of the Linnean Society was marked by stamps in 1988.) Experimental gardens were set up in Edwardes Square, a nursery garden at Kensington in 1818, and another garden was added in 1821 at Chiswick where fetes and floral exhibitions were held. Joseph Paxton, who worked at Chiswick, went on to be Head Gardener to the Duke of Devonshire at Chatsworth. Prince Albert became the Society's President in 1858 and gardens were opened in South Kensington in 1861 when the Society was granted its Royal title. The Kensington gardens and conservatory were run in association with the Commissioners of the Great Exhibition, and in 1871-74 international exhibitions organized by Henry Cole (who worked with Rowland Hill on postal reform) were held in the gardens. Expensive to maintain, the gardens closed in 1882. The RHS gardens at Wisley were presented to the Society by Sir Thomas Hanbury in 1903 and the Chiswick gardens were closed. The Royal Horticultural Hall in Vincent Square, designed by E.J. Stebbs, was opened in 1904, and a new hall, by Murray Easton, was built in nearby Greycoat Street in 1927-28. The Lindley Library at Vincent Square has over 36,000 books, making it one of the leading horticultural libraries in the world. Apart from wartime, the Society's Chelsea Flower Show has been held in the grounds of the Royal Hospital Chelsea each May since 1913. Today the Society answers over 65,000 gardening queries each year, and several thousand amateur and professional gardeners sit RHS examinations to gain nationally recognized qualifications.

Stamp collectors will be aware of the RHS halls in Westminster – the home of Stampex, 1969-95 and now of Philatex. Numerous other exhibitions have been staged there over the years – such as the Schoolboys and Schoolgirls Exhibitions, Applied Arts and Handicraft Shows and the Model Engineer Exhibition – see the letter from Rene Dee published in the June 2003 *Bulletin* (page 317). An exhibition is planned, as part of the Society's Great Autumn Show, to depict the Royal Horticultural Halls and their extraordinary history of events.

The Royal Horticultural Hall featured in a number of Stampex postmarks, and the RHS was mentioned on four postmarks used on 20 January 1987, the day of issue of Flowers stamps. The Society's name also appears in the postmarks used for the Chelsea Flower show in recent years •



The tercentenary of British Gibraltar By Richard Garcia MBE, Chief Executive, Ministry for Postal Services, Gibraltar

THE MOST striking aspect of the designs for the new special issue of stamps (26 April) to mark the tercentenary of British Gibraltar is the profusion of red, white and blue.

When approaching the question of a brief for the designer, the Gibraltar Philatelic Bureau had several key elements in mind: the designs had to cover the full 300 years, from 1704 to 2004; they had to echo the partnership which has evolved over time between the UK and Gibraltar; and they needed to reflect some of the very positive effects on the development of Gibraltar of the British connection.

It was therefore necessary to identify some of the milestones in Gibraltar's relations with the UK, and after much debate – and the deletion of a number of important events – the final list of subjects which was arrived at was as follows: the capture of Gibraltar in 1704, by an Anglo-Dutch fleet commanded by Admiral Sir George Rooke; the designation of Gibraltar as a Free Port by Queen Anne, which laid the foundations in due course for Gibraltar as a centre of trade and commerce; the importance of Gibraltar as a military base; the development of justice and law in Gibraltar; the establishment of the Royal Gibraltar Police; the development of postal and telephone communication; the introduction of compulsory education, modelled on the British system; Gibraltar's parliamentary tradition; and the overwhelming popular support for the retention of strong links between Gibraltar and the UK.

Gibraltar has always been an important military base, and this is reflected by a stamp depicting certain early military uniforms. The Corps of Royal Engineers was created in Gibraltar in 1772, and the early uniform is depicted on one stamp (at left). Another uniform on that stamp is of Fox's Marines, today the Royal Marines (at centre), who took part in the capture of Gibraltar in 1704 and who display a single battle honour 'Gibraltar' to this day. The third uniform (at right) is of an early regiment which garrisoned

Gibraltar in the 1750s. Indeed, had it not been for Gibraltar's strategic value, the famous Rock of Gibraltar might never have been taken by the British.

Gibraltar prospered in ways which were not linked to the British military presence, but which took advantage of the protection which it offered. A civilian community was gradually attracted to Gibraltar, consisting of British, Genoese, Barbary (Moroccan) Jews, Portuguese and Spanish immigrants. In due course, there was also a considerable influx of Maltese. Gibraltar became an important trade hub in the Napoleonic period, and by 1815 the civilian population outnumbered the military garrison for the first time. The development of the civil community required, in turn, the development of institutions and British models were naturally adopted.

The Royal Gibraltar Police was founded in 1830, one year after Robert Peel created the Metropolitan Police, on whom they were based. The Supreme Court was given its charter of justice in 1830, and Gibraltar solicitors and barristers are mainly UK qualified. The education system is based on the English system, and students in Gibraltar study for GCSEs and 'A' levels set by the English examining boards prior to applying for tertiary education to British universities and educational institutions.

Gibraltar looks British, although it has a Mediterranean feel and charm at the same time. The street names are very English: Prince Edward's Road, for example, is named after the Duke of Kent, the father of Queen Victoria, who was the Royal Governor at the start of the 19th century. Pillar boxes and old-style telephone booths are distinctly British in appearance.

The Westminster-style parliamentary tradition in Gibraltar is represented by the Mace of the House of Assembly, a part of which is illustrated on one stamp. It was presented to the first Gibraltar parliament in 1951, the year after its inauguration by the Duke of Edinburgh. Parliamentar-

1704 - 2004

Celebrating the Tercentenary
of British Gibraltar

ians are elected every four years, and the House of Assembly consists of an elected Government and Opposition, presided over by a Speaker.

The final stamp in the sheetlet shows vividly the strength of British feeling in Gibraltar today. In spring 2002, the Gibraltar Government organised a demonstration, which made international headline news, to protest against any attempt on the part of the British Government to share Gibraltar's sovereignty with Spain against the wishes of the people of Gibraltar. A referendum in November 2002 produced a 98.97% result in favour of strong continued links with Britain. This is reflected by the centre stamp of the sheetlet.

The symbols at top centre and bottom centre of the sheetlet are also of considerable significance. The crest at the top is a combination of the Royal Coat of Arms, complete with the Lion and the Unicorn, surmounting the Gibraltar Crest which consists of a castle and key. The castle is symbolic of the strategic significance of

Gibraltar and its importance as a fortress. The key represents Gibraltar's position as the key to the Mediterranean. The crest also demonstrates the strong sense of allegiance of the Gibraltarians for the British monarchy. The logo at the foot of the sheetlet is that of the tercentenary, and echoes the red, white and blue of the Union Jack and the red and white of the Gibraltar flag.

The people of Gibraltar are fiercely proud of their British heritage and of the close ties which have grown and developed between Gibraltar and Britain. The tercentenary is an event which is being celebrated throughout the year 2004 with a series of cultural, historical, musical and sporting events. It is a year which will live long in the memory of the Gibraltarians. This set of stamps helps to represent a few of the important elements which have helped to shape the Gibraltarians of today, and which are so deeply valued ●

The tercentenary stamps are available from Gibraltar Philatelic Bureau, PO Box 5662, Gibraltar. www.gibraltar-stamps.com

Philately on-line Ron Negus takes a cruise on a ships site



Ships on Stamps Unit

American Topical Association
American Philatelic Society



[Home](#)

[Watercraft Philately](#)
(1/1/2004)

[United Watercraft Philately](#)
(1/1/2004)

[New Ship Stamps](#)
(1/1/2004)

[Ship Topic Pages](#)
(12/2/2003)

Dedicated to the study of philatelic material pertaining to watercraft on stamps, to sharing knowledge, to encouraging the growth of the hobby and to supporting the preservation of our maritime heritage.



www.shipsonstamps.org The 'links' page on this site gives details of other websites that will interest collectors of ship stamps, plus related non-philatelic sites such as maritime museums. An application form to join the Ships on Stamps Unit is also included.

IN THE MIDDLE OF APRIL, Royal Mail will issue its latest commemorative set of six stamps plus a miniature sheet featuring Ocean Liners. This will be welcomed by the growing number of enthusiasts who own collections of Ships on Stamps. The popularity of this particular topic is clear, since Stanley Gibbons considers it merits its own volume within their thematic catalogue series.

For the collector who has never examined the possibilities offered by this subject, a visit to the site maintained by the Ships on Stamps Unit of the American Topical Association (see address above) is highly recommended. This particular Unit is 'dedicated to the study of philatelic material pertaining to watercraft on stamps, to sharing knowledge, to encouraging the growth of the hobby and to supporting the preservation of our maritime heritage.'

It publishes a journal, *Watercraft Philately*, six times per year. This is now in its 50th year and contains histories of ships featured on stamps, changes in the status of operational ships, listings of newly issued ship stamps, book reviews and news of the Unit and the hobby. The website has a section that lists the contents of recent issues of the magazine, which includes some of the articles in full. There is also an index of ships mentioned in past issues, together with details of how to get photocopies of previous numbers.

An illustrated listing gives the details of new ship stamps that have been produced in the past year, and this is updated on a rolling basis. The Unit also has its own publications and an order blank for these appears on the site. Another useful feature is the discussion page where members

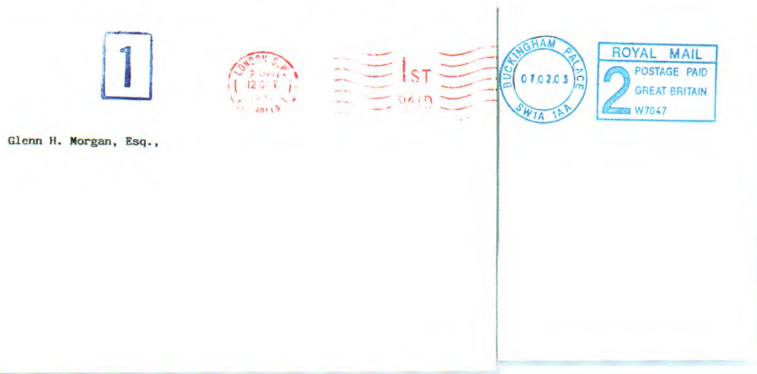
can ask and answer queries about particular vessels that have been stamp subjects, and converse about other related nautical topics.

Perhaps the most fascinating part of the site, however, is entitled 'Ship Topic Pages'. This contains 53 subject headings. Each one takes the user to a set of web pages giving a thematic overview with illustrated stamp designs and accompanying text about the selected subject. These mini displays cover maritime history, types of ships, discovery and exploration, and more. Amongst the more technical subjects for example, is an explanation of the well-known Beaufort scale that measures wind force, with appropriate stamps illustrating each step from calm to hurricane. This page adds details of two other lesser-known scales, the Saffir-Simpson for tropical cyclones, and the Fujita that measures the intensity of tornadoes. Other examples of subject headings include 'Voyages of Captain Cook in the Pacific', the 'Secret of the Mary Celeste', the 'America's Cup' and the 'Attack on Pearl Harbour'.

In this section there is also the story of the 'Great Bitter Lake Locals' that will interest Cinderella collectors as well as ship enthusiasts. It relates the events surrounding the closure of the Suez Canal in June 1967 during the Israel-Egypt war. This closure caused 14 cargo vessels to be trapped in the Great Bitter Lake for the next eight years. Whilst there, these ships produced their own local 'stamps' that had no postal validity but could be used on mail bearing normal Egyptian adhesives. This intriguing tale, together with pictures of the various locals involved, is told on this well designed website •

The Court Post Office 1990-2004 Part 1:

an introduction to Royal Household mail



by Glenn Morgan FRPSL

READERS may be aware that in 1992 the writer published, through the British Philatelic Trust, a book entitled *Royal Household Mail*. This work, now long out of print, recorded the history of postal facilities for the Royal Family and Households from the reign of King John, through to the date of its publication. Since that time, there have been many changes to the handling of this special class of mail. This story will now be updated here by recording the past 15 years activity, ie from the start of the 1990s, which conveniently coincided with the appointment of a new Court Postmaster, through to early 2004.

There are sections covering an introduction to the operation of the Royal Household and its mail arrangements, details of the postal staff who run the service and a record of the Royal post offices and the postal markings/cachets that have been introduced or withdrawn. Royal travel arrangements and mourning and celebratory mail complete the story.

Publication has come about as a result of ex-Court Postmaster, Adrian Vidler MVO, concluding that the sweeping changes that had been made during his term of office should be recorded prior to the information being lost. The writer was therefore invited back to Buckingham Palace for a unique meeting with the three most recent Court Postmasters.

A lot of background work had been undertaken primarily by Adrian prior to the meeting, to locate much of the detailed type of information that collectors of this material would wish to know. One of the biggest changes since writing the book has been this new style of openness. No longer is the information deemed to be virtually a State secret, but something for sharing with interested parties.

Huge thanks are therefore due to Adrian, David Wren, Michael Delaney and their staff – especially Kevin – for answering many questions, recognising the importance of recording this data, thus ensuring that future generations of collectors and historians will not have to guess at what changes were made and when they might have happened.

The Royal Household The official government website ‘The Monarchy Today’ (www.royalinsight.gov.uk) records that the Royal Household comprises five departments and that the 645 full-time staff assist The Queen when she undertakes her official duties, taking on the role done by courtiers historically. The Royal Household includes The Queen’s Household and those of other Royal Family members who undertake official duties.

The Royal Family and its day-to-day operation are, in essence, a business – indeed Her Majesty allegedly refers to it as ‘the Firm’. It therefore recognises that the rules of running a business have to apply and wherever process improvements and cost savings can be made, they need to be implemented. Adrian Vidler had taken over a role that had not fundamentally altered in decades and so was ripe for change. The world had moved on and communications were much faster now that computers, word processing, the internet and mobile telephony had all become firmly established, and the Court Post needed to catch up.

Traditionally, each department sending mail applied a certifying stamp (cachet) to the bottom left corner of the envelope to identify its source. Larger departments had their own cachets, such as the Paymaster of the Household and the Board of the Green Cloth; while smaller departments such as The Royal Archives utilised a generic Royal monogram cachet together with their hand-written initials to indicate that it was mail of an official nature. These were then collected by van and sent to one of Royal Mail’s sorting offices for cancellation and forwarding to the addressee.

None of these items of mail required postal accounting because until 31 March 2001 the postal services of the Court Post Office were provided free of charge by Royal Mail. However, from 1 April 2001, the Household were charged for these services, perhaps the most salient change in decades, resulting in a need to allocate postal services to the cost code of the sender.

Head of State expenditure and Royal financial arrangements are increasingly under scrutiny to ensure that the country is getting value for money. There are four sources of funding of The Queen (or officials of the Royal Household acting on her behalf). The Civil List meets official expenditure relating to The Queen’s duties as Head of State and Head of the Commonwealth. Grants-in-Aid from Parliament provide upkeep of the Royal Palaces and for Royal travel. The Privy Purse is traditional income for the Sovereign’s public and private use. Her Majesty’s personal income meets entirely private expenditure. The postal service costs for Royal Household and Family mail is charged to the Civil List and is understood to exceed £1 million per annum.

On 12 January 1998 at Buckingham Palace and on 5 April 1999 at Windsor Castle, first class franking machine dies were utilised on every item of mail posted from these residences. On 2 April 2001 second class franking machine dies were additionally utilised now that the postage costs incurred by the Royal Family and its Households were charged for. No longer would all Royal mail automatically be treated as first class, removing a tradition dating back to the introduction of the two-tier postal service on 16 September 1968.

All Court post used to bear a large numeric '1' to ensure that it was treated as first class and many styles of number had been requisitioned from Her Majesty's Stationery Office stores at Norwich down the years, but no number '2' has been recorded as being in use. Instead, lack of a '1' would indicate second class, although it was rare to see an item without a '1' on it for several years after 1968. In the period covered here, the use of '1' had long since fallen out of general use, but it is still seen occasionally on covers.



Counter services Postal counter services had been provided at Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle year-round for decades, and these continue today. However, when the Royal Family was in residence elsewhere, it was normal practice for the Court Postmaster and his staff to attend. This has now changed. Holyroodhouse ceased counter services from 6 July 2000. Balmoral Castle followed on 9 October 2000 and Sandringham House on 11 February 2001. The long tradition of 'official mail' cancellations and counter handstamps used at these locations has ceased, closing a chapter that produced some fascinating items of postal history down the years.

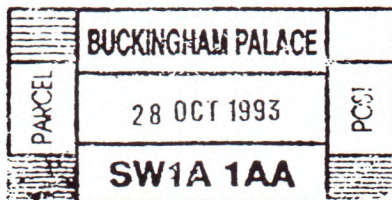
The volume of Royal Household mail posted each year is immense, especially when events, anniversaries, Christmas, births and deaths occur. Her Majesty normally receives around 400 letters each day. A heavy strain is placed on all concerned to process this correspondence and it is not uncommon for very senior members of staff to assist at peak times. A warm affinity exists between the staff and the eight Royal Mail employees who handle this mail. So long as there is the fascination and love for all things Royal by much of the population, there will be the need for postal facilities to serve them, be they resident at one of the grand palaces or at one of the small private country homes.

We live in a period of constant philatelic change, no more so than with Royal Household mail, for no sooner does one era close, than another opens. Highgrove House has become the latest residence to have its own postal facilities and postage paid marking, with the Castle of Mey and Birkhall possibly to follow when Prince Charles is in residence. This is what helps to make this hobby so fascinating and constantly stimulating.

Royal residences and their postal arrangements Current postal arrangements at Royal residences cover the locations recorded below. There have not been any additions or subtractions to the residences used during the past 15 years, although residents have sometimes changed, following marriage, divorce or death and the nature of the service provided may also have changed, as with Highgrove House.

The compiler was given photocopies of all markings in use since 1990, which will be reproduced here and in coming issues. There are approaching 70 such markings, some of which were in use for an extremely short period of time and are bound to become Court Post rarities of the future.

Incidentally, there is no significance in the colours used for the markings and whatever ink pad is to hand is used, so no premium should be attached to an example in a colour different to that expected or usual.



BUCKINGHAM PALACE has been the official London residence of Britain's sovereign since 1837. It evolved from a town house owned from the beginning of the 18th century by the Dukes of Buckingham. Today it is The Queen's official residence. Outgoing mail is franked with a blue-coloured first or second class Pitney Bowes meter franking marking and is forwarded via the London South Mail Office at Nine Elms. Items for Britain or the Commonwealth additionally bear a machine applied Royal monogram certifying stamp. Foreign mail is not treated this way, as the marking only applies to mail where The Queen is replying to one of Her subjects. Mail from Royal Collection Enterprises is cancelled with a London postage paid impression numbered HQ7397 in first and second class versions. All other departmental certifying stamps appear to have ceased to be used.

CLARENCE HOUSE, the London home of the late Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother, was built in 1825 and now provides a London home for The Prince of Wales and his sons. Mail from this residence is collected and sent to Buckingham Palace, where it receives the standard franking machine cancellation and, where appropriate, Royal monogram certifying stamp prior to onward transmission.

KENSINGTON PALACE is a working Royal residence of great historical importance. Today it contains the offices and London residences of Princess Alice, Duchess of Gloucester and The Duke and Duchess of Gloucester, The Duke and Duchess of Kent and Prince and Princess Michael of Kent. Princess Margaret and Diana, Princess of Wales used to live in Kensington Palace and had offices there until their death. Royal Household mail from this residence is treated in the same manner as that of Clarence House. A London postage paid impression numbered W7047 is used on mail from The Michaels and The Gloucesters.

ST JAMES'S PALACE was built by Henry VIII between 1532 and 1540, on the site of the Hospital of St James, Westminster. For over 300 years it was a residence of kings and queens of England. Today St James's Palace contains the London residences of The Princess Royal, and Princess Alexandra and her husband Sir Angus Ogilvy. Mail is collected and sent to Buckingham Palace, and receives the franking machine cancellation and Royal monogram certifying stamp when appropriate. The offices of Royal Collection Enterprises Limited in the Palace use an oval cachet on its mail. This bears a lion on crown in the centre with a postage paid impression numbered HQ7393. Her Majesty's Representative, Ascot Office is also located in St James's Palace and continues to use an oval certifying stamp.

It is hoped that this survey will assist collectors to identify items that they may be unaware of, and therefore are probably missing from their collections. However, it must be stated that the Royal Mail and Royal Household members employed at the Royal residences are extremely busy and cannot, therefore, respond to specific requests for copies of any of the postal cachets or markings recorded here. As a refusal to comply with your request could offend, please approach one of the many dealers in British postal history or ephemera if you wish to own this type of material ●

In the next part of his series, Mr Morgan deals with mail arrangements at Highgrove House, Sandringham House and Windsor Castle.

In love with the Falklands Richard West learns about the

RONNIE SPAFFORD and the Falkland Islands are almost inseparable. As for many, stamp collecting had been a childhood hobby, but during his National Service, in the Army, this collection was put to one side. Before long however, his interest was rekindled by an officer who collected German Inflation material: Ronnie saw that he could usefully 'invest' money he was now earning in stamps. But what to collect?



a collection: far more important are the proofs and essays.

Much of the material is acquired at auction, particularly in searching out more unusual documents. There have been some good 'buys' made over the years. The 1933 'Centenary of British Administration' issue was bought in blocks of four for £1,200 from J Lea of Manchester. It may sound a high price, but the 10s and £1 (in a corner block) proved to be

from the second printing: as such the £1 block could well be unique. He owns the best cover in existence bearing one of the 1891 bi-sects. Bought at auction from Christie's, it was written by the postmaster who authorised bi-sects to his bank in Jamaica. He also owns all the proof material relating to the King George VI postal stationery. He tends to read everything that is published about the Falkland Islands, and wrote the book on the Centenary issue, for which he received much help from the Crown Agents. He enjoys giving displays to societies, not only of Falkland Islands but also on the ss *Great Britain* and philatelic research, and would love to exhibit again. He achieved a gold medal at Capex in 1996, but a burglary at home resulted in the loss of much important research material.

He is sceptical about the long-term future of the hobby, based on the age of those attending philatelic society meetings. However, he does like the growth of interest in social philately, which he feels is more simulating than thematic.

Ronnie's initial thoughts for a career had been as an artist, horrifying his parents, but, although the prospect of National Service filled him with fear, he so enjoyed his time in the Army that he made it his career, retiring at the rank of Major. While in the Army he found himself very much a lone collector, but he did have those who helped and influenced him. One was Malcolm Barton, with whom he founded the Falkland Islands Study Circle in the 1970s.

Philately apart, Ronnie's relationship with the Falkland Islands has spanned many years. He was invited to be the military member of the Falkland Islands Committee. He first visited the islands in 1977, soon after retirement, and was again there in 1982, shortly before the Argentinian invasion. He recalls that there was anxiety that an invasion might occur, perhaps in November 1982, and shared with Rex Hunt, then the Governor, concerns over the scrap metal dealers who had settled on South Georgia. As we now

conservation quality leaves within conservation quality protectors (by Frank Godden), it may come as a surprise to find that most of his stamps are conventionally hinged. When buying, he will usually go for mounted copies, as these are often cheaper. However, he explains that in many respects the stamps are now the least significant aspect of

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Islands from Ronnie Spafford

know, Argentina occupied the Falkland Islands from April, finally surrendering ten weeks later in June, following the arrival of the 'Task Force' from Britain. The following year Ronnie spent three months helping to organise a stamp exhibition as part of the celebrations of 150 years of British Administration.

For the past 15 years he has been arranging visits to the Falkland Islands so that others can enjoy the fascinations these islands have to offer. The war is still a vivid memory, and you are never far from reminders of what happened. Equally, the war did speed up the development of the islands, with the creation of the new airport at Mount Pleasant, the building of many more roads, the development of a tourist industry (many cruise ships now call at the islands), with a consequent increase in the population (many of the workers come from St Helena), and the creation of a valuable fishing industry.

These trips to the Falkland Islands, which Ronnie calls the 'Falkland Islands Experience', leave from Brize Norton, flying with the RAF, with a re-fuelling stop at Ascension Island. If you fancy a holiday venue that is certainly different, you might like to consider the Falkland Islands •

RONNIE SPAFFORD FACT FILE

Born Bristol, but due to war-time bombing moved to Weston-Super-Mare, which is still home.

Sports Ronnie enjoys, and has actively participated in, many sports including rugby, skiing, horse riding, show-jumping and underwater swimming.

Travel When not visiting the Falkland islands, he has visited Japan, New Zealand, Thailand, Mauritius and the Seychelles, where he has enjoyed under-water photography.

Moment of fame Adviser to the television programme *In the Post*, produced at the BBC's Bristol studios in 1980.

Pets In the Army, Ronnie was almost inseparable from his pet Labrador: his book on the 1933 Centenary issue was dedicated to Remus.

Hobbies Apart from philately, another hobby is gardening, particularly tending his own large garden.

The Falkland Islands Experience If you fancy a visit to the Falkland Islands, information can be obtained from Major R N Spafford, 29 Queens Road, Weston-Super-Mare, BS23 2LH.

Readers' reports

Dropping the mail Rather belatedly I have found a positive identification of the aircraft depicted in the September *Bulletin* (page 6). It is the prototype Vickers Vimy Commercial produced in January 1919. It is not a converted RAF wartime bomber, but a new aircraft, designed by Vickers (based upon the Vimy) for the commercial market. A ground view photograph of this machine is on page 94 of *Vickers Aircraft Since 1908*. The caption to this photo taken in February 1919 shows the aircraft before painting as K-107.

The accompanying three-view diagrams show the artist's handiwork to be fairly accurate. The remarks by Sqn Ldr Witherow (February) about colour and markings of RAF aircraft at the time are entirely correct, but K107 was a Vickers number, applied before it received its normal civil registration number G-EAAV later that year. Whether the upper markings existed or are just an artist's impression cannot be ascertained. As an after-note, this aircraft was chartered from Vickers by the *Times* newspaper to attempt a flight to Cape-town in January 1920, but crashed in Tanganyika on 27 February. I can find no mention of mail-dropping, but as the book illustration was published in 1919 perhaps it was a Vickers publicity idea and one of the many possible uses for their new aircraft. N MORRIS, SUTTON COLDFIELD •

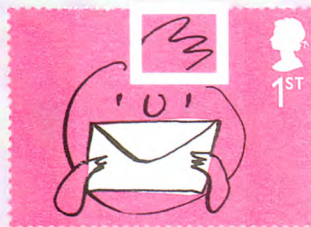
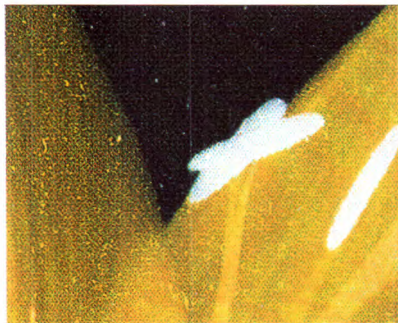
Prize draw Stamp tweezers

WE HAVE silver stamp tweezers to give away to the senders of the first four cards drawn on 30 April. To enter the draw simply write your name and address on the back of a postcard and send it to: Tweezers Draw, British Philatelic Bulletin, Royal Mail, 148 Old Street, London EC1V 9HQ •



Prize Draw winners The winners of the February stamp issues in the prize draw in the January *Bulletin* were: L Court of West Yorkshire; C Bishop of West Midlands; J Rennie of Australia; I Winrow of Derbyshire; and A Phillips of Hertfordshire.

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



January identify The detail is from a new Occasions stamp (envelope being kissed). The winner was P Pincket of Belgium.

January knowledge Answers: 1) Basildon; 2) 1976; 3) green. The winner was V Aves of Sussex.

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

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

- 1 Who designed the 1995 Science Fiction stamps?
- 2 What colour was the George V 7d definitive?
- 3 In which year were Postage Due/To Pay stamps first issued?

Send your answer (addressed to either the April *Identify* competition or the April *Knowledge* competition), name and address on a postcard or back of a sealed envelope to: British Philatelic Bulletin, Royal Mail, 148 Old Street, London EC1V 9HQ. The senders of the first cards drawn in each competition on 14 May will each receive £100. Ten runner-up prizes of presentation packs or FDCs will be awarded in each competition. The competitions are not open to Royal Mail employees •

Events

3 April North of Ireland PS Annual Exhibition & Fair at St Nicholas' Church Hall, Cadogan Park, off Lisburn Road, Belfast, 10.00-16.30. Admission free, dealers – stamps, postal history, postcards and accessories. **Enquiries** N Scott, 028 90 795530.

10 April Maidstone & Mid Kent Philatelic Society Stamp Fair at Grove Green Community Centre, Maidstone (near junction 7, M20), 10.00-16.00. **Enquiries** B R Stonestreet, 01622 675784.

16-17 April Scottish Philatelic Congress at Dewar's Centre, Perth. **Enquiries** A Watson, 36 Anson Ave, Falkirk FK1 5JB.

17 April Leystonstone, Wanstead & District PS Stamp Fair. **Enquiries** 020 8491 6235.

17 April GB Philatelic Society displays at British Philatelic Centre, 107 Charterhouse Street, London EC1.

11.00 display to be announced, 14.15 Elizabeth II by Phil Kenton. **Enquiries** C Harman, Greylands, Melton, Woodbridge IP12 1QE.

17 April North Eastern Philatelic Association Convention at Westgate Community College, Newcastle upon Tyne, 10.00-16.30. Dealers, commemorative cover. **Enquiries** J Smiles, 313 Heaton Road, Newcastle upon Tyne NE6 5QD.

24 April Westbex Stamp Fair, organised by Thatcham & District PS, at Kennet School, Thatcham, 10.00-16.00. Dealers, displays, meetings, young collectors etc. Over 700 lots for auction (20 May). Admission free. **Enquiries** 01635 866942 or www.tdps.org.uk

April Welsh Philatelic Society meeting, south Wales. **Enquiries** P Gaywood, 2 Fairways, Fulwood, Preston PR2 8FX •

Late news

Newcastle Convention The North East of England Philatelic Association's annual convention will be held on 17 April at Westgate Community College, West Road, Newcastle upon Tyne, 10.00-16.30. A commemorative cover, celebrating the 60th anniversary of the Newcastle upon Tyne Philatelic Society and centenary of the Newcastle Electric Railway (now Tyne & Wear Metro), features trains of 1904, 1954 and 2004. Enquiries: J W M Smiles, 313 Heaton Road, Newcastle upon Tyne NE6 5QD •

GB in-fighting For many years the Great Britain Philatelic Society was a rather staid but worthy organisation. In recent years its two publications – *Journal* and *Newsletter* – have become much more lively with a wider range of subjects covered and more member participation in the form of letters and comments. It is clear that there is some disagreement amongst members as to the validity of different aspects of GB collecting and how the Society is run. In the March/April *Newsletter* former President Chris Harman responds to an earlier article by Robin Tibbenham, arguing for tolerance of others' interests, but at the same time critical of collectors of Machin stamps for being too specialised and not getting sufficiently involved in other areas of collecting and promoting the hobby. He writes: 'In fact the need is for the Machin collector to come out of the closet and show just how interesting the subject really is.' *Newsletter* Editor Tony Walker comments: 'Why is it that these modern collectors, perhaps relatively new to the hobby (say in the last 20 years), are reluctant to come forward to participate in Society affairs...?' It will be interesting to see how the debate continues and how the GBPS marks its golden jubilee next year in the interests of all its members. The *Newsletter* also reports on a meeting between Tony Walker and Tony Conder, Chief Executive of the new Postal Heritage Trust which takes over responsibility for the former Post Office Archives and National Postal Museum on 1 April. Mr Walker expressed the disappointment of the philatelic community

in the absence of a philatelist on the Trust but noted that Mr Conder is considering an 'advisory philatelic panel'. On the subject of new premises, 'the future facility was unlikely to be a repeat of the old NPM', and bearing in mind the cost of a new 'museum' could be £10-12 million, 'it is unlikely to open before 2007 earliest.' If that is true, we will have been without a museum for nearly a decade! •

Royal display The Smithsonian National Postal Museum is hosting an exhibit from the Royal Philatelic Collection. The NPM is housed in the Old Post Office near Union Station in Washington DC. The exhibit displays a representative selection from The Queen's collection featuring the lead-up to the introduction of the Penny Black, Twopenny Blue and the Mulready in 1840. Included will be pre-Treasury Essay material, some Treasury Essays (from the largest extant holding of these) and material illustrating the development of the stamps and the Mulready envelopes and lettersheets. Of particular note is the 'Kirkcudbright Cover' – in fact a wrapper – bearing the largest multiple (10) of Penny Blacks known on first day of use, bought by The Queen in 2001. The unique block of 38 unused Twopenny Blues from Plate 1 is also being shown. The exhibit also illustrates the work undertaken in selecting a new colour for the Penny stamp, by showing some of the obliteration experiments and 'Rainbow Trials' and goes on to display Penny Red printings from the 'Black' Plates. A selection of Mulready caricatures is also being shown. This part of the exhibition concludes with coverage of the work leading to the embossed 1d and 2d envelopes. In a special gallery, a number of other rarities from the Collection are being displayed, including the 'Post Office' Mauritius 1d and 2d, British Guiana and Bermuda items, Cape of Good Hope 'Woodblock' errors of colour, and other 'gems' from the Collection. The exhibition is open from 6 April to 11 January 2005; admission is free. *Michael Sefi, Keeper of the Royal Philatelic Collection* •

A collage of six images showing various stages of shipbuilding. From left to right: 1. A worker in a dark environment, possibly inside a hull, with a large white circle overlaid. 2. A close-up of a ship's hull with the number '200' visible. 3. A ship's hull under construction with scaffolding. 4. A ship's hull being launched from a dry dock. 5. A ship's hull being launched from a dry dock. 6. A ship's hull being launched from a dry dock.

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